THE BIBLE HERALD

FOR THE EDIFICATION OF BELIEVERS AND THE SPREAD OF GOSPEL TRUTH

EDITED BY

WILLIAM REID.

Second Series.

LONDON:
W. B. HORNER, 27 PATERNOSTER SQUARE.
1877.

CONTENTS.

Accepted in the Beloved, ... 178
Assembly Christ's Body, ... 282
Beauty of the Rejected Jesus, ... 22
Beacon, A 200
Behold the Bridegroom, ... 87
Being with the Lord, The 342
Bright and Morning Star, ... 95
Characteristic Action of Grace, ... 179
Christ Jesus Himself our Centre, ... 207
Christ Jesus our Pattern, ... 263
Christ Himself our One Object, ... 355
Communion with the Lord, ... 329
Comparisons and Contrasts, ... 8
Doctrinal Definitions, ... 233
Do you Walk with God, or does He Walk with you ? . . 140
Everlasting Glory (Poetry), ... 206
Everything should Comport with God's Presence in us, . 344
Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ, . . . 347
Eye on Christ in Heaven, The 3
"Father of Mercies," The 319
Father's Object of Delight ours, The 21
For me to Live is Christ, ... 235
God for us to the very End, ... 46
God of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father of Mercies, The . 49
Gospel of the Grace of God, ... 270
"He is not Here," 346
His Place ours, in Heaven or on Earth, ... 373
Hold Fast that which Thou Hast, ... 38
Holy Moment, A 290
It is Himself who is coming, ... 317
In the Current of the Spirit, ... 63
In the Sanctuary, ... 188
Jesus on the Shore, ... 35

Jesus the Son of God, ... 106
"Justify many ;" "Turn Many to Righteousness," . . 266
Knowledge of the Father, The 67
Lamb of God, The 134
Looking for the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, . . . 361
Lord Jesus Himself, The 30
Manna and the Old Corn, ... 189
Meditations on the Acts of the Apostles, 23, 78, 120, 138, 170, 201, 256
Ministry—Self-Sacrifice, ... 243
Model of Love, The 269
My New Name, ... 136
Near the End of our Journey, ... 31
Occupied with the Lord Himself, ... 101
Our Peace with the Father and Before the World, . . 60
Passover in Egypt and in Canaan, ... 308
Perfect Peace, ... 368
Perfected Worshippers, ... 296
Place, Relationship, Testimony, and Glory, . . . 10
Priesthood in its Great Outline, ... 337
Purpose of Heart for Christ, ... 4
Redemption, Liberty, and Glory, ... 302
Remarks on Haggai, ... 66
Righteousness, and the Fruits of Righteousness, . . 313
Root and Fatness of the Olive Tree, The . . . 241
Seating of the Lamb on the Throne, ... 214
Security, Communion, and Confidence, . . . 285, 291
Separating Power of the Person of the Christ, . . . 240
Sins Blotted Out and Glory Seen, ... 332
Sorrows and Triumphs, ... 322
Sphere of Christ's Power, ... 89, 123
Tenant and the Son, The 151
What does the Coming of the Comforter mean ? . . 223, 251
What John xvi. 23 Means, and the Divine Order of Worship, . 174
Where doth Christ Execute the Office of a Priest ? . . 164
Wholly and Solely Jesus, ... 94
Wisdom Justified of all Her Children, ... 230

THE BIBLE HERALD.

THE EYE ON CHRIST IN HEAVEN.

Acts vii.

You never find heaven opened save when the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is in question. Whatever man may be, whatever I am, there is *One* Person on whom the eye of God can rest with perfect delight—and nothing God can do to express it, is too much.

There is nothing the children of God need to judge themselves about so much as not walking with their eye fixed on Christ. If God has taken you out of power of circumstances on earth, it is to shut you up to Christ above. Heaven is now the only place you have.

"*Full of the Holy Ghost.*" Do we Christians think enough of the possibility of that little word? The effect of it on Stephen was, that he looked up steadfastly into heaven; not an expression *that* of the indwelling Spirit such as man might expect, but his soul brought into what occupies God's thoughts Oh! for more of this bringing of our thoughts and hearts under *all* circumstances into that place where God is unhinderedly showing forth his power, and that in a *man* in heaven. The world would take notice of it were it so.

Nothing has let saints of these days down spiritually so much as want of intercourse with the living Saviour at God's right hand. I am left here not that I may know myself saved, or to do a great deal, but to walk in communion with Him. Am I doing this?

Stephen gets that same light which was to fall a little after on Saul of Tarsus. Christ let the glory of His Father fall on him. God presented to his soul what enabled him to be perfectly quiet as to the scene of wicked men's darkness, whence His Son has been cast out. We see what the power of it is.

"*Stephen calling upon* (or invoking), saying Lord Jesus." It is a distinct act of worship to the Lord Jesus. Stephen was there in weakness, and he must have the whole expression of the love of the heart of Christ. If you have been walking to-day with God as a people whom He has saved and will have in the glory, you will have seen a quantity of things in which your need could only be met by communion with the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven.

"*Stephen kneeled down.*" The collectedness of his spirit is remarkable. What a contrast between human thoughts and divine, in a man's heart! The rancour and hatred of the Jews because God had uncovered Stephen's heart to see the glory of Christ, and Stephen like the Lord praying "lay not this sin to their charge." He got an answer to his prayer in Saul of Tarsus. Christ is always before God, filling His eyes—are *you* occupied with Him? and favoured by the revelation of Him? If you are, He is more than an answer to your circumstances.

PURPOSE OF HEART FOR CHRIST.

JOHN xii., xx.

THIS gives the counterpart of the subject of John i. *Christ drawing* in our case; in the other, *power of purpose* to cleave to Christ and to no one else.

What I want to see among us, dear friends, is a *purpose of heart.* (I do not see one single particle of truth about

The Bible Herald 1877

Christ acted on consistently.) We need not mere knowledge, but *purpose of heart*, individuality of love to Christ; that He, and He alone, should be the magnet; every heart turning to Him; the Lord satisfying the heart; Christ the pole-star, drawing up all our hearts to Him as we go through the wilderness.

As to Mary—there was no particular light in sitting at His feet; she simply loved her Lord: her whole life being inside Him and His thoughts. In John xii. and verse 3d, she gives an expression of love, of the most costly order—not only the box—but she wiped His feet with her hair (hair given to woman as an ornament), and "the room was filled with the odour of the ointment." In Mary's mind there was only one thought; and only *one* Person present could read the enigma of her strange doings. Did she wish to make a perfume? Did she even think of His death? Nay—personal attachment to the Lord alone, and the heart drawn up to God to know what to do to express it, to hear from Him how to put honour on Jesus. Her thought was "What most costly can I give *Him?*" Judas was quite the opposite—How much shall I put in the bag? and, out of the abundance of the heart, both spake. (How strange the way human nature works. He bids them gather up the fragments, that they may see that with God there is more in the end than in the beginning, for those who need,—and now, when the *one* that God delights to honour is present, they think of the poor!)

Then she got such a guidance from God! She did not know that He was going to die, but she heard from *Him first* that she was anointing Him for His burial. Her whole mind being set on Christ, God suggests to her the suited act, that she had not the intelligence to understand. The power of the Lord let her into something new. Oh what a beautiful thing is the retired walk of one full of Christ, and she a woman! A channel pre-

The Bible Herald 1877

pared of God for His own purposes. What could have been wiser? It was in beautiful season too. Not so the feasting and conversation: for who would prepare a feast for a beloved one about to be murdered? God honours His people by letting their loving purpose do the very thing He wants for His Son. She did the very thing that showed she was in practical fellowship, *because* Christ was the object. What a beautiful subject to speak with her upon—*one* whom God had thus put honour upon.

Where there is purpose of heart, it is brought into a most blessed place of privilege (chap. xx.). Mary's thought was,—My Lord lies buried, I will go and visit the spot; but all her hopes are blasted when she finds the stone gone. She goes to the disciples; "we have lost the object of our love," she says in effect.

The disciples had not the purpose of heart Mary had (verse 10). "They went unto their own home" shows how low in love even the best of His disciples were. Mary's home was the sepulchre of her Lord! No sympathy or interest lay elsewhere: and she is rivetted to the spot. No doubt the Lord kept her there to reap the reward of her unwearied love.

There was more attractiveness to her in Christ than in anything else; *the angels* did not surprise her (verse 11). What were they to the *one* she wanted? Nothing can turn her off. The needle was quite true to the one point—her soul is in a state for all that honoured Christ to pass before her (verse 13). They draw from her the spring of her sorrow. "Oh if you knew all that my Lord was to me, you wouldn't be surprised at it." "*My Lord!*" as if hers alone.

What a touching scene follows (verses 14, 15). The Lord risen from the grave, cognizant of the state of all His disciples, sees this poor woman absorbed with Him, and communes with her to prove to her that

The Bible Herald 1877

His love for her is greater than hers for Him. "Whom are you seeking?" "If thou hast borne *Him* hence, tell me where thou hast laid *Him*, and I will take *Him* away." Though dead, she still wanted to have Him. Poor stupid thing that she is, she tells her living Lord, "Oh but you are dead!" But He says, "*Mary*!" Whatever there was in that word, whatever the manner of naming her, she turned round with "*Master!*" She has now a live Christ! Mark how she got there. The Lord interferes, "do not touch me" (verse 17). She got the place of messenger of resurrection—blessed post! How did she get it? With full purpose of heart, occupied so with the Lord that she was above all objects, and neither angels nor disciples turned her aside. What a heart she must have had, in going forth with the message to gladden and console the disciples! Here was her reward, all through *she* had no *thought* of personal devotedness, she thought of Christ. He had her heart. If your eye be single, you cannot divide between *having* an object and *following* it.

"Touch me not," etc., refers to Lev. xvi., the first fruit and wave sheaf (verse 17). If she was to have real enjoyment in Him, she was to look up. He would be given her of the Father in a place *suitable* to Him, and she would be conscious of it. "Go to my brethren." In heaven He could recognize them in this new relationship. "My Father and their Father, my God and their God," blessed position of sons of God brought out at Pentecost! A *woman* got that truth first of all simply *by purpose of heart*, beyond faith. Himself the object of worship in heaven increases the quantity of truth revealed, God finding and bringing souls into *purpose of heart*, into scenes where Christ came. Knowledge is useless without the heart, but they ought not to be divided. See Paul, Peter, John. I would rather have less knowledge, but real *purpose* of *heart* for Christ and *Christ Himself*.

The Bible Herald 1877

These (I mean women) are not vessels to be put forward outwardly, but Christ ought to have been anointed for His burial, Christ ought to have had some one to watch His tomb: and God used them to honour Him. The two greatest instances of Christ attracting the heart after Him, and their following in purpose of heart, therefore God using them to carry out His counsels as Father; to wash Christ's feet, and to greet His Son after His resurrection. O for more *purpose of heart* for Christ among all the children of God!

COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS.

DEUTERONOMY viii. 7-9; xi. 10-12.

I WAS musing a little on the beautiful description given to Israel of the land (before they entered it) by Moses, in Deuteronomy viii. 7-9; xi. 10-12. He exhibits it to them in its *positive* and *comparative* excellencies—as it was in itself, and in contrast with Egypt. In itself it was to be full of all manner of good things—*wheat*, *wine*, and *oil*; (viii. 8;) of which good things another scripture says, "Wine that maketh glad the heart of man—and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart" (Psalm civ. 15).

And not only was the soil or land itself to be thus the *storehouse* of these most needed and best things, but their hills and stones were to be *warehouses* of brass and iron, wanted in the common traffic and use of life in their place as well as the other (viii. 9).

But in contrast with Egypt, the character of the promised land is very blessedly described. Egypt was watered by the foot, *i.e.*, the common industry of her people drawing off the water of the Nile upon their fields and gardens (xi. 10). Their river was everything

The Bible Herald 1877

to them—and all they wanted was to be busy round its banks, and they could supply themselves out of it.

But Canaan was to be tilled by the Lord. He would water it from heaven Himself—His heart would care for it, and His eyes would rest on it from one end of the year to the other (xi. 11, 12). As another scripture says, "Thy land shall be married" (Isaiah lxii). A strong figure. The Lord was Himself the *husband* or the *husbandman* (kindred words, no doubt,) of the land of His people.

But, beside, Canaan was to be a land "of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills" (viii. 7). And this is still blessed, I believe, containing deep intimations of the peculiar glory and joy of Canaan. Egypt had a mighty river that was everything to it, but the source of that river was unknown. Canaan, on the contrary, had no mighty river. A "brook," as it were, was its largest stream—even Jordan compared with the Nile was but as a streamlet of a river. But it had "fountains" springing up in all its hills and valleys. Its currents and channels may have been small, but it was full of the source and springs of those currents. This was just the opposite of Egypt. There the current was mighty, but the source unknown; here, the channels were small and unimportant, but the sources were all known and enjoyed, together with their waters and streams.

And, as we know, beloved, that these two lands were mysteries: the land of Egypt representing the world, or the place of nature, out of which the redeemed are called, and Canaan, the scene of communion with God into which the redeemed are brought—so we may learn that these features of the two lands have meaning also. For the world can go on, supplying itself from the great current of daily providential mercies, and leave the source or parent of it altogether a secret; while the believer

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

or the Church has to do with the great Source or Parent in all things and in every place; a fountain is to be known in every hill and every valley, and if the little tiny brooks be tasted, it is well known where they rise and from what recess in glen or mountain they broke forth. Has not this a voice in it? The Nile itself commanded the notice of the world, while its birthplace was a mystery. No river in Canaan was worth the geographer's notice, at least in the scale of rivers—but every hill and valley there had its fresh and sweet springs. And we may ask ourselves, in which land are we more at home? Do we like to walk in a place that is full of the presence of God, like Canaan; or would we choose a place like Egypt, where we may get all providential supplies, while keeping the great Source of them at an unknown distance?

The character of heaven, too, is signified by this Canaan. It will be a *rest* surely so, it will be deliverance from a dreary wasted wilderness, but it is to be a rest *full of the presence of God*, and of the incessant and abiding witnesses of that presence. *The fountain is to be everywhere* (Rev. vii. 17). May we the more welcome it, because of this! and the more we can dwell in the presence of the fountain now, may we be the better pleased. If we go up to a hill or down to a valley, may the fountain meet our gladdened eye!

PLACE, RELATIONSHIP, TESTIMONY, AND GLORY.

In the first five verses of John xvii. the Lord Jesus takes His place. He does so on a double ground—first on that of being *Son;* and then on His *work;* so that we get the relationship and the title to being there. "Glorify *thy*

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." Next He says, "I have finished *the work* which thou gavest Me to do."

First, He speaks of His Person in relationship to His Father: "Glorify thy *Son*:" not glorify thy *servant*, though servant He had become. He adds, then *the work*. Therefore, putting Christ into this place, you have the double ground of being there. He is looked at as Son and man, and is put there in virtue of the work He has accomplished.

Then we find what is true everywhere, but strikingly so in John, that, while the Lord speaks in familiarity with the Father, as an equal, He never goes out of the place of an obedient servant. You never find Him taking Himself out of the place He has taken as man. "He made Himself of no reputation," He never goes out of it. He drinks of the brook in the way, and lifts up His head.

Then you see what eternal life is, the place that He had gone into and takes us into. The revelation of the Father and the Son, the Son going as man to the Father. He is that eternal life that was with the Father, and this eternal life is developed and unfolded from the Father by the Son. Thus He has given Him power over all flesh, that is, Christ's authority over all men, and then, to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him.

He first speaks of His disciples (verse 6) who were actually then given Him, and then goes on to those who should believe on Him through their word. Of course this takes in all His people. The Father revealed in the Son is the complete absolute revelation of all God's thoughts of the Son. The name and revelation we have in Christ carries eternal life with it. When I get the Father revealed in the Son, it is sending eternal life here; "that which was from the beginning . . . that

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."

And, therefore, this name of Father and Son is eternal life come in man, in the person of Jesus Christ: no other revelation of God ever gave that.

It is, indeed, a very solemn thing to think that the Lord opens out everything that we have here in this chapter, not as spoken to us, but we have His mind and feelings about it with His Father; we are admitted to hear what He says to the Father. The object is to give "eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him," and *this is* eternal life, knowing the Father and the Son. A person may obey Jehovah, and yet not have eternal life at all, because that is God's government. Everything has come out, as it were, now. Things will not come out in the millennium as they do now: they will believe when they see, but "blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed." The veil was rent for us. In the millennium men will not be conformed to the image of His Son, nor be in heavenly places. It is the moment for us (all our spiritual state depends on it) to realize the place we have been brought into, under these names of the Father and the Son. Of the rest, "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." And then when I receive it, that is eternal life; and "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." It came down from the Father and the Son, and it is revealed *now*. We stand in an eternal state in connection with Godhead, as Godhead is in itself.

Through incarnation the Son is become a man (Matt. iii). He is baptised with the baptism of John, which was a baptism of repentance: of course there was no need of it in Him, for with Him it was fulfilling righteousness. And Christ comes: that was the door for entering in, and He comes in by the door, though He

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

had nothing to confess. He is doing His Father's will, and He goes and puts Himself with these poor penitents, and takes the place with His people. The moment He does so, we see that the heavens were opened unto Him, opened to a man upon the earth, a thing which had *never* been before.

In Christ God did come out, and, now that He has gone up, man is gone in, the veil being rent.

See it marked in the last verses of Matt. iii. It is the first time the Trinity is revealed, and it is in connection with Christ being a man: the Holy Ghost comes and descends on Him, and the Father owns Him from heaven. This could not be for *us* without redemption. But Christ stood personally as man in it. He gives us our place with the Father and our place with the devil, for we have to do with both while on the earth. If the angels want to see God, He says "seen of angels" in a man. But with us now it is through the Holy Ghost come down.

"Him hath God the Father sealed" (Jo. vi. 27). As regards ourselves, of course, redemption was needed to get into that place: "He was" the First-born among many brethren." We are united to Him by the Holy Ghost, but then this is from heaven. He must take man into heaven, and then we by the Holy Ghost are associated with Him there, though still walking here.

You always find the person of the Lord: however much He is bringing us into the same place, His person is always kept safe. For instance, the heaven is as much opened to Stephen as to Christ, but the difference is that, with Christ, He does not need to look up to heaven to get an object to change Him into the same image, but *He* is the object for heaven. So again, Moses and Elias were talking with Him in glory; but when Peter puts them on a level, they disappear altogether, and a voice comes out of the cloud, "*This is My beloved Son.*"

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Till redemption was accomplished He abode alone: "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." Christ did become a man, and was totally alone. Puseyism makes the sacraments the continuation of the incarnation, to communicate life to us. It leaves out the necessity of redemption. If all my sins are not put away for ever, something must be done to put them away. It thus becomes looking at the work of the Spirit in us, instead of the sacrifice. But if I have Christ's life, I have responsibility according to the new condition I am in, to walk as He walked (Phil. ii. 15).

In verse 3 He still speaks of Himself as the sent One (verses 4, 5); that is, having accomplished this work, He goes back as man into the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. This gives us (1) the person, and (2) the work, and (3) a man gone into glory. And now He comes making it known to us; He first lays the foundation in His person and work, and then He brings us into it.

"Thy name" (verse 6) is the Father's name. Grace with us is always the Father and the Son. He has nothing to do with the world now; and "not of the world" is the Lord's word about us.

If you keep the word "Father" in mind, it is simple (verse 7). The Jews were looking for Jehovah to *do* great things in and by the Messiah on earth, but it is not the Messiah now: the Father had *given* great things to the Son. We know it by the Holy Ghost. We have got into the place; the name of the Father has been manifested to us by Christ (verse 8), and now He gives us the communications belonging to that place. All that the Father communicated to the Son as a man on this earth He had communicated to them; afterwards, by the Holy Ghost came out the other things as to His glory in heaven. All that the Father communicated to Him as a man on the earth, He passes on to the disciples.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

"The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." When it is a question of the world, He says, "O *righteous* Father" (verse 25). Persons who really believe in the Father thus sending the Son, which is grace, are not of the world. . . . The prayer here is to show the place of the Christian: no Jewish believer had an atom of that. He only prays for believers now. He sends out the message of "salvation" to the world, but He prays not for the world but for believers, and this in connection with the place they are brought into. It is when they are actually there that they become the true subject for Christ's praying. It is very beautiful—wherever you find Christ bringing us in after that way, you find Him in identity with the Father.

There are two reasons: first, "for they are Thine" (verse 9), and secondly, "*I* am glorified in them."

Verse 10. As a Father, if you care about My glory you must care for the children, because I am glorified in *them. Their connection with the Father and Himself* is the motive for praying for them.

Verse 11. This gave the *actual* position. He is in heaven and we are in the world though not of it. We are kept in the name of the "*Holy* Father;" we are sons, put in the place of Christ in this world, and He looks that we should be kept for this place as sons in holiness. Christians are holy brethren.

Verses 12, 13. He is putting them into His own place directly with the Father, "that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." Of course Judas could not come in.

There are *three unities* here, but no church-unity. John never deals with the church, but with the family: first, the apostles; next, those who believe through their means; and then, the unity in glory. First, "*as we are;*" second, "*in us;*" third, the unity of the *glory.* The first is simply "that they may be one as we are"

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

(verse 11). Having the same divine nature as Christ, and one Holy Ghost, there is the practical unity that flows from Him. The apostles were full of the Holy Ghost—no difference of counsel and mind; that did not go beyond them. Then the second unity (verse 21) is "that they may be one in *us*"—is what the apostle says in 1 John i., "that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly *our* fellowship is with the *Father* and with His Son Jesus Christ." They come into the same place through the means of the apostles, as brought into fellowship with the Father and the Son. That is what the world would believe. They see this unity as those that are gathered. There was the witness of a motive and relationship which took them clean out of the world and left the world behind; and therefore "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." This unity of the children of God was the witness that there was a power which brought together into relationship, and yet the world had nothing whatever to say to it. . . . You get on with Christians first-rate in the train; but if you were out together, you might be walking on the other side of the road. If people walk together every day, they have all their corners knocking against each other: so much the better if grace act!

In verse 14 He takes the opposite position. Down to the end of verse 13 He had given them the *words* that the Father had given Him to bring them into complete communion with the Father and Himself; here He gives them the *word* and the place He had in the world; "the world hath hated them." For *privileges*, it is "thy *words*:" for testimony, "thy *word*." If Christ was in communion with the Father, He was in testimony to the world. He will eventually take the world for His inheritance; but the world now is neither His place nor ours.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

The *third unity* is verse 23—the Father revealed in the Son, and the Son glorified in the saints. When we appear in the same glory as Christ, then the world will *know* that we have been loved as Christ is loved; it is in glory.

Thus we have seen, 1st, unity of the apostles, the Holy Ghost; 2nd, unity of faith, fellowship with the Father and the Son, not coming down, but going up to Him in spirit; 3rd, unity of glory, that the world may know. The unity of *communion* is that the world may *believe* (verse 21); the unity of *glory* is that the world may *know* (verse 23).

Having this place we come out as it were from Christ, "as Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world"—the epistle of Christ. Verse 14. We come out from Christ into the world, just as Christ came out from the Father into the world. He has put them in His own place with the Father; (all being accomplished now), He puts them in His place with regard to the world. Yet we are in it, and have natures susceptible to its defilements. Whenever the world affects our dress, tone, house, &c., it so far destroys our testimony. They come forth from Christ to testify that the works thereof are evil. Well, if I say that, and go and do the same, I destroy my testimony. We have ever to watch against the language of men, for the *word* is the index of the *mind.* The language of the world is formed on the spirit, feeling, and mind of the world. Not that we are taken out of it; we have to go through it as other people. But all this should come from Christ, and not from the world we are in; everything should do so, for a straw shows which way the wind blows.

There is no way but the truth (verse 17). How am I to run but by Him? Then I get "sanctify them through thy *truth*," etc. It is the Father's truth, "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, etc., is *not* of the Father."

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

People say, "Did not God create these things?" But that is not my relationship with Christ and the Father. The Spirit is the opposite of the flesh, the Son of Satan, and the Father of the world. Christ comes forth from the Father, and comes into the world, and the world rejects Him, and He goes back as rejected by the world into the Father's house, and sets up anew by His own person. The Father's truth is what comes from the Father as having glorified Christ, when the world rejected Him. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me," and again, as regards the world, "righteous Father:" you must choose between Him and the world. The world and the Father came to a direct question in the cross, besides redemption. The Father's delight He had to take out of the world, because the world would not have Him; and we have now His place both before the Father and before the world. Blessed privilege: solemn responsibility!

"*The truth*" is the Father's mind revealed in Christ, and the word of God, and come down to us to form us into this place into which we are brought by redemption. It *is* "the truth." There is no truth anywhere but in the WORD of God. I don't call the law truth in this way. It was perfectly right, but truth is not *what ought to be*, but *what is*, Christ says what is, He reveals what the Father *is*. This full truth, that has come out through Christ who is the truth, is the thing that separates us from the world. Did not God give the things in the world? To be sure He did, but where do you find that here? It is the use I make of the things, not whether God gave them.

Cain went out from the presence of the Lord: it was all over with him. He had nothing more to say to God; but he cannot have a dull, stupid city, so he must have musical instruments, and he makes the city pleasant "without God." "What is the harm?" The

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

world is using these things to make itself as comfortable and as pleasant as it can "without God." This is the harm. I could not be in fellowship with that and the Father's truth, the place He has put us in Christ, and Jesus Himself, as the only One God can recognize.

You must get the Father's "truth" to run the right path through the things in which we have to live.

There is a blessed and beautiful thing added to this, Christ saying (verse 19), "*for their sakes I sanctify myself*," etc. I see a person as well as a revelation, in whom all truth is—a person who is separate from all the evil, in the blessed full result of all the good, and in a place where His perfect love to me has brought a man. I see this heavenly man to give a spring to the truth. All the blessedness of Christ is what my soul is formed to in the truth. All this is upon earth, both parts of it, our fellowship with the Father, and our testimony too.

It is only four times that He speaks of our having anything to do with heaven (verse 24). To behold His glory is a deeper blessing and joy than to share the glory. The point Christ takes is this, I have come into the world, I have revealed Thee, and the world wont have it. Well, the world must be judged, and now He says, I want to have them where *I* am. I get two things: first, the world in question, "are You going to approve the world and let Me be put to death? or are You going to put your seal upon Me?"

It is not merely a question of right, but He was the object of the Father's delight before the world came into existence at all, and we are to see Him in that glory. Glory before the world was (verse 5), and loved before the world (verse 24). He brings us into this knowledge of the person of Christ where He is now gone, just as you see in Prov. viii. Before ever the world existed, He was the Father's delight, and His delight was with the sons of men. In giving the world up, He takes them

The Bible Herald 1877

into that place where He was the object of the Father's delight before ever the world was:—"That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them." When Christ appears to the world, then the world will know that we are loved as Christ is loved. But when I am taken into glory, I see Christ loved, and His glory that He had before the world was; and meanwhile I don't wait till the world knows about the love (verse 26), but even now and here I know that I am loved as Christ was loved. We *do* know we are loved as Christ was loved when here. The world will know it when we appear in the same glory, but I know it now by the relationship in which He has set me, and by the Holy Ghost. Ours ought not to be a religion of regrets, but a rejoicing of heart continually, the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

The moment I get it all grace, I have dropped the question of what I am except as exalting the love. You see it in the poor prodigal. It was not a question of how he had behaved, but just what was in the Father's heart. Till he got to his Father, he was reasoning about the fact of what he was, mixed up with the Father's love. He hoped to get some kind of place. He was only reasoning from himself; he had set out, but he had not met his Father yet. When people are reasoning and thinking how they will be received, it proves they have not got to the Father at all. Souls in that state have not got to the Father. I do not say they are not on the way, or not quickened. The moment you get what the Father is, and giving all, it is a question of what is in the Father's heart, His inclination and mind, what *He* likes to give and nothing less. Eph. ii. If God has shown "the exceeding riches of His grace," it is not a question of what we deserve. "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (Jo. xvii. 26).

THE FATHER'S OBJECT OF DELIGHT OURS.

THE Father has given us the very object He delights in for the object of our affection. The Father could not be silent, when Christ was here,—"*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" The perfection of the object is the reason of the imperfectness of our apprehension of it; but that is the way God brings our affections into tune with himself. He could say at the beginning, because of His intrinsic perfectness, and at the end because of His developed and displayed perfectness, "*This is my beloved Son.*" Then what do we say? In weakness and poverty, yet surely each can say with unhesitating heart, I know He is perfect. We cannot reach his perfectness, but we do feel our hearts, poor and feeble as they are, responding. The Father has shewn us something of His perfectness. The Father is communicating of His delight. "This is my beloved Son, *in whom I am well pleased,*" not in whom you ought to be well pleased (which is true too); but His way is to communicate to them of His own love to Christ. It is a wonderful thing that the Father should tell of His affection for Christ, and that when He was here amongst us, the Son of man on earth amongst sinful men.

A person need not know that he is righteous in Christ, before he can be attracted by this communication with Him. With the woman in the Pharisee's house, it was what was revealed in Christ to her made her love much, not what she got from Him. The blessedness of what was in Christ had so attracted her and absorbed her mind that she found her way into the house, thought not of the dinner, &c. She was taken up with Him; she

The Bible Herald 1877

wept, but had nothing to say. Jesus was there. He commanded all her thoughts, her tears, her silence, her anointing of His feet —all noticed by Him, and all before she knew what He had done for her. Attracted there by what she saw in Him, she got the answer as regards peace of conscience from Himself.

THE BEAUTY OF THE REJECTED JESUS.

I HAVE been just asking myself, how far I really see "form and comeliness" in the rejected and despised Jesus; and I am assured that while the soul is under the power of things seen, this cannot be; because the marred visage, the thorny crown, the carpenter's son, the penniless, homeless stranger, the One spit upon, the patient sufferer of wrongs and reproaches daily heaped upon Him, is no object of "form or comeliness" before the eye of mere man. If the soul, therefore, be under the power or presence of things seen, what is Jesus to it? It is faith alone that can admire Him. It is the eye trained and practised by the Holy Ghost that alone can see the beauty of the smitten form of the low-estated Galilean.

This tells loudly against the constant currents of our hearts. May we be more and more lifted above the admiration of, or delight in, the things seen, the fair shows of the flesh. Such glances of our hearts, of which they are so guilty, weaken our power to perceive this only real "form and comeliness."

So, where there is the ear for the Shepherd's voice? Surely only in that which the Spirit has, in like manner, opened. And if the flesh and the world be practising it with its music and soft words, its readiness and skill to catch that unearthly voice will, in like manner, decline and be impaired.

The Bible Herald 1877

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Chapter xv.

The Assembly of Jerusalem and the Gentiles set free from Judaism.

But the Jews—those at least who made a profession of Christianity with Satan as their instrument, sought to place the Gentiles under the yoke of Judaism, and destroy the work of God within, if they could not hinder it without the Church. They went down from Judea to Antioch, teaching the brethren that they must be circumcised, and observe the law of Moses, in order to be saved. The moment was a critical one. It was necessary, according to them, that the Gentiles should submit to the law of Moses, and become Jews, or that two separate assemblies should be formed. Paul and Barnabas, however, oppose themselves to these exactions. But God did not permit the question to be settled at Antioch.

It will readily be understood, that, had the cause of the Gentiles been vindicated by a decision given at Antioch, and, in spite of the Jews, they had preserved their liberty, the danger would have been imminent of two assemblies being formed, and of unity being lost. All the spiritual and apostolical power of Paul, therefore, was insufficient to overcome the opposing spirit at Antioch, and decide the question. It was God's will that it should be decided at Jerusalem, and that the Christian Jews themselves, the apostles, the elders, and the whole assembly, should pronounce the freedom of the Gentiles; and that thus holy liberty and unity should be secured. It is decided, therefore, that Barnabas and Paul shall go to Jerusalem concerning this matter. We learn from

The Bible Herald 1877

Gal. ii. 2, that Paul went thither in obedience to direct revelation.

God permitted that these Jews, without mission, zealous without God for the law, the authority of which over the conscience had been terminated by the cross, should raise this question, so that it might be definitively settled. The apostles and elders, therefore, meet together. It seems that all the believers may have been present, since verse 12 speaks of the multitude; however it is the apostles and elders who meet together. Paul and Barnabas relate what has happened in their journey,—the conversion of the Gentiles,—and the brethren rejoice with great joy. Here the most simple hearts enjoy with simplicity the grace of God.

But at Jerusalem they met with greater difficulty. Nothing could be more opposed to grace than the doctrine of the Pharisees, which asserted that righteousness must be obtained by works, and by the administration of ordinances.

Arrived at Jerusalem, they declare there, also, all things that God has done with them. But here God in His grace manifests the question as having been produced by the hardness of the heart; that is, that some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, demanded that the Gentiles should be circumised. I do not believe, however, that it is Paul or Barnabas who relates this fact, which had happened at Jerusalem. the apostles and elders then meet together. After much disputing (for the principals, led doubtless by the Holy Ghost, were wise enough to allow all who thought themselves capable to give their opinion; and in order that after the thoughts of men the voice of God might be heard), Peter reminds the assembly how God had chosen him first to bear the Gospel to the Gentiles, and that the Spirit had been given to Cornelius without his being circumcised; that God Himself had borne witness to them by the Holy

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Ghost just in the same way as to the believing Jews; that He had made no difference between them, purifying their hearts by faith. He acknowledges the yoke of the ordinances, and warns them not to tempt God by putting it on the neck of the Gentiles. For did not they themselves believe that they had been saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, and not by ordinances?

Then all the multitude kept silence, and Paul and Barnabas declared what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. (Here, at Jerusalem, Barnabas is always mentioned first; it is probable that he spoke more than Paul, relating what had been done. Paul had laboured more than any other; but at Jerusalem it was natural that Barnabas should be more forward than Paul).

Then James, who held the first place at Jerusalem (see Acts xii. 17, xxi. 18; Gal. ii. 12), gives a summary of the judgment of the assembly, which no one opposes, and, by the aid of the Holy Ghost, a definite form to the thought of God, expressing His will respecting the Gentiles. The work of the Holy Ghost is here in the first place remarkable; and also His full liberty, so that all the thoughts of men are brought to light, and given utterance to. In the next place, what God proposed to reveal by Peter in the case of Cornelius; and then the wonders that had been wrought by the hands of Barnabas and Paul among the Gentiles. Such is what seemed good to the Holy Ghost, what was given to Cornelius, and worked also among the Gentiles with signs and wonders by the hands of those who were sent out from Him.

Then James, who, as we have seen, represented the Judaic spirit, and in whose mind the feelings of the assembly at Jerusalem concurred, but who was fully under the influence of the Holy Ghost, expresses the thought of that assembly, and of the eleven apostles of

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Jerusalem, whom we may call Judaic, the judgment of God on the vital question under consideration; namely, that the Gentiles should not be subject to the law of Moses. The word of the prophets supported this sentence, for they had declared that there should be Gentiles on whom the name of the Lord should be called. It is with this intention that he cites the past.

Thus the Gentiles were free. The things they had to observe were duties before the publication of the law. The worship of one God, purity of man, was always obligatory. Noah had been prohibited from eating blood, in testimony that the life belonged to God. These great principles are established by this decision,—the abstaining from idols,—that life belongs to God alone, purity of life in man. They were principles necessary for the Gentiles, and corrected their evil habits; principles recognized by the law, but which had not been distinctly laid down by it.

The Assembly did not vote. All consented, under the influence of the Holy Ghost to what had been expressed. All agreed, apostles, elders, and the whole assembly, to send men chosen from among them to confirm by word of mouth the account of Barnabas and Paul, and the written decision which they took with them from Jerusalem. The apostles and elders assembled together to examine the question, but all the brethren joined with them in the letter sent to the Gentiles. Thus it was not the Gentiles who maintained their rights in spite of the assembly at Jerusalem, but by the wisdom and grace of God, the assembly at Jerusalem which acknowledges the liberty of the Gentiles as to the law; and unity is thus preserved.

We may add that it was not a general, or other assembly, for it was the assembly at Jerusalem, and the apostles and elders of that city, who met together, with a few from Antioch on the part of the Gentiles, to

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

consider the question. The councils, for many centuries called "general," were convoked by the emperors to settle the disputes of the bishops; first in the east, on which occasions there were never more than six bishops present from the west; and afterwards when the Greek Church separated from the Latin Church, when there was no emperor from the west, councils being assembled by the Popes, without a single bishop from the east being present. These Popes, without one bishop from the east, and profiting by the need of the emperor of the east, who was menaced by the Turks, sought to unite the east to the west in the fifteenth century at Florence, but the attempt failed.

What we have here is that the apostle and the Judaic assembly, by which God had begun the work, set the Gentiles free from the law; and unity is preserved. We learn too how the Holy Ghost gives unity of thought concerning the questions which had arisen, since the gathering was waiting on the Lord. Thus is the liberty of the Holy Ghost preserved to the Gentiles, and, by the goodness of God, the unity of the whole assembly maintained. It is declared that no commission had been given to those who had disturbed the Gentiles, subverting their souls. Subsequently, after much long-suffering on the part of God, the Jews are called, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to give up Judaism. The law and Christianity cannot be united.

Paul and Barnabas, then, taking leave of Jerusalem, come to Antioch, assemble the multitude, and give them the letter. The brethren, having read it, rejoice for the consolation. Thus was the state of the whole assembly settled, and also the relationship between the Jews and Gentiles. The necessary rule for them is established. They are to walk well, avoiding certain things. Judas and Silas remain for a time with the disciples at Antioch, exhorting them, and rejoicing in this new fellowship, of

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the love of the assembly at Jerusalem for the brethren among the Gentiles. Then Judas leaves them, but Silas, drawn towards these new brethren, remains at Antioch. Paul and Barnabas also remain there, teaching the brethren; and many others likewise interest themselves on their behalf; for the power of the Holy Ghost was working in their midst. Life was fresh in those days.

After some time, Paul, active and full of love, his work accomplished for the moment at Antioch, turns towards the gatherings he had founded, desiring to know how it fared with them. But now Barnabas, like Peter before him, disappears from the scene. Not that he no longer worked for the Lord, but he did not maintain himself at the same level of service as Paul. Eclipsed in the work when with him, now he disappears altogether. A good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, he was yet not detached from everything as was Paul, for whom, according to his call on the way to Damascus, Christ glorified and His own was all in all.

This remarkable servant of God knew no longer anything after the flesh—a consecration necessary to the founder of the Church of God. He had given up Judaism that he might become a minister of the economy of the Church (see 1 Cor. iii. 10; Eph. iii. 1, 2; Col. i. 23-25). This economy had always existed in the counsels of God, but, after the delay granted by His patience till the preceeding mission of Paul from Antioch, which mission was then only put into execution, it is put on its true footing, on account of the attachment of Barnabas to things which were only objects of natural affection. John Mark was the son of the sister of Barnabas, and the island of Cyprus his native country (Col. iv. 10; Acts iv. 36).

Barnabas was quite disposed to accompany Paul in his journey, but he wished to take Mark with him; this, however, was displeasing to Paul, for Mark had left them

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

in the preceding journey at Perga. He had not courage sufficient to confront the difficulties of the work outside of Cyprus. Paul only thought of God, Mark of the circumstances; but it is not thus that difficulties are to be overcome. It is possible that the flesh may have manifested itself in Paul; but at all events he could not boast of being in the right. Paul did not think of the economy entrusted to him, but of what, according to faith, suited the work,—the principle of life and heart necessary to accomplish it. He did not know the results, but what was necessary to produce them. Separation was necessary, and that God had wrought out in him. Still acerbity was unnecessary. At the bottom, Paul was right, and the hand of God was with him. Even where the purpose of the heart is just, the flesh may very soon manifest itself.

Barnabas separates himself, and sets out for Cyprus, his country, taking Mark, his nephew, for the work of the Lord, but no longer the companion of Paul in the work to which God had called him. We do not forget the real worth of Barnabas, a true servant of Jesus, to whom the Holy Ghost himself has borne witness; only he was not suited to that work. We learn ourselves that a heart consecrated to the Lord, without other attachment, separated from everything, is alone suited to represent Christ in a ministry such as that of Paul, and indeed in every true ministry.

Affection is good, but it is not consecration. Woe to us if we have not natural affection,—it is a sign of the last times (2 Tim. iii. 8); but these are not suited to such a work, a work which demands that one should not know anything after the flesh. Natural affection is not the "new creation," though fully recognised by God in Christ himself, when He was not in the work; neither is natural affection the power of the Holy Ghost, which alone produces the effects of grace in the work of God.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Barnabas then goes his way ; such was his will. Paul chooses Silas, and is recommended by the brethren to the grace of God—a second ordination, if it were a question of that, but it is quite another thing. And he went through Syria and Celicia, confirming the churches. Remark here that many had been formed where the apostle had not before been, as he found the first time he passed through the island of Cyprus.

THE LORD JESUS HIMSELF.

MAY the Lord Himself be more personally with and before us ! a *nearer* and *more real* object than ever !

Truth that gives *thoughts* is not fully the right thing ; but truth that gives *Himself*—that is the thing.

Jesus once here—now in the heavens—again to be here and with us for ever—the *same* Jesus throughout—known for eternity as He was known in His track through the cities and villages of Israel—this is the mystery that gives us *Himself*. And it is the business of *faith* to reach *Himself*. The centurian pierced the cloud, the *thick* cloud, of His humiliation, and got at the *divine glories*, which lay on the other side of it, or under it. The poor sinner of the city pierced the cloud, the *dark* cloud, of her own sin and misery, and got at the *divine love* that could heal it all. Faith may thus find various excellencies in Him, but it is *Himseelf* it reaches.

Faith sits and sings—

> "All human beauties, all divine,
> In my beloved meet and shine."

Let not this evangelic age give you the *work* of Christ alone. It tends that way. Without His work, I know, all would be nothing. But let not doctrinal acquaintance with His work turn you from personal acquaintance with Himself.

The Bible Herald 1877

THE MANCHESTER CONFERENCE.

NOVEMBER, 1876.

THE following is a very full report of the most of the addresses delivered at the Manchester Conference. This will give our readers a taste at least of the spiritual things that were then presented to the saints of God who were present; and though the circumstances of the hour, the manner and voice of the speakers, and the breathing of the Spirit cannot be transferred to paper, yet the truth as far as conveyed, may, if prayerfully perused, be enjoyed in the Spirit, and may be received into the soul in similar power to that with which it was given out by the speakers. It was certainly a time of rich blessing to many; and we have no doubt but that the Lord will own the truth then uttered, to the refreshing and edification of those who read it. May the Lord grant it may be so; and to His name be glory, both now and for ever. Amen.

The first morning began with the hymn, "Brightness of eternal glory.' A brother (C. S.) prayed, and then Mr. C. M'Adam, London, read Numbers xxi. 3-20, and spoke as follows:—

NEAR THE END OF OUR JOURNEY.

ISRAEL was nearing the end of their journey. We are at the close of our wilderness journey: we are about to enter, as this people were, into the promised inheritance. Two things are strikingly presented in the chapters before

The Bible Herald 1877

us—the condition of the people, the wondrous and marvellous manifestations of the grace of God. Every step of our journey we prove it, but very markedly at the end, and in a different way. This passage brings before us the patient grace of God. You will observe the people's determination utterly to destroy the enemies of God. They would have now no quarter whatever for that which was opposed to the people, the purposes, and the counsels of God. Israel vowed a vow unto Jehovah, and said, "If Thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand then I will utterly destroy their cities." One of the main charges of God, when Israel had left Egypt (Deut. vii.), was that everything that pertained to the people in the land whither they went to possess it, should be utterly destroyed. For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth,"—v. 6-8. Their altars, their pillars, were to be utterly destroyed, and their graven images to be burnt with fire. Every trace of idolatry was to be purged away. What sorrow the neglect of this injunction wrought. O what wretchedness and misery to this present hour, for Israel is still bearing the indignation of Jehovah by reason of their manifold transgressions and their mighty sins.

When they would destroy the Canaanites and their cities the Lord harkened to the voice of Israel, delivered up their enemies into their hand. When the heart was right there was no difficulty. God then became the sovereign actor in the scene, and Israel utterly destroyed the Canaanites and their cities. Now, beloved, it is just at such a moment we get one of these remarkable reactions in the history of the people. The Lord had de-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

livered them from their enemies and from the power of their adversaries. Shall I say they forgot themselves? *They forgot God.* The present bitter circumstances turned away their heart from Him. They had been promised rest; they had conflict still, they were not yet in the land. Their faith failed. How low we sink when faith goes down! "The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. They spake against God and against Moses." One of the most serious of evils, is this murmuring. They spake against the Lord God. The heart of the people rose in rebellion. How did God meet this sin of His people? We get one of these illustrations here of the wonderful free grace of God. The brazen serpent is brought in. It occurs at the beginning of the Gospel of John. Everything is over as regards this world, and as regards man. The Jew is under judgment. The whole scene by which we are surrounded is regarded as under darkness. "The light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." So it continues, light and darkness, darkness and light. He had weighed men. He could not commit himself to them. He needed not that any should testify of man. He knew all men. He knew what was *in* man. He knew the whole history of man, and He did not commit himself unto them. In John iii. we get the Lord bringing into the midst of this scene of death and darkness, eternal life. The question of sin must be as truly put out of the way as the question of the enemy. What was the brazen serpent to Israel? God had said to them by the fiery serpents, if you cast me off you shall know what the serpent is. He lets the serpent loose upon them. They are bitten. What is the remedy? The serpent is lifted up, the brazen serpent; lifted up because of sin. The remedy for sin was not to be found anywhere on the earth. Something is lifted

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

up, you must look at that. It is not remedy. It is absolutely another thing brought in. As many as looked on it lived, "it came to pass that if the serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." One great leading fundamental truth, that He who knew no sin, God made Him sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We go forth as those that have been healed of the bite of the serpent.

Verse 10.—And the children of Israel set forward and pitched in Oboth. They set forward. God forbid we should settle on our lees. It is no time, no day for that. The powers of darkness are all abroad, they are mustering their hosts. Israel journeyed from Oboth and pitched toward "the sunrising," a happy little word for us. From thence they removed across Arnon. "Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord, what he did in the Red Sea, and in the brooks of Arnon, and at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Arnon, and leaneth on the border of Moab." From thence they went to Beer; that is the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, "Gather the people together and I will give them water." Very touching is this instance of the grace and of the tender pity of God. He knows the trials of his people. However unwatchful and prone to rest upon our oars, after all it is those blessings that come from Himself, that strengthen and refresh us for our onward journey. "Gather the people together and I will give them water." Here we are, at the end of our journey, not knowing when the trumpet may sound for us to cross Jordan. Without any effort, "I will give them water." It is very pleasant to the people. "Then sang Israel this song, 'Spring up' (ascend, marg.) O well; sing (answer, marg.) ye unto it!" There was a noble and glorious song at the start, at the Red Sea, rejoicing in

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the victory the Lord had wrought over His enemy. "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth Thy people whom Thou hast redeemed, Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation." How soon that song had died away. Here is a little song at the end of the journey; a more subdued note. "The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people dug it with their staves." Here is refreshing for us as we get to the end of our journey. God is not going to do great new things; it is not the smiting of the Rock again, to which He calls us.

If you will use diligence, if you will dig, I will give you water. "Spring up O well." May the Lord make this a time of profitable instruction, and refreshing to our souls; for His own name's sake. Amen.

JESUS ON THE SHORE.

MR CHARLES STANLEY read John xxi., and spoke as follows:—

A thought connected with the voice of the Lord, to us this morning. "The early morn now breaking" (ver. 4). The morning of His appearing now is near. The present gathering may be the last before we see His face. Do we not all feel the force of that word to our souls—what a solemn thing to be brought to the close of the Church's history—and the call to know His mind, His will for the few days that remain.

"The early morn now breaking," Jesus stood on the shore. The disciples knew not that it was Jesus. God has been pleased to reveal to our souls the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, not in Peter's boat, not in the boat we were in, fishing, not on the unstable water of Christendom, but on the solid shore. And from one to another

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the word has passed, north, south, east, and west, "*It is the Lord.*" Not, "It is believers," "It is ourselves." Many disciples have not known Him, who He is. Some are at the net, a few fathoms off. I go with our beloved brother: with every word. In the Gospel, and as an old evangelist I may be allowed to say it, and often as I have seen the direction of His eye, as to where the net has to be cast, and where many, and great fishes, should be taken; there is something more precious than this to my heart. It is communion with Him; it is His "come and dine;" it is the food He bids us share with Him,—the commnnion of heart with Himself. This is really the contrast with the fishing. Oh, what a moment this is in the history of saints. The time of man's activity, of human fishing, without the known presence of the Lord ending; and now the known presence of the Lord is given, "*It is the Lord.*" "*On this wise* showed He Himself." The Holy Ghost is whispering round to heart after heart, "It is the Lord," but made known not on the sea, but by gathering all those who hear His voice, to the solid shore of resurrection to feast with Himself. I doubt not, we might carry this blessed figure a little further. I doubt there are few here, but can take the place of Peter, whether as to the fishing or the food. Have we not been brought to walk a little more softly than we walked before? Is not that same blessed Lord that disciplined Peter, disciplining us? Now, as the early morning is breaking, is He not in some measure weaning us from fleshly prowess, from fleshly activity; and are we not just in His presence, as Peter was, to *hear a few words from Himself?*

While, on the one hand, the need of becoming fishers has long impressed us, and may He be with the evangelists present, bid them cast the net, and where the fishes are to be found; yet, He did not say to Peter after

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

His appearing, "Carry the net and cast it in again." It was not that work that specially occupied Him at that moment, and I believe with our brother, that it is not that work that chiefly occupies Him now.

May I ask your attention now, to your own neighbourhood, your own town, and villages. What is the heart of Christ respecting His lambs around you? His sheep? We can say with Peter; and it is an immense favour, softly as we may be called to walk, deeply as we are brought to feel our own nothingness, "*Thou knowest that we are attached to Thee.*" We are attached to Christ. We are linked with Him. To think of this company now, gathered from all parts of England, Ireland, and Scotland too, all attached to Christ—linked to Christ. Having no other interest but to *represent Christ,* "the bright and morning star." To represent Him, not merely leaving the dark night that is past in Peter's boat, but to see and hear Him *at the breaking of morn.* Is there a sight on earth, the Father's eye can rest on, like the sight this morning? When in prayer last night, the gravity and solemnity of so many saints, all gathered by Himself, and to Himself, was pressed on me. What a sight; the gravity of it is amazing. But have we responded to the heart of Christ, as to His lambs and sheep?

A word about the villages around our places. I do not mean as to fishing merely, but as to feeding. "*Children have you any meat.*" The answer from a thousand round our homes would be, "We have not food;" never was a time when the sheep of Christ were needing food and shepherding as at this moment. What is our responsibility? What is yours? What is mine? What is the responsibility of our united hearts? To answer to the word of Christ, "Feed My lambs; shepherd My sheep." It is the will of our ascended Lord that the word should

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

pass from heart to heart, "*It is the Lord*" gathering His sheep, gathering His lambs, giving the well that is springing up; let us sing unto it. Oh, the all-sufficiency of the Holy Ghost that dwells in us. May He bless this, perhaps our last coming together, to bring us more into tune with His own heart; and let a wave of divine blessing flow out from this meeting, for the refreshing of His own. "The early morning is breaking" and Jesus stands on the shore. Tell it, tell it all around! Disciples there know not "it is the Lord." Solemnly do I corroborate the thought so set before us: it is the Lord's message to us, at the closing hour. May He keep our hearts, through these meetings, in communion with Himself, and to His blessed name be all praise. Amen.

HOLD FAST THAT WHICH THOU HAST.

Rev. iii. 11.—"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

MR W. KELLY said:—

I would add a thought or two as to some Scriptures of the Old as well as of the New Testament, which have been already before us. There is a striking coincidence in the facts of the word of God with the ways of God at this present moment. I daresay many may have been struck, and unable to account for the circumstance, and I remember when it exercised my own mind a great many years ago, that God should have given such a setting forth of His grace, in the twenty-first of Numbers, when they were nearing the end of their journey. I think that we should have more readily thought of it at the beginning. But God is always wise. We may be exercised. He may bring in apparently a difficulty; but a difficulty overcome

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

by faith, in the mind of God, that has long been uncertain, when once apprehended, what a gain it is, not merely to our own souls, but for others as leading into fresh confidence in God and His word. And truly the word of God is a mighty thing, not merely for us, but for *Him* at this moment is a moment when Christendom abandoning it, and when its leaders, blindly I am sure, and not knowing what they do, are doing what they can to undermine it. His grace has caused that word to shine out in fresh power. I speak not only of the beauty of the word, but of its *authority*; and this has a most weighty place. By it God Himself puts and keeps us in subjection to the Lord Jesus.

I would first ask, beloved brethren, whether we have not felt that which answers to it, that God has given the living power not merely of much in His word that we had not known, but also of fundamental truth that we knew imperfectly? Has He not given us back again the gospel, and *that which is the fruit of receiving it?* Not that He has poured out the Holy Ghost again, as some have wrongly asked at His hand, but most assuredly He has given us back the truth of it again. I do not speak now of individuals. It has been very properly said, that, when we are speaking of that which is the mind of the Lord, we must distinguish between that which is for His own glory, and for the church at the present stage of it, and His special guidance and working in individual souls. It would hinder a little misunderstanding of thoughts very precious in themselves, but very capable of being misused. It is the mind of the Lord at the present time to be forming and fashioning the Church as the Bride of Christ. It is His mind that we should be awaiting Him from heaven. But it would be a very grave mistake to substitute that which is His will for the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

individual for that which is His mind for the Church. It is the truth for us all—what the Church never should have forgotten; but this does not in the least degree interfere with the particular work of the Spirit of God by each.

Therefore, whether in the fishing or the feeding, servants have each their place—they in nowise supersede each other. When the heart is filled with Christ, the heart recovered to Himself personally, Himself as an object before us, and Himself in His moral discerning power—for this is one of the most remarkable features of the way He reveals Himself to the Church in Philadelphia—are the fishers to be less simple, earnest, or devoted? is the feeding to be relaxed? The very opposite! There is a heavenly impulse given to it. There is also a freedom from excitement, a solidity and a separateness of character. Not a single want that is not met in the fulness of Christ. The love of Christ constrains.

Knowledge puffeth up, love buildeth up. You cannot separate love rightly from the truth. This personal revelation of the Lord Jesus at the present moment—this use of truth, not as putting something between us and the Lord, but putting away all that separates—is what we must all have found not only our deepest joy, but our best security.

Let me recall this word as a very solemn one. Do you think any are in such danger as the men of Philadelphia? I do not find that such a sifting goes on elsewhere. But I do not believe that Philadelphia is gone. I believe that *Laodicea is come*, but that Philadelphia is not gone, and will never go until the Lord Jesus comes, and that what He has set forth as a testimony, by revelation of His person, will never be rendered void. I do not believe that Philadelphia will go, but that

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the souls that fall short of attachment to Christ there revealing Himself, will go, and that grace will bring others to fill up more worthily their place. Assuredly the grace of God which began will keep those that have been there and go on with Christ.

But further, it may be well to observe that the most painful elements in the formation of Laodicea may well have had their place in Philadelphia, when faith failed and flesh gave place to Satan. But if they were in Philadelphia (or separation to Christ), they never were of it. They were such as never appreciated the testimony of Christ; for my heart fully goes along with our beloved brother in the thought of the Lord having a present mind. I believe that, while something more has come in, we must not allow that which we have to slip from us, as it would if we were to get under the clouding depression that Philadelphia had so failed, that there is no longer now any thing of that character. I am saying this as a word of supplement. I believe this is on His mind, that those who are accounted of Philiadelphia, surely not a mere question as to position but morally, do especially need His grace; for Satan uses all his arts to deceive and injure them. Where the heart is with Him, there He is all to the heart. But you have not Christ thus unless the Lord has led you back into understanding of what His church is to Himself. The most remarkable features of the appeal to Philadelphia suppose a knowledge of the truth and of grace found nowhere else. There must therefore be a very striking commentary within that Epistle. It is simply true. "Behold I come quickly."

But we find that the Lord warns. "*Hold that fast which thou hast,* that none take thy crown." Do we not know, beloved friends, that never were men more liable to be carried away by feelings, and to be caught

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

with novel teaching? People outside do not believe it; they think, if you see one, you know all! We know a very different story, and that as grace began the thing, so grace alone sustains and completes it? If any people were liable to be moved, we are. The very fact of being alone with Christ, away from the various means of occupying, I might say of *entertaining* the saints of God (for what else could I call the excitement of gathering thousands, with the attraction of music, &c.), makes us seem ungenial and ungracious in these days of exposure to the efforts of Satan in ways most trying and delusive. Let us cleave to the evident truth of the Lord. It is a caution given to Philadelphia, more than to any other, "*Hold that fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown.*" It is hard for love to look unamiable; but Christ should be beyond all to us, and His love is alone true.

There are other reasons. This I would add: if you look back over what the Lord has been doing, you find that when souls do slip away, it is rarely into Sardis, still more rarely into Thyatira, but Laodicea is the common direction into which all those who fall from Philadelphia gravitate; and there you have that which is most painful, nay, repulsive, to the Lord Jesus. Self-complacency of knowledge abounds, but Christ is outside the door. It is not lapsing from first love, it is far worse than that. It is *indifference to Himself* with total lack of spiritual discernment. What state is farther from the mind of God?

Philadelphia, I believe, according to marks that to my mind are incontrovertible and sure, will be found when Christ comes. I believe that, as Sardis does not supercede Thyatira, the states abide; but through the infinite mercy of God, I see in Philadelphia the saints enter there as a *question of Christ.* It is not merely a true thing here or

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

there known, but the truth bound up with *Christ* is apprehended, and there *only* presented morally and in love. Now, this is in no way boastful. There is no man that is led by the Spirit and enters into the mind of the Lord, as regards the Church, but is ready not only to live for it, but to die for it; but Christ is nearer still, not merely this particular service or that rendered; though God has been recovering the cream of the gospel, and puting it in quite another fulness. Who does not know now the controversy as to the righteouness of God? The heart of each of us owes much to the recovery of that truth at the end.

Another thing, it is well to bear in mind, for it is as important for God's glory as for the saints. Christ leaves room for all liberty and variety; for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. We must not set one thing up against another. Evangelising is a special power, and the Lord calls upon us, after we are enabled, to spread the gospel, and not to teach only. We may be called to correct and be corrected, but our place, I am persuaded, is one of freedom and respensibility in individual service. So the apostle, in exhorting Timothy as to the last days, bids him do "the work of an evangelist." Nor can any who are not evangelists duly enter into the feelings or appreciate the mode of that work.

"*I have a few names even in Sardis;*" and suppose any of these came; suppose they misunderstand those who do not happen to be in their own circle, and apt to be fault-finding if not captious, would it not be humhing for those who are blessed to be offended by their remarks? If the Lord has borne much from us in many ways, and yet has shown the fulness of His grace, brought out in the greatness of His love, we too are called to answer to His mind: and what is it? There are many saints that

The Bible Herald 1877

pine for a better knowledge of His truth, and desire to enjoy the presence of the Lord, who is very dear to them. We know that whatever He may give to some, in His abounding grace, the true way to enjoy His presence is, according to His word, to be where saints gather to His name; there His Spirit works freely.

He says to the angel of Philadelphia,—"Thou hast kept My word, and not denied my name." I should feel it was making His word of none effect if we allowed that there was the same enjoyment of the presence of the Lord where His name was not the centre, and His word not maintained. He has brought out His truth in such activity that those who would follow Him fully now are called into the place of Philadelphia, to know Him who is holy, Him who is true, to hold fast His word, and not deny His name. Other things have come in. The most evil departure with good and bad together leads us in it. We would never forget that is what grows until Christ comes. We may let go that which we have,—may we hold it fast. May it be true of us, "That no man take thy crown."

The trials will be fierce and fresh. There are contant dangers and constant difficulties. Only one object keeps, as well as awakens, while in this world, and that is Christ; but there must be self-judgment, weighing truth and judging self solemnly, in order to communion. So only can we have Christ's power in our weakness resting on us. Who or what will make more complete shipwreck than the attempt to take such truth as this up in a mental way? Persons that seemed Philadelphians when they started, where are they now? Yet I have no such thought as that Philadelphia will end before Christ comes, though individuals may come or vanish. It is precisely this which is so serious. We are on a ground where nothing can

The Bible Herald 1877

sustain us but the Christ who led us there. The word without the Spirit of God always ends in intellectualism, Sandemanianism, or rationalism; as the Spirit without Christ goes into fanaticism for a while, and fleshly form in the end. What avails to offer the brightest visions possible of the church? Better have Christ with self-judgment. The grace toward the end of the journey teaches us how He recovers. The Lord at the beginning, and before the beginning of the Church, gave us these very words,—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst." Did He not contemplate our need at the end? Faith in them and Him thus really forms Philadelphia. I do not believe that we shall be ever driven to isolation, though desire after union will never keep us together—nothing but the power of His name. There may be a thinning of numbers instead of that increase which some complain of. All but Christ will fail, that no flesh shall glory in His presence.

There is another word, and a weighty one. "The Spirit and the Bride." The Holy Ghost has had His active presence and power confessed; *it is a great thing to the Lord Jesus* that *the One sent down from heaven to glorify Him be owned,* and this too in our proper nearness to Christ.

It is not that He does not bless where this is not so; but there is an immense difference between those that are merely blest by preaching and prayer, and those that own the Spirit's presence and action in the assembly also. For my part I see, in verse 10, an intimation that there will be the expression of going it on until the end. Saints will be together, and not breaking up into mere units—"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." I do not say that all that ought have really the intelligence of the place; but there are those who do cleave to Christ thus by the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

grace of God, who prize it above all things here, and that because it *is* the grace of Christ.

The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. It is the due answer to the voice of the Lord Jesus who is coming. It is His word that gives the ground to faith: such His grace will keep; keeping together, too, those who have kept the word of His patience. Where He is, He not only produces liberty, but sense of unity. It would be a most painful thing, and disheartening to our faith, for those for whom the Lord had interposed—separating them to His name—if they must think that all that is found henceforth would be merely Laodicea. Let none think so. Sardis will go on to the end, and Thyatira. But it is solemn enough and searching truth for us, and for others, I repeat, that while Philadelphia is not gone, *Laodicea has come!*

There is one other mercy we have to thank Him for,—that as we know what it is to be of Philadelphia in His place, so there are souls in this very place once impregnated with evil, yea, leaders of Laodicea. If the worldly-minded slip intoLaodicea, God is working to bring out of it also, and into Philadelphia; just as those who become more simply set for Christ must do. May our Lord, beloved brethren, both warn our souls and at the same time encourage our hearts, for His name sake. Amen.

GOD FOR US TO THE VERY END.

MR. CHARLES STANLEY read from NUMBERS xxii. 1-6 and then said:—

WE see in this chapter the last march and the last pitching of the tents of Israel on this side Jordan.

The Lord has laid it on our hearts that what He is

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

speaking to us now, He is speaking at the close of the journey, and there are principles here brought out that seem to me encouraging to our hearts at this moment. The *intense opposition* of Satan was seen at the end of the journey, immediately before Israel passed into Canaan. The policy and craft of Satan was seen, and it was at the close of Israel's history that Balaam was hired against the people of the Lord. But the eye of Jehovah was upon him, and the eye of the Lord is on His people now. At the close of the journey GOD IS FOR US. If we look at this very moment, this precise period of Israel's journey, we shall see, in Deuteronomy xxxi-ii., there the Lord coming down reproving, rebuking, and declaring to them their departure from Himself. I receive every word our beloved brother, who has just sat down, has said to us. It is our Deuteronomy. It is not for our own worthiness that God is for us. We have failed. We will bear rebuke, timely because at the close of our journey. But was there ever a time when God so wrought for His chosen? God was so infinitely above the apprehension or intention of the people, that if you go down to the plains of Moab you find the whole of the congregation in ignorance of what was transpiring on the heights above.

The opposition of Balaam was very much of the character we have to encounter now. It was on the Jannes and Jambres' principle, a perfect imitation, with its seven altars, oxen, and rams, but it was the intense opposition of Satan behind all. Let us not be ignorant, that the opposition is not merely of Balaam, of Moab, of the world, it is not merely of man; but we have come to the last days, we have come to the trials when that which professes to be of God is most intense in its opposition, but behind the whole is Satan, who knows we are about to enter the glory; and whilst we bow to the rebuke—the

The Bible Herald 1877

voice of the Lord unto us—let us rise up to the blessed fact, it was at *that* time, when Israel knew nothing about it, that God was for them—and with them was there ever a more glorious vindication of His people. Oh, what were Israel in God's sight! The righteousness of God shines out—God the Justifier—It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again. He has suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. He has glorified God. Oh, that foundation ground. . . . The Holy Ghost *is with us.* Notwithstanding all our failures I take courage, beloved brethren; if this be our last march, if this be our last assembling together, let us carry it home with us that God is for us!

Let me read a few words that God may use in strengthening the heart of His people. Let even Balaam speak. God will make even them that are of the synagogue of Satan to come and do homage at the feet of His weak ones. After all their failures, their stiff-neckedness, He says, O blessed be the Lord it is true for us today: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters." Numbers xxiv. 5. The Lord send us to our homes with these, *His* thoughts about the assemblies He has planted on the earth. In His sight they are as gardens. If our leaf is not as green, the *River* is the same. The Holy Ghost is the same. May that well of water spring up. May we awake to the sense of what His saints are in God's account. As trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted. Do you know the sweet perfume of the lign aloes? that there is no wood more fragrant. Do you know what the saints are to God? Do you know *His* thoughts of every assembly? *These* are

The Bible Herald 1877

His thoughts—and His thoughts after all our failures. His thoughts at the *close* of the journey, and more than these. "As cedar trees beside the waters," O what power the soul has if the Holy Ghost abide in him. O what power for good in the assemblies, which the Holy Ghost maintains here for Christ. And yet we look at ourselves as if we were not here?

"He shall pour the water out of the buckets." May God use every saint present in pouring out the living waters. He is with us still—God is for us. Do not for a moment suppose there is a clash in the ministry of the word by His Spirit. We need every word, and God by His Spirit fix it in our hearts. He is with us. Go forth, my brethren, as buckets the Lord has filled. May God do it, and do it by all, to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE GOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THE FATHER OF MERCIES.—(J. E. B.)

2 Cor. i.

There is, beloved brethren, a revelation from God, of Himself made to us, in His Son—and of the relation in which we stand by grace through Him. I call attention to it as being beyond all His works in creation—and the most wonderful testimony we find in the Word of God. From first to last it is what overtops everything else. It is a revelation of God Himself, and by the only One who was competent to declare God the Father, and that is the Son of His bosom.

Clearly there must be a ministry suited to such a revelation—as there was in olden times, one by Moses, through patterns, and shadows, and types. Up to those days we are familiar with failure and immediate judg-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

ments in the world before the flood, but the resources which God had in Himself were infinite, and far abounding over sin and the deluge. All pointed to the Son, and the eye of faith rested on the coming One, whether told of by type, or prophecy, or promise—it was the Son of God. This is not now where we are, but it is well to refer to such, in order to see how careful God is, that not a jot or tittle should fail of all that he has purposed for the glory of Christ.

As for example, in verses 19 and 20 of this chapter, "The Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea. For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." He secures all blessings to the seed, by their redemption, and gathers up all the promises of Jehovah, and fulfills them in Himself, whether they be promises substantiated by covenant, or whether God gave out His thought by patterns, for "My thoughts are not your thoughts," saith the God of Israel, and how could He then give out His thoughts to men? He says, "I will bring my ways and thoughts down to their own level, and take up that which they are acquainted with, to teach them." What a striking example of this, both by colours and metals, was "the ark of the covenant and the covering vail." A wonderful moment for Moses when he was entrusted with the pattern, and equally so to Bezaleel, who constructed it. and overlaid it all with pure gold, and the rings for the staves in its journeyings. How marvellous was the journey—they put in the staves to bear that whose proper place was the holiest of all, and the journey was begun! That is not promise, it is not covenant, but it is promise and covenant substantiated in the Ark, by the Mercy seat, and the Cherubims of glory.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Look at the love of God in seeking to make Himself known and understood, by the Tabernacle of witness; and to show them the way by which they were to approach Him, for He says, "I have come down to dwell with you, and be your help. I have given Bezaleel wisdom and understanding or it could never have been done." God took the whole of the arrangements into His own hand from first to last. "I must declare Myself." In the governmental ways of God, it repented Him that He had made man upon the earth and He destroyed it; but I must accept the covenant of the bow in the cloud over Noah's head, or I shall not understand God in these new lessons of faith and grace. The end of all flesh is come before Him in righteous judgment, but He will go along with man on the earth in virtue "of the sweet-savour-sacrifice on Noah's altar." When all that world broke down with which God was connected as the Creator, God took His new place in the midst of His people Israel, before the Ark of the Covenant to seek out a resting place for them. In all their journeyings He went before them, and in their haltings and encampments the Tabernacle became a sacred enclosure for the Ark of the Covenant, as their centre of present and abiding blessing. They had to learn by these patterns and pledges of His love, how God delighted in His Israel—precious lesson.

I want to show how God ever delights to go along with His people. It is not only God for us. It is His delight to journey with His chosen, and to bring them into communion with His thoughts—His mind—His ways; and so you will find all the path through the wilderness, God was true to the Ark of the Covenant in the midst of His people,—even their raiment waxed not old. The goodness and faithfulness of Jehovah were thus in keeping with the Ark of the Covenant, which the sons of Aaron

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

bore upon their shoulders, before the eyes of the people, under the leadership of Moses, through the desert.

When the time was come for Joshua to take the command and lead them over Jordan into Canaan, the power and glory of God were necessarily superadded to His goodness and faithfulness. The waters of Jordan rolled back as a heap before "the Ark of the Covenant of the God of the whole earth," when it would pass by that way, and the walls of Jericho fell down flat: who could question the power of Jehovah? At the close of the holy wars of Israel, God put another seal to His faithfulness, for He hearkened to the voice of a man, and the sun stood still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, until the people had avenged themselves of their enemies. And it came to pass as they fled before Israel that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them, and they died; more died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword. Never was there a day like it before or after that the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man, for the Lord fought for Israel. The rod of Moses is gone, and power is seen in the hand of God, and the captain of the Lord's host,

Is He changed? No, beloved. God goes on in His own path; and His power is but clearing the way for His glory to dwell in the land of Immanuel; for the staves which were put into the rings of the Ark of the Covenant to bear it withal in Exodus times were drawn out, when the priests brought it into his place, "to the oracle of the house, into the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim." In the days of Bezaleel they put in the staves, and commenced their pilgrimage with Jehovah; but in the reign of Solomon, when God had given the people *rest*, "the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God," and they drew out the staves of the Ark; and there it is unto this day.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

But who is He that shall take type out of type—pattern out of pattern—promise out of promise—yea, and prophecy out of prophecy? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell? Who is He that shall embody all these in Himself, and for the glory of God, and for the blessing of His people, by His birth, by His death, by His resurrection, and His second coming?

The power and the glory of God had alike displayed themselves in Jerusalem, by the destruction of the Adonizedic confederation under Joshua, through the hailstones, and afterwards in rest and peace by Solomon.

Leaving behind us at this point the ways of Jehovah in the history of Israel, let us look at the place in Bethlehem where the young child lay. The Son born was introduced—the One on whom every hope and expectation of covenanted blessing hung for faith; the Man of God's councils and purposes before the world was; the bearer of all our wretchedness; the bringer in of gladness; and made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. What was the state of the world when He came? It was in the fulness of the time God sent forth His Son, and with this view let us look at the Gospel history.

Do you not delight to see in the various records of the whole evangelists that blessed One? What is the value and glory of the life of Christ to God and to us, as we see the Son of man acknowledged and greeted from the heavens by the Father himself? Who can carry God's thoughts out of counsel and pattern in which He put them? Who, but the Son of His love, who was the One with Him in counsel, and now in operation! I look at the cross of Christ; are not the sacrificial types taken out of pattern *there*? Assuredly, and confirmed in that death. If I look at His life: how was He born into this world? was it not as

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

"the appointed Heir of all things—the Son of God—Son of Adam—Son of Abraham—and as Son of David?' "Where is He that is born King of the Jews," say they who followed the star. But the Messiah was rejected in those rights and titles; nevertheless He tells His disciples, "There be some of you standing here that shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom."

The Ark, when carried into its place in the temple, had nothing in it save the two tables, which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the Lord made a Covenant with the children of Israel. It waited for its fulfilment and manifestation, till He should come, of whom it was written in the volume of the Book, Lo I come, "I delight to do *Thy will*, O my God, yea, *Thy Law* is within in my heart."

What is the spot on earth, which this Jehovah-Jesus makes His starting point? The Lord had spoken by His prophet, "out of Egypt have I called My Son"—and in Matthew we follow Him from thence, into the river of Jordan, where aforetime the typical Ark stood firm, till all had passed over—but now He to whom this Ark pointed, identifies Himself with his forerunner and the repentant remnant, and supersedes all in the title of "the fulfiller of all righteousness." The voice from heaven—the Spirit of God, descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him—show what a new beginning this was between the heavens and the earth, as centred in this Jesus-Messiah. The whole power of the devil, and his temptations in the wilderness, do but turn it into a fruitful field, for the opened eye. Jesus "saith to him, Get thee hence, Satan."

The Wilderness, Jordan, and the land of Israel, prove who He is that was passing through, presenting Himself and the Kingdom. In chapter xvii., He goes up into the holy mount, for the highest place is His, to take in

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

righteous title as the obedient One. But He must die, to carry others in, where He alone could go. There was a moment of silence between the heavens and the earth, so to speak. By His birthright, and as the obedient Servant, in wondrous ways, He had won everything in righteousness, that Israel and Solomon had forfeited by sin, so that the Voice on Tabor acredited Him "as My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," when He received from God the Father honour and glory. He left the rights and titles of the kingdom, for another day and from the excellent glory, He accepted His decease at Jerusalem, and came down to die that He might accomplish our redemption, and take His place as second Adam at the right hand of God where He now is.

Tabor is changed for Mount Calvary, and the throne of David for the Cross, and the royal sceptre for the reed. He goes forth as a lamb to the slaughter, and what love to us that death declares! Now raised from the dead by the glory of the Father! What an object He becomes for our hearts to rest in, who loved us unto death. Those who in simple faith will follow Him as disciples, must need travel by His cross. That wonderful group of chapters in the middle of John's gospel is on this account peculiarly ours. They will not belong to people in the millennium. We are told of the delight in which the Son came down to reveal the Father and the delight of the Father in that well beloved Son, a man down here. I have spoken of Him as having gone away but to prepare a place for us, as His own—who are not of this world. Our place on earth, corresponds necessarily with our position in the heavens with Christ, and likewise with the purpose, and objects of the Holy Ghost, which He seeks to carry out practically in us by divine operation. If Paul be faithful to the testimony of our Lord, (for example)

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

what place could he be found in but a prison below, as agreeing with his Lord in heavenly glory. So also, Stephen the martyr below, in testimony to the Victor above! You will see now why I have read this chapter in Corinthians, that you might know what fellowship with Christ is, in His rejection, and in present sufferings, as identified in testimony with His present glory. Are you afraid to look at tribulation *now* with Christ for the truth's sake? Or with the revelation God has made of Himself, and of His mind to us as the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort? Take care that our afflictions spring from the right cause, and do not lose their lustre, and character, as the afflictions of Christ, the proper fruit in this epistle, of following Christ? It is not the ordinary trouble and afflictions of the wilderness I speak of, but 'we which live, are alway delivered unto death for Jesus sake.'

Beloved, are we alive to the fact that God has come out in a new revelation, and in new relations to His saints, and made good to those who will accept and share this pathway of His Son. It is a new path, in which you are called to honour—the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. It leads not to prosperity on earth like Solomon, but to the Cross, and the abounding consolations of Christ? I have to carry about in my body the dying of Jesus, that all may be kept down in me, that would be counter to that death; lest the flesh should escape, and by means of its desires &c. give a handle to the devil.

I will quote one or two things familiar to you in this epistle.

Not only is it God for us, but our present circumstances *contribute* to us, for "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." See how He turns everything to account. Everything will work out fuller glory if you

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

will only go down by obedience to the Father and in communion with Christ into the place of death. In chapter eight you will find how He uses Christ as known to us by the word in the power of the Holy Ghost to produce what is like Christ. We ought to press it home. It is not only coming relations with the eternal glory, and a revelation about God the Father and the Son of His love, but each and all in the precious and divine activity of this living love are brought *now* into this combination and wrought out in these afflictions for Christ in us. If he wants to cultivate the grace of giving, he counts upon the grace of Christ in their hearts, and so tells them—"You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Is there a heart here to-day could refuse it? What does He do to bring out the grace of giving? He is presenting Christ! He does not do it by compulsion or duty, but "*you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" He is not expecting less of us; on the contrary, the Spirit knows how to touch our affections. Where is there a heart which does not own the constraining love of Christ? Under this power its best and truest affections will respond to Christ. Let the state of any heart be what it may, I know of nothing that will reach that heart and touch it but the presenting of Christ. Shall I be the contradiction of what He was? Shall Ibe a false representation on this earth of what my blessed Lord was? Suppose Paul wants to correct the self-importance of the flesh, he does so by seeking to cultivate the gentleness of Christ, or suppose these Corinthians were guilty of the folly of comparing themselves with themselves and one with another. "You are not wise," he tells them and brings Christ into their midst. If I compare myself with another the flesh would make it my

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

advantage so to do. The gentleness of Christ or any other excellence which marked Him humbles us all down to the dust. You know Christ, or you are not a Christian at all. You know the meekness of Christ. This meekness and gentleness would be disqualifications in the progress of this world and its objects, but in the Church this gentleness of Christ is the riband of blue, and is connected with your whole vocation. It is not by telling me to adorn the doctrine that it is furthered in me, but by the presentation of Christ to the heart. I cannot refuse that Christ, and the Spirit is free to cultivate or supply to us the very grace that may be deficient or lacking. Will you be the subjects as well as the objects of these wonderful manifestations? Paul himself going along through this world not only gets the consolation, but he is able to comfort others, and the grace by which he comforts others is for us to use to-day in everything here, afflictions, tribulations, working out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

I have to do with a new standard of computation, and if you compare losses and gains with things that are eternal, you will have a new principle of arithmetic, I am quite sure. The debtor and creditor side will get reversed,—so also, by what reckonings will you estimate things seen unless it be with things that are not seen?

Nor will the apostle finish this epistle without making Satan himself tributary to him and a positive gain. "There was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."

I am indebted to him for the thorn in the flesh. It is the only epistle where you will find absolute weakness is reached and counted indispensable that the grace of Christ may be found out and proved in its sufficiency. "I take

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake." I would not be without them for anything. I have found out a new pleasure by means of infirmities, and have reached the power of Christ. By strength shall no man prevail—weakness is my fortune. We preach the power of Christ, and we preach the grace of Christ—though He were crucified by weakness He liveth by the power of God, and the apostle refused every other path. It opens resurrection to us as the way out with Christ into the future glory. The Lord make this epistle wonderfully clear and marvellously dear to us. That as true hearted and willing disciples we may follow a rejected Christ, taking up the afflictions of Christ so that the consolations of Christ may abound. In this course we shall find nothing but things around contributing to work out for us, a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory. Living in the power of things not seen and eternal and bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus? we shall be reaching absolute weakness through it, that the life also of Jesus may be manifest in our mortal body. "For me to live is Christ," will thus not only be a text, but find its personification—to the glory and praise of the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.

All this is the effect of our going in the current of the Spirit, and God working by the Holy Ghost, nothing so blessed for the servants, as being used of God instrumentally and knowing it. God then does not refuse to shake the foundations of the prison, and the result is irresistible. We afterwards find the rulers brought down down to the feet of these two men of might. The Lord by His grace open our eyes to follow in their footsteps. Amen.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

OUR PLACE WITH THE FATHER AND BEFORE THE WORLD.

John xvii. 14 to end.

ONE or two thoughts suggested by what must have fallen solemnly on our attention this morning, in relation to the presence of the Spirit of God, and how far—allowing all grace and sovereignty of God in being for us and with us at the end, in spite of failures—still the thought of how far we are with God is solemn. I don't think it takes away in the least from the blessed fact of His own goodness and grace, that rises beyond and above all failure and responsibility, but if it is true, and we do accept the fact, that we are really at the very end, at the last hour, on the very eve of the removal of the saints of God from the earth ; then it is a solemn question, not only with respect to testimony, but with respect to other matters, it is on my heart to touch upon a little now, how far the place and power of God the Holy Ghost, is really owned in conscious communion with the thoughts of God, by His people at the present moment. Now it has been said, that no one would desire to weaken the blessed testimony of the Spirit of God in the 14th John, but, that the deficiency and feebleness is in not giving the Holy Ghost His place in the 15th and 16th. How far have we not lost one of the subjects of the testimony of the 14th. If I understand His testimony (chap. xiv.), it is this, that He associates us, places us in His own position, His own place before the Father. Now I think it is a wonderful thing how little sense there is of that in the hearts of the saints. Or take chapter xvii. where, after laying the foundation in His Person and work, He associates us in all the blessedness that springs from it. "Thou hast loved them them as thou hast loved me." The knowledge

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

of the Father's love, it is wonderful if you have to do with the saints individually, in various places, and find out the condition in which the saints are individually, you find out how things are ecclesiastically. Now it is a wonderful thing how little it is known what it is to have to do with the Father. It is simply the knowledge of the Father's love. How few there are that have the real sense, that they have the knowledge of the Father's love, that they *have* a Father. There is no security without it. If I have not a Father in heaven, I must go to the world for help. Everything around that is planted, as it was said—when you are face to face with difficulties, difficulties in circumstances at home, in the Church of God. What little sense we have that we have a Father, and I believe if I must say it, it touched my own heart I honestly confess, if we have failed in giving the Holy Ghost His place before the world, we have positively lost the blessed consciousness which He would give us of our place before the Father. I would prefer that it came from some one more able to speak of it. But take another matter; we cannot blind ourselves to the fact of this, there are difficulties on every hand at the present moment. There is hardly a place where there are not difficulties of one kind and another. I feel, before the Lord, they meet us and prove the denial of this very thing. Is God the Holy Ghost looked to in connection with these difficulties as *the power* to meet them? It is not as to the question of the doctrine. The question is as to the *application* of the doctrine of the gospel. If God really does care for the glory of His Son, the glorified man, and if the Holy Ghost has come down here and fills the house as well as His important indwelling in the saints, and bearing witness to the glory of Christ, and conducting the interests of Christ at the present moment, then is it not a

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

serious thing that when things arise that call for our divine judgment, that we are at sea and unable to act effectually in them. It is not that we deny the presence of God the Holy Ghost, but is there not a *want in our souls of confidence in the resources of the living God outside all the resources of men?* Consequently we make use of things we have got to our hand instead of being in the power of the Holy Ghost, and look at what comes out of it.

A thought here as to our mission. I think it was said here yesterday that God had a distinct mission for His people at the present moment. Now if there is such a thing in His mind, and who can doubt it, it should be before us as distinct and definite.

Have you and I the sense distinctly in our souls that the measure of our separation from the whole world under judgment at the present moment is no less a measure than the separateness of Christ from it. "*As thou hast sent me*," &c. We are sent back into it, morally separated from it, as Christ was divinely. I said in my heart, when our brother was speaking this morning, who could maintain me in the distinctness, the definiteness of that position but God the Holy Ghost. Well if I look at the question of testimony, I think it is appalling. It is not that one would become morbid, no, thank God, God is for us. We can have all the power and strength of God being for us, but I say if it is true that we have failed, or are slipping away from that distinctness and separateness of mission and testimony, because we have not given God the Holy Ghost His place, I do not think we ought to say we can throw ourselves on God: of course we can, but the more sense we have of the unfailing resources of God, the more sense we must have of anything that may be inconsistent on our part.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

IN THE CURRENT OF THE SPIRIT.

Acts xvii. 16 to end.

Mr. Burton: I read this to bring before us, by a first-class example, how we, "made partakers of His grace," ought to be occupied, and if so occupied, what the effect will be—without effort, but naturally. There is nothing like the effects of true Christianity and true Christian bearing that is without effort. The activity of nature is quite another thing. The first thing we have before us, leading up to these results, is that Paul and Silas had been commended to their work by the prayers of the Church. It is not that they asked for them, or even sought for them in their minds, but it was entirely the thought of the assembly itself. Why? Because Paul and Silas were in the current of the Spirit, and so was the assembly. There had been a contention between Paul and Barnabas. The contention had been so sharp between them that they parted company, and Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God; and he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches. Then we find they were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia; afterwards they essayed to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.

How blessedly they were in the hands of the Spirit. They arrive in result at Philippi; and being there not doing any great things; we find Paul, what some people would consider wasting his time, outwardly doing nothing, to human eyes looking about him: in truth, however, *waiting on the Lord.* If the servant of the Lord is going to do great things, he must be found in a quiet place. Whenever anything great is going to occur, there is always the calling aside beforehand.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

First he met Lydia; that was no great thing apparently. They went on the Sabbath out of the city by a river side, where *prayer* was *wont* to be made,—the right course to take,—and spake unto the women that resorted thither. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. A very small beginning. Do you think the apostle knew the work had begun? Well, if he did not, one did. The Lord knew; the spirit of Python knew; satan knew the work had begun, and satan wanted to be in it. It was a wonderful thing, and a great thing for men of like passions with us. They became the detectives of satan at once. Not merely the detectives of satan as satan, but in respect of the work of God the Holy Ghost at the time. If satan had not been met by the Apostle when he was, there is not the smallest doubt that all the work would have been broken up. Where would Lydia have been? Where would the jailor have been? What a remarkable and blessed thing the ability by the Spirit to detect the working of the enemy in its infancy. Paul was very little occupied with evil: he did not give the evil *time to get ahead.* What a blessed thing it is for the servant of the Lord when he meets it at once and has done with it. It came in at once. "These are the servants of the Most High God who show unto us the way of salvation." What is the consequence of faithfulness in respect of satan? Before they had time to look about them they are cast into prison.

Do you think the apostle did not have an inkling of what might happen on exposing the enemy? There was Paul and Silas bound, their backs scored, their feet fast in the stocks in the innermost prison. That is the result of meeting satan. Where is all that to end now? The spokesman for the gospel—his feet fast in the stocks,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

and kept fast by a man who was determined to keep him fast—it was his duty, having received such a charge. Well in the middle of the night, when they might have been bewailing their predicament, Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Praying and praising! what each temple of the Holy Ghost ought to be doing, no matter what the circumstances. We have much to pray for always. We shall never be without occasion for praise. What a blessed occupation for the individual soul, and for the Church at large. Praying and praising is the gospel in itself to those that hear it. What has such effect on the unconverted soul is to see a soul or a company *entirely independent of circumstances,* and everything else, recognising God in the circumstances, and praising Him notwithstanding the circumstances.

The confidence expressed in praying and praising has its effect upon others. All the prisoners were wide awake hearing them. It is a blessed thing to go forth with the gospel of God. And what an effect that, if you are simply doing as you ought to be doing—viz., *praying* and *praising*—the prisoners' ears are opened! Every unconverted man is a prisoner. We were all in that state. But the praying and praising has not the slightest effect on the jailor. We all have to do with souls, and something more than praying and praising it must be for some souls, who seem to be free, and many even the custodians of others. This soul had to be met in its peculiar need and hardness. God met it. He shook the foundation of the prison—took the ground from under his feet.

The Bible Herald 1877

REMARKS ON HAGGAI.

Mr. OLIPHANT read Haggai.

The beauty of the combination of the call to consider our ways accompanied with the comfort comes out in these scriptures. Is not the secret of all the trouble, "You run every man to his own house, and the house of the Lord lieth waste." It is self and its concerns that occupies the heart. How far is it self with us? How far have Christ and the Church the place really that is due? How far is there the readiness to die for the saints? How far is the heart affected by the state of things around us? And if in any measure the Lord has given the feeblest or the youngest any sense of what the Church is in relation to Christ—what it was at the starting—what it is now—we get into the place of comfort. The comfort is, "the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this House with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts." And as there is sorrow of heart, as Christ and the Church are by the Spirit of God given a place in our souls, Christ in glory and His Church on earth, and we know something of a mourning spirit; "*God is for us*" is a real vantage ground. *Provided* we are above this, *provided* we hearken to His Word.

He says to us, "Fear not, I am with you." Be it that it is all feebleness and weakness; the comfort is, that the Desire of all nations *shall come. He is coming!* and on the eve of it. It is the return of the people out of Babylon, answering much to the place in which we are found together, and the word of the Lord has been to us, "Consider your ways." As we answer to His call He bids us "Fear not, *I am with you*;" and the exhortation founded upon it, "Go up and build the house"—it is *Christ* and the *Church.* Nothing narrower. The whole

The Bible Herald 1877

Body of Christ on the earth. The Lord grant we may see the wonderful place He has given us in relation to Himself and answer to it, while we are in the dust before Him as to the practical state of things to-day.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE FATHER.

Lecture on John xvii. 26, by Mr. J. B. Stoney.

IN John's Epistle we read that the youngest class of believers know the Father. Scripture does not recognize the believers in a lower place than knowing the Father; it does not say loving the Father. You *know* before you love. In the parable of the Prodigal Son the father first kissed, then clothed, and then feasted him. What you get the Lord setting forth is, I have declared Thy name unto them, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them and I in them. The first thing you find practically for the soul is that Christ has cleared away everything.

Three actions, true of every soul, are set forth in Luke xv. 1st. The shepherd goes after the lost sheep (the thief on the cross.) If the shepherd had not gone after the lost sheep the father could never have embraced the prodigal son. 2nd. The woman lights a candle, and seeks diligently for the lost piece of silver. 3rd. The Father meets the prodigal. If the light had not shone in the soul of the thief on the cross, he never would have come to God. Not only is Jesus there the shepherd going after the lost sheep, but the light shines in, and the Father has met him when so far away. There is the thief in the very grip of the law, about to be plunged in everlasting judgment, as one who has offended the law, no mercy for him, when in steps the Son of God. I bear the judgment. "The just for the unjust, to bring us to God." We have

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

then that wonderful historical fact, that wonderful material fact, a fact that stood there open to the eye of every man, that the veil was rent from the top to the bottom. It was not the sinner's praying, but it was God saying, I can come out and take the greatest sinner to my arms.

The one thief did not see the Lord, the other not only saw Him, but had that wonderful disclosure made to his heart. "*This man* hath done nothing amiss." Could he do anything? It would not have been grace if he could. All grace could do was completely done. He died the just for the unjust to bring us to God. And the action following on conversion is, he prays. Confidence in God is established, he prays. The proof that Saul of Tarsus is converted is, Behold he prayeth. Very seldom souls look at that side of truth. There is the heavenly side. As a general rule the soul is more taken up with the effects of the grace.

He said to Mary Magdalene "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, my God and your God." She is a pattern of a heart true to Christ to the end. Christ will keep hearts true to Himself to the end, though the phase of the Church known as Philadelphian is wanting. A Laodicean is one who has Philadelphian truth without Philadelphian power. It is not that Philadelphia does not continue, but Laodicea sets in. The thing that makes Laodicea so mischievous is that with Philadelphian truth and Philadelphian standing there is not Philadelphian power. It is not, there will not be true Philadelphians among them, but Philadelphia will not be characteristic. Another point now as to knowing the Father. I turn you to 1 John ii. 15. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The first thing is, that I know the Father. I can say I have a Father in heaven. "Take no thought for your life

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. . . . For after all these things do the Gentiles seek, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Look at the Lord Jesus Christ in His wonderful solitary path here on earth. If deserted and left alone, His heart went on in that unswerving confidence, that dignity of knowledge of His Father's love. I know nothing so wonderful to think of as the Father's love. Do you never meet with a vexation? Hardly a day passes without them. What is the resource? The Father. Ye have lost the world, what will you do? I have the *Father*. Are you satisfied with the exchange, beloved friend? "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." It was long before I could believe that this is addressed to the young men. It does not mean the bad world merely, but it includes custom, the organizations men have instituted. What is to keep you from the world? It is a most interesting point, because it is the world with all the things that invite you that you are called here not to love. Am I callous to a beautiful view? It has not love for me. It is the love of the Father that really makes me superior to all things that are in the world. It is not that I cannot look at them or enjoy them in a way, "but my heart is not going after them, it is going after another thing. I have the Father's love." If a man is looking to get comfort or support or position from the world, he does not rise to the love of the Father. If the love of the Father were in him he would rise from the things to the source. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." It is the thing that comes in to correct. There is no one here who has gone through the exercise that has not found when he left to His Father the thing

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

he was anxious about, it was perfectly seen to. Not a single thing ever happens as you forecast it, so you are wasting your time forecasting. I never met a man, however spiritual, that care about temporal matters would not damage him. Reverse it if you will, you work after the spiritual, leave it to God to look after the temporal. I believe it is a wonderful thing, I am only learning it myself. I am not entitled to anything, I leave it all to him, and I get the most extraordinary manifestations of His care in every way. The deepest and fullest love is not the love that can be demonstrated. I do not want to be signalised, but I want my friend to have a cipher between him and me. I don't want others to read it. God has a different cipher for each of us. I do not want Him to tell another what He said to me.

"I will declare Thy name." If I am near to Him He will declare it. I used to think if I could say, "My heart is fixed, I will fear no evil," I should be the happiest man alive. I did not know the Father's love. The love of the Father was not in me, so I was looking for the work of God's hand to be a secondary cause, to produce an effect. You must go higher than that.

I should like to turn to another subject, that is, the love of Christ. Though the babes know the Father, it is the fathers know Christ. I give you examples of what the love of Christ is. First, Gen. l. I am quite aware this passage refers to the restoration of Israel to Christ, but in it I find a great practical application for the present time. I believe there are a great many acquainted with the service of Christ, who have not yet learned His heart. Have you ever come close enough to Him to learn His heart? When death has removed the screen, have you found out what your nature is in the sight of God? Here is a remarkable fact, that for 17 years these brothers had

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

been living on the bounty of Joseph, and they had not known the heart of Joseph. Are not the most of Christians like that? We all have failed and come short of the glory of God. We never met the claims of God, like tenants that never paid, and the whole amount of the debt has accumulated. And God has sent His Son. "He that believeth on the Son hath life." You are not tenants now, you are children. It is an immense thing to get practically the fact that you are children. Suppose the debts are cleared away, that does not constitute you a child. Many a person is only trying to pay the rent. It is a wonderful thing to get hold of, simply that you are a child. You are transferred to a model farm; do you know what that is? It is worked at the landlord's expense. The body is now to come out in Christ's power, and according as it is seen here, so will it determine your relation to Christ in the kingdom. You were a bad tenant and could not pay the rent, He has forgiven all the arrears. You are clear now. Now you are my child, am I to continue here with this framework? With the very same body, the very same mind. If you walk in the Spirit you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. This is the wonderful problem of grace, the child is to be here in the very same body in which he was a very bad tenant; he is to be the manifestation of the beauty of Christ on this earth; and according to the manifestation here will be his relation to Christ in the kingdom hereafter. Souls ought to arrive at it by the very preaching of the gospel. They are simply kept to the fact that the debts are paid. What is the effect? The man who knows his debts are paid is roaming up and down the world for something to comfort him. People say we shall be children by and by. You are children now. Grace first meets us and pays the debt, and besides this a fortune is

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

given us, for the use of which we are responsible. The responsibility is that we might be the expression of Christ in the body here on earth. It was a wonderful manifestation of the secret purpose of God that, when Satan used man to drive His Son from this earth, Christ would be manifested in thousands of bodies in this earth. Never was there so signal a defeat of Satan, and so complete a triumph of grace. There was one man the full, bright unfailing exhibition of God. Satan used man to drive Him from the earth. Now His body is formed on earth, its component parts each to exhibit the beauty and the grace of Christ. There is a simple flower called the hen and chickens daisy, all the small daisies grow out of the large central daisy, the one parent, and all of the one pattern. To be Christ-like is consecration. Consecration is not what I give to Christ, but what I get from Christ.

True, the debts are cleared away, but the other part of the Gospel is not sufficiently insisted on. The Lord does not speak first to the woman of Samaria about payment of the debts, but He tells her "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall *never thirst.*" I say that therefore, not only would she find she was in a condition full of recourses, but the very contrast to (chap. ii.) the man that in his brightest day—his wedding—cannot carry it on without wine. I only adduce that in order to show how the Lord Jesus was thinking, how He would make a poor heart abundantly happy. The Lord delights in my perfct happiness. "I will praise the name of God with a song, and magnify Him with thanksgiving, this also shall please the Lord better than an ox, or bullock, that hath horns and hoofs." No devotedness in sacrifice can please Him as when the soul can say, I am perfectly happy in the knowledge of your love. That necessarily produces worship. Having said so much, I

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

turn to the chapter brought forward in the first morning meeting, (Numb. xxi.) After 39 years, of the most unexampled nuparalleled goodness of God, it comes out man is ruined. They murmur against God—you must go back to your old state, He tells them—and the Lord sent fiery serpents among them, they bit the people, and much people of Israel died. Not only was the Brazent Serpent the cure, but we find it written, "Gather the people together, and I *will give them water.*" I not only relieve them of all their ruin, but I give them a fortune.

Suppose a relative of yours is in the debtors' prison. You say, I will release him. Did you do nothing for him? You have left that poor follow in need and distress. But suppose you put him in a position, where he never can exhaust what you gave him, and the more he uses it the more he discovers the fortune he possesses. God has given me that very spirit, whereby I call Him Father. That is what is left out. Those who preach are clear enough about paying the debts—I thank God it is so clear—but why should I lose the best of it? God delights in my happiness. He has given the living water —the Holy Ghost—"They began to be merry." As some one said, "they have not done yet."

How does it come. this living water? I turn to Ps. xxii. It will show you where the great defect is, and where there is a defect in the preaching. I want to set forth to you why it is so little known to the soul. In Ps. 22nd are two grave subjects. Only one man ever could reach these two subjects. One is He knew the measure of the sin we had done against God. I must be equal to a person to know how he feels an offence. That stamps Him as the Son of God.—No one knew that love but Himself; only one man ever knew the measure of the sin; He removed it. The other thing is the love: He de-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

clared it. Why a soul is not able to listen happily to the declaring of the love is because he is not clear of the sins. All that is against me the Lord Jesus Christ has encountered and removed. There are several giants that He overcame, bodily weakness: sin: bulls of Bashan: dogs: Satan himself He encounters.

But as David over Goliath He is victorious over them all. Another word—the Lord grant it may be fastened on your soul—whatever you see of Christ you possess. If you see Him victorious, you are in the victory, a man in bodily weakness is like a ship waterlogged; no time when a soul is more tested. You are looking at the giant, and what you ought to have looked at, is the One who was victorious over the giant. For whom did He get the victory? For Himself? Never! Thank God He got it for me, and as my eye is upon Him I am in His victory. What is the second thing? "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." You are occupied with some of the giants, if you are not occupied with the victorious one. The bulls, religious pretension, the dogs, the earthly power.

What you have to learn practically is what Jonathan reasoned: not only do I see Goliath floored, and his head off, but I see the head of Goliath in David's hand. You have not a good conscience until then. You do not see the enemy out of the way. How can you be occupied with David until that which is the terror of your heart is cleared away. *Now* you can listen to another thing—"I will declare Thy name."

How many never have come to close quarters with Christ—never have known what they are in God's sight. Hence, in some cases aberration of mind and despair. Not a doubt about Christ having taken their sins away, but they have not known His heart. If it has a dark side, it has the brightest side that ever was known to the soul. I never

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

knew before the heart of Christ. "Joseph wept when his brethren spoke to him." "Fear not," he said to them. "I will nourish you and your little ones, and he comforted them and spake to their heart." There is a double action. I ask you to ponder it well. I believe that is only one phase of it. Though you have to learn what you are in yourself, it may not be true of many in this assembly, that though they have learnt that Christ takes away their sins, they have never learnt their defiled nature in the sight of God. There is another action: you make acquaintance with your Saviour. In the history of Joseph's brethren, it is marked by the fact that they saw their father was dead. All that would intercept them from Joseph was gone. When the soul gets the knowledge of the Father's love, the world loses its hold on the heart. I have the love of the Father; the world and the things therein go. In leaving the love of Christ to me, man goes. I have a love that does not let anything come between. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." In the 50th of Genesis we see Joseph's brethren had never been exercised in love as to their true relation to him those 17 years; they had lived on the bounty of Joseph, and they had not made acquaintance with him. They had never come to acknowledge their ruin and guilt. "Mine iniquity have I not hid." I tell the Lord not only what He has done for me in putting my sins away, but I have made a clean breast to Him of the defilement of my nature, my heart. Does He spurn me? No. I find He has a love that will take account of everything: every single thing that belongs to me. I believe, at the bottom of a good deal that is called aberration of mind, there is some unjudged evil. There it is. You have not brought it to the Lord, where yourself is nothing, where you find how contemptible you are. Two characteristics of power I remark here. Helpless, I

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

walk on the water; contemptible, I command the grace of Christ. I have reduced myself to nothing, like the Syrophenician woman; then I succeed.

In Luke v. it is a man doing everything right. He is giving his ship to the Lord, like a man giving his time and money for the gospel. He is perfectly exemplary, and crowned with favour. A most wonderful miracle of fish he had had. He had the two things a Jew would delight in—conduct and favour. "Depart fron me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." It is not he is not devoted to Christ, but he has not reached the love. When he learns it, he forsakes all, and follows Christ. The very argument he might have used for retaining the ships, because of the wonderful divine miracle connected with them. Everything is left: he has now One that satisfies his heart.

I turn now to the 11th chapter of John's Gospel. Here it is not a question of sin at all; it is bereavement. "He whom thou lovest is sick." Lazarus died. My impression is, that Martha questioned the power of the Lord, but Mary may have had misgivings about His love. He comes in here. Death has removed all that would be the stay of the heart. Death has done its worst. Other things could be ameliorated. This cannot be. I come now to acquaint you with what My love is. Have you ever passed through bereavement? He does not talk of raising Lazarus. Do you look for His power, or do you yearn for His sympathy? Trial does not soften character; it is sympathy that softens. A man that passes through a deal of trial, and does not meet with sympathy, that man is as hard as a rock. The Lord says, I have a deeper sense than you have of the sorrow. My sorrow should be deep as the person's that is suffering; I should have a heart at leisure from itself, to sympathise with another. Death has left you stranded here; I can come

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

to you in your solitude, and acquaint your heart with a deeper solitude. You get in the Gospels two alabaster boxes, very different in kind. The one is spent upon a living Christ, the other for His burial. Everything went into His grave.

One verse more before I close (Eph. iii. 17), "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;" that He Himself may be in you. Now when was that said? After they were blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. They were to be occupied with the One that brought them to heaven, to that wondrous domain, to the plenitude of God Himself. There you are to learn the love of Christ outside of everything on earth. You are to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fulness of God. The Lord lead us, beloved friends, practically to understand this. It is not said of the Church only, but of the individual, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." What I want to lay upon your heart is the wonderful effect of the love of the Father and of Christ. First, the nature of the love; then the effect of it. I know the love of that heart—I can turn to it. I mention things to him—I know the love is there. The books of faith do mischief to the soul. They lead you to form your idea of the love from the way it acts. I know the love, whatever its acts may be. People delight to read things to prove to them that God cares for them. What poor love it is that requires demonstration. The one that loves me best I would not ask for proof of it. It is a very rare person that I do not know how much he cares for me. It is not doing a thing that would prove it. Why the smallest thing done by a hand that cares for you carries with it a fragrance that the mightiest thing done by one who does not care for you never could have. What I want you to under-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

stand is, how the Lord has set Himself to make known His love to you, and to declare the Father's name. The Lord grant we may each of us practically understand it. We shall have the very same future with Christ. Well each of us may bless the Lord for the very word of truth now brought before us through His grace, and may go on our journey here rejoicing, to the praise of His name. Amen.

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Translated from the Italian of J.N.D.

CHAPTER XVI.

Now from the beginning of chap. xvi. down to the end of chap. xx. we have the public ministry of Paul among the Gentiles during many years when he has commenced his apostolic ministry, (as under the grace and direction of the Lord, head of the work) having undertaken it, it being laid upon his heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, and taking with him first of all Silas, and afterwards other co-labourers—but always to help him—in a work, in which by the authority of the Lord and led of the Spirit, he held the first place; the activity, the direction, and the movement proceeded from him, the others who accompanied him, being only co-labourers and being under his direction; but he stands alone now as apostle of the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 13; Eph. iii; Rom. i. 13, 15; Gal ii. 7, 8).

We have seen that now Barnabas has separated himself. Paul (1 Cor. iii.) as a wise masterbuilder has laid the foundation; others worked independently, as Barnabas,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Apollos, etc. But Paul had the revelation of the mystery of the Church, and the administration of the economy among the Gentiles to found and set in order everything (1 Cor. xvi. 1; vii. 17; and many other passages). Timothy, and Titus, and Silas, and many others named in his epistles, laboured under his direction, and he sent them wherever the exigencies of the work required. He had already taken with him Silas, and now, having returned to Lystra and Derbe, he chooses Timothy to whom the brethren bore a good testimony.

It appears that Paul laid his hands upon him (2 Tim i. 6), the young man having been marked out by prophecy, as he had been himself: then the testimony of the elders was added, and they also laid on their hands (1 Tim. iv. 14).

It is possible that Paul may have laid his hands upon him when he visited Derbe on his first journey.*

That, however, is not said; at the same time, it was known by the brethren of Lystra and of Iconium, as also at Derbe; prophecy had marked him out; and the testimony of all, manifested by the laying on of the hands of the elders, confirmed it. Paul conferred on him the gift of the Spirit (2 Tim. i. 6, 7) by the laying on of his hands, although it may not be said openly when.

It is quite possible that he might have been active already in that locality, but he was specially gifted for the present work by that imposition of hands of the apostle.

There yet remains a special fact to remark upon. Confusion had entered into the practical life of the Jews,

* In chap. xx. 4, the reading should be: "and Gaius and Timotheus of Derbe." Gaius was not of Derbe. The difference is only in the punctuation.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

as among the Christians. The mother of Timothy was a Jewess, his father a Greek; a thing unlawful among the Jews. His mother was pious; it is not said if it was before his conversion or after; also his grandmother was so (2 Tim. i). Now such a marriage was totally contrary to the custom of the Jews (see Neh. xiii. 23-31; Ezra ix. x.) According to these books, the sons and daughters were heathen, and ought to be rejected, and sent away, as well as the wife. It was a disorder. Paul availing himself, not of the law, but of the privileges of grace, and thinking of the Jews, of whom there were many in those regions, circumcises Timothy. This was not according to Judaism; on the contrary, it was against its order, but he took away what would have been a stumblingblock for the Israelites. It was pleasing to the Jews; he did it to gain them; in a word, it was not a legal act, quite the contrary. It was an act of superiority to the law. The Jews all knew that his father was a Greek; and the position of Timothy, his mother being a Jewess, was scandalous for them, and the apostle takes away the scandal. The hearts of the Jews would find themselves contented; and they would have had something to say if the son of a Greek, by whom his mother had been rendered impure, had presented to them the Gospel. It was an arbitrary act, but the scandal was taken away, and he went against the prejudices of his people. But when the Jews wished to force him to circumcise Titus he yielded to them not even for a moment (Gal. ii. 3-5).

At the same time, as they passed "through the cities they delivered the decrees of the apostles and the elders for to keep;" a perpetual testimony, if the Christian Jews should wish to put their brethren from among the Gentiles, under the law of Moses, that they acted against the thoughts and authority of the apostles and of the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

elders, of those whom the Lord had established for Christ by the Holy Ghost, who in the Jewish Church itself were as an authority. That the Judaizers were not in any way authorised by the chief men gives a source of joy to the Gentile brethren thus established in the faith.

And remark how the Christian faith is now spread throughout all the regions where Paul prosecuted his labours; and the number of those gathered together increased daily. Now we follow his labours in other countries and regions.

Here we find another precious truth: the perpetual direction of God by the way, be it directly by the Spirit, or be it by other intimations. Paul was sent to preach the Gospel to the entire creation under heaven; but that field is large, and so he labours under the authority of the Lord, the Son, who is over the house of God; as also He was announced as Lord and Saviour to poor sinners. They execute then this mission in Phrygia, and in the regions of Galatia. He had already commenced in Phrygia on his first journey, but now he enters Galatia, a large province, for the first time. These had suddenly gone astray from the right way, through the means of Judaizing Christians; people who wished, as we have seen, to join the law to Christianity. We possess the epistle written by the faithful care of the apostle to deliver them from their error; an epistle more severe than all, since they had taken away the divine foundation of righteousness and true holiness; more severe than that to the Corinthians, who had committed nevertheless sins more horrible than the heathen, and had got into deplorable disorder. He says all the good he can to the Corinthians, although he does not spare them as regards their deeds, but reproaches them; and also he

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

did not wish to visit them until they repented. But as to the Galatians he says nothing loving to commence with, but sets himself at once to reproach them, and at the end salutes no one. Troubled in his heart he does not know how to take them (iv. 20), he would wish to be among them in order to speak according to their wants. His love had not grown weak, but he travailed in birth again of them until Christ was formed in them. We see the power of the love of the blessed apostle. Moses weary, fatigued by the unbelief of the people, asks if he had brought forth all this people that he should carry them as a father. Paul, full of the love of Christ, is contented to do it a second time rather than lose them. He was their father in the faith; so powerful is the love of Christ in the heart!

Having crossed Phrygia and Galatia, the Holy Ghost forbids them to preach in Asia. Later he dwelt about three years in Ephesus, the capital of the province; and all Asia* heard the word of God. Arrived in Mysia they essay to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit of Jesus suffers them not. Having passed by Mysia, they come to Troas. There Paul has a vision in a dream. It was not the open direction of the Spirit: it was left to spiritual intelligence to understand the meaning. A man of Macedonia appeared to him, beseeching him to come and succour them.

As Paul lived in the things of God, he interpreted the vision as his mission, both by the knowledge he had of the thoughts of God, and of the wants of men, and passed over therefore at once into Macedonia.

Perhaps it is not very important, but we may remark here that for the first time we find the writer speak in the first

* Then it was the name of a province of the Roman Empire.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

person: "we endeavoured," that is to say, Luke, who has written the facts, becomes now the companion of Paul in his work.

Here the question presents itself, In what manner and to what extent can we expect the direction of God in our work? The answer is analogous to that which we have already given with respect to the intervention of God in order to liberate us from dangers. We cannot expect visible and sensible interventions; but we can expect with certainty the care and direction of God by His Spirit in the heart, if we walk with Him—"To be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding"—to be led by the Spirit if we walk in humility (Rom. viii. 14; (Col. i; see also Ps. xxxii. 8, 9). I do not doubt that if we walk with God and look to Him, the Spirit will put in our hearts the special things that He wishes us to do. Only it is important that we keep in memory the Word of God, in order that it may be a guard against all our own imaginations; otherwise, the Christian who lacks humility will do his own will, often taking it for the Holy Ghost. That is but the deceitful folly of his heart: first, that it knows them; secondly, taking it for the Holy Ghost; but I repeat, he who looks with humility to the Lord will be conducted by the Lord in the way; and the Holy Ghost who dwells in him will suggest to him the things which He wishes him to do. "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no one. . . . We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 15, 16).

Here then the apostle gathers that the Lord had sent him to Macedonia, and goes there. He stops at Philippi, the principal city of the country and a Roman colony. He commences, as he always does, with the Jews. It appears that there was not a synagogue there. It was

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the custom of the Jews to have their worship in such a case, as it is still, on the banks of a river. I believe, for the sake of purification. There were but a few women there; Paul contented himself with them, and spoke to them of Christ, and of salvation through Him. There was Lydia, a proselyte who worshipped the true God: she was among these women, had not the knowledge of Christ, but the piety which does not neglect the worship of the Sabbath day, in a far distant country, where it was not the natural occasion to observe it. The blessing is accorded at least to that one in whose heart this faithfulness is found. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia to attend to the things spoken by Paul. She was a Gentile, but brought to the knowledge of the only true God; and she is another example of the difference between conversion and the knowledge of salvation in Christ.

There were many such worshippers—their souls were wearied with the folly and iniquity of paganism, which was insufficient to satisfy the needs of the soul, and through grace they were turned to the only true God known among the Jews, and they frequented the Jewish worship, without being circumcised. They were called religious persons, persons who served God. They listened to the apostle more than the Jews, and were often the occasion of their jealousy: of this class was Lydia. See xvii. 17; xiii. 16; where it is said: "and ye which fear God." They are found without being named, in xiii. i. and distinctly v. 43, and also elsewhere.

Lydia is baptized with all her house; and Paul and his companions enter her house and dwell there. It may be said that now the assembly was founded at Philippi.

But the enemy is not satisfied to allow the work to make progress, without doing anything to oppose it.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

On the contrary, he works with deceit; he does not assail the work openly. He has the appearance of helping it, certainly not recognising Christ as Lord, because then he would no longer be Satan (the adversary), but flattering the apostle, in order to be able to mix himself up with the work of the Lord, to accredit himself with this union, and to spoil it at the same time. He acts thus with more finesse in order that Christians may be less wise to refute him, to be supported by the world (and Satan is the prince of it), will appear to be a great help to the progress of the Gospel. The enemy disguises himself, makes himself the friend of the servants of God and of the work; transforms himself into an angel of light. The Gibeonites with deceit made themselves the friends of Israel, and in consequence they were never conquered, as our friends are not conquered. Thus, when the Christian or the assembly, mixes itself with the world, the loss is always on the side of the Christian, because the world in its nature its always with its motives, but the flesh is always in the Christian. He may draw near to the world, but not the world to the Spirit. The testimony, however is lost. Wine mixed with water is no longer pure wine, it has lost its taste. The friendship of the world is enmity against God.

The world seems amiable when it draws near to Christians and their testimony, but it draws near to Christians to spoil their testmony, and to put itself in esteem; but to Christ it cannot draw near.

The spirit of Python can flatter the servants of God in order to gain them; it can speak of God, of the most high God, even of the way of salvation, but not of Christ Lord and Saviour, of the state of sin and guilt in which man is, in which he is lost. That would be to confess

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

that he who says such things is lost. That is quite another story. When the world unites itself to Christians their testimony is lost, and the fault is always that of the Christians. They accept the world, because they have already lost true spirituality, the love of Christ rejected by the world, the love of the holy glory of His cross in which His heavenly glory was exhibited in this world.

But the apostle does not seek to excite the enmity of Satan, he does not accept that testimony, he keeps himself ever separate, neither does he act so as to change it into open opposition. He continues quietly on his way. At last he can no longer bear the voice of the unclean spirit, it being so grievous to his heart that he associated himself with him: he casts him out by the power of the Holy Ghost. Suddenly the enmity of the natural heart under the influence of the world is revealed. And that influence is more fatal for man than the possession of the body and faculties.

The Lord drove out the legion with a word, but the world, frightened by the manifestation of divine power, cast out Jesus from its confines. Similarly here, the demon being cast out, the masters of the damsel, through human motives to which the demon lent himself, seeing that their gain was lost, stirred up a persecution against Paul and Silas.

What the servants of the most high God do, is now of no consequence. Man's god is money, power and human glory. Satan never wishes that the power of God should be cast out. To be recognised, accredited, to join himself to the excellency of the truth pleases him, because he knows well that true power is with God, and thus that which remains of the truth in effect increases his influence, for that is now only increased, not destroyed. He will speak sufficiently of the truth to deceive Christians

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

if it were possible, in order that such as he is as prince of the world, he may not the less be in light.

The pure light manifests him, and thus is it that Christianity, and Christians, less wise than the apostle, have mixed themselves with the world, and the result is that Christianity lies under the power of Satan. The apostle did not act thus; but now it is quite possible that persecution will arise, and that is what came to pass here. If the enemy cannot accredit himself with the Gospel, he will oppose it.

BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM!

OR, THAT WHICH PRODUCED THE REVIVAL.

In a letter which we have received from J. B. S. we have the following:—

. . . "I quite believe 'Philadelphia' will last to the end. In one sense it has always existed; but when the cry raised about fifty years since awoke up the slumbering saints, when the word, with power, reached souls—'Behold the Bridegroom! go ye forth to meet him'—then, I say, 'Philadelphia' (Rev. iii.) came out in new and brilliant colours; and though there was nothing outwardly to boast of, yet, it was a great sight in the eyes of angels, to see the 'grave-clothes' removed—the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free practically known—the time-honoured institutions—endeared by the most sacred associations — separated from because on enquiry, on comparing them with the word of God—they had no authority for their rules and regulations; when not only the safety of the soul was the end of all ministry, but the desire and labour to help one another in the knowledge of Christ.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

The universal effect on every awakened one was that there was no food for his soul in the system in which he found himself. The faithful course of a few with very imperfect knowledge produced an astounding effect. The seats of learning and the centres of theology were stirred by this great moral revolution. Habits of life in private and public were subjected to the scrutiny of the Word of God: everything—dress, furniture, and employments, were required now to be in conformity with a new rule of life, namely Christ. The Holy Ghost was relied on as the only power for testimony; and it is here the first step of declension has occurred.

No sooner had the evangelistic work become ardent and engrossing, than the pastor's and teacher's service began to decline; and with this increase of seeking souls in the world, arose the use of human means in reaching them. The Spirit of God was not simply and entirely relied on; and, corresponding with the means and the increase of human means to obtain congregations, there has been a manifest falling off in the supply and devotedness of the pastors and teachers. I am not excusing the pastors and teachers; far from it—I say the world has hindered them: but I say the Evangelist introduced and gave countenance to the use of human means, and this has produced, when generally accepted, a weakness corresponding to the strength required in the department of each. I think, had there been an increase in every department as well as in one, different results would have been apparent, though I think the zeal in the one has not been without a stooping to man, which has tended to enervate every where.

The Spirit of God has not been honoured: hence there is not the same care and earnest service to the saints; the gifts are undeveloped; and the gifted men are connected

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

with things in private and public, which, though not morally wrong, deter them from being very powerful expositors of the life of Jesus: for a man cannot really press on another, what he is not living out for himself. Thus worldliness and decline have set in wide spread; though, I doubt not that there is a deepening in many souls of affection to Christ, and waiting for Him; and as when He left this earth He saw in the crowd one who answered fully to His mind, "She hath cast in all the living that she had." So when He returns there will be a phase of the Church, though unseen to man, most pleasing to Him—"The Spirit and the Bride say, come."

THE SPHERE OF CHRIST'S POWER.

I DESIRE, beloved friends, to shew you, not only what power is, but *where* the sphere of power is—where it works.

We have two things in Mark ii. 1-12; one is what Christ does *for* us, and the other what He does *in* us. These are very distinct things in themselves. What He does in us is seen in the body. This is what people too much overlook. They are saved, and they go on satisfied with that, as if the body had nothing to do with it. Now this was exactly the Corinthians. They did not want grace, but they did not look to it that the body should be the exemplification of that grace. I am sure of this —there is more grace in people than they shew, and what is the reason of this? Why, there is something hindering. But where is the hindrance? There own bodies—the working of the flesh. When I come to the second part, we shall see how this is to be dealt with.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

To-night we shall consider where the sphere of the power is now.

And first, to clear the ground—not because it is necessary to dwell upon the facts of what Christ has done for us. Generally I find people at the bottom are quite clear about this, if they are not always clear and certain about what Christ does *in* them—the simplest thing in the ministry of Christ is when He comes to a poor powerless man, and sets forth and displays His power. The first two chapters of this gospel are one series. Our Lord is here looking at everything as it was, but as a man come into the world able to remove every character of trouble and grief to which man was liable. That is the great thing, here was a man upon the earth able to deal with every class of evil, and remove it. He takes every class. Not every variety of a class, but every class of evil. I will shew you here four classes—four different varieties of disease from which man suffers.

Turn to the first chapter and 23rd verse, and read to the 28th, here we find satan has found entrance into a man. Not into every man, though no man is safe from him; and it is very important to get hold of this fact. An unconverted man has no safeguard against satan, because man is not able to keep out satan. There never was a man yet able to expel satan except one—the Lord Jesus Christ—and the moment he expelled him, the devil cried out you are not a man, you are more than man, you are the holy one of God. No man could expel him before. God could of course. The wonderful thing now is that a *man* has power over satan, and can lift off the burden from the shoulders of a man, whatever that burden may be. The judgment is on the body, but while resting on the body, the spirit also suffers. And now satan enters man. But there is a man here

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

who has power over satan, and the Lord rebuked him, saying, "Hold thy peace and come out of him." The devil had said, "art thou come to destroy us? They thought that He had come to cast them down to the abyss, as we see in scripture He will. "I know thee who thou art—the holy one of God." He does not own Him as a man at all. But He is there as a man, and this is quite a new thing. And I too, as a man connected with Jesus—I too can defy satan. I am a man by birth, but I am more distinctly so as born of Christ than ever I was as born of Adam. I more and more distinctly belong to the new creation than ever I belonged to the old. I am more distinctly so because of this great work of Christ. I am a brother of the risen man. I am a brother to the dying man by birth, but that is broken into by Christ now by divine power, and He says, "My brother." That is the new creation. I belong to this man. The Lord utters just one word, and satan leaves the man. "Hold thy peace and come out of him," and he came out immediately. *There* is power for you, if you want power. He speaks the word and it is done. There is not the slightest parade about it. And this is always so marvelr lous about the works of God. When we come to speak more of the character of power, we shall find that one great characteristic of power is quietness. People are always quiet in power. When it is a master, or a father, or whoever he is. When he has power, he is quiet. Man as man can do nothing quietly. He must make a noise about it; when I watch the growth of a vegetable or a flower, I say this is divine. It proceeds noiselessly, therefore I say that is God's hand.

I turn now to the second class. I cannot dwell upon these instances. The second is merely to note another class. In the 30th verse, Simon's wife's mother lay sick

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

of a fever. Here He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up, and straightway the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. It is another class. This is the excitement of nature. A person might be in a temper in what he is doing or in haste, and we say "you are quite in a fever about it." Here the Lord takes her by the hand, and lifts her up. He does everything in a different way. He has not one sovereign remedy for all. He has a particular one for each.

The third class is in the 40th verse. A leper comes to him. That is outward evil, and He puts away this by touching it.

Now I come to the chapter I read from, and I bring before you the palsied man—a man characterized by perfect powerlessness. The others had some strength remaining in them, this one had none. And this is what I think marks it so much, and which may be of immense help to your souls, is his perfect powerlessness. He could do nothing, and he himself received everything. And he receives it from God, and knows it is a perfect thing he receives. If God does the whole thing, it must be well done. And this is the great thing that the soul finds out in grace—that *He* has done it. This is practically what characterizes the man in the 7th Romans. He has uot a bit of power left. He could do nothing, could not stoop to pick up a crumb. That is when you get power. When you have nothing, and can do nothing, then you must receive everything. It is then a very simple thing for the heart. God has done it all for me, and it must be well done. When you come with nothing—no power—nothing the soul wants to retain—then what comes out is the simplicity of grace and power. When the palsied man goes forth, grace comes out in its fulness. See how it acts, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.' He does not touch

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the palsied man—does not heal him first, but forgives his sins. He goes down to the root of the work. Now I find His perfect grace, by the necessity of perfect powerlessness. That is what the poor soul has to do. Come with perfect powerlessness, and you will unlock the heart of Christ. Here, then, are the four classes, and the Lord has power over each and all, and the delight of His heart is to shed forth this grace. He looks for a scene where He can display all the benign influences of His love. The real attraction to Christ is that you are nothing. Like the syrophenician woman. I will be a dog, and come and pick up a crumb. You see it is the essential point. I have to learn that *He* has done it all.

Now let me say one thing in connection with this, to make it a little plainer. You see Christ does it all for us. He is sent from God to do it. He comes from God to meet the mind of God about the sinner. He does not come to meet the mind of the sinner about God. Now, I know people press it this way. And though it is true, it is not the whole truth. I may say I am perfectly certain I paid an account to the last farthing, and yet, my creditor might grumble because he does not think it is paid. And so long as this is the case the matter is not settled—cannot be said to be settled. Now, we could not say we have paid the Lord the last farthing. No one knows what there is in his own heart. No one knows the extent of his sins. He knows a little—some half dozen sins and failures—but he does not know half of what goes on there. "If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." I say, then, that what you have to learn is, that *God has satisfied Himself,* and that is quite a different thing. Thus Christ came to meet the mind of God about sin. Hence, the moment Christ is revealed to my soul as the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

one in glory, I see He has satisfied the heart of God about me, a sinner. It is God's satisfaction I have got. It is not, "I know I have paid the last farthing, and have got the receipt in my pocket." The whole truth is I have got the satisfaction of God touching the work done for my salvation, and that is acceptance. Hence a Christian is "accepted in the beloved." That every believer has, though he may not know it. Every believer is like a prince who is born to a kingdom, but does not know it, till he is grown up. Does not enjoy it. He is heir to a throne, but he has not got it—does not know it—has not got intelligence about it. Thus souls do not know what they have got. That is acceptance. That is what Christ has wrought. Now do not be thinking I state it too strongly—I could not—you never can improve your acceptance, and what is more you never can lose it. Your soul may be darkened without it, but that is another thing, you can never lose it, nor alter it. You have no hand in it whatever.

WHOLLY AND SOLELY JESUS.

HAD I even Simeon's righteousness, piety, revelations, and every gift he possessed, I would, with him, (Luke ii. 25-32,) willingly forget and forsake them, living or dying, in order to exchange them for the child Jesus—Israel's only consolation. It is matter of astonishment, adoration, and delight to see how the Lord can induce us to let everything go—everything appears so frivolous, unsatisfying, trifling, and superficial—even good and religious things which formerly gave much gratification, and of which we were so tenacious, but which for that very reason served only to interpose between us and God, and were injurious because they were held so fast. Jesus alone is sufficient, but yet insufficient, when He is not wholly and solely embraced.

The Bible Herald 1877

THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.

"I JESUS have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—Rev. xxii. 16, 17.

I wish to speak of what appears to me to be especially on the Lord's mind at the present time. How little one apprehends it; still we ought to be occupied with it. It may be that something good occupies us; but it does not follow that it is the right thing at this present time.

It is important we should see that we are at the end of our journey, and that not simply individually, but that church history is atthe end. Nevertheless, the Lord has not left us without a thought from Himself now.

The knowledge of Scripture is not sufficient without knowing what the Lord is doing at this moment. "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." I trust every heart here bows to it. What is the prominent thought in my Lord's mind at this moment? I believe many a person would be set straight in his course if he were in the secret of the Lord's mind, and that you never can get, if you are not with Him. Gideon never told the multitude the order of battle, but to the three hundred that could stand the earthly favour, the water, he committed the secret, "as I do, so shall ye do." It is simple devotedness that qualifies one for receiving this wonderful favour. "Greater

The Bible Herald 1877

love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Well, if you would *die* for the saints, He would tell His mind to you. Tell me what is really your love for the people of God — Christ's interests? Are they dear to you because they are Christ's? I believe it would be immense blessing to us all, if in the very smallest circumstances we had before us what he is doing. I might be occupied with a very useful line of Scripture, and still not be in His mind. I find there was always some one thing peculiarly before Him. One finds contiuually people are not up to it. The disciples, however true and faithful, were not travelling in company with His mind at all; and what He seeks is, to lead them to it. They do not understand Him, but it is the thing He is leading them to. He told them of His death, and they did not enter into it; neither did they follow Him as to His resurrection; they were weeping because He had died. After His ascension the Holy Ghost was the great thing before His mind. After Pentecost the Church was the prominent thing. What was the cause of their trouble? They had not His mind, they were not in the secret of his working.

I turn to the end of the third chapter of Revelation. The Lord leads His people to what He is about to do and doing. When I am watching for His mind what He would do, I am not guided by circumstances. Supposing I heard of a great number of conversions I should be thankful for it, but if I am in His mind I am not carried away by it, because I know there is another thing more prominently before Him. Sincere people can go on in a great way of usefulness and yet be apart from His mind, and therefore they are not told "the thing that I do."

I see here at least four phases of decline. First,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Ephesus, with zeal in non-toleration of evil, but forgetting Christ, while they were exemplary in discipline—they had left their first love. The second is Pergamos—mixing with the world. The third, Thyatira—idolatry. The last is indifferentism, no discipline at all,—that is Laodicea. There is the danger of oscillating between the first and the last. You will find in all the dispensations, before there is a setting aside of that which God set up for Himself on earth, there is a revival. You will find in the ways of God there is always revival even though removal be determined on. No restoration, but a last revival. There is a revival of the original standing before the final crash, before the entire removal of the dispensation. The snare then is settling down with self-congratulation as to one's advantage or blessings, — a separation between them and responsibility. Jacob at Shechem has got back to the land after twenty years absence, and after the night of wrestling, he seeks to enjoy his blessings, but forgets his calling. The children of Israel, after all that terrible journey from Babylon to the land, when opposed, for sixteen years discontinue building the temple. The house of the Lord lieth waste. They are satisfied with their standing; they become indifferent to their responsibility. "Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye ran every man into his own house."—Haggai i. 9.

The revival in Church history has come. Philadelphia is the revival. What follows? Laodicea,—which is boastfulness of the standing while slighting the responsibility to Christ, in which alone it could be maintained. To live Christ was the cardinal thing that should mark them. "The slothful man roasteth not that which he

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

took in hunting." The closing hour has come. Are our hearts seeking to learn what is the mind of the Lord at this closing hour? In my judgment Philadelphia is waning. It is not that there are not many in the grace of it, but its moral influence with greater pretension is not what it was with a fewer number.

When the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom" was first begun to be heard, satan attempted to neutralise it in a most malicious way; namely, some of the most ardent and foremost of those presenting the truth of the immediate coming of the Lord, preached and pressed that as believers had not the gift of the Holy Ghost they could not meet the Bridegroom, and therefore they should pray for the descent of the Holy Ghost, thereby diverting the minds of the saints from the coming of the Lord to the descent of the Holy Ghost. From this grievous subtlety many were preserved or restored by the simple truth that the Holy Ghost had come down, and that every believer coming to Christ did drink of Him.

The cry came and the grace to answer it—"I am He that is holy and He that is true." What was the practical effect of the answer to the call? Some were exercised; others were afraid to look into it. Many hold dispensational truth now without affecting them practically. The truth has lost its force for them. Laodicean indifference has set in. I believe the great thought on the Lord's mind now is, to save and extricate His people from indifference, from the wave of Laodicea, which has set in. Church barriers are relaxed or disregarded; no church order is now insisted on, except by Romanists, as indispensable. The truth has lost its force on souls. It is not that the truth itself is weakened, but a wonderful amount of truth can be accepted without effecting any change.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

The Lord in His address to Laodicea sets forth the truth needed for this time. "I am the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God." Man in his natural condition (see John ii. 1) is irreparable. John iv. is the antithesis to John ii. The Lord begins with a new creation. There is a great deal of truth current at this time, but it is so weak that it does not address the conscience. I am always thankful when a word lays hold of me. There is a certain effort abroad to make the Word pointless, and to reduce it to a mere matter of opinion. It is said, "You may state that as an opinion, but do not state it as a truth, for then it dictates to the conscience, and then it is resisted." How then does the Lord work at such a time? He says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock." The knowledge of Himself personally is now the great thing that goes above all dispensational truth, which reaches and affects souls when the other has been inoperative; and when He is personally known now, it is not only that He presents Himself as the Morning Star, but as the *Bright* and Morning Star. He is more attractive as the Coming One. He draws out our affections more to Himself. The one answering to it is getting ready for Him, as the day becomes darker here. The Lord, I believe, does not confine His knocking to any company of saints, but every one who opens to Him is learning from Him to be ready for Him, and walking in Philadelphian ways here. We have failed in maintaining Philadelphian ways characteristically; that is, we have failed before men. We have not collectively presented Christ to the world, still we can and should cultivate affection to Christ. "The Spirit and the Bride say Come." We should be like the widow in Luke xxi. in heart and ways banded together, to give up all for Christ. The Church may be lost in the mass of Laodicean

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

profession, but she should have her heart occupied with and governed by the Bright and Morning Star; and as we are looking out for the Bridegroom, and ready for Him, we shall be in Church order here. Many a zealous servant who puts one to shame, would not go on with *what he has embarked in, had he known what the* Lord is doing. Servants get instruction as to their course, either from the necessities of man or from following the Lord. The philanthropist cannot go beyond human benevolence. Divine love cares for the object eternally, even where the object has no need. The philanthropist only cares in time.

I believe there is a very distinct action going on around. We ought to be in the current of that action. He is teaching us what He is personally. The closing phase has come. It is not now any particular church testimony, though there would be the Philadelphian separation and ways, which the Bride's raiment or adorning morally must entail. Rev. xxi. furnishes one with the moral character of the Bride, for she suits Christ. It is the Bridegroom that forms the Bride. I get into the very things that would suit Himself, because it is association with Himself that makes me learn of Him.

Many are making evangelisation the chief thing; it is *part* of the work which Christ is doing, but it is not *all* that He is doing. The order of this verse (Rev. xxii. 17) is the true order. From occupation with Christ and the saints, as we come from that we can truly descend. "The Spirit and the Bride say Come." I want all the saints to join. The heart full of affection can put no object between it and Christ. The very greatness of the object delights and captivates the heart. "The Spirit and the Bride say Come; and let him that heareth say come; and let him that is athirst come." Do you think a man would be a worse evangelist because he goes with

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

his heart full of what Christ is? "Let him take of the water of life freely." That is evangelising in its fulness; and it may be a very small work in appearance—nothing to show.

The Lord lead our hearts to understand this wonderful thing now; and to answer to what His mind is set on. Amen. J. B. S.

OCCUPIED WITH THE LORD HIMSELF.

John xx. 19-23.

ALLUSION has been made to the great importance of our having clear knowledge of what the Lord's mind is concerning us in these closing days; and I have read this Scripture, in connection with the latter part of the epistle to the assembly in Laodicea, which has already been brought before us, to call attention to the fact that during the whole period of the Lord's absence, His own ministry is characterised by the presentation of Himself. We see here that Christ began His ministry to His disciples after His resurrection by presenting Himself, and we know also that he opened to them the Scriptures concerning Himself; and in His last address, which was to the Laodiceans, He knocks and calls to any faithful one to open the door to Himself, for He wants to feast with any who will open the door to Him. During the whole of the time of His absence we know that the Holy Ghost is here to testify of Christ to our souls, to take of His things and shew unto us. So one thing is perfectly certain that it is the Lord's mind that our hearts should be occupied with Himself.

A precious thought here for our souls is that the Lord looks after us, cares for us, and seeks to make us happy in Himself. It is not our looking up to Him, important and blessed as it is, but He opens His heart to us, and

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

would have us know what His thoughts about us are, and that we are constant objects of His active ministry while He is in heaven and we are still in the world. We must not forget that there is such a thing as being interested in truth without being taken up with Christ, who is the truth; but it is assuredly His will that we should "*grow* in grace, and in *the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*"

Through these precious Scriptures we are able to look a little into our Lord's heart. It was only a short time before this precious scene we have just read that he had died upon the cross. Men hated Him without a cause. They perseveringly cried out "Away with Him," "Crucify Him," so that when He was taken down from the cross, and laid in a sepulchre, the world seemed to have got rid of Him, and all appeared to be over. Not so, however, for He rose from among the dead. He came out of the sepulchre in the power of resurrection. He was on new ground, outside the world, the other side of death. *Now*, what does Christ do? Whose company does He seek? Who on earth are the objects of His solicitude? Who? His heart turns to the few poor disciples He had left behind. He seeks not the rich, the noble, nor the mighty; but he seeks out the timid, faltering disciples. They were the objects of His affection and care. He found them sad and terrified, or shut into a room for fear of the Jews, yet He did not leave them until they were full of joy and gladness; and the way He effected it was by revealing Himself, and expounding unto to them the Scriptures concerning Himself.

The blessed Lord having found His distressed disciples, first of all establishes them on the true ground of peace—His own accomplished work on the cross—He said, "Peace be unto you; and when He had so said He shewed unto them His hands and His side." We have

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

here the assurance of peace based upon His own *work* on the cross, as His hands and side shew, and brought to us by His own infallible *word* "Peace be unto you." Having Himself made peace, He does not tell them to look at themselves, their feelings, or doings, but at Himself—"His hands and His side"—and to rest on His word, "Peace be unto you."

Thus they were drawn away from themselves, their fears, and their circumstances, to Himself—the One who had loved them and given Himself for them. And while they were thus contemplating Him, and all the wondrous love He had manifested toward them in having suffered for their sins, the Just for the unjust, while they gazed upon Him as the mighty Conqueror of death and Satan, in rising from among the dead, while they were thus engaged with Him what was the result? We are told, "*Then* were the disciples glad when they *saw the Lord.*" They were made very happy in Him. Thus, while we see that the *work* of Christ is the ground of peace, we also learn that the *person* of Christ is the true source of joy. "Then were the disciples *glad* when they *saw the Lord.*" This is a precious secret for our hearts. Some of the Lord's people imagine that they cannot be "glad" as long as they are in circumstances of sorrow, but this is not true. The Lord did not alter the circumstances of those disciples who were "shut in for fear of the Jews," but He shewed them Himself, and this raised them above their circumstances, so that they were "*glad* when they *saw the Lord.*" Again, in the first chapter of Peter's first epistle, you see saints in great trial, and through persecution scattered abroad, homeless, and it may be houseless, friendless, and in other sorrowful experiences, but looking to Him whom having not seen they loved, they "rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory," without any part of their sorrowful circumstances having been altered.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Well, indeed, it is to be so taken up with the Lord Himself as shall enable us to "Rejoice in the Lord always!"

Then, observe, when these disciples were thus established by our blessed Lord on the true ground of peace, and made happy in Himself, He then sends them out into service—"As the Father has sent me, even so send I you." Thus we see that every believer has a mission. The Lord keeps us here for His service. He gives us each our work. If any believer wants to know what his line of service is, he can only have it from the Lord Himself. Thus happy in the Lord, he goes forth as sent by the Lord. In this way, true service connects us with the Lord Himself, and we prove that His yoke is easy and His burden light.

Then we are told that Christ "breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The Lord being now alive again from the dead, in resurrection life and power, communicated to His disciples what could not have been given before, risen life—life in the Spirit,—by breathing on them. I need not say this is not the coming of the Holy Ghost, the other Comforter, because after this they were told by our Lord, in the first of Acts, that they should be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

There is another point of great interest in this Scripture, it is Christ assuring His disciples (not apostles) that He will be so with us here, that, "Whosesoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosesoever sins ye retain they are retained." The Lord said something like it in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. Speaking of church discipline, He said, "If he neglect to hear the assembly, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. . . .

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

For wheresoever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Now what seems so sweet in these statements is that the blessed Lord so identifies Himself with us in our service to His name, that He will confirm and put His seal on acts of discipline; and in this way so binding or loosing, remitting or retaining sins, as to ratify in heaven what we, as gathered in His name and by the power of His Spirit, may do on earth for His name's sake. It is very solemn, but it surely brings the Lord in His great love very near to us, and in matters often very sorrowful to our hearts. I need not say there is no idea here of priestly absolution, nor of any absolution as to justification and eternal life.

The more we know of the Lord Himself, and His love and care for His own, the more will He become the satisfying object of our hearts. And this true enjoyment of Christ, who is the holy and the true, can alone keep us, I believe, from drifting into Laodicea. We are enjoined elsewhere to look away from other objects unto Jesus, to consider Him, to abide in Him, for surely Christ Himself is the true object of faith. To the most failing He knocks, and faith opens the door to Him; and observe, Christ takes the initiative, and desires our fellowship. He says, "I will come into him and sup with him, and he with Me." Blessed be His name, this is His desire toward us even in the worst state of things ecclesiastically. What love, yea, what patient, matchless grace!

Is it not clear, then, beloved brethren, that it is our Lord's mind that however failing be the state of things spiritually round about us, that we should be *individually* taken up with the Lord Himself, and be learning increasingly of Him? And is it not also clear, that, however important other matters may appear to be, we cannot be according to His mind if we are not living by faith upon

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the Lord, and drawing our help and blessing from Him? We may be assured that nothing will make up for lack of personal intercourse with Christ. May our hearts, then, be more and more entering into His perfections and love, which will not only save us from ten thousand snares, but keep us happy under the most trying circumstances, and make the Lord's coming our bright and blessed hope!

H. H. S.

JESUS THE SON OF GOD.

Lecture by W. KELLY.—John i. 29-43.

THE great truth that underlies the Gospel of St. John is the Godhead of that man who was thus walking on the earth, I do not mean merely in its explicit statement of Him, but in that which implies it constantly, as is ever more wonderful to him that attentively weighs the word of God. Thus His divine glory comes out in the most indirect ways and unexpected forms; hence souls grow in strength by that infinite display of love—Jesus nowhere more truly God than when a man. He was indeed a man: but this was little or nothing in itself, unless He were God. Then what a truth and what love! what humiliation on His part; what infinite blessing to man, at least to the souls who believe! The word was made flesh; but He was the true God; and hence it is that we find, whenever He speaks or acts, by whatever the Spirit of God traces Him, Godhead is there behind the veil.

John the Baptist's testimony here has quite a different character in itself, and another effect on the soul from what we find in the other Gospels. Where else does He treat of Him as the Lamb of God? The Messiah, the coming King, the perfect Servant engaged in the work of God, the woman's Seed and Son of man; these we do find elsewhere, but here we have Him as the Lamb of God in

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

a far more comprehensive relation than with the old and favoured people. He is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. Thus it is that He is presented in a universality of blessing through His work that could not be in any one but a divine person. Certain it is that He is shewn here habitually in this character. "This is the Son of God."

Hence it is not in the Gospel of John a question of the dispensations that disappear or succeed one another, but of what is vital and unchanging because divine. Hence, too, therefore, it is when dispensations have passed away that the full meaning of such a word as this is realised. It is not particularly now, nor in the age that follows, but in the eternal state, that it will be manifest that He is the Lamb of God who taketh away (not our sins as believers, but) sin in its totality. We know how it is usually quoted for a sense altogether different. It is not really to meet that which we are found in and forgiven by faith in His blood, but then the world shall be clean rid of it all. Sin will have vanished wholly from the universe. What a testimony to His glory, who by His work effects it all!

I refer to this prevalent error the more plainly and pointedly, because souls may be suffering under the influence of this too common confusion in things which so materially differ. It is not a question of the saint on earth in whom the Spirit of God dwells. The error helps on the delusion of satan, not alas! outside, but in Christendom. There is the subtlest snare for man. It is Babylon.

What is Babylon then? Is it not the cage of every unclean bird and beast? What havoc is not there, particularly of the truth! God has been most of all dishonoured there. It may be, as in the present case, by only one letter, but that letter makes all the difference between

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

truth and error. All Christendom then says or sings, Christ is the Lamb of God which taketh away the *sins* of the world. How blinding is worldly religion!

Can we not now register our growth in the truth by the words we used to say ignorantly but dare not repeat now at all? They are positively false. Indeed I know scarcely a more injurious error than this if logically carried out. Christ is the Lamb of God which takes away the sin, not the sins, of the world. One is a blessed truth, the other is a mistake with the gravest consequences. It is to enfeeble or destroy the peace of the believer, and to pillow unbelievers with hopes that work ruin to themselves, with dishonour to God and His Christ.

Nor do I believe that any bodies in Christendom have contributed to this error so much as those who boast of their liturgies. Remission of sins for faith is an integral part of the gospel; which supposes that the sins of unbelievers, far from being taken away or forgiven, will be the more sternly judged because of unbelief in Christ.

But this verse, misinterpreted as we have seen, has helped on the errors of Christendom from sub-apostolic days. It was among the delusions which gave impulse to the departure that undermined the gospel of God, nor am I aware of a single Protestant Confession which has cleared itself from perpetuating this error, though they differ widely enough otherwise.

The dissenters, too, who stand for extemporaneous prayer, are no better. If you went into a place where there is no prayer-book, you would find the self-same doctrine, and the same misuse of this very Scripture. So engrained is the error that, if you stated the truth, they would affirm that it was a distinction without a difference. Thus everywhere the truth of God is entirely set aside for tradition, which is man's thought and subversive always of God's truth. The only party that succeeds in

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

a compromise is satan's synagogue. Where souls in the forms of prayer are habitually fed with such an error as this, it is vain for the pulpit to assert the truth opposed. The heart prefers error to truth, for the truth exalts God and humbles man. And satan is striving to lower the person of Christ, to whom that word testifies. Hence it is, no matter what you take up, though it were a "Life of Christ," the uniform tendency is to dishonour Him, and in the same proportion to blot out the real difference between believers and unbelievers in relation to Him. There may be every kind of reverent language and pious desires, but it will never suffice for God without the truth, that is, Christ. Error puts all down on the same level, but this gives, in vain, everything to the world, as it takes away every distinctive blessing from the believer. They humanise Christ and they deify man as he is. How full and refreshing the testimony of God Christ as His Lamb taking away the sin of the world in due time; the same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost (verses 29, 33). They are the two works of the Lord Jesus, in the words of John the Baptist, His great earthly and His great heavenly work. We must not confound the bearing of our sins in His own body on the tree with taking away the sin of the world, as He will, for the new heavens and the new earth. When it is a question of sin-bearing, it is our *sins* (1 Peter ii.); when it is a question of taking away, it is the world's *sin*. This is the ultimate effect of His work. The Spirit looks onward by John in the full sense of what Christ was eventually to accomplish, an immense work in connection with His divine glory. He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Hebrews ix. speaks of His purpose to put sin away. It is not the time when it was to be done, but the end for which He appeared. The work was effected on the cross; but the full results of the cross are not yet manifested.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

John bare record with another declaration, that he knew Him not. It was not to be in anything human. Of course the heavenly work needed a divine person. It is even more distinct, for who could give the Spirit thus? None but God could take away the sin of the world; and John knew Him not, though he came baptising in view of His manifestation to Israel. So also now there is an equally great heavenly work that He wrought at Pentecost, the effect of which still goes on. He Himself never was to be baptized by the Holy Ghost, which signifies the bringing entirely out of one position into another.

Quite another thing is said of Him. "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." We are said to receive the Holy Spirit of God unto the day of redemption. A believer is sealed now by the Spirit; an unbeliever at all times needs to be quickened. Were the unbeliever sealed, it would be woe to him; it would fix him (if it could be) in his state of ruin. "In whom after that ye believed ye were sealed." It is not a question of what the interval may be. It might be long or short. But no man is sealed the very instant he believes. First, there is the Spirit of God bringing him to judge himself and his sins before God. Thus is the soul born of God; he believes the gospel and finds peace. Men were cleansed by the word, or born of the Spirit, before the gospel. In reality it is the word by the quickening energy of the Spirit revealing Christ that effects this. The word brings home God's judgment of sins now instead of by and by. Hence it is mischievous to date a soul's conversion or quickening from the day when it is first awakened or made happy.

It is of the deepest consequence to bring souls to repentance, as much really as to bring them into peace. People talk often of having peace with God long before

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

they know what it means. They may have joy before. There may be a bright revelation to the soul through Christ which they are apt to call peace; but for solid peace the soul must have found its all in the work of Christ, entering by faith into God's mind about itself and Him. Consequently it can rest only in that full redemption of the Lord Jesus. Then the Holy Ghost seals. There can be no sealing until Christ and His work are thus rested on. The two things are distinct,—to be born of the Spirit of God, and to be sealed on the ground of Christ's redemption. When the soul has submitted to the righteousness of God, the Spirit seals it.

But our gospel is bringing us into the truth of Christ's person, as applied to whatever the Holy Ghost traces it here. He was not baptized by the Spirit, but He baptized others by the Holy Spirit. "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit," &c. There was an entirely special glory in our Lord's case. The Spirit was as the dove, not as in the day of Pentecost the rushing wind or the tongue of fire.

Yet was Jesus man, and joined those who confessed their sins and were baptized with water. But at that very moment the heavens opened and the Father's voice was heard, and the Holy Ghost descended on Him, but no baptism of the Spirit for Him, no power needed to bring Him out of the position in which He was to a new and a better one. It was as on man that the Holy Ghost came down, on Christ without blood; no sacrifice did He need, no offering for sin, for in Him was none. Yet it is the believer that most of all confesses what he is and what he has done, and the Holy Ghost not only descends, not only abides, as on Christ, but baptizes. It is the divine power that puts us in entirely new associations in and with Christ.

But the body is not the only great truth of God. It would be wrong to state that the baptism of the Holy

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Ghost effects it *alone*. The unity in John is very different from that of Paul. It is never the unity of the body, but that which is of Christ in us. Being thus formed by the Spirit of God, it has the character of deeper intimacy, and is rather family unity, giving communion of mind, feeling, and purpose. We have had the work of Christ on earth in respect to sin; before the work of redemption there could not be baptism of the Holy Ghost. The work must be laid as a basis which would glorify God and is to take away the world's sin. Now this work is done, and we can be thus baptized.

But many are quite incredulous. They hold that the Old Testament saints were just as much thus baptized; only we have better knowledge and can judge of everything, and so on. This is not the only error. They are doctrines that flow from a low estimate, if not of Christ, certainly of His work, and consequently there is no thorough judgment of sin or the world. Doubtless some would be disposed to talk of "peculiar views." How little have such souls been exercised by the word of God! We used, when denominationalists, to have peculiar views; we are getting rid of them now through the Lord's mercy.

The testimony of His work now follows the declaration of His person. So the two disciples heard Him speak, and followed Jesus. But we fail to see the force of this, unless we see who it was that gave the testimony. According to the Lord Jesus Himself, "Of all that are born of women, none was greater than His messenger John the Baptist. Yet the effect of it is that the disciples leave him for Jesus. "Behold the Lamb of God" had sunk into their hearts. Now we see this blessed result: they followed Jesus.

Here comes out the glory of the person of Christ. If

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

He had not been God, what a slight it would have been to have given up John the Baptist! John was the greatest of God's servants; but he says, "He must increase and I must decrease." God was there in the man Christ Jesus. This truth abides still, and we see it open out a little, when "Andrew findeth Simon and he brought him to Jesus" (ver. 42).

Now I want to shew that there is another truth of the highest possible importance taught in all this. God is not merely saving souls, but gathering to Jesus. Do we want to know what He is gathering for and what to? It is to Jesus. One was there, God, that was not only from the beginning, but who looked right on to the end; there may be other things to intervene, but once we find this immense landmark, what a change? Jesus is not merely a Saviour but a centre; and this is what the Spirit here brings before us. There is nothing else to give us both firmness and humility. It communicates a deep sense of what God has at first done and is still doing; for we are simply recovering what God has laid down in His word. It is what has long since slipped out of mind in Christendom.

This further truth I would now press on those that are here. It is not enough to have salvation, still less to have life in time, and forgiveness through His blood. God also gives us Christ as His one central object for gathering together. His love to us, His glory, would not be satisfied by conferring blessings on us. He makes CHRIST to be the one adequate and abiding centre for the saints on earth. If He had not been God, it would have been a derogation from His own honour; but as He is God equally with the Father, to own Him thus is the Father's joy. In all things the blessed servant of God, that Man alone was God, and in Him we find the true centre.

But the knowledge of Christ as the Lamb of God pre-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

cedes this, as we see here. Then God puts this desire into our hearts. The destroyer of the works of the devil, the deliverer from sin, attracts our hearts and we go forth to Him.—(Compare Heb. xiii. 13.) No person or polity, doctrine or creed, is worthy of such a place. It is due to Christ from all that are His. It is not a question of a centre by and by in heaven. Scripture shews us the value of Him now as the divinely-given centre on earth. So in Matt. xviii. 20, He says, "Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them." What a joy to have Him thus. We shall ever be around Him in heaven; but why defraud Him and our own souls of the privilege, not to say bounden duty, of the same principle now and on earth? It is His holy and unquestionable will about us; and we dishonour Him if we do not gather to Him here below.

Let me refer you to other Scriptures that prove the importance of it, as Matt. xii. 30. "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad." The believer is called to take his stand for and with Christ, and to make Him his one and continual centre for gathering souls to. It goes far beyond the fact that one believes; "for he that gathereth not with Me scattereth." The first is for myself, the second is for my work; and in both respects Christ is all. He is my Lord and Saviour, He is also my centre, and, in whatever way seen, He is in all His divine perfection the needed and the given One, and as His own God works that we should be gathered to Him and gather. There may be seductions and trials, and these not on one side merely, but on all sides. There may be fair appearances, efforts after union if not unity, and success may be claimed where Christ is not the centre. There may be sorrow and

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

shame where He is thus acknowledged, sometimes wrong done and sometimes a right thing in a wrong way. We are not to be moved on the one hand, nor to be insensible on the other. For where God's centre is owned in faith it is in general a question of grace and patience, though possibly at times a question of judgment, but all these things turn in the long run to Christ's glory, and then what joy for those who wait in faith!

Thus Christ as the centre for saints on earth becomes of the deepest practical moment. There may be all kinds of centres, but whatever they be they are rivals. Every one but Himself is repudiated by God's word, and really it would be an unworthy centre for His people were we to substitute for Himself anything in the Bible—say the highest truth—His body, the Church. For that very reason you would have not only a spurious centre, which has wrought infinite mischief, as we see in Catholicism, Romanism, &c., but besides the very narrowest of all narrow parties; you would merely have those that understand the Church of God. A similar result would follow if the Lord's coming became the central object and test for gathering to. We have been speaking to-day of the Lord's coming, and the very souls who would need most the loving gracious care of Christ, are the very persons who would then be rigidly shut out; for how little is their intelligence in this or anything else!

Where Christ is held to truly as the centre, it will be found that the affections freely flow towards all that He loves. If you have the true centre, can it be doubted that you will find yourself with the true circumference? It is His name by faith in it which alone gathers according to God, and those who answer to it are welcome to Him, and should be to us. Hence also it appears to me quite a mistake to set forth the Church or its principles

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

as the remedy for the present distractions of God's children, but to set souls right with Christ. I have never met a Christian who simply and fully entered into the liberty of Christ without also finding out the value of Christ as the true centre for saints. Let them only know Christ better and His redemption, and then follows the heart's decision to cleave to Him in every way. On the other hand, I have known many an one familiarly learning the Church, the Lord's coming, and other grand truths, who nevertheless remain in their old human associations. If we all owned the same person, work, and centre in Christ, we should all circle in harmony around Him.

But it is, alas! far from the fact; and men cleave each to their systems, which thus, whatever they may argue, become a rivalry of Christ. Nor should one wish to hurry any soul. Those who hear and refuse Christ as a centre should be left with the Lord. I have known those who seemed even spiritually-minded to turn out quite unsound in faith, so that if you had only known you would have thanked God for keeping such away. If then you are content with Christ as the centre, do you gather with Him, and He will approve it when He comes again.

But if you are not gathering with Him, what forfeits? O! what scattering; O! what an utter collapse of zeal and labour! Can you deny that His word warned you? Which is the case with you? To what centre are you really gathering? Have you the "open door" and Christ inside, Christ in the midst? Are you looking and labouring in the Spirit to that centre? He is worthy, He alone.

But there is another passage to be noticed briefly, in Mark ix. 40, "He that is not against us is on our part." Here it is a question of largeness of heart in what is wrought, and not of the paramount claims of Christ personally. Hence it is no longer "me" but "us," and "on

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

our part." "And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part." The danger is here of narrowness in service, not of speaking against the Son of Man and the Holy Spirit. The faithful should appreciate true service wherever it is, but can only gather with Christ. We have to bear this in mind. There is such a thing as work done in the name of the Lord Jesus, which is not done within the circle that is formed round the true centre. And what have we to do? Meddling as little as possible, we should heartily own whatever is done in His name, but cleave to Himself as our only security, as well as our joy and boast.

You may see often a servant of Christ in a false position yet blessed to others largely. Do you envy it? Or would you depreciate the work done? The Lord answers to the faith in His name without the least endorsing what even we regard with deep regret. Be content yourself to keep His word and not deny His name. Do not forget the distinction between the sovereignty of Christ's grace and the Christian's fidelity to His person. I can understand an unhappy man always murmuring, but those brought into the richest blessing may well rejoice like Paul in Phil. i. But do not confound largeness with laxity. Of all things under the sun there is in a saint nothing worse than looseness; but the more right we are by grace, the more we can afford to be gracious.

Cleaving to Christ, then, let us watch against the narrowness that is only occupied with our own things. If in Matthew we have Christ against satan, in Mark on the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

other hand we have the place we should give to a servant, even if not with us. The Lord Jesus did not, could not, say as regards Himself what He says about His service. Compare Luke ix. 50for the one and Luke xi. 23 for the other. The Gospel of Luke is pre-eminently full of great moral principles.

It is not then that we pretend to have what God does not give to all His children. But we want them to see all that Christ is to His own even on earth, as well as for them in their sins. We seek no party, and I dare say a big party is but a bigger evil. But there is only one thing which truly preserves from every snare to the glory of God, and that is Christ. Let Him then be the object of our souls. May we be kept by the Spirit in all subjection under His blessed name.

Nor is it only that we have the divine centre in Christ, in order to be thus kept from building up something that has to be taken down when He comes, but we are in the midst of dangers, and snares, and evil. How are we to be kept from these? By Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever. The same divine person provides for all the difficulties of every day. He is the light of life, as well as the centre for our zeal and labour. Every word of God is precious and profitable, as every Scripture is inspired of Him; but we need to read Christ in it to reap the full value; and for this we may count on the Spirit of God who is here to glorify Christ.

I do not believe that the word of God apart from Christ ever does suffice for His purpose or our blessing. The word written is meant to associate with Christ and not to dispense with Him. God has given us His word. So He says to Philip, "Follow me" (ver. 43). He is the *way* as well as the truth and life. How blessedly we

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

have Himself set out in the word! If a person is in difficulty and a situation opens out for him, he might think it providential; but he is required to do certain things he knows to be wrong. Is he then to follow Christ or evil? The voice of Jesus is heard, "Follow me." Thus in our whole path by His grace we have the same Christ that engages our affections and service. Is Christ, then, your object? He is the TRUE, the HOLY; and those that hear His voice will cleave to Him. Christ, who is the constant spring of blessing, is the safeguard of every saint in this world of vain shew.

The Lord, then, is "the way," as He expressly says of Himself in John xiv., as truly as He is the attractive centre; and we need Him quite as much for our way now on earth. Are we competent to pass safely through this wilderness where there is no way? Only by cleaving to Christ as the way. It is a great thing to work to Him, as well as from Him and for Him; but there is no adequate, no absolute, preservation from slips and deviations on our part, or from the misleadings of others, let them be ever so wise in the main, save by following Jesus. He only is the way. We have to "beware of men;" we do well to try by the word what saints say and do, but we may, we ought, to unreservedly follow this divine and divinely given way—our Lord Jesus. It was not needed in the paradise of man unfallen; it will not be in the paradise of God, where all will be according to His will and glory in unfailing goodness, and no seducer intrude more, no weakness or lack of vigilance expose on our part. But whether we look at what is without, or bear in mind what our nature is within, we do deeply need a sure path through the world, away above its motives and maxims and habits and objects. And here we have the one God delights in, even Christ, not only as the Lamb of

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

God and the centre in grace and of right for the saints, but as the way to follow through all snares and difficulties and dangers. Who that knows would fear to follow Him? May we learn to know Him better as the only way. "If any man serve me, let him follow me: and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Translated from the Italian of J. N. D.

CHAPTER XVI.—Verse 19, &c.

THE motives were purely human, the influence, that of satan. The motives presented to the magistrates were nothing but false pretexts. They worked on the pride and the fear of the authorities, who desired peace, and that was disturbed by the enemies, not by the Christians; besides the Gospel did not oppose Roman dignity which possessed the city, it being a colony. The magistrates ask no more; they had stirred up a multitude which strove for its privileges. Rending their clothes, they command them to be beaten, and then send them to prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely. He, having received such a charge, thrusts them into the inner prison, making their feet fast in the stocks.

All then was tranquillised; but the magistrates thought nothing of justice, nor of paying costs * for poor evangelists. But God has not forgotten them, and bears marked testimony to His servants. He permits them to be punished unjustly, and it is their glory to make no resistance. It is a means by which still brighter testimony may be given to His word, and to His servants.

They are thrust then into the inner prison, and there sing praises to God, and the prisoners hear them. Suddenly there is a great earthquake, the doors of the prison are opened, and

* Feeing Counsel.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

every one's bands are loosed. God intervenes for His own, and to bear testimony to His word. When persecution is allowed, the wickedness of man can do much, but he cannot hold against the power of God, those who fall into his hands. The jailor wishes to kill himself; but Paul crying out that they were all there, prevents him from doing so. Leading out Paul and Silas, he asks them what he must do to be saved. The answer is simple, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The word is then announced to him and his, and he is baptized with his house. He then cares for his prisoners, and washed their stripes, being filled with joy and peace, with all his house.

Tranquillity restored, the magistrates, believing that all trouble is thus ended, send word to the jailor to let Paul and Silas go. But it was a struggle between the testimony of God and the power of satan; it was necessary that the unjust magistrates should own their fault, and the rights of the Gospel of God. Paul did not wish to excite this struggle, (an important warning to us!) but to continue his work peacefully. The devil was seeking to mix himself up with the work, to associate himself, to the eyes of the world, with what was done by the servants of God. This provoked the Apostle. It was necessary either to receive the testimony of the devil, and join his name to that of Christ, or to enter into a struggle. He casts out, therefore, the unclean spirit—and open war is thus at once declared.

Satan is the prince of this world; and the world, stirred up by the present power of God in the work of the Spirit, is, unless kept down by God, stronger than His servants. Here God permits the world to manifest itself in violence and injustice, in the multitude as much as in the magistrates. The servants of God submit to this injustice, are beaten, and cast into prison, their enemies being the guilty ones, as is nearly always the case. I say *nearly*, because it is possible for Christians to fail in wisdom, and to provoke a struggle without cause. They do not resist; but here the power of the Holy Ghost and the state of

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

their souls shew complete superiority to circumstances. Full of joy in prison and in the stocks, they can sing praises. Testimony is rendered even to the prisoners. As far as the body is concerned, the world is stronger than the Christian, if God allows it to act; but in soul, the Christian is always above circumstances, if he can realise the presence of God. His presence is the greatest of all circumstances, and overcomes the others. One can rejoice even in sufferings, as we see in Acts v. 41; Rom. v. 3.

Moreover, God makes use of the circumstances, and enters, so to speak, into the struggle Himself; the doors are opened, the bands are loosed. In body, man is powerless, unless God see fit to intervene; and often He does so by His providence, if not in a miraculous way. All were witnesses or convinced that God was victorious in the struggle—though some, in spite of themselves. The magistrates had taken part in the wrong with great injustice, and it was necessary, therefore, that they should own their fault. Now that all was calm, they sought, in the wisdom of the world, to let the affair blow over in silence. But when God works and shews Himself, He makes it plain that He has rights in this world.

Paul and Silas were in prison against all the rights of God and of men; and the magistrates are obliged by the firmness of Paul, to own their fault, and to ask the servants of the Lord as a favour to depart. This, as it suited them, they do without delay; only, being perfectly free, they enter into the house of Lydia, see the brethren, comfort them, and depart.

When Paul sought to make use of his rights as a Roman in order to arrest injustice, he lost his liberty, and was sent a prisoner to Rome, although the Lord had directed everything. But here he did not attempt to arrest injustice; he submitted, only taking advantage of this right afterwards, when it was a question of the innocence of the Gospel, and of its conduct, and when it happened that the magistrates, and not he, were in the wrong.

The Bible Herald 1877

THE SPHERE OF CHRIST'S POWER.

BELOVED friends, let us at the outset be clear as to our acceptance; for how can I ask any one to be acceptable to God if acceptance is not known? If you say, "I do not know acceptance yet," I cannot ask you to be acceptable.

Here is a number of disorderly children going about breaking the panes outside. What is to be done? The owner of the house takes them in and makes them his own—adopts them. Now they are children of the house. You may say they will break the panes inside. Perhaps they may, but they are children now. They are accepted, if not acceptable. They are children. I must get that clear. If I get a child breaking the panes I cannot excuse it—in fact, I make it to be a greater fault because he is a child in the house, and I cannot allow it, or go on with him. If the child will do badly inside the house, he will get a far more severe dealing with, in divine chastisement, than the one outside. And depend upon it, there is no question about it, if you as a child do evil things inside, God will not overlook it, but will deal with you. As He said to Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: *therefore* I will punish you for your iniquities." They were as children inside, on the ground of children.

I must dwell upon the fact of your acceptance first. You may be a child, and not like a child. I admit it. My child goes down into a coal-cellar and blackens his clothes—defiles himself. But he is my child still, though a dirty one. So with God's children. To say otherwise is to deny the new creation. That is why I am so strong

The Bible Herald 1877

about it. I cannot go outside the fact of what God has done. You are my children now, therefore, "Have grace to serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire."

I am often obliged to bring up the question of acceptance, for many people raise it. They talk of doing something to please God, and yet they have not found out where God has placed them. Some one has said, and most truly, "Christ has placed us in the presence of God in the beauty of His own person, and what we have to do is to be in the beauty of Christ before the world." That is the whole of Christianity. Christ places us in the beauty of Himself before the Father, and now we are to be in the beauty of Christ before the world. And that is where the rub comes. That is the acceptability.

Faith is the thing that comes out in this case. Faith is simply this: I have turned away from myself, and turned to God. It is like a man standing on a wreck with the water rising around him. If he stayed there he would die, and hence he goes from there to the dry land, or to a boat. That is faith. He abandoned the thing that was no good, in order to get unto one that was really safe. That is what Christ is. You get this in the thief on the cross,—"This man has done nothing amiss." Look at that. There is something for us to learn. The moment faith comes in, prayer flows out. See how God proves to Ananias that Saul had faith, He did not give him a full account of the mode of his conversion, but, "Behold he prayeth." He is dependent on God now.

But I do not dwell any longer upon that, further than to say, I never can lose the acceptance which my Father's love has brought me into through His Son. I am in all the beauty of Christ before Him. If you have soiled your garments, you will have to judge yourself, and sor-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

row and repentance must follow. And when this is the case, I see my sins and follies put away in the cross. I have judged them in the death of Christ. Otherwise, God comes in and judges you in that very body in which you have gone on trifling with Him. If you have gone down into the coal cellar, and soiled your clothes, He will make you strip these clothes off, and perhaps make that very act the sorrow of your whole life. For you see, "God is not mocked." Do not imagine such a thing. He is perfect love; but also perfect holiness. "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." That belongs to the other point more especially, namely, acceptability. That is another thing. To walk with God, I am to be acceptable to Him. Born of God by the Spirit of God—the ground of a new creature—what a wonderful creation we are in Christ! I cannot let that go. I am a child, and He has given the Spirit into our hearts whereby we cry "Abba, Father." The Christian is a wonderful creation! an incomparable creation? I cannot explain it: but it is an incomparably greater creation than the old! I am a new creation in the old, and the point is that this new creation, which is Christ, should be seen in the old, and in the sphere of the old creation. So that this body, instead of being a hindrance to the setting forth the grace of Christ, should actually be the vessel in which it is displayed. You say I have a weakly body, and have no means of doing it. But what does the Lord say to the palsied man? "Take up thy bed and walk." Now comes out the body as the sphere for the divine work. He has to shew the work of Christ in him. "Take up thy bed and walk, and go to thine house." If you cannot walk in grace where you are well known, you cannot where you are little known. "Take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house," and the people marvel,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

and they say, "We never saw it on this fashion." Let me explain. It had not been seen in that fashion before. There was a certain virtue exhibited in the Old Testament—a certain religious thing set forth, but little power. That the body should be the sphere of divine power was quite a new thing connected with Christianity. I think we have lost sight of much, very much of this important subject. I do not say we are looking to be perfect. The body was the place where the judgment of God lay. The moment Adam sinned, and heard the voice of the Lord walking in the garden, he hid himself—he sought to hide his body from the Lord. The Lord says to him, "Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" He said, "I was afraid because I was naked." He knew judgment was upon him. The apostle sees the resurrection body, and writes of it to the Corinthians. He saw what was at the bottom of the Corinthian's error. They said we have Christ, let the body go. Thus we see the heresy underlying all. They said they never would see the body again. On the contrary, says the apostle, in 2 Cor. v. 9, "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him." The word translated accepted should be *acceptable.* We *are* accepted. It is not our works that make us accepted, but Christ. My works will determine my relationship to Christ in the kingdom. We have lost too much of the doctrine of the body in this sense. We are to be acceptable to Him. Why? The next verse tells us. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The Corinthians said the body was nothing. No, says the apostle, every good thing you have done in your body will be brought up

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

before the judgment seat of Christ. A Christian is like the pear tree. There may be plenty of blossom, but all may not produce fruit. Every blossom that dies away producing no fruit will be lost, but every ripe pear will be reproduced there. That will be your qualification for your relationship to Christ at that time. Not your works to get into glory. You will be there, and in a glorified body. But the Spirit of God will bring out everything you have done for Christ upon this earth. It will be the white linen which, as we read in Rev. xix., is the righteousnesses of saints, not the *righteousness*. You will be decorated, ornamented with everything that Christ has brought out in this poor body. What a wonderful thing! It really astounds me at times! To think that this poor body that satan run riot in—that satan has had his way in—that the weeds have grown in, and which has suffered the ills that flesh is heir to—to think that Christ should come and say, I must have that body now to be the garden where the beauty and grace of myself can be exemplified! Can anything be more wonderful? I do not want *that* now to be *my* serving but Christ's. Now let me shew you how this is accomplished. We carry about this treasure in earthen vessels. We have the new creation. *I* cannot give it out. But "it is not I but Christ that dwelleth in me." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation." Scripture goes even further than this, and says, "Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." We are in the old creation, and here is the difficulty. If we were in the new body there would be no difficulty in setting it forth, but I am called to this now when the power of Christ comes upon my body. Know ye not that your body itself is to be made the very vessel, vehicle, instrument for setting forth my beauty. Here is the palsied man, and to the astonish-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

ment of everybody around, carrying his bed. That is the last thing you would have thought he would carry, or the last thing he would be ready to carry, because it was what his former state required. As you all know his infirmity required it. I cannot say what one's infirmities may require, but when Christ comes in, the thing of all others you would be most likely to retain is the first. He will tell you to give up. How can I give it up, you say? Nevertheless, that is the very thing you will have to give up. That is the very thing in which Christ will shew his power. There are infirm people that cannot do without certain comforts. I am not saying a word about them, but I am saying that what Christ demands wherever He dwells, is, that if there is anything that hinders, it must be given up when He would display His own power. And so you will find you cannot say you have not got power from Christ. And the thing you think perhaps most unlikely to hinder the expression of Christ is the very thing to give up. Here it was positive infirmity, and what Christ wants to set forth is His power, and it cannot be so seen while a bit of the things that would hinder the setting forth of His power shall be left. The Lord is the only one who can judge this matter aright, and while he may keep one in health, He may see it necessary to retain the infirmities of another.

There are two things to notice with reference to the sphere of Christ's power, the body. One is the weakness of the body, and the other the wickedness of the flesh; and the Lord deals with them differently. In the case of weakness He gives present power. The very weakness thus becomes the theatre for the expression of His power. People say I could not do this or that—I could not give up this or that. That is because they do not understand His power. Suppose I tell a person that he ought to

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

give up painting, or music, as a snare to him. Oh, he says, I cannot, I have been used to it all my life. I could not give it up. Well, I tell you that when Christ's power comes in that is the first thing you will give up. It is not a question of being a child of God. You are a child, but you want power. You are a powerless child. The palsied man was forgiven before he carried his bed, and when he carried it, it was not by virtue of the power *for* him, but by the power *in* him. He can now do the thing that will please the Lord.

When the apostle comes down from the third heaven, he has to complain of a thorn in the flesh. Well, the Lord does not take away the thorn, but says, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Then says the apostle, "I take pleasure in infirmities, for when I am weak, then am I strong." The moment I see I have nothing but Christ's power, Christ's power actually comes in, and makes good the weakness. Suppose it is the case of a timid person. Timidity is weakness. Bad temper is wickedness. What is done with the former? The Lord may make that timid person even more useful than the courageous one. If the courageous person trusts in his own courage he will do mischief. What does courage do for Peter? He smites with the sword when he should have been quiet, and quails with fear when he should have been bold.

But what I want to instruct you in is this. There is nothing whatever in you that is impossible to give up. You say you could not give up this or that, and the moment you say so, you are refusing power. But there is no good in power unless it act where required.

Suppose I have a toothache, and you give me medicine for a headache, it is no good to me. It is the toothache I want cured. I want power to be applied where the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

power is needed, and the want is. I must have it where the want is. Suppose you offer a hungry man a coat, you have not met his case at all. He wants food, and you offer him a coat. It is not the action suited to him.

There is weakness—constitutional weakness. God does not alter that. He does not make a timid person courageous, but he uses the timidity for the occasion of the display of His power. His grace is sufficient for you. He does not take away the thorn. The weakness continues, but there is grace to support him in the weakness. There is no excuse for it. Suppose a person says it is my besetting sin; well, there is no excuse for indulgence in it in any way. You say I have always had a taste for painting, or a great fondness for music—I say, when power works in you, that is the very first thing you will have to give up. That is the place where the defect is, and it must be worked where the defect is. Christ's ministry is always directed to the defect. If He washes your feet, where does He wash them? Where they need it. This is the peculiar character of Christ's ministry. The moment I have a defect He comes in. I learn my besetting sin from the Lord's word applied to my soul, and I learn it from the Father's chastening. He keeps His eye on our defects. Just like a man going on the water in a boat with a hole in the bottom. He has carefully plugged it before starting, but watch his eye while on the trip, and you will see it rests upon that spot. And you will find if you have any particular defect, the Lord's eye is upon you there, and that is the safest bit of you; for He does not allow it.

Suppose it is the case of a person with a bad temper, and he says, what shall I do with it? I say all your prayers and watchings will never give you a good one. You have not got power. You are not out of the seventh

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Romans yet. If I am in the seventh Romans, I can do nothing. I cannot do a right thing. I have not a particle of power. Trying to repress your bad temper does not give you a good one. If repressed it would not be a good one, but only a bad temper repressed. The repression of a vice is never the implantation of a virtue. It is the principle on which all reformation is based. But suppose I pluck up every weed in the garden and plant nothing in it—what sort of a garden is it? I have nothing in it. True, there are no weeds there, but there is nothing else. I like to have something in my garden. If not, what is the use of it? Is Christ in the garden? That is the thing. Are you cultivating Christ? Every thing that is not Christ is a weed. Christ is the One to be there. It is not merely repression we want. Teetotallers I know argue thus. Is it not right for a man to be sober? Certainly, but if you repress this act of drinking, you have not given the taste for sobriety. You may repress the vice, but you have not given a virtue. I insist upon it—the Spirit of God does not pluck out the weed only, but plants a flower in the place of the weed—plants the new thing there. He says, "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." A new plant is now in the garden. That is the way you will always know the Spirit of God is at work. You can repress, but you cannot create. It is the principle of all reformation. Just like Methodism. All you get is the weeds out of the garden. But you want something in the garden. The Apostle says, "I know that in me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth no good thing." But Christ dwelleth in me. I have now something in the garden, and I am cultivating that; and now there is this important difference also. I was cultivating a weed, now I cultivate Christ. "He that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin." Like

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

a child I used to like to take that lump of sugar and hide it, but now I turn from it. I have "suffered in the flesh"—I have "ceased from sin." Instead of taking pleasure in the lump of sugar, it fills me with disgust.

I will give you one or two examples to show how the Lord works. He sees the defect; and the great principle here is, the Lord can exemplify His power in you in spite of everything quite the other way. I have gone through it myself, and know what it is. I found when I had to deal with the Lord I could not go on with it—I must give it up. If I am to go on in acceptability I must please God. God has pleased Himself about me, and now I am to please Him. The principle is this. God takes the actual defect, and turns it about to His own use. Thus we sometimes see a young man who, when in the world, was ambitious and anxious to get on in the world, when he becomes a Christian is humble, the very opposite of what he was. He finds there is no place for it here. God cannot have it; and so he turns about in the very opposite direction. The Lord appropriates all he has, whether of muscular or mental power, and uses it accordingly.

For example, Moses was a man of muscular strength, and when he first commences the work of delivering his people, he knocks a man down. It was nothing to him to do that. But by and by the Lord comes and says that is not the way you are to work for Me—you are to work with a rod. After 39 years the propensity shows itself again. He smote the rock twice, and was not, in consequence, allowed to go into the land. So much for going back to old powers. God does not allow these things to come out. You must work in another way. It is not a question of who is the strong man in mind or body. The moment you attempt to do God's

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

work with it you fail. Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips.

But another thing is, where there is a defect there comes out the opportunity for the exhibition of God's grace. We have an illustration of this in the way pearls are formed. The little bits of grit introduced under the oyster shell, though troubling to the oyster, become in time the beautiful mother-of-pearl. Practically speaking, so God does in us. A bad temper may become a pearl. Let me give you Scripture for it. Turn to Eph. iv. 28. Here it is a defect, not weakness, and He transforms the defect and puts a virtue in its place. "Let him that stole steal no more." Stop the defect. People talk about law-keeping. Well, if a Christian is not up to the law, he is an uncommon bad one. He has not come to the right expression of power yet. But this is the negative—only repression—you are not come to Christ yet. Of course you keep the law; but that is a low standard. You are to be like Christ. He is to be your standard. I never judge myself by the law. I judge myself by the standard of Christ. It is not a question whether I am honest, but is that the manner of Christ. Suppose you visited some sick person to-day. Did you go in like Christ? You were going to do some good—you positively spoiled it. You studied to *do* something instead of to *be* as Christ.

"Let him that stole steal no more" is the law. Read the next clause. "But rather let him labour"—with the very hands that used to steal. How beautifully Scripture puts it. "But rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good." Not the bad. Honest labour, what for? "That he may have to give to him that needeth." The stealer is to be a giver. "Working with his hands," not to amass a fortune, but that he may

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

have to give. That man is now known as a giver, and grace has done it all. All this grace brought out—accepted for ever, and now acceptable here upon earth. Setting forth not only legal righteousness, but Christ. Thus, see what grace can bring about. Power to work in a person that his own hands become the actual expression of divine power, the power of Christ in him causing him to act like Christ. The man known as a thief before is now known as a giver in the very same place; and people marvel and say, "Well, we never saw it after this fashion."

Practically, saints ought to be known as great peculiarities. Bodies full of light. Just like an apparition. Something seen in the darkness. Something so distinct that though people might not be attracted by it, they should not be able to help noticing it. The world ought to see the saint walking in the power of Christ. Knowing what Christ has done for him, he ought to be all brightness, and joy, and rest of heart in the presence of God here upon earth, setting forth the beauty and grace of Him who has set him in all the brightness and perfection of Himself in the presence of God.

THE LAMB OF GOD.

Rev. v. 22.

It would be too wide a field to comment in succession on each instance in this book in which, in different aspects and varied connections, we are brought into contact with the *Lamb*.

In tracing through, from the sixth chapter to the end, "the Lamb" is ever in the ascendency.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

The song of heaven is, "Worthy is *the Lamb* that was slain" (v. 6-13). It is from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of *the Lamb*, that the men of this world seek to hide themselves in fear (vi. 15, 16).

The palm-bearing multitude before the throne have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of *the Lamb*" (vii. 9-14).

It is *the Lamb* that feeds them, and leads them (as a shepherd) "to living fountains of water" (vii. 17). It is the blood of *the Lamb* that answers all the accusations of satan, as the accuser of the brethren day and night, on high (xii. 10, 11).

It is in the book of life of *the Lamb slain* that the names of the faithful are found written amidst the corruptions of the beast (xiii. 8).

It is *the Lamb*, also, on Mount Zion, with the sealed ones, whose honour and privilege it is to follow "*the Lamb* whithersoever He goeth" (xiv. 1-4).

Again, whoever worships the beast or his image, and receives his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, will be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of *the Lamb* (xiv. 9, 10).

It is the song of Moses, and the song of *the Lamb*, that is sung with the "harps of God," by those who, in victory over the beast, stand on "the sea of glass" (xv. 2-4).

It is against *the Lamb* that the beast and the ten kings make war; and *the Lamb* shall overcome them; for He is "*King of kings, and Lord of lords*" (xvii. 12-14).

It is the marriage of *the Lamb* that strikes the note of joy in heaven; and to be *called* to the marriage supper of the Lamb is the mark of honour and blessing then (xix. 7-9).

And after the seals are loosed, and the trumpets are

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

blown, and the vials poured out—when satan is bound, and the clangour of earth's judgments is hushed, it is "*the Bride, the Lamb's wife,*" that is the wondrously glorious spectacle on which the apostle is called to gaze (xxi. 9).

They are the twelve *apostles of the Lamb*, whose names are in the twelve foundations of the "holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (xxi. 14).

Of this city the Lord God Almighty and *the Lamb* are the temple, and "*the Lamb* is the light thereof" (xxi. 22, 23).

There is to be no inhabitant in this glorious city "whose name is not written in *the Lamb's* book of life" (xxi. 27).

And onwards "the river of the water of life" flows out of "the throne of God and *the Lamb*" (xxii. 1).

And finally, there is to be *no more curse*, because the throne of God and of *the Lamb* are to be there (xxii. 3, 4, 5).

"MY NEW NAME."

The question "What is our Lord's *new name?*" (Rev. iii. 12), is not answered in so many words in the book of "Revelation," but we think that, in substance, the answer is to be found there.

Is it not remarkable that in the book of "the Revelation" we get the new name of ARNION (*Lamb*) applied to Christ, and that it occurs *twenty-eight times* in the Apocalypse, as we have seen in the preceding jottings, and is found as a name given to HIM nowhere else in the New Testament?

When the same writer, St. John, speaks of Jesus as presented to the Jews in the Baptist's preaching, He is

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

termed AMNOS (*the Lamb*), and when in the Revelation, Jesus is spoken of as *the Lamb*, the word ARNION is used exclusively; and every scholar knows *arnion* is a *diminutive*, and hence a word of *disparagement*. JESUS, the personal name of the Lord on earth, was nailed over the cross as a name of humiliation, scorn, and rejection; the world treated God's AMNOS as ARNION; and God opens the heavens to the Prophet of Patmos, and by him shows to the Churches, as He shall one day do to the world, the One who was treated on earth as ARNION (*i.e.*, as a diminutive creature, a lambkin not worth looking at) "*in the midst of the throne*," and "*the book*" of the title-deeds to the world's dominion given by GOD into His hands!

The whole action of the Apocalypse, is in connection with the enthroning of ARNION on the throne of God—as He is now on His Father's throne as Son—and Christ's promise "I will write upon him my new name," seems to be fulfilled in the end of the book, when His "faithful" followers have the name of *Arnion* written upon them, and they are called "The Bride, ARNION'S Wife" (Rev. xxi).

The places where the word "Lamb" (*Arnion*) occurs in "Revelation" are the following, as above:—Rev. v. 6, 8, 12, 13; vi. 1, 16; vii. 9, 10, 14, 17; xii. 11; xiii. 8, 11; xiv. 1, 4, 10; xv. 3; xvii. 14; xix. 7, 9; xxi. 9, 14, 22, 23, 27; xxii. 1, 3.

In "man's day" the "Lamb" was treated as "small and despised," "a worm and no man;" but "in the day of God," He and His people shall be in the ascendancy. and angels and redeemed men, the earth and the heavens, shall conspire to praise and exalt Him. "Let us go forth therefore, unto Him without the camp, *bearing His reproach;*" and, when the day of His manifestation in glory arrives, "we shall be *glorified together*."

The Bible Herald 1877

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Translated from the Italian of J. N. D.

CHAPTER XVI.—Verse 19, &c.—*(Continued.)*

But God has this peculiar work in the world, the blessings of grace; and makes sure of all this for the conversion of the jailer. He works as a man of the world at his post; but by this manifest intervention of God, he is awakened, convinced of sin, and given to feel his need of salvation. Now that all call themselves Christians, one asks if a man is a good Christian, truly converted; but then all were heathens or Jews, and became Christians. Now Christianity is salvation. The grace of God has brought salvation into the world in the Son of God; and by His work on the cross, it is announced by the Holy Ghost. The need makes itself felt when the conscience is moved by the Holy Ghost. What it seeks for is salvation, as here does the jailer. The answer is simple and clear; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

The object of faith is the person of the Lord Jesus, and the redemption accomplished by Him; and all believers, reaping the benefits of this work, are saved. Now one investigates and scrutinizes in order to know whether one has faith in the heart, and whether it be true faith. We all pass more or less through this state, but true peace is never to be found there. It is perhaps, however, useful in humbling us, and teaching us that in us dwells no good thing. But we are not called upon to believe in the faith which is in us, but to believe in Christ Jesus; and God declares that all believers are justified, and have eternal life. I do not examine my eyes to know whether I see, I look at the object before them, and know that I see. People quote the passage in 2 Cor. xiii. 5; but those who do so deceive themselves, leaving out the correct beginning of the passage, "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, ... examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith."

The Bible Herald 1877

The apostle shows them their folly in doubting his true apostleship. If Christ had not spoken by him, since they had received his word, how was it that he had been the means of their conversion? For the same reason he continues to enquire, "Know ye not your ownselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you?" Christ therefore had spoken by his mouth. There were many proofs of his apostleship. Here he shows them their stupidity, because if he were not an apostle, they would not be Christians. Of their conversion they had no doubt. If we examine ourselves to know whether we walk as Christians, we do well; but if we do so to know whether we are Christians, it is not according to the Word.

Faith looks towards Jesus, not towards self. The experience of the examination of the heart, in order to discover what passes there to make one believe, leads us to see that it is impossible thus to find peace, or even victory, for we are looking at what is behind us; but when we are convinced of this, the answer of God is there—He has given salvation in Christ, and he who believes is justified. The Lord says, "Thy sins are forgiven; go in peace, thy faith hath saved thee" (Luke vii.) The woman looked to Jesus, and believed His word, not thinking of the state of her own heart. The state of her heart, the conviction that she could not find peace and salvation in herself, led her to look to Jesus, and in Him she found peace. The Gospel gives the answer of God to the heart clearly, fully. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

I learn by experience that in me dwells no good thing, and that I have not the strength to conquer. I cease to look towards myself, as though I could become better. The flesh is always there: the will may be good (in a converted man), but practice does not correspond to will. Not amendment, but salvation, is needful to us; and that we possess in Christ by faith, and, in salvation, peace. Being unable to accomplish justice in ourselves, we submit to the justice of God. By the faith that Christ Himself is our justice before God, we learn by

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

experience what we are ourselves. This experience is itself the fruit of the work of the Word by the Spirit in the heart; but by this we learn that we are lost, and that, looking to Christ, we are saved. "Believe, and thou shall be saved." Good works are what suit the position we then occupy. It is the same in human relationships of children, wives, servants; it is necessary to be in the relationship, or the duties do not exist. When we are saved, we become the sons of God, and then we find the duty of sonship; but it cannot exist before we are sons. The duty of man as the creature of God existed, but on that ground we are lost. Christian duty does not begin till we are Christians. It is remarkable, here and elsewhere, how whole households are admitted to the Christian Assembly.

DO YOU WALK WITH GOD, OR DOES HE WALK WITH YOU?

If we study the actions in the lives of the saints which the Spirit has recorded for our instruction in Scripture, we are struck by the fact standing out in prominence wherever we turn, that whatever be their failures, *God never leaves His people.* Now, most believers will readily own that this is true, but will equally qualify it by the addition, "It is true if the saints are seeking to walk in obedience to Him." But I suggest that it is also true when they are disobedient and self-willed. If we will not walk with Him, He will turn aside to walk with us. But this is to humble us and to teach us ourselves. It is when the saints are reduced to the greatest extremity through the exercise of will, and when forced to cry aloud to Him (as in Ps. cvii.), that He comes in for deliverance,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

proving that He has been watching us all the time. He has been very near, and steps in to make manifest His presence. He comes in when the cry is gone up proving that I prefer God to myself, and at His nod the storm becomes a calm, its winds and waves are lulled to rest, and *self*, on whom God in mercy has brought the storm,—*self*, man's prop, satan's tool, and the ever antagonistic enemy of God, is withered up, and reduced to the proper silence of death before Him, while His child is taken to a Father's bosom to rest in Him. And it is ever thus. The old nature turns to Him *never*, it must be brought to death. As long as *we* are active, there is no room for Him to lead, and then in mercy to us He keeps the storm up to its height, to bring all that is of the old nature to the silence of death before Him. Yet He is standing by. As the "refiner and purifier of silver" He waits to see His image prominent in us, and not the dross of self. He does not value this, and in mercy to us, for He will have us walk with Him. He does not spare it. He will consume it that we may fully enjoy Him; nor will He leave the work partially completed. He says, I will never leave thee "until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

I desire to draw the attention of my brethren to an important difference (as it appears to me) in these two paths, and in the two parts of the question at the head of these few remarks, and I desire that its value may be tested by the balances of the Sanctuary in the light of Scripture. To me there appears to be an important and most instructive difference in these two paths,—whether am I content to be walking with God, or (what I judge is a lower path) content to know that He is walking with me.

I allude to Enoch and Noah as special examples of

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

saints, of whom the Spirit distinctly records that they "*walked with God*" (Gen. v. 24, and vi. 9). Not but what others have done so also, but Scripture is clear as to them. This characterized their walk. I shall quote Jacob, as much a called saint of God as they, as an example on the other hand of a saint with whom *God walked,* looking at his history a little.

It is also to be remembered that as a saint I may be found walking with God at one portion of my history, but not at another. In illustration of this, I draw attention to the fact that Noah lived *after* the flood as well as *before* it, and yet that it is only of Noah before the flood that the word says he *walked with God.* It was after the deluge that he was found drunken and uncovered in his tent. And when the years of his life after the flood are named, we read only thus, "Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years, and all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died." Yet, though Scripture does not add the same commendation to his life after the flood as to that before it, I judge that God never left Noah—that He still walked with him.

Jacob was one in whom natural will, taking the shape of prudence, as men speak (this it often did with him), was most strong and characteristic. And it is to Jacob, when fairly started on the path of worldly wisdom or expediency, that God Himself comes and declares to him that His presence shall abide *continuously* with him. By deliberate falsehood and gross deception he had (just prior to this moment) obtained from his father Isaac the blessing of the first-born, which had so provoked the wrath of his brother Esau, that he must flee as an outcast from his family and the land of promise. To him, then, at that moment, and though even when leaving, continuing to deceive his father as to the real cause of his flight,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

God appears, and gives him this remarkable promise, "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen. xxviii. 15). Mark the importance and grace of this promise as coming from God to him at such a moment as this. Now, does this promise sanction the late actions of Jacob, or encourage him to go on in the same? I judge not, for he presently says, "How *dreadful* is this place!" And yet many of us are quite content to quote this passage (Gen. xxviii. 15) as the acme of our blessing! For God as truly says the same to every saint to-day as He did to Jacob in his day, even if natural will and energy are at work in us. Ah, it is a real place we are in, and God will accompany us to bring us to naught. Well may Jacob say, "How dreadful is this place!" Dreadful to nature. For God was there.

Now as to God's path, what is it? Job xxviii. gives us the clue. "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it." This is God's path through a sin-stained earth. Would we walk in company with Him to-day? We, too, must tread it. As then, so now, it is ever one and the same. Let us look at it a moment in detail; we shall see who they are that discern it not.

First—It is a path which no fowl knoweth. Here we have those who, rising highest in natural ability, will discern it if any can. It is a path totally unknown to them. Second—It is a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen. Intelligence and intellect, here pourtrayed by the piercing eye of the vulture, these cannot discern it. Third—The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the fierce lion passed by it. Natural force and strength, and all the swiftness and might of nature, are here entirely at fault—they never use this way. Man, then, whether I look at him in his highest position, in his piercing intellect, or in his natural force and strength, never knows, sees, or takes this path. May we not ask why does he not take it? and answer, It is because it makes nothing of *him*. Was Job walking in this path? At first I should judge that Job was conscious that he was not. Earlier than this, in ch. xxiii., he has said of God, "He knoweth the way that I take: when I am tried I shall come forth as gold." This is true. He does know the way that His saints take. But this way was *Job's* path. And the furnace was kindled on him therein. There is a more blessed position even than God knowing our way, precious as this is, and this is, that we know and walk in *His*. And this is far harder to nature than the other. Job had learnt it when he could say, "I abhor *myself:*" this is ever the great hindrance to our walking with God. The question is, are we content merely to know that He knows our way, or are we desirous of knowing and walking in His? He must bring to naught all that which hinders. This day of Job's trial brought him into God's path. To walk with Him—gold "tried in the fire."

In the varied and chequered history of Jacob, God has shown us that for many years he chose and trod his own path. What remarkably characterised him was natural prudence and forsight, coupled with a strong force and energy of natural will. All these are seen in him, but they do not help us in God's path, much as men are disposed to admire them—they are positive hindrances to us therein. To him, as to Job at first, it was an unknown, unseen, and untrodden way. If it be thought that in

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

saying this we are speaking too strongly of the patriarch, let us listen to his own testimony. A testimony as simple as it is sad. On two remarkable occasions Jacob is called on to record his past experience in the path he has trodden. On the first occasion he does so when he is pursued and overtaken by Laban, at the close of his twenty years' sojourn in Padan-aram. This is his judgment of his past life there, Gen. xxxi. 40, 41, 42:—"In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle; and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty." Now it is most clear that Jacob distinctly recognised that God had been with him. But that he had not been with God is equally clear, for he is now on his way to Bethel, the house of God. But Jacob is on the eve of a fresh start in his history, so to speak. And after he leaves Laban, after he has planned and contrived in the best manner, how best, in his judgment, to meet and palliate the wrath of his brother, who, he hears, is coming to meet him, "there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." Here Jacob became *crippled*, and went forth another man. No longer Jacob, but Israel. He has received his blessing and his new name when he clings in helpless dependence to his God, and when he measures himself with God in the light of His presence. Surely this was a new path to Jacob, who had hitherto so largely depended on himself? Yet, be it remembered, he was as much a called saint of God when at Padan-aram as he was at Bethel. Padan-aram had seen the establishment of *Jacob's* house, the patriarch is now on

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

his way to *God's* house. This path, untrodden by him for twenty years, involves the imperative, inspiring judgment of self, for it has been truly said that the character of things allowed at Padan-aram cannot for a moment be tolerated when at Bethel. But let it be remarked that there is no thorough self-judgment until we have accepted *God's* path. It was so with Jacob, and it is so still. But when he is in God's path mark the consequence. "They journeyed, and *the terror of God* was upon the cities that were round about them," Gen. xxxv. 5. Notice this; surely it was not that they feared a helpless man with plenty of spoil? No, but there is a power felt by those around us when we are walking with God in His path which is unknown when God is walking with us in ours. Did they fear him in Padan-aram? Did the power of God so make itself felt around him there that all feared him? Ah, no; there, as we have heard from his own mouth, they had taken every mean advantage possible of him—all permitted of God; but now he who goes forth is a prince, a vanquished Jacob is an Israel with God. Oh, what a lesson is taught us here as to the secret of power with God and with men. It was because God was now leading him that the "terror of God" was upon those who could see nothing outwardly more to fear in Jacob to-day than when he dwelt in Padan-aram in servitude.

The other occasion on which Jacob reviews his life is when he is asked by King Pharaoh his age. Memory again flies back over the past days and scenes of his earthly pilgrimage, and again, in a most simple and touching way, the old man expresses his judgment of them. Gen. xlvii. 9, "And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, the days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of my life been, and

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." As to the number of days they were "few," and as to the character of them they had been "evil." Such is the past experience of this saint of God. Is there not a lesson in it? Is it the record of him who has walked with God? Yet in the midst of it all the aged believer is conscious of the unchangeable favour of God resting upon him, and in conscious dignity he can bliss Pharaoh, nor would he at that moment have changed positions with him who wore the crown of Egypt; for the apostle declares "the less is blessed of the better." How precious is this moment, enhancing, as it does, the wondrous grace of God, notwithstanding all Jacob's failure.

Besides drawing attention to the language of the Spirit of God, used only of the two saints Enoch and Noah, that they "*walked with God,*" I would ask attention to two remarkable examples of saints who, prominent in the history of Israel, at different times walked with God, and bring in, by way of contrast, contemporary saints with whom, doubtless, God walked. I offer them merely as suggestions for others to weigh.

First,—Abraham, the father of the faithful, is generally found walking with God through his life, as a pilgrim and stranger in the earth. Of such the Spirit of God declares that "the world was not worthy." But was it thus with Lot? He experiences a most remarkable deliverance for himself and family, in Gen. xiv., but does he walk in God's way, so clearly pointed out to him in this merciful interposition? His path leads him again down to Sodom, where he is presently seen, in Gen. xix., "sitting in the gate," the place of honour among the dwellers of earth. Peter, notwithstanding, without any hesitation, calls him a "righteous man," and Psalm xxxiv. declares

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

that "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous." Surely God *is* faithful; yet I judge that there were these two paths clearly taken in the days of Abraham and Lot —the pathway pleasing to God, and that satisfying to nature or self.

Second,—On many occasions, may we not say *generally*, Moses walked with God. (See Ps. ciii. 7.) "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel." Here Moses is seen in contrast with Israel. Israel had to receive His acts, because they were not in the secret of his ways. So in Judges ii. 22, the Lord does not drive out those nations which Joshua left, "that through them I may prove Israel, whither they will keep THE WAY OF THE LORD *to walk therein.*"

One more incident in the New Testament occurs to me in connection with this subject, as recorded in Matt. xiv. The Lord having gone away to pray, had given his disciples instructions to cross the sea. In obedience they launch forth, but encounter much trouble,—a frequent attendant on the path of obedience. The ship is in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves, for the wind was contrary. Here, doubtless, we should say that their unswerving confidence should have been in Him whose directions they were following. Doubtless it should, for obedience can not only always count on His presence, and can trust Him whose heart and whose eye ever survey us, but can also say, "I know that just at the right time He will manifest His presence to me." We can say, "I know not *how* He will come in, but I am sure that at the right moment He *will* come in." And He came. In the fourth watch they saw Him, walking on the sea, and they cried out for fear. Now, why did they cry out for fear? I believe that it was because they did not expect to see Him come and manifest Himself in that way. And are

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

we not often just the same? Had He come and spoken, and quieted the wind and waves, they would have understood who He was. But to walk thereon as a spirit, to keep the storm up to its height till death apparently stared them in the face, yes, this was His purpose, and then He will make Himself known to them. When the wind and waves are still at their highest, He bids Peter come to Him on the water. To walk with Him in this path apparently of certain *death*. Is Peter able to do it, and are we? Scripture says that he walked on the water, though apparently it was but for a moment. Now, what caused him to sink? It was self most assuredly. Self cannot walk in this path, but when this is so, the Lord's presence and never failing care are manifested. Does He leave Peter because he sinks in the path He has called him into? No. He lets him into the waves and gives him thus to taste *death*, but He never lets him go. He sustains him, and takes Peter's eye off everything of self by referring him to *faith*, which never deals with the seen but with the unseen. He would have us to walk with Him, but we must refuse self if we are to take the path here indicated. The storm is kept up in order to sink SELF, not to sink PETER.

Now, I believe that to see clearly the difference in these two paths is of immense importance, and that there are at the present moment thousands of God's dear children who do not discern it. Let it be remembered that Jacob could have assured any enquirer that *God was with him* all the while he dwelt in Padan-aram, and none could have denied it. Yet we read of no altar erected by Jacob in Padan-aram, while on the other hand we are sure there was the allowance in his own household of idolatry! Gen. xxxv. 2, 4. How often are we met by such remarks as "What harm is there in this or that?" and this not

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

spoken by the world, or we might not be so surprised to hear such language, but by undoubted children of God. I reply that your question itself seeks to limit me to sight, and seeks to induce me to walk in a certain path, because I cannot see why not. This is not faith. Again we are told, "God is with us and converts souls, and yet *you* cannot have fellowship with us in the work," &c., &c. I readily own that God does walk with us, notwithstanding all our waywardness, but I do submit the difference between my walking with God and His walking with me to the godly consideration of my brethren. In the first, self is allowed no place, save its own true place of death; in the second I am persuaded self *has* a place and existence, though it may be an infinitesimal one. And I suggest again that it appears to me there *is* a higher thing than being able to say *God is with us*, blessed as this is, and that the higher thing is to be able in humility to say, I cannot do this, go here or go there, because I desire to *walk with God*, who has given me no word to go. To go here or there, to do this or that, merely on the ground that I have no word from God *against* it, is to allow self to act.

May the Lord give us a distinct perception and apprehension of what a path it is—both individually and in service—wherein self is kept in the place of death, and to which the Lord calls us in this day.

The Bible Herald 1877

THE TENANT AND THE SON.

Exodus xx. 18; Luke xxiii. 39 to the end.

ONE of these passages of Scripture sets forth Law and Grace together, and in the other passage you have the results of law and grace. What I mean by the results is, what they do for us; and that is set forth in the New Testament passage which we have just read. I get law and grace put together in the twentieth chapter of Exodus; but I do not get the results till thousands of years after. I get the results when Christ dies; that is, when grace comes to perfection. For instance, in this scene of the thief on the Cross, we have grace come to perfection. But grace and law are quite different. Law has a claim upon you, and a just claim. If it were not a just claim it would not trouble you. The more you insist upon a just claim to a person who is unable to meet it, the more you can make him averse to it. Consequently, in this passage in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, the law came with thunderings and lightnings, and great noises, "and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off." The people not being able to meet the demand, does not mitigate the present claim, for the very justice of that claim is what aggravates it. God had a right to make the claim, just as a landlord has a right to the rent of his tenant; and if he insists upon his right, supposing the tenant to be poor, he makes a bankrupt of him; at least he has a right to do so. If a landlord insists upon his right, and you find your incompetence to meet the claim, it brings you simply to this point, that you must sue (in legal phrase) in the form of a pauper—that is, you must sue for mercy. The law

The Bible Herald 1877

makes you sensible that if you are unable to meet the claim, but still admit the claim, you are a fit subject for grace. You must plead, "I cannot do anything. I am unjust and undone. If I do not get help now I am ruined." Yes, that is the way grace comes in. I am only sketching out to you what I will now proceed to prove.

What is the effect of the Law as God's claim upon man when man is unable to meet that claim. He is at a distance from God; then the whole point is to effect a reconciliation. If the landlord says, "You must meet such and such a claim, and the tenant answers, "What is the good of insisting on it when I have not a farthing," what will grace do? Suppose that there is goodness in the landlord's heart, and he says, "I do not want to ruin you, but I will make you one of my children." The landlord does not ask his children to pay rent. The tenants under the law are made children by grace. He says, "I will forgive you all, and I will transfer you from tenants to children:" that is Grace. Now which will you stand upon? Will you be tenants or children? You are, at this present hour, either the one or the other. All whom I address are either tenants or children. You are all owing God something, or you may answer, "It is all cleared away." But that is the other side—that is Grace. Every one who goes home from hearing me must either go a tenant, or (as I hope will be the case), go home a child. That is when all is cleared away by the blood of God's own Son; then you are children by grace, and children are not to pay. "Well," you will say, "what is the good of having a claim?" The good of having a claim is to prove that you must come in by grace; because if you cannot pay, you must come in by grace. It is clear enough in Scripture, and plain enough

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

to every one who has tried to understand it; and I am sure many of my hearers have tried it. You have tried to keep up your engagements. That is quite right. I do not like idle tenants; but I like to see a man who labours hard to meet the rent when it is due. I like to see industrious hard-working tenants. But sometimes they are not able to keep up to their own resolutions, then how can they meet God's sense of righteousness when they cannot keep up to their own sense of righteousness?

"Therefore, the children of Israel removed and stood afar off." I hope that every one now hearing me has the fear of God before him. I think it is a great thing to fear. I remember, my beloved friends, what fear I was in once. I was very young at the time: I think about seventeen or eighteen. I was reading in the newspapers that the cholera was only about six miles away from the place where I was living. I was very religious. I read the Bible four times a-day, but I was in such a state, that at last I was on the floor; and I said to myself, "What are you afraid of?" And I answered, "I am afraid to die; I am afraid to meet the Holy God." Yet I was religious. I used to go to church—even four times a-day. But I was a tenant, you see, and I knew that I had not the rent. I knew that if the day of judgment came I could not meet the Lord. And thus you will find that, when the Lord came to the children of Israel on pay-day, there were thunderings and lightnings; and "the people removed and stood afar off," because they could not face the Lord. Thus the distance is made wider. Did you ever see a tenant, who had not the rent when it was due, seeing his landlord coming down one side of the street? I am sure you would see that tenant cross to the other. That is not reconciliation—for he is trying to avoid him. That is what the Law does. You know that you are

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

owing him, and you are afraid to face him. Now the wonderful thing is this, where you fear most, you are most at home. The place you fear most is that which is filled with the righteousness of God for you. That is the very place for you. Why does a child like to sit next its mother? Because that is the safest spot for that child. You fear God, because He has a demand upon you, and He has a right to that demand. If He had not a right, it would not trouble you at all. You would say, He has no claim upon me. But if you are owing one a debt you would avoid him, because the righteousness of the claim does not effect a reconciliation; but, on the contrary, it causes a greater distance between you. Therefore, the people removed and stood afar off. That was the effect of the Law.

Now let me read to you what Grace is:—"An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." That is grace; for there is to be One to bear what is the penalty of your failings, and not only to bear that penalty, but to have an excellency in Himself. He is the firstling of the flock. He is a victim not chargeable with our offences, but bearing our offences, and having a personal excellency at the time of bearing them. If you understand that, and it is very simple, you will understand what is the nature of sacrifice. I will explain this better when I come to the New Testament, but I only want to show you, in the meantime, how the two things go together—the victim bearing our offences; and having a personal excellence at the time of bearing them. The Lord says, "There are certain places where I record my name, and there I will come to thee and bless thee."

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

That is grace; and I want to say one word about the conditions which are connected with grace. There are two conditions: one is, that you must not lift your hand to take any part in it, or you will pollute it; and the other is, that you must not raise your foot. When the tenant is unable to pay the rent, and when grace is about to be extended to him by the landlord, the landlord says to him, "Now you must stop all efforts of your own. You must do nothing but take what I give you. If you stir hand or foot you spoil everything, because you must let me have the credit of it all." The tenant knows that he cannot pay, and when he is pressed for it his position is embittered, because he admits the right, and, at the same time, feels his inability to satisfy the demand. In that position, you must listen to grace. The landlord will extend the grace to you; but he says, "I have two conditions to impose, and they are, that you must not stir hand nor foot—you are not to do anything at all: you have merely to receive it." "Must I do nothing?" "No." "Must I do no works for it?" "No." "Must I make no exertion for it?" "No; you must not stir hand nor foot, or you will put a stop to it." Your questions show that you do not believe in grace. Christ comes so near to you with it, that you must not go a step for it. The poor man who was lying at the point of death at the roadside did not go a step to meet the Good Samaritan who came to give to him. What was the use of a man lying half-dead, unable to move hand or foot, trying to go a step to meet the Good Samaritan? The good man makes a child of him, makes no claim, but does all for him. He poured oil and wine into his wounds, and put him on his beast, and walked alongside of him. Now, mark these conditions, because when I come to the two things—law and grace—you will find the grand thing

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

that I have to maintain: that the man who is saved is simply a recipient. You may say to me, "Why did you go to church four times on Sunday, as you spoke of?" It was simply because I thought I would make God look more favourably upon me; that is, because I was a tenant at the time, and I thought if I went to church four times on Sunday, I would get on the better all the week. But it was altogether different when I became a child. Now look at the New Testament, and you will see the results of grace. We have both law and grace, and it points out that the ruin which Adam brought is now all reversed by the Son of God, and that there is to be a complete renovation for every believer.

In this New Testament passage, we have Christ crucified. The Lamb of God is suffering; and two thieves are crucified along with Him. They are now in the grip of the law, and they are suffering its vengeance. They have broken the law, they are nailed on the cross, and they are dying without mercy. One of them repents. It is not merely a death-bed repentance, but it shows us that when the law takes its course to the utmost, grace comes in, and Christ says, "I accept the punishment: the just for the unjust." That is grace; therefore law and grace come together.

The great principles of the twentieth chapter of *Exodus are brought out in the twenty-third of Luke.* There is no mercy in the law itself. He who breaks the law must die without mercy. When the law finds you out it condemns you. If I go to a tenant and say, "You owe me the rent, and I claim it at once;" if that man cannot pay me, it is all over with him so far as the law is concerned. There is no hope for him. Now these two thieves are in the grip of the law. In a very little moment they will be launched into the fearful endless

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

eternity of the condign punishment by the law, to bear the judgment of God for ever. I want you to look at what the law brings men to. You say, "Oh! we are not thieves." I would like to see the man who would stand up and say that he never broke the law, and if you broke the law, do you think that God will let you pass? The Scripture says that if you offend in one point, you are guilty of all. If you take the position of a tenant, you are in a bad position, and I grieve for you. You hear people constantly saying that they are in a miserable condition, and there is no remedy. Don't talk in such a way; for you have been told the remedy, but won't take it. Suppose a man has got some disease, and I say, "Here is an infallible cure for it." Do you pity that man if he does not take the cure? Not a bit. An infidel comes to me and says, "I don't believe in that book." "Don't you?" I answer. "Very well. I am under the judgment of death and I find in this what is the matter with me, and I also find what will cure me, and the cure is mentioned in the most distinct manner." The infidel says, "I don't believe a word of it." I ask him, "If you deny this cure what better cure do you give me in its place?" "I have not got any," he says. "Very well," I retort, "you may walk off, because this is all nonsense on your part. Here is a book that actually describes, in the most penetrating manner, my soul's state, and, in as distinct a manner, gives me a remedy for that state, and you will not believe it as much as you would believe in the cure one gives you for a bodily disease, but if you had a pill for the cure of it, and had millions of people who would testify to the efficacy of it, I defy the world to disprove its efficacy, and you would use it until you got something better to supersede it. But all the skill in the world cannot take a man out of death. Death is the terrible

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

thing that has got no law. There are laws for everything in nature. Organization proves that there has been a primary cause."

Now I turn back to this wonderful scene, and I find the two thieves on the Cross, one on either side the blessed Lord, and they did not know it. One of them says, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." "If." There is not a tenant among us who does not say "if!" That little word is what keeps the terrible darkness in your souls, that makes you unable to see grace. You know of Jesus very well, and so did this thief, but he did not see grace, because he had an "if." That little word "if" was his ruin. What a sad thing, my beloved friends, to think that hereafter you should say, "that word 'if' has been my ruin." Now drop the "if" and say, "I am a poor wretched creature —I will only look for grace." But Christ and grace in this world are resisted. It is not only yourselves that will not have the good that is offered, but Satan also is resisting it, and you are morally blinded. A light is in the room, but you may not see it. I am sorry for that, but still the light is here, and it shows you Jesus. It is the light of the glory of Christ. That was what cheered the thief. Christ is the one who is come to pay our debt.

For example: a man owes an inconceivable debt, and another man comes and says, "I will pay it all." The debtor believes, but he is first in an anxious state. When he sees his friend go into the bank, he is in a hopeful state, and when he sees him come out of the bank with the receipt in his hand, he is in an assured state. That is grace and the reconciliation. Well, there is another thing: God is so well pleased at the way in which the debt has been paid by the Son, that He is raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father. It is not only that

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

I see Him risen with the receipt in His hand, but He has done it in such a way, that He is glorified for it. The bank has determined that from henceforth they will have an illumination day and night, to commemorate the way in which this debt has been discharged. Every time I saw the bank before, I was in bitter trouble about the debt I owed to it, but now every time I look at it, I see the light—the wonderful continued light—and I do not feel troubled any more because I see the expression of the divine satisfaction, with regard to the way in which my debt has been paid. And it is not only how I feel, but how God feels. Before this time you were afraid to go into the bank, in fact you dare not go in, because you would have been taken prisoner. But now if you go into the bank, you are the most marked man there. They will say, "Here is the man who owed such a large debt, and a friend came and paid it all. Here is the man who dared not show his face in heaven, and now he is a most welcome man." Language fails me to express the beauty of all this.

Now the thief on the Cross knew the law, but he did not know Christ. He is in the hands of the law, and his companion turns round to him and says, "dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" One of old, of whom you have all heard, John Bunyan, says that God never begins to play upon an instrument but He begins upon the base note. The thief says to his comrade, "Dost not thou fear God?" "We receive the due reward of our deeds." That is law. But he says, "I have received a sight of Christ; This man hath done nothing amiss." What a wonderful thing! The poor thief or sinner dying under the law of condign punishment without mercy, gets the pure light, and can read the history of that man, as spotless from the hour he came

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

into this world. That is the light which is disclosed by Christ to him. You say, "Was it by the natural eye he saw Him?" No, it was by the spiritual eye. How could he tell his whole history by the natural eye? Nothing but the Spirit of God could make such a wonderful disclosure to the thief; the disclosure that the just was suffering for the unjust, to bring him to God.

Did you ever see him? (I must come to close quarters.) Did you ever see Christ?; can you say, "I have got the Firstling of the flock, offered up for me, the spotless One of God?" I think you can hardly estimate what a wonderful thing it is, this disclosure, to a man who is about to suffer for his iniquity—a man who was so wicked that the world could not put up with him. The law has put him in such a position that he could not stir hand or foot. Now grace comes in, and what are the conditions? We ought to be thankful for what the law does, for it puts us in a position to receive grace. That man was pinioned by the law, so that he could not move hand or foot. Hand means work, and foot means exertion. What could he do? He could say, "He that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, hath everlasting life." Jonathan did not raise hand or foot for the destruction of Goliath, but he saw David do it all. The man who was owing the large amount of debt did not raise hand or foot to clear it away, but he saw his friend go into the bank and come out with the receipt in his hand, and then he saw a great light from the bank, and he was sure everything was done without the least exertion on his part. Thus the thief on the Cross, without stirring hand or foot got the blessed assurance, "to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." This just shows when things come to the final issue, what the law brings a man to, and what grace brings him to. God gave His own Son as an offering, the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

just for the unjust, that He might bring us to Himself. The wonderful action of grace is also beautifully shown in the three parables, in the fifteenth chapter of Luke's gospel. It is a proof that you are converted, when you pray to Christ. It was quite the opposite in the garden of Eden, for there Eve trusted herself, but here is a reversal of all that, and the work is done by the Spirit of God. Christ suffers the judgment and brings restoration to the soul. The point of departure is the point where restoration comes in.

Now the thief prays, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom;" Now this thief not only received grace, but the effect of grace comes out in him. The man has got a new taste. It is a wrong statement to say that thieves are in heaven. There is no such thing as a thief in heaven. Those who were thieves are in heaven; but that is entirely a different thing, and so Christ says to this man, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The first man lost the paradise of men on earth, and now Christ comes and discharges man's debt, so that He can bring him into a new paradise—the paradise of God.

Now, how does that bear upon us? I do not believe that any person who has really got the new taste can put up with his old ways. This poor thief has got a new taste, and what does he say? He says, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The Lord says, I will do more for you than that, for "to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," where you will be in the perfect enjoyment of everything that is beautiful and perfect. There are two things which mark a converted man. He prays to God, putting his trust and dependence upon Him; and he has got a new taste—he would like to be where Christ has the rule.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Do you remember what the disciples said to Jesus when He first spoke to them? They said, "Where do you dwell?" Now, I ask any converted person present, "Are you not looking for the place where Christ dwells?" You say, "It is in heaven, and I cannot get there yet." No; but if I cannot get the whole, I would like to get it by instalments. When the disciples asked Christ where He dwelt, what was the answer? "Come and see."

Do you think He would not say that now? A man gets a sense of being holy when he is converted; and do you think that a holy man would not like to be in a holy place? I think the society of the unholy would be very intolerable to him. He has got a taste for his Saviour, for he has got the same nature as his Saviour, and wants to be where He is. If I cannot be in paradise, I would like to be in the next best thing. I cannot put up with evil when I have seen His beautiful holiness. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

Well, beloved friends, I need not dwell more upon this; but I will put it to each one of you, "Are you tenants or children?" Let each of you, as you walk out of this place, put the question to yourselves, are you tenants or children. How I wish I could dilate upon this point—how this poor thief has seen the Holy One, and his heart is enraptured. He sees the Lamb of God, and he has confidence in Him. He has got a sense of what is in the heart of the Lord, and therefore his confidence is awakened. He confesses that confidence, and has got the comfortable assurance of Christ, that that day he would be in the perfect enjoyment of all that is pure and lovely and divine, and that he would be in company with the One whose blood was shed for him, and who loved him.

The Lord lead our hearts, my beloved friends, to realise

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

this! I wish I could affect you with the solemn reality that the light of Christ is shining here, whether it is shining into your souls or not. The light of Christ is shining here more surely than ever the sun shone. Why do you not all see it? There were two thieves on the Cross. The one was quite as near to Christ as the other; but the one saw the light of Christ, while the other did not. The Spirit of God comes to bring the light into the soul, and therefore you find the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost, and the Father, all engaged in the conversion of a single soul. The shepherd comes after the lost sheep: the Spirit brings light to our souls: and the Father takes us in.

The Lord lead your souls to understand that the only One who can save you is Christ. You cannot meet God as a tenant. You must say, "The Lord help me to be sensible that I am utterly incapable of doing anything for myself: I must look only to Christ." That is what the law has brought you to, and the law has done you good service. The law brought the poor penitent thief to the condition that he could do nothing for himself, and therefore he was a fit recipient for grace. First, there is fear on his part. He says, "Dost not thou fear God?" and the next thing that he knows is love. You see there are only two states—first, Fear; and then Love.

May the Lord grant that not one here present will say "if" now that he is brought face to face with Christ! Never say "if," but say, "I believe in Christ." What do you want now? I want to be where Christ has the rule.

J. B. S.

The Bible Herald 1877

WHERE DOTH CHRIST EXECUTE THE OFFICE OF A PRIEST?

From a letter received by me I find the writer is in some difficulty "about Christ executing the office of a priest by His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to to satisfy divine justice." I think there is some confusion here which has hindered a clearer discernment of the priesthood of Christ in its true character. And if so, there must also be obscurity upon the Christian's position contrasted with that of the Jew; for if the law changes with the change of priesthood (Heb. vii. 12) there will also be a change of the standing of God's people. The subject is one of great importance, and I should be glad to give a little help, as I may be enabled, to look at it in a scriptural manner.

The confusion I refer to seems to consist in regarding Christ's offering up of Himself as being just as purely a priestly act as His making intercession for us. Thus His death and intercession have been regarded as strictly co-extensive, and the limited reference of the one has been considered as proving the limited reference of the other. The thoughts of man, if not brought captive to the obedience of Christ, are against the knowledge of God. What I wish to point out, however, is that Scripture does not seem to support that mode of viewing Christ's once offering up of Himself. He did so offer Himself: and He is a priest. But these two things are not I think so tied together in Scripture as they are in conventional theology, though they do come very near each other.

In the book of Leviticus, where we get so much about

The Bible Herald 1877

the offerings, the offerer and the priest are plainly distinguished. Read the first chapters on all the four kinds of offerings. It is "any man of the people" that may bring his offering. He offers the victim, identifying himself with it by laying his hand on its head, and it is he who sheds its blood. Hence it appears that, though these things may be done by a priest, they are no essential part of the priest's office.

Lev. xvi., the chapter that gives us the day of atonement, is of course the one that typifies the Lord's atoning work, as it is the paschal lamb that specially gives us redemption. Here we find Aaron both offering and making atonement with the blood. He is seen as doing all; the people, though he takes of them two kids and a ram for offerings, only come into prominence when he confesses their sins over the head of the scape-goat. But I should say that Aaron here combined the characters of offerer and priest. The priestly functions, strictly speaking, appear to begin by taking the blood to put it upon the altar, or carry it within the veil. "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission." The first thing therefore that Aaron does is, as offerer, to lay down the indispensable basis on which to discharge the duties of High Priest.

But though offering may not be always, or necessarily, the action of a priest, yet it seems that it must not be apart from him, or cannot be completed without him, when priesthood has been instituted. Hence we see in Leviticus the priest offering a man's burnt offering, as completing the action which the man has begun. The latter is in relationship with God as one of His people. It is "before the Lord" he sheds the victim's blood, but the relationship

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

is a distant one. It is not as if he, for his part, has nothing to say to the Lord, but is in such a position as the priestism of an apostate christianity would assign to him, but that, till redemption be accomplished, God cannot have man in His near presence—that is in the holiest. Hence all the arrangements shew, what indeed we are distinctly told, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest. The Israelite offers, and it is accepted to make atonement for him. Then the priest must come in and receive the divided parts, and dispose them upon the altar, and must also with the blood make atonement for him. But it is not another atonement, whether made at the altar or within the veil, neither is it another offering though both Israelite and Priest are concerned in it.

In Heb. viii. we are told that, as every high priest is appointed or constituted to offer both gifts and sacrifices, it is necessary that this one also have somewhat to offer. There must be a basis for His priestly action, and that He lays down Himself, but if being both priest and sacrifice does not make these the same thing, neither is this done by priest and offerer being the same person. He is not called a priest when He is spoken of as offering Himself without spot to God; though He was so called a few verses before, when He goes in with His own blood into the most holy, and this He does as having already obtained eternal redemption. There is indeed an analogy between His priesthood as we have now to do with it, and that of Aaron, but the virtues of the offerings are strongly contrasted, not compared; and the Epistle to the Hebrews has it for its object to shew this contrast. If the priest of a former day must offer that which the people offered; this one has given us a rent vail and a permanent standing in the holy.

This leads on to another very important question which divines appear to have generally overlooked, and that is,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Where doth Christ execute the office of a priest? When we are told that it was necessary He should have somewhat to offer, it is added that if He were on earth He would not even be a priest. It is very clearly and fully pointed out that the place of His priesthood is not on earth, but in heaven. My purpose is not to treat of His intercession or advocacy, but to shew somewhat of the importance of the fact that it is in heaven He executes the office of a priest. "We have a great high priest who is passed through the heavens. Such an high priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Why should such an high priest become us? It cannot be a question of what becomes the converted as opposed to the unconverted. The latter have a mediator, but they who have a high priest of any sort are in some way related to God as His people. Nor can it be a question of attainments in personal holiness, as if different degrees of this demanded different sorts of high priests. What then remains but that God's people now occupy a position contrasted with that of God's people of that period, as the priest that becomes us is such a contrast to Aaron? A high priest became them who was on earth, whose sacrifices were shadows, who had infirmities, and who had to offer first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. Accordingly there was always need to shed and sprinkle blood afresh,—for there was a continual remembrance of sins, the people were far off, the veil unrent, and God dwelling in the thick darkness.

But our High Priest is in heaven itself, and there is no more sacrifice for sin, nor conscience of sins; the veil is rent, and we are bidden draw near. No one denies that our position is one of greater, many say of much greater nearness than theirs, but where is the place of the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

nearness? If we say on earth, that is where the Jew was, and where the Lord Jesus could not be a priest. And if the Jew was also a quickened soul, that was a blessed work in him, but did not take him out of the place he was in. We indeed are actually on earth, but we are not to stand back like the Jew, but to draw near, for the veil has not been closed up again on a priestless holy of holies; and it is into the very place whither our forerunner hath for us entered, into heaven itself we are to come. How enter heaven while actually on earth? A new and living way has been opened up for us, not through viewless space or cloudy firmament, but through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.

The Jew sinned, and the Christian sins. Man is ever marked by failure. But the Jew's position is outside. There he must wait till Aaron, having made atonement in the holy place, comes out again, before he sees the altar, his place of meeting with God, hallowed from the uncleanness of his iniquities, and his sins carried away by the scape-goat. He was "on earth," and his priest was "on earth." It was into the first tabernacle the priests always went, accomplishing the service. There was a continual going in and coming out. But there was no way into the holiest for any one. If the high priest went in on the day of atonement to sprinkle the blood afresh, it was only that things might be carried on another year. God did not rend the veil.

The Christian also knows that atonement has been made, and has seen his sins borne away; but it is not after waiting outside till his high priest has come out. He is still in the holy of holies of the true tabernacle, that which is not of this creation; and we are not to wait till he comes out to us like the Jew, but to go in where He is. What a place for us to enter! Yet if

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

we have a worthy estimate of the blood of Jesus we shall even enter boldly, and knowing the way that has been dedicated for us, and having our eye on our Great High Priest, we shall be even there with a fulness of happy confidence that shall leave no room for the wavering thoughts of the natural mind.

It is too true that a Christian may sin, and certainly it is quite as defiling in him as in another. Without fresh cleansing, then, he cannot be in the holiest; but God has not closed the veil, and sent him back again to an earthly standing at the brazen altar. That would be to restore the law, and the sanctuary of this creation, and to change the priesthood back to that of Aaron with its repeated sprinklings of blood to make atonement. He may have sinned, and surely he will be the last to make light of it, but his place is still in the holy, he is still a redeemed man, a son and a priest. He has been purged once, and has no more conscience of sins. As sanctified by the blood of Christ the perfection he got by that one offering continues without interruption, but broken fellowship must be restored by confession. The brazen laver is at hand. He has an advocate with the Father, not merely a mediator with God, and in Him an already accepted propitiation for his sins. He is cleansed by his High Priest in heaven, by the washing of water, by the word.

The question may arise, Are we then in heaven as our High Priest is? If we were viewed as being there we should hardly be bidden draw near. Yet in Ephesians we are so viewed. There we are taught that the one who is quickened together with Christ, is also raised together with Him and seated in Him in heavenly places. In Romans we are taught that his standing on earth has been ended by death with Christ. Whatever experience may say, faith, believing God, knows the true standing of

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

a Christian, that it is in the scene where Christ executeth the office of a priest. The Epistle to the Hebrews does not give us the truth of Ephesians; but though it addresses most solemn warnings to such as have taken the place of Christians, yet it pointedly characterises our calling as heavenly, and we are spoken to from heaven. Also we do not belong to that which is bound up with the earth, whether camp or city, whether religiously or politically. Not to Sinai, and darkness, and distance are we come, but to mount Zion, and to the church of the first born ones written in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. We also are to bring sacrifices continually, as the priests of old went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service; and all our working, walking, worshipping, is in the light of the very presence of God; for the rent veil has not been closed again.

As nothing lower than this is the Christain's place, it is most important that it should be distinctly seen. And along with this goes another truth of similar importance, viz., that the one sacrifice of Christ which rent the veil, and gave us this wondrous standing, put away sin, perfected us for ever, and laid the basis of perfect propitiation, on which He so blessedly for us, executes in heaven the office of our Great High Priest.

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Translated from the Italian of J. N. D.

CHAPTER XVII.

To suffer with patience, to sing in the midst of tribulation—this is power; then with the same strength we can, when free, carry on the Lord's work, with like courage. So says the Apostle, referring to such circumstances, in 1 Thess. ii. 2; having been

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

stoned and shamefully entreated at Philippi, he boldly and energetically continues to preach the gospel at Thessalonica. It is there we find him at this point of our narrative. God leads through persecution just as by all other means. The Apostle selects localities where there were synagogues. Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, he stops at Thessalonica; where was a synagogue. It was a large city, where to this day many Jews are to be found. "To the Jew first and also to the Greek," characterized his work.

In Philippi we find satan's opposition apart from the Jews, for, though Paul had there sought the Jews also, they had no part whatever in the conflict. The enemy had desired to identify himself with the work of the Gospel, falsifying it in order to avoid the destruction of his own power: but he does not support open opposition. But when the religious element is present—that is a religion which boasts of possessing the rights conferred by God on His own on the earth, the professors of which do not submit to the truth—this is always a source of persecution. In Philippi it was simply an arrogant and self-interested people who spurned all religions which spoke of the true God, as well as everything else except its own superstitions, and only sought to preserve peace under the government of satan. It was the world that cast out Paul, as the Gadarenes did Jesus. It could neither endure the manifestation of the truth, nor of the power of God.

In the narrative which follows we again find the religious element in enmity to the truth; the Jews jealous of the Gospel *of grace, and of the Gentiles, to whom it was announced,* although the former had the first place in its administration. For three Sabbaths Paul reasons with the Jews of Thessalonica in the synagogue, according to the custom, shewing them that it was expedient that Christ should suffer, and rise again, and that Jesus was this Christ. Some of the Gentiles, who worshipped the true and one God, whose need had led them to recognise Him who had revealed Himself, believed. They were many in number, and of the chief women not a few.

The Bible Herald 1877

The blessing of God does not fail to excite the jealousy of the Jews, and to the enmity of the human heart all means are lawful. Stirring up the people of the baser sort, they assault the house of Jason, seeking to bring out the servants of God, but they do not find them there. Jason, however, and certain other brethren they drag before the rulers of the city, accusing them of teaching doctrines opposed to the authority of Cæsar, and of saying that there was another king, Jesus. But the rulers, troubled, it is true, with the people, were wiser than those of Philippi ; for, taking security of Jason, they let them go. The chief culprits, Paul and his companions, not being found, were not there; and the brethren, finding the door shut for the moment against the work, send Paul and Silas to Berea, a neighbouring city.

In the epistles to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. ii. 14), where also the Apostle speaks of the state of the Jews (2 Thess. i. 4), it appears that immediately after the Apostle's departure, a violent persecution sprang up, and that the converts suffered greatly, but remained faithful, so that their faith became celebrated everywhere. It was to these that the Apostle wrote his two first epistles, immediatly after his departure from Athens and Corinth, in order to encourage them to persevere, having sent Timothy from Athens, to know if they stood fast in the faith (1 Thess. iii. 1). In reading these Epistles, and Acts xviii. 6, we find that the first was written from Athens when Silas and Timothy had rejoined him (Acts xvii. 15 ; 1 Thess. i. 1). Then he had sent Timothy to Thessalonica, who, on his return, brings good tidings of the state of the Thessalonians. The first epistle is then written. It seems that Silas and Timothy had come back and again rejoined the Apostle, when he had already left Athens, and was come to Corinth (Acts xviii. 5).

Of this journey we have no account, but it is the proof of the tender care with which the apostle watched over the new converts, and sought to establish them in the faith and path of of Christ. The two epistles are remarkable for the freshness

The Bible Herald 1877

and affection of the communications, of which they are full, and especially the first, for the testimony which the apostle could render to the state of the disciples.

It will be useful to examine for a little what the Apostle taught during his short stay at Thessalonica. We have very little, almost nothing, of the Apostle's discourses outside of the synagogue. At Athens, he makes a speech in the Areopagus, but he does not preach. He preached, it is said, Jesus and the resurrection. Let us gather up what is said here. In the synagogue he maintained that Christ should suffer and rise again from among the dead; moreover, he announced the Kingdom of God, because He was accused of having taught that there was another King, Jesus (chap. xx. 25). Short though the time was in Thessalonica, yet during his sojourn there, he had taught the disciples the coming of the Lord; which, in reading the Epistle, is perfectly clear. The disciples had learnt that Jesus had delivered them from the wrath to come, the resurrection, and the expectation of the Son of God from heaven; that they were called to suffer with Christ, and to walk in holiness; the coming of the Lord with fire for judgment, and that with all His saints; that they should be caught up to meet the Lord; that the man of sin should be revealed, and that the mystery of iniquity was already working, but that they were called to share the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. He taught salvation by the truth and by faith, through the power of the Holy Ghost who sanctified them for God. And all this by grace, to those who were chosen for salvation. Even the peculiarities of the last days were communicated to them (2. Thes. ii. 5).

But all this was for the disciples; only the coming of the Lord in judgment of the living—this world—was announced to all, and they were exhorted to flee from the wrath to come; from which Jesus was the deliverer. It was necessary now to announce facts known to all; but if he speaks of salvation, the person of the Lord, as also His coming, has a far greater place in his doctrine than in that of the preachers of to-day. A present salvation is clearly announced, through Christ dead for us, s

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

that we might live with Him. That which was everywhere presented for salvation is described with much simplicity and clearness in 1 Cor. xv. 1-11,—Christ put to death for our sins, buried, and raised up the third day. But here also the facts hold a greater place than now. We reason on the value of the facts, and this is necessary; but the more the facts are put in evidence, the more will the preaching be powerful.

While the people are occupied with Jason, Paul sets out for Berea, and with undiminished courage enters into the synagogue of that city. Here the grace of God is manifestly with him, to dispose the hearts of the Jews to listen, and to search the Word; and many believe. But the unhappy Jews carry on their work, and come from Thessalonica, to stir up the people against Paul and the others. It is mournful to see their permanent hatred to the Gospel. But it is ever thus with an old religion set aside by truth which its professors will not receive.

A few brethren conduct Paul to Athens, and he sends an order to Silas and Timothy to join him there at once. But with all this, the enemy does nothing but order the path of the Gospel, according to the will of God.

WHAT JOHN XVI. 23 MEANS, AND THE DIVINE ORDER OF WORSHIP.

My Dear Brother,—I have received your letter of perplexity, and lose no time in replying to it. The answer will appear to you when I point out to you that there is no such thing in Holy Scripture as you are founding your whole theory upon.

When the Lord says (Jo. xvi. 23), "*In that day ye shall ask nothing of Me,*" it neither refers to formal *prayer* nor to *worship*, but to their enlightenment as to their relationship to the Father, through the Holy Ghost, the promised paraclete, so that they would need to ask him no question

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

(1 Jo. ii.) They had, even in this discourse, been asking questions of Him about going to the Father (Jo. xiv. 5, 8; Jo. xvi. 18, 19). They kept demanding this and that of Him; but the Holy Ghost, when He came, would be in them, a Spirit of divine knowledge of their place in Christ with the Father, and filled with divine intelligence and led of the Spirit, they would then pray the Father in His name.

All questioning about their place and relationship and privileges would be at an end—they would, after His death, resurrection, and ascension, know all in the present grace of the Holy Ghost; and thus they would be gainers, not losers, by His absence. For they would not need to ask Him to solve this and that question for them, and be at their wit's end, when they would no longer have Him. They would sustain no loss in this respect by His absence, but be gainers. For they would then by the Holy Ghost be led on from the position of good Jews, and branches in the true Vine, to be good Christians and children of God with the Holy Ghost giving the cry of Abba in their hearts, and the consciousness of relationship and the knowledge of sonship, and being members of Christ's body. (No doubt to be with Christ, or have Him return, would be far better.) But the Lord spoke in Jo. xvi. of the better thing about to come then, and for them at that time, by the coming of the other paraclete, the Holy Ghost.

Now, dear Brother, this fact subverts your whole theory, that addressing Christ in prayer and worship is forbidden, and all that you have built upon it. It has no existence except in your own imagination. What a comfort for you to know this divinely by the true knowledge of God's Word viewed in its proper connection.

The old "fathers" that led the early church astray from

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Christ; Grotius, a cold linguist after the Reformation, and several rationalising German theologians, take the word here (ἐρωταω) to mean to *pray*, but it is a mistake. The common word for *formal* prayer is another (προσεύχομαι).

I am satisfied that the form our worship or prayers should take should be that indicated by Eph. ii. 18, and *that* the worship of the *Father*; and, as a rule, our prayers and worship, should be addressed directly to *the Father*, as His children, being all of the family of God, in a known relationship; but "*God* is a Spirit and they that worship *Him* [God, *i.e.*, surely Father, Son, and Holy Spirit equally] must worship *Him* in spirit and in truth."

The article you refer to in the *Herald* some years ago is quite correct, you will find, "according to the Scriptures," and so is J. N. D. "We all say the same thing" *but yourself.* Now that you see that your thought is based on no word of God's or Christ's, but on your own misapprehension of Christ's word, I have no doubt you will no longer make yourself an exception. The Lord keep us receiving all truth in the Spirit and in Christ "in faith and love," that it may lead us to more practical conformity to the walk of our rejected Lord.

The above is a reply we wrote to a perplexed brother, three or four thousand miles away, on last Christmas day, and after it was written I found he had given no address, so I insert it here if possibly it may catch his eye and dispel his self-inflicted trouble; for his trouble is this, that in John xvi. 23 the Lord absolutely forbids all addressing of prayer to Himself! He has swung to the very opposite of the common practice (perhaps too *common*) of addressing prayers and worship all but exclusively to the Lord Jesus. There is nothing that the Holy Ghost insists on more urgently and emphatically than

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

honouring the Son as we honour the Father. But would not the general practice, as well as our hymns, lead people to conclude that we had been enjoined to honour the Son more than the Father, for sometimes from the beginning to the close of our worship, the hymns, thanksgivings, and prayers are addressed exclusively to the Lord Jesus and not to God the Father. This ought not so to be, for it will lead to *humanize* and weaken worship, for in being constantly occupied with the incarnate Christ, "The Man Christ Jesus," and not the Father, we are in danger of sliding into the anthropological, and "*God* may not be in all our thoughts."

It ought not so to be I grant, but I ask the question, Is it not a sad fact that it is so? We ought not to conceive of the Christ of God without being possessed of a sense of His Divine nature as the Son of God, for if He were not GOD, we dare not worship Him.

But I speak not of what ought to be, but what is, and therefore I recall our readers to the order of Christian worship. "We worship *God* in the virtue of the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. "To serve (as a worshipper) the living God" Heb. ix. 14. We may *serve God* acceptably (as worshippers)," Heb. xii. 28. "Worship *God*," Rev. xix. 10. "Worship *God*," Rev. xxii. 9. "The true worshippers shall worship *the Father* in spirit and in truth: for *the Father* seeketh such to worship Him. For *God* is a Spirit: and they that *worship Him* must *worship Him* in spirit and in truth," John iv. 23, 24. "For *through* (διὰ) *Him* (Christ) we both have access (ἐν) *in the power* of *one Spirit*, (πρὸς) unto THE FATHER," Eph. ii. 18. Where is the scene of worship when the prodigal returns? In the father's presence.

This then is the divine order—διὰ, ἐν, πρὸς: διὰ, Christ; ἐν, the Spirit; πρὸς, the Father: the very word πρὸς serv-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

ing to point out *the Father* as the Object we are to reach. And if we take the Epistle to the Hebrews we have God as the object of worship, and Christ the great high priest over the house of God, and through the rent veil of His flesh we are to draw near by a new and living way, as worshippers, with full assurance of faith, and *serve God* acceptably (as worshippers) with reverence and godly fear. "*Through Him* (the Christ) therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise *to God* continually, that is, the fruit of the lips, confessing His name," Heb. xiii. 15.

ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.

O GOD of matchless grace !
We sing unto Thy name !
We stand accepted in the place
That none but Christ could claim.
Our willing hearts have heard Thy voice,
And in Thy mercy we rejoice.

'Tis meet that Thy delight
Should centre in the Son !
That Thou shouldst place us in Thy sight,
In Him Thy Holy One !
Thy perfect love has cast out fear,
Thy favour shines upon us here.

Eternal is our rest,
O Christ of God, in Thee !
Now of Thy peace, Thy joy possess'd,
We wait Thy face to see.
Now to the Father's heart received,
We know in Whom we have believed.

A sacrifice to God,
In life or death are we ;
Then keep us ever, blessed Lord,
Thus set apart to Thee !
Bought with a price, we're not our own,
We died, we live to God alone !

The Bible Herald 1877

THE CHARACTERISTIC ACTION OF GRACE.

THE intervention of God in grace is incomprehensible to the natural man. God, however, works that men should understand it, should share in it, and, as partakers of grace, seek to bring others to enjoy it likewise. For grace is expansive in its character, and has for its object, not the one who shows it, but the one who is to partake of it. Yet there is a joy, which he only knows from whom the grace flows out. And since God acts in saving grace, He has a joy in connection with it in which others may share but which they will never fathom. The shepherd called his friends to rejoice with him over his sheep which was lost. The servants rejoiced with the father when the prodigal son returned. All, however, will admit that the shepherd's feelings, and the father's joy, must be deeper than that of the angels of God. God has a joy in showing grace, the depth, the fulness of which is known only to Himself. Has He then had joy over all the readers of those lines, by their receiving salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

But there is more than simple rejoicing with God to which we are called. Angels can, and will, do that. In all, however, who are partakers of grace, and not merely spectators of its reception by others, there is a transforming power which it exercises over them. New aims are theirs, and desires which they had never experienced spring up in their hearts. It could not be otherwise. We see this exemplified in the history of the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar. When first she met the Lord she was a stranger to God's grace, and could not understand the motives of the one who would manifest

The Bible Herald 1877

it. Ere she left His presence she had partaken of it, and what was more, had drunk into His spirit who shewed it.

One simple request from Him laid the train for a most interesting work. "Give me to drink" was the opening speech from the weary, thirsty man, who was the eternal Son of God as well. His motives for asking a drink of her she did not then understand. Her reply evinced that. "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" How strange, she thought it, for one of the race who kept aloof from her people to solicit a favour from one of Samaria's daughters. Ever after she must have admitted, that she had learnt the object of that then strange request. He asked of her the drink of water that He might satisfy her with living water in the fullest, deepest sense. And though her first utterance was enough to repel a stranger, He would not be repulsed in His efforts to bless her soul. Her answer was a confession that she did not understand His motives. His rejoinder was an assertion that she was ignorant of grace, ignorant about Him, ignorant of what she needed, and of what He could give. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." The stranger, in her eyes a simple Jew, knew of something that she did not, and that something was the gift of God. Her surprise did not astonish Him, for it only attested her ignorance, and of that he was fully conscious. Had she done, as He suggested, asked Him for the living water, all her prejudices would have vanished, all the cherished enmity between Samaritans and Jews would, as far as she was concerned, have been dispelled at once, and for ever. And the incongruity, and as she thought the inconsistency of a Jew seeking a favour at the hand of a Samaritan

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

would have been explained, as she received from Him far more than He asked of her.

But as yet He was not understood. His reference to Himself procured an answer from her, which indicated what Isaiah had foretold, that to an outward observer there was no beauty in Him that they would desire Him. To her he was as yet only a Jew. "Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, his children, and his cattle?" He was greater than Jacob, for He had wrestled with him on the other side of Jordan at the brook Jabbok, when He humbled him in order to bless him. To that, however, the Lord made no reference. Nor did He work a miracle to dazzle, or startle her by such an exhibition of his power. Yet He made it known to her that He was greater than Jacob, by speaking, as He afterwards did, to her conscience. He had made the patriarch feel his weakness. He taught her truth about herself, and of her needing divine grace. And as Jacob had to his dying day the mark of the angel's contention with him: so she is known, and on that day she herself proclaimed it, as the one whose life was laid bare, and her sin detected by the simple word of the stranger who sat on the well.

To the question as to His person the Lord replied that He could, and was willing to give her water different from that which Jacob had provided by his industry and labour. Living water, as opposed to stagnant water, Jacob had indeed provided. It was in this sense she understood the term "living" here used by the Lord. Living water of a different character, and from a different source, Christ offered to that sinner. For if she once drank of it, she would never more thirst, and it would be in her a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. What an offer to make to such a character! She had but

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

to ask, to get the Holy Ghost to enable her to have communion with God as her Father. No preparation on her part was needed beyond the desire to have the willingness, believing His words, to receive. Grace such as Jacob could never have bestowed, the Lord was willing to give to the vilest creature on earth. But of what use was such an offer unless she was in a condition to profit by it. Who wants to drink of water unless he is thirsty? As yet she was not thirsty. The sense of need was one to which she was still a stranger.

To the class of people for whom such blessing is intended she certainly belonged, for she was a sinner. The condition required to partake of the proffered gift had yet to be formed. The Lord afterwards effected that, when He put His finger upon her conscience. So her only reply to the full and frank offer which He made her, was to ask for the water that she might not come again to draw. She only thought of herself; her convenience, and her ease. How completely was she a stranger to grace! Grace is occupied with others. She was, as yet, only thinking of herself. What she was before she was a partaker of grace, her questions and her requests have manifested. She could not understand His answering her in the way He did. She did not see in Him anything different from other people. She only desired to be saved the trouble of coming to that well every day to satisfy her thirst.

The Lord gave her, not what she asked, but what she wanted. Often does He act in this way still. How changed did she become! His motives were ever after surely very clear to her. He, she learned, was indeed greater than Jacob. And instead of seeking her own ease she became an earnest, active worker for Him. Self was no longer her object. She shared His thoughts, His

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

desires. The well to which she had not wished to return became to her the most attractive spot upon earth, for the Messiah was there; and all her efforts were directed to getting souls within the reach of His voice, and under the attractive power of the teaching of the Son of God.

What had wrought this change? She had partaken of grace. Who that reads the lines understands her actions, and shares in what were her feelings and her wishes? C. E. S.

IN THE SANCTUARY.

MINISTRY, AT THE LORD'S TABLE, ON PSALM LXXIII.

It is evident this psalm was written after the events of which it speaks. It is the experience of a godly man viewing things around him both naturally and spiritually. He looked at the seeming good fortune of the ungodly. "I was envious," he says, "at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. These are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches." He as it were passes his judgment on them, and says, "When I thought to know this it was too painful for me." He could not understand why the lot of the ungodly should be so different from his own. He says, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." I am constantly oppressed, and the wicked flourish on the earth. Now a godly man may

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

look at things in a natural way, and this is what makes the judgment of saints so to differ. If you could see the same thing with God's eye your opinion of it would be very wide of what it is looking at it from a human stand-point. We see this wonderfully exemplified in the book of Daniel; with man's eye the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw bore a head of gold, but from God's stand-point the head was that of a lion, the king of beasts—all the confusion results from what view we take of things. Daniel, the man of God, saw things with God's eye, and Nebuchadnezzar viewed things in a natural way. The one had a spiritual, the other a natural judgment. There is not a difference amongst the children of God but is the result of the world coming in and giving colour to their thoughts. If I differ from a brother as to any matter, great or small, it is because the world is influencing him or me. It may be in us both, therefore we need to be very patient and wait on the Lord, that we may "all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God unto a perfect man."

The Psalmist was perplexed as he looked around and saw the wicked in power. He betook himself to the sanctuary of God, and then he found the judgment of the court above reverse that of the courts below. He now gets inside with God and gets a Divine sight of that which before he looked at in a natural way. Now all is explained. He was confounded until he went into the sanctuary of God, "*then*," he said, "understood I their end." The glitter was gone now. The external was seen to be false, and the reality of everything was known to him. It was not now the golden-headed image, but what God saw that figure to be. It is a great thing to get into the sanctuary with God, and to know when we are there. With the Psalmist it was like one on earth looking through

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

a telescope, which showed him what was going on there, but with us it is different. We do not look through the telescope and see heaven in the distance, but we are there. By faith we are seated there. We are in Christ, and "one spirit with the Lord." Our communication is perfect, and our entrance there has been accomplished. "Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," we are now in the presence of God. We have been brought there by one who took a veil on Him, that He might take the veil from us. We have entered by "the new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say his flesh." We have boldness by the blood of Jesus. But what are the characteristics of His presence? How do we know when we are there? The first characteristic is *light*. We have power to discover what is of God, and to refuse that which is not of God. How we stop short in carrying out this great characteristic of His presence! We feel its divine action on our souls, but we shrink from the thorough acting according to the light. Love we feel is more what suits us, but love without light, or before light has done its work, would lead to rationalism. It is the light that convinces of evil and shows the true place for the exercise of love. Jesus said to Nathaniel, "When thou wast under the fig tree *I saw* thee." Light made him the object of love. Light convicts. The woman in John iv. gave her testimony to this, "Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did." Light makes the secrets of the heart manifest. We are the children of the light. "Light in the Lord." We are always "in the light," though we do not always walk according to it. This is our responsibility, and we must know what we are, and where we are. David found the thoughts of his heart changed when he got into the sanctuary. His natural judgment of this scene

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

was reversed. Now many view things in a natural way, and yet are most sincere. They judge according to the light of their minds, and take a common sense view of things. When we get into God's presence no such judgment will stand. *Light*, then, is the first characteristic of the presence of God. "Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places; Thou castedst them down into destruction; How are they brought into desolation! They are utterly consumed with terrors."

Next you get a true knowledge of God and of His power. "As a dream when one awaketh, so, Oh Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image." The stamp that marks you is that you have been with God. His greatness fills your soul. You comport yourself as a son of God. Do you bear the impress that you have been with Him? Have you been in trouble and have you had an audience with Him about the matter? Have you made known your requests to Him, and does His peace now control you? Bless the Lord for the trouble—your circumstances took you into His presence, and you return to your circumstances to go through them empowered by what you have got there—*your* state took you into the sanctuary, but when there you dropped your state—all fear, perturbation, tumults, left you when there—your cares you gave to Him, and you returned to this scene with God's state characterising you—you came laden with heaven's air—you have the peace God which passeth all understanding. It is not that you are taken out of trouble, but now the trouble does not press on you—you have got superiority to it—you have come out from the presence of God with the impress of His state upon your heart. This is the first thing you get. First you were detected by the light, and now you receive an impress of the God of light. To speak of what is small

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

in the presence of that which is great, it is like a person getting an *audience* with the sovereign of this country. It is not sending in your request by one of her ministers of state, but you see the Queen herself, and you come out from her presence sensible of the greatness of the one with whom you have been. Peace reigns where God is; so I come out from my audience with Him possessing "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." I am not troubled now. God has undertaken for me, He is equal to anything. "As a dream when one awaketh, so, oh Lord, when thou awakest *thou* shalt despise their image." Their prospects are vain, the prosperity of the wicked is but a phantom. "Thou shalt despise their *image*." The psalmist's thoughts of himself are now gone. It is God and His judgment of the whole thing. When self got place the heart of the psalmist was grieved; and he says, "I was pricked in my reins." In New Testament Scripture we learn self is gone on the Cross of Christ; and with us it ought to have no place. Would that it were so; but it is ever getting a place. Even in our worship meetings, we sing of ourselves and our blessing, and very feebly rise to God's mind as to this. If self gets in at all let it only be that it may be put out. I have no place before God now, I am gone. Let me be at the vanishing point. So David saw himself when He got into the sanctuary. "So foolish was I and ignorant: I was as *a beast* before Thee." Man has no place there. It is new ground altogether, and yet a *third* thing comes out. Though there is no reckoning of me now, yet "nevertheless I am continually with Thee." As to me I am as a beast, a Gentile dog, yet I never before had such a sense that I am an object to God. "I am continually with thee; Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou wilt guide me in Thy counsel, and after glory Thou wilt take me." When I get into the presence of God,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

then I learn His love. I find that I am cared for with a Father's love, and "carried like a child." If once you know this, have tasted it but a little, you will so long for more of it, that nothing will satisfy you but abiding under the shadow of His love.

What a great thing then, beloved brethren, it is to be in the sanctuary. The Psalmist longed for it as the poet does for the land of his fancy. Prophecy is very like poetry, for it brings you into the realisation of something in which you are not yet; brings you sensibly there, before, in fact, you are there. But ours is no poetic fancy. We are there—brought to God. So the psalmist's experience is in fact what ours should be. But a fourth thing comes out—I have learned that I am God's object, but I also find He becomes mine: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." I have Christ in heaven and on earth, I want no one else. There He has no rival, and if I look to earth, I can do without all besides Himself. Saints are lifted up to this. Christ's death has shut out everything, and it has shut me in to Himself. I am perfectly happy in His presence. With Himself only. This is the proper thought for us as we sit at the Lord's Table. You think of nothing then but Himself. The cares of life, one's family matters, are all outside that scene. I am happy then with Him. But the disciples said they had no bread, though Christ was with them: very like us! Christ is bread and all for our hearts. God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever. My afflictions are gone, my joys have no place at His table. His death and the living Lord Himself is all my thought. When I go again into the world I thank Him for all His mercies, but

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

at the Table, the afflictions and joys of life have no place. I am engaged with Christ, whose death hath separated me from all else. Beloved brethren, may this be our experience, when by the Spirit we are gathered to His blessed Name, and break bread, showing forth His death till He come.

J. B. S.

Glasgow, March 25th, 1877.

MANNA AND THE OLD CORN.

"This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."—JOHN vi. 58.

"And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched *corn* in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year."—JOSHUA v. 11, 12.

We are in a world that yields nothing for our *souls*—absolutely nothing; and all who are taught of God prove this. Surrounded as we are, surely, with abundant providential blessings, and many social and national mercies, yet, as to our *souls*, it is "a barren and thirsty land, where no water is." Such it was to our Lord, and such it is to us. We have, however, *resources* in God. He is to us *the fountain of living waters* in and through Christ, in whom we have redemption through His blood, and in whom we are blessed in the heavenlies with all spiritual blessings. Our never-failing springs, then, are in Christ, who is our wine to cheer, our bread to stay, our living water to refresh, our sufficiency and strength; a free and exhaustless supply to faith, as He said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." Thus we walk by faith, not

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

by sight; for though, by grace, we are brought into such nearness and acceptance in Christ, we are however set in constant and entire dependence on Him whom having not seen we love. It is the sense of this that enables us to glory in the Lord. It has always been the lesson God would have his people learn; hence, if the Psalmist exclaim, "*All* my springs are in Thee!" we find one apostle writing, "Our sufficiency is of God," while another says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Again, if we take our place in company with Jesus, we hear Him instructing His cleansed ones to cling to Him in order to bear fruit, "for without Me," said He, "ye can do nothing" (Ps. lxxxvii. 7; 2 Cor. iii. 5; Jas. i. 17; John xv. 3-5). In this way we can easily understand why the apostle characterized the servants of Christ as "having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. vi. 10).

In looking over the history of the children of Israel, we notice, not only that they were a redeemed people, and frequently reminded by the prophets that Jehovah had brought them out of Egypt with a high hand, but they were constantly to have the sense of it kept up by observing the passover. They kept the passover in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan. Again, it is plainly set forth that wherever they might be, or in whatever circumstances, God made Himself known to them as taking the care of their sustainment, because He had redeemed them. He was their Sustainer, as well as their Redeemer.

If they were under the safety of the sprinkled blood, He gave them to eat the flesh of the lamb roast with fire, especially the head, and legs, and purtenance. Not only to read to us typically the precious lessons, that we are

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

safe for eternity in virtue of the precious blood of the Lamb of God, but also that during this night of watching and need, He who died for us is our strength, and that we should have communion with Him, as to His mind, His walk, and inward affections. Again, when redeemed out of Egypt, and brought through the Red Sea—place of death and judgment—on new ground, they soon found themselves in a barren wilderness, removed from all visible means of subsistence, and therefore entirely dependent upon God. But this gave occasion for Him who chose them, and redeemed them, to prove His power and goodness in caring for them. Day by day, according to His word, He sent manna down from heaven for their support. We read that "the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan" (Ex. xvi. 35).

When, however, they set foot on the promised land flowing with milk and honey (which sets forth our present position in Christ in heavenly places) they were still dependent on God, though instead of manna, their food was "the old corn of the land." We are told that "the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year" (Josh. v. 11, 12).

While we may gather from these facts in their typical import, that every believer is set in the position of dependence on God, and that He is the Sustainer of our souls, yet it makes a vast difference to our state of heart, whether our habit is to think only of Christ as the *Lamb* who shed his blood for many, or as *the manna*—the One who came down from heaven, or *as the old corn of the land*—the One who ascended up to where He was before.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Those who are thinking only of Jesus as crucified, limiting their thoughts mostly to what He did upon the tree—blessed, and most precious as it is thus to remember Him—may be often reminded of the manifestation of divine love, sins borne and suffered for, and peace made, thus assuring them of safety, and of being objects of divine mercy; but being still in Egypt (where there was no singing) such do not know deliverance from the world or from themselves, nor what it is to stand in liberty and joy in the presence of God. No doubt all our blessings are founded on the work of the cross, but Jesus *is not there now.*

There are some, though, whose apprehensions of divine grace, and of the work of Christ, are beyond this. They know that Jesus who was crucified is risen, and that they are associated with Him whom the world rejected, and whom God raised from among the dead; they know too that they have life in Him who is out of death, and has triumphed over death and Satan. Such souls apprehend that they are rescued from this present evil world and not of it, though they find themselves in a wilderness of need and dissatisfaction, and that they are going on to their inheritance. But such mostly think of God's pouring blessings down upon them in the wilderness, and, it may be, regard earthly prosperity as a mark of divine favour. They are dependent like the Israelites on periodical ministrations from heaven, and are satisfied to gather up now and then a little food. The one thought of a soul not delivered from the world—still in Egypt—is his safety from coming wrath. The one thought of a wilderness Christian is having God's blessing poured down upon him day by day; he looks for the manna. Both thoughts very important in their place; but in neither of these states of soul is the conscience at liberty or the heart at rest. Some-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

times singing, and at other times murmuring, wilderness Christians know that they have been sheltered by the blood of the Lamb, and brought out of Egypt with a high hand, through the sea of death and judgment, and they have seen all their fleshly enemies dead upon the sea shore; but, with all, their thoughts are limited to God's blessing poured out upon them down here. Very blessed surely it is to realise God's delight in blessing us here, but to know what it is to have to do with the ever-living, ever-loving Son of God Himself, as in Him who is in the glory, is another thing.

Blessed as it is to contemplate the faithful care of God in day by day providing for His people in a barren desert, it is sweeter still to know that "the manna" set forth Jesus; for He said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever. . . . This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever" (John vi. 51-68). Blessed as it is to think of Jesus as the One who *came down,* and gave His flesh for the life of the world in such matchless grace, yet the difference is most striking as to our apprehension and enjoyment whether we only think of Him as He *was* down here, or as He *is* up there. What the believer wants now day by day is the sustaining power and blesssing of having to do with a living person up there—the Man in the glory. And no doubt *the* great cause of weakness and failure in believers is *not* that they do not sometimes remember the work of the cross, or that they forget that Jesus came down from heaven; but because they do not draw from, lean on, and abide in a living, faithful Christ in the glory, in constant dependence, obedience, and confidence. We need His continual upholding care and

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

blessing. Apart from Him we are helpless. We can most truly say—

> "As weaker than a bruised reed,
> I cannot do without Thee;
> I want Thee here each hour of need,
> Shall want Thee, too, in glory."

It is when the believer enters upon by faith the new-creation blessings God has given us in Christ in heavenly places—the true Canaan—that he knows Christ Himself there as his Soul-sustainer—"*the old corn of the land.*" The "Corn of wheat" which fell into the ground and died is alive again, and in the glory. He then finds that it is not merely the work of Christ on the cross for us, nor the blessing poured out upon us on our pilgrimage which should occupy us, important as they are, but a full Christ up there, a living person in the glory, even Christ Himself who did the work, and through whom all our blessings have come. It is Jesus glorified who is "the old corn of the land," to whom we are now to look as the commanding and absorbing object of our hearts. It is not merely promises, nor even privileges, but liberty to approach God with boldness because He is there in whom we are for ever blessed, whose blood ever there speaks for us. Oh! the unspeakable blessedness of feeding on Christ as "the old corn of the land"—on Him who is our life, righteousness, peace, and hope, and yet the One in whom are all our present and eternal springs and resources. And surely He is enough to fill and satisfy our minds and hearts. Known thus as an object, He eclipses every other. Beauty then is seen no where else. All here is death and corruption apart from that living, incorruptible One. By the word and Spirit which testify of Him exercising our souls we grow in acquaintance with Him, rise superior to old associations, and find ourselves

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

in the circle of such love and dignity, as makes every thing here seem poor and dissatisfying. The heart thus taken up with Him loses its relish for passing and fading things; and finds Him a satisfying object, as He said, "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." He is enough for us, for not only is He almighty, but His love is perfect, and He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He is able to sympathize with us, for He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and His compassions fail not. He ever lives to intercede for us, and always appears for us before the face of God. He is ever active and faithful in managing all our affairs for us up there, as the other Comforter does every thing for us, and in us down here. Well then might an inspired apostle enjoin us to set our minds on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and remind us at the same time that we "are dead," or have died with Christ, and that "our life is hid with Christ in God."

We find that "the lamb" was *eaten,* the "manna" was *eaten,* the "old corn of the land" was *eaten.* What is the instruction to *us* in this? Is it not that as those were all types of Christ, that *we* should feed by faith upon Him? Not merely think of Him, read about Him, hear about Him, or speak of Him, but receive God's revelation of Him into our hearts, for our sustainment and joy. They did not merely think of the flesh of the lamb, or look at it, or the manna, and the old corn, but they *ate* it—they felt they needed it, they partook of it, and thus received strength for walk and service. And so now. We may read a chapter in the Bible or hear an orthodox discourse, and yet it may be sadly true of us, as it has been said of others, "the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard." No doubt it is by

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the written word of God that we have any knowledge of Christ; and the Holy Ghost, the Glorifier and Testifier of Christ, is here to guide us into all truth, and to take of the things of Christ and shew unto us. So that by the Spirit through the Scriptures the deep and wondrous glories of the person, work, relationships, offices, moral excellencies, and fulness of Christ are brought to us, and our souls are strengthened by feeding on Him. It is the needful daily employ for every child of God. When Jesus said to Mary, "One thing is needful," it was the habit of sitting at His feet, and hearkening to His word to which He alluded. This was Mary's source of spiritual power. It was the good part which she chose. She was enabled to go forth from such a place of blessing, to let love have its own ready outflow, in breaking the costly alabaster box of very precious ointment, and pouring it upon Him, who was the conscious spring of all her blessing. Had Martha learned the same lesson what failure and distress she would have been spared!

Feeding on Christ then is communion. It is an unfeignedly dependent one having to do with Him, leaning upon Him, drawing from Him, as He is set forth in the Scriptures, and revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. When God's own testimony of Him is thus received into our hearts by faith, He is the food and strength of our souls. The more we feed on Him the more we desire Him. If we are going out after the gratification of fleshly desires, we shall loose our relish for the sincere milk of the word. Fleshly lusts war against the soul. Where personal intercourse and communion with Christ are not practised, there must be weakness and failure, even in those who have spiritual life. It is, therefore, of all importance for us, who have no visible means of sustainment, like "the lamb," "the manna," or "the old corn," that we hold

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

tenaciously, for the necessity of spiritual health and activity, that our joy and strength are found wholly in being personally occupied with Christ Himself. Dead, cold, formal exercises are short of this, and to be dreaded. Sitting at the feet of Jesus, and hearkening to His word are as "needful" as ever, and this the most spiritual and advanced Christians know best and practice most. May we be kept abiding in Him!

The children of Israel fed on "the lamb" during the night, on "the manna" in the wilderness early in the morning, but on "the old corn" of the land at every time of need; and these points read instructive lessons to us. The passover feast was the remembrance of the lamb slain, by whose blood they had obtained safety. It was eaten "roast with fire," which to us sets forth the sufferings of the Lamb of God who endured divine wrath for us.

In "the manna," we have the One who came down from heaven—"the bread of God," "the bread of life." He said, "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John vi. 51). The manna was a small thing to man's eye, like hoar frost, and was to be "gathered" before the sun rose, which would melt it; forcibly reminding us that the time for feeding on Christ is before things of this old creation, however pure and necessary, have their effect upon us. The things of God should have their *first* claim on us. When Christ has the *first* place in our hearts, He will have every place. To begin the day in His strength is the secret of going through it well. "Blessed is the man whose *strength* is in Thee." It is a good thing to see the face of the Lord Jesus by faith before we see another face; we thus have power, from intercourse with Him, before we practically enter upon the day's duties. What a

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

precious secret of blessing this is! How different when we make the things of this life, however important, our first concern of the day, instead of Him, who said, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things *shall be added* unto you" (Mat. vi. 33). The way the first part of the morning engages us often tells the real state of our souls. If we are minding earthly things they will assume increasing importance and gravity with us; but, if our minds are set on things above, the things of Christ, and His claims, will be the unerring standard of the value of everything. Feeding on Christ is a daily business, for "the inward man is renewed day by day." The manna, too, was to be gathered fresh "every morning;" if it were kept it "would breed worms and stink." It is the habit of dependence and communion with the Lord, daily drawing directly from Himself, and not trying to live upon past experiences and gifts, however rich and abundant. O, the unspeakable blessedness of personally feeding on Him!

As we have noticed, "the old corn of the land" might be eaten at any time. It was unknown till they possessed the land. It was unlimited as to supply. It sets forth to us a full Christ, risen and ascended. We see Him in heavenly places—the land. We enter the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, and know Him there, as "Head of His body the church," "Head of all principality and power," the glorified Man, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Thus knowing this blessed One in the glory, we have a full and never-failing supply of strength and blessing in Him, who is our righteousness and strength. We are accepted, blessed, complete, and seated in Him in heavenly places. We are therefore enjoined to abide *in* Him, to walk *in* Him, to be rooted and built up *in* Him. Wondrous place of bless-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

ing! Unspeakable privilege, perfect acceptance, marvellous nearness to God, in whom we have all spiritual blessings in heavenly places! May we go forward in the walk of faith as those who know that without Him we can do nothing, but as knowing also that we have strength for all things *in Him* that gives us power (Phil. iv. 13).

Another point to notice is, that if Christ risen and glorified is looked to as *the* source of all sustainment we cannot forget Him as the One who came down from heaven and died for us on the cross. We know Him in the glory as the Lamb as it had been slain. Hence we find that they not only ate of the "old corn" when in the land the day after keeping "the passover," but that "the manna" ceased the day after they had eaten of the old corn. Here we see "the passover," "the manna," and "old corn" clustered together. We are told also that they did eat of "the old corn . . . unleavened cakes, and parched corn;" the cakes and parched corn forcibly setting forth the sufferings of Him who had been bruised for our blessing, and had been cut off under the fire of divine wrath (Joshua v. 10-12). Thus let it be carefully noted that if we are really occupied with Christ ascended into heaven, we shall never forget how He came there, and what He did for us upon the tree. The reverse, however, does not hold good; that is, souls may dwell frequently upon His sufferings and death upon the cross, and have little sense of personal intercourse with Christ and what He is for and to us now on the throne. In fact some would teach us that the true place of a Christian is to be 'always at the foot of the cross." Such know Christ as a Redeemer but not as their ever living Sustainer, and this may account for much of the weakness among so many of God's children. Now while the death of Christ can never be forgotten, for it is the great manifestation

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

of divine love, and all our present and eternal blessings are founded on it, still we know that He is not now on the cross, nor in the sepulchre, but is at the right hand of the Majesty on high. We delight to remember Him. The passover was celebrated in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the land, and we are to shew or announce His death till He come, and always bear about in our body the dying of Jesus. But while we thus remember Him where *He was*, we now see Him by faith where *He is*. Christ glorified is the object of faith—"*We see Jesus*, who *was* made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 9). Having to do with Him there, we have power to walk as He also walked. "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

May we know day by day the precious reality of present sustainment and blessing by feeding on Him who is now seated on the right hand of God, and who is soon coming to take us unto Himself!

H. H. S.

A BEACON.

JONATHAN loved David with all his heart, but he did not follow him outside the court circle; so is it with some true-hearted ones in the present day. They love Christ, but they will not "go forth unto Him without the camp bearing his reproach." But Jonathan, refusing David's fellowship, fell with Saul on the mountains of Gilboa!

The Bible Herald 1877

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Translated from the Italian of J. N. D.

CHAPTER XVII. 16-34.

Now at Athens the sight of the idolatry ardently practised in that city pressed heavily on the spirit of the Apostle. He reasons in the synagogue with the Jews, and daily in the market with them that met with him. Athens had been a city famous for the glory of its arts and of its arms, and for its schools of philosophy. Having succumbed to the Roman yoke, it had lost its importance, and lived in idleness, seeking for some new thing, still philosophizing, and boasting in the memory of its ancient glory in pagan philosophy, surpassed perhaps by that of Alexandria and Tarsus (where Paul himself had been educated), although where the leaders of Roman society studied. The fruit was not great in this vain and idle city, but the instruction for us is precious.

The Apostle's discourse at the Areopagus was not the preaching of the Gospel. It was his apology before an ancient tribunal whose decisions had, in times gone by, possessed great weight, but which then, though still allowed to exist, no longer retained its ancient importance. But the fact that the Apostle was obliged to present himself before the tribunal, gave him the opportunity of manifesting the wisdom and grace he possessed through the Spirit of God. As we have seen he *preached* in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. In the market-place, where the philosophers and town's people met together, he announced Jesus and the resurrection, His person, His victory over death, the testimony that God had accepted the sacrifice of Christ; and moreover that in Him we are admitted into a new creation (a position which Adam, even in innocence, never occupied) the kingdom of the second, of the last Adam.

I do not say that all these points were unfolded, but the Apostle announced the grand foundations on which all these

The Bible Herald 1877

truths are built up. He did so according to the need and capacity of his hearers; and nobody is so incapable as a philosopher, and those under his influence, and who walk in the vain thought of being something, when in reality they are nothing; and such was the true character of the Athenians. Knowledge is blinding. Human intelligence does not know God. God enters the conscience when he speaks in order to make Himself known; and in proportion to the pretension of the human mind to intelligence, is the hardness and inaction of the conscience. It is as though dead, and man as though he had none, and therefore no capacity to receive the truth whereby he may know God. These wise men thought that Jesus and the resurrection were gods, so far were they from the truth. The mind of man, and the activity of his intelligence, when it is a question of morality and of God, can do nothing but always drive him farther and farther away. He finds no basis for morality, and consequently no true rule; and when God is submitted to the human understanding, He is no longer God in any sense. God does not present Himself to man in order to know what he ought to be. Conscience and faith put God in His own place, and man in his true relation to God; and the Word is the means of doing so, the Word in which God reveals Himself, and shows what man is.

Some mocked the Apostle, saying, "What will this babbler say?"

Ridicule is often a means in the hands of the enemy to turn away souls from the truth, because men are afraid to identify themselves with what others despise. Conscience and moral courage are the very last things to be found in the heart of man; grace awakens conscience, and gives strength to follow it.

Still here was something new; and that was always enough for the Athenians, fatigued by the nonentity of their existence. Accordingly they lead Paul to the Areopagus, once honourable and honoured, in order to know what this new doctrine might be. Because however frivolous philosophical opinions may be, they cannot quietly endure either truth or Christ.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

One human opinion may be as good as another; but the testimony of God operates on the conscience, and demands the heart.

Paul, surely taught by the Holy Ghost, replies in the Areopagus with admirable wisdom, and a calm love which lays hold on the sole circumstance to which he could attach the truth he desired to communicate to them. His practised eye had observed in the city the only little remnant of truth by which he could lead them to recognize their true position.

It was not simply a declaration of the salvation of the soul, which had already occupied him in the synagogue and public market-place; here he explains the true character of the religion of idols, but with perfect delicacy; and seeks to bind that remnant of truth which the enemy had not been able to destroy, with truth more positive, with the name of Jesus, and with that which appealed to the conscience.

The people of the city, idle and at heart sceptical, were given up to idolatry; and the circle of the gods being exhausted, they had dedicated an altar to the unknown God. It is said that in former times a fatal malady had reigned in the city; and that the inhabitants, having prayed in vain to all the gods to remove the plague, had consulted an oracle, who directed them to dedicate an altar to the unknown God. It is unnecessary, however, to seek for any special source of this worship. At the bottom of all idolatry there is the idea of God, corrupted, and taken possession of by satan, so that men may worship demons; but the idea cannot be eradicated from the heart of man. Infidels seek to do so, but it always remains at the bottom of the heart, in spite of all their efforts. It is born with the birth of man, and creation bears witness too clear and too strong to allow the heart to believe that everything was made by nothing. And then conscience speaks too loud to allow it to be unharkened to. Man does not want God, and tries to forget Him; he reasons, and seeks diversions, but the thought always returns, and possibility makes itself felt. He endeavours to get rid of the thought by every means, but still

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

it is always there; and the thought of God always makes us feel guilty.

God is to be found in all idolatries, neglected and forgotten, it is true; but He exists in all mythologies, and is found in the conscience when awakened by fear. When men are in agony (so says a Christian of pagan times) they do not say, "Oh, immortal Gods," but "Oh God, a proof, I would add, of a soul naturally Christian." They made great gods and little gods, placed a god or a goddess at fountains, in woods, and everywhere they could see the operations of nature; but behind every thing remained the deep feeling that there was one only and all powerful God. Thus among the Brahmins in India, in Egypt, among the Sabeans, among the Scandinavians, there were gods without end, but one God not worshipped, but owned as the source of everything. This God, the author of all, rested in darkness. In India not a single temple was ever dedicated to him, but still He exists and is the source of everything. Among the Sabeans, the ancient Persians, there was another kind of pagan religion which recognized Ahirnian and Ahrmasda, a bad and a good god, and in which God was worshipped in fire, and which had no idol; there was another god as the source of these. I say source, because a creation was not owned among the pagans. (See Heb. xi. 3.)

The imagination, under the influence of satan, created gods everywhere, but at the bottom the idea of God was there. And yet this God, the true, was unknown—deplorable state of mankind, deprived of God, of whom they stood in such deep need; thus enemies to His true knowledge, because the conscience, which makes responsibility felt, could not endure His presence, because the heart desired things which the conscience in the presence of God condemned. They made gods who would help men to gratify their passions. Man cannot suffice to himself; he has lost God, and fears Him; his heart stoops to that which is more degraded than himself. He seeks, but in vain, to satisfy the need of his heart by means of objects which degrade him, and make him forget God, of whom the thought is anguish to his heart.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

God, the unknown God, now reveals Himself; and the Apostle, laying hold, with great happiness of thought, of the inscription on the altar, announces the true God, whom they did not know. This is not the Gospel; but he identifies the God he had already preached in the Gospel of Jesus and of the resurrection, with the truth they themselves admitted, and defending it, speaks to the conscience. The unknown God would judge the world by this Jesus, in that He had raised Him from the dead. This truth he applies to their conscience and to idolatry, under the yoke of which they were subjected. By the power of the Spirit in Paul they stood accused, convicted of having falsified the idea of God and denied His glory, the glory of the only Creator, for they had only recognised Him by the confession that He was unknown.

Here was what was done by the apostle, He announced to them clearly this true God. He had manifested Himself in the gift of life, and in the things necessary to sustain that life. Through the conscience, He was then not far from each of them. During the times of ignorance, God had borne with the wanderings of man; He had passed them over, without judgment. Now He was calling to all men everywhere to repent, because a day was appointed in the which He should judge the world (this habitable earth, for he speaks of the judgment of the οἰκουμένη) in righteousness by the Man whom He had ordained; whereof He had given assurance unto all men, in that He had raised Him from the dead. In this way He reveals by the power of the Spirit the one true Creator-God, the Sustainer of all things, the knowledge of whom had been lost in the folly of idolatry, into which man had been deluded by the enemy, who, by means of the passions of deceived beings, had made himself God. Then he declares the approching judgment of this world by Jesus, the risen Man, but that grace, in the patience of God, invited all men to repent.

Such was the Apostle's defence; not of himself, truly; but he brings his hearers into the presence of God, and sets forth that which the conscience could not deny, and that this was

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

what they ought to have known (Rom. i. 19, 20). Then he reveals what was new, namely, that judgment was approaching, that it was to be executed by the Man established by God, of whom He had given assurance, in raising Him from the dead, as the public proof of His ways and power, which ended the path of man on earth, and enfeebled the power of satan. The accusers receive their own sentence. To the existence of God they say nothing, but many mock at the idea of resurrection.

It is the *present* exercise of the power of God that man cannot receive; let there be a God, and it is well; but let Him do something, let Him intervene presently, and man cannot willingly receive it. But the mighty word of the Apostle touches some hearts even among this frivolous people. The harvest is small, but God does not leave Himself without testimony. A few, believing the Gospel, join themselves to the servants of God; but the testimony being rendered, the Apostle remains there no longer. Philosophy and frivolity united, as is always the case, give a high opinion of self, are bad soil for grace, and do not deserve that God should wait long for the good will of vanity. Grace can be effective everywhere; but here judgment and testimony are given against philosophy and the pretensions of men.

EVERLASTING GLORY.

EVERLASTING glory unto Jesus be!
Sing aloud the story of His victory!
How he left the splendour of his home on high;
Came in love so tender, on the cross to die.

Yes! He came from heaven, suffer'd in our stead!
Praise to Him be given, our exalted Head.
Jesus, meek and lowly, came the lost to save,
He, the Victim holy, triumph'd o'er the grave.

We in death were lying, lost in hopeless gloom,
Jesus, by His dying, vanquish'd e'en the tomb!
Burst its iron portal, roll'd away the stone,
Rose, in life immortal, to the Father's throne.

Christ the Lord is risen, sing we now to-day!
Freed are we from prison, Christ our debt did pay!
Sing aloud, and never cease to spread His fame;
Triumph, triumph ever, in the Saviour's Name.

The Bible Herald 1877

CHRIST JESUS HIMSELF OUR CENTRE.

I AM pleased to see that you like the book I sent you, for I humbly think that it contains a kind of truth—that which directs to the person of Christ in the heavenly glory—which saints in your land much require to have preached to them at the present time; for doctrines, however precious, do not fill renewed hearts, they must have the person of the Lord Jesus Himself.

It was when He Himself appeared and showed His disciples His hands and His side and said, "Peace be unto you," that they were glad, for they "*saw the Lord.*" The position of the saints in your country just now is very much that of the disciples on the sea of Galilee after the Lord's death, when they "toiled all night and caught nothing." But they caught a glimpse of the wonder-working Stranger on the solid shore, and they got not only a great draught of fishes at His word, but they left the ship and made towards Him on the shore, and found a feast as well as Himself there. This is in parable what will be when we see Him on the shore—outside all human systems.

Their work at Christ's bidding led to worship; they got a great draught of fishes on the right side of the ship when they let down the net at His word; but this led John, the most spiritual and loving, to whisper, "*It is the Lord,*" and that word ran through them all, and drew them from the ship and nets around Himself on the solid shore, where they had personal intercourse and precious refreshment, and restoration of soul and heart, where this was needed.

In this country this divine watchword, "*It is the Lord,*" has been uttered from heart to heart and from lip to lip, and tens of thousands have left all the ships of man, all

The Bible Herald 1877

denominational distinctions and ecclesiastical systems, and have made for the shore and the blessed person of the Son of God, and have gathered around Him to feast and worship outside of all sects and churches on the original ground of the Church of God, as did the primitive Christians in the days of the apostles. There were no Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Calvinists, or any other *confusions* then, but they were "all one in Christ Jesus," children of God, members of Christ, and they worshipped God "in one body." There was no such folly uttered as saying "we are all one in heart though we may be in different folds and churches," for they had the Lord Himself as their one centre, the Holy Ghost as the one gatherer of souls, and He gathered only to Christ, and the result was "*one body*," as there was "one Spirit" and "one God and Father."

If we read to find God's present work in the Word, we will see that which few seem to have apprehended about the coming and presence of the Holy Ghost to be in and with the Church. Be so kind as read and ponder what is written in Acts of the Apostles, chap. ii., also Eph. i.-iv., 1 Cor. xii.-xiv., and the Epistle to the Hebrews. If the truth of "the great mystery—Christ and the Church"—is got hold of by us in the living grace of the Holy Ghost we will have a spiritual apprehension of what Christianity and the Church of God are in God's word such as is known by few. Some might think it very presumptuous to write thus, and ask, "Can it be that, with all our learning, talent and piety, we are in gross ignorance of Christianity, as a divine system, and of the Holy Ghost as a present divine person now come to be in the saints and with the Church of God"? But the fact of the existence of different denominations shews it is even so, and little wonder, when the Lord Jesus is so ignored in His living

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

person that saints generally think only of *His death*, and cannot be roused to think of Him either as the living "Head of His Body the Church" in heaven, or of His imminent personal *coming* for His saints, to take them up to heaven in glorified bodies like His own.

When Christ was here did He not gather to Himself? and is He not carrying on the work of gathering His people to Himself by His Word and Spirit now that He has gone into heaven? Hence all gathering into sects and churches with human names and creeds is against Christ's mind, and opposed to the Holy Ghost's mission and work—and that, my dear brother, is not only solemn, but awful. Jesus says, "He that is not with Me is against Me; and *he that gathereth not with Me scattereth* (Mat. xii. 30). All those ministers of the Lutheran Church who gather Christ's people into that Church for worship and the Lord's Supper, are "against" Christ in this action, and, because they gather not with Christ, they "scatter" Christ's sheep. All who gather to the lesser denominations do the same evil and unscriptural thing. The Holy Ghost gathers out of all to Christ Himself in the heavens. This and more is proved conclusively and irrefutably by Holy Scripture. It is quite contrary to God's mind, as Holy Scripture teaches, to be inside any human fold; for, as the Lord says, the time has come now when there is "one flock and one shepherd." He does not say "*fold;*" but "*one flock, one shepherd*" (Jo. x. 16). There is now no fold at all here below of an earthly kind like that which Israel had. That is "the camp," and the Word of God says—"Let us go forth unto Him *without* the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. xiii).

A "fold" is a falsity and a denial of Christianity. Plainly, therefore, all denominationalism is "against" Christ, and tends only to "scatter" Christ's saints,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

and distinctly against the Holy Ghost, who baptises all saints into one body (1 Cor. xii. 12-13), and whose design in coming was to form them livingly into one body, with their living Head in heaven, and have them manifestly "one body" on earth: for the Church of Corinth was an expression of that one body there (1 Cor. xii.), and we read, "Now ye are Christ's body," verse 27, and to shew that He meant the whole Church in the next verse, he said—"And God has set certain in the assembly—apostles, prophets, teachers, &c." Two things are referred to:—1, The Assembly, which meant the whole Church of God on earth; and 2, The assembly at Corinth is called Christ's body, because it gave expression to it there—just as if a husband put his hand out at a window, and a wife should say (though not seeing his *whole* body), That is my husband. It was not all Christ's body that appeared at Corinth, but it was nothing else, and it was *visible*. There was no talk about an "invisible" Church in those days. It was not until man had ruined the Church of God as His house on earth that they talked foolishly about the invisible Church! The Assembly of God was intended to be the light of the world: but of how much use would an *invisible* light be to mariners in a dark night?

The Holy Ghost, beyond all controversy, came to baptise all believers into one living, spiritual, visible body, the body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 12-13); and our duty is to keep this unity already made, and not break away from it to any human unity formed by "the flesh" and Satan, to subvert the Spirit's unity of the one body, comprising all believers on the earth. His Word is surely binding above man's, dear brother, and He has written this: "Using diligence to *keep* the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace—*one body and one Spirit*"; that is "the Spirit's unity" which we are to keep practically,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

and not to break away from, though we should stand alone with Christ and the Holy Ghost; for it is the only thing we dare do unless we deliberately set ourselves to be *against* Christ and "*scatter*" the saints. "*He that gathereth not with me scattereth.*" I write thus freely, beloved friend, because I know your true-heartedness for Christ, and because you write as you do, and say, "I am wearied out with sectarianism." Why then go into a new ecclesiastical sphere, and go on again with man's sectarianism? Can you not leave all, and go forth in faith to Christ outside all sectarian societies? Is He not enough? Led forth of the Holy Ghost to Him, you would be thus practically in God's assembly.

I myself long strove in the very way you are doing, after the unity of God's people, without seeing that I myself should first be practically in that unity by coming out of all hindering things to Christ Himself. Trained like yourself for many years at school and university for the work of the ministry in man's Church, and ordained there in due form according to man's ideas, I have preached Christ's Gospel, and taught His saints as he enabled me. But only lately I saw it to be inconsistent to be upholding that system with the one hand, and pulling it down with the other. The teaching was right; but the teacher's position wrong. For when I preached fully about Christ and His Church, and the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, exercised and spiritual souls withdrew, and took up that position around the Lord Himself in the unity of His body, which the following of the full truth they learned from me gave them; and they told me that it was my teaching that made them leave "the Church" and take the outside place with God's rejected Son.

This led me to weigh well what the Word of God said as to the saints' place in this day, and I read, "Let

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

him that nameth the name of Christ ['the Lord,' rather in the true text,] depart from iniquity;" and about vessels to honour and to dishonour in a great house (*i.e.*, to us, Christendom), and that if a man is to be a vessel unto honour fitted for the Master's use, he must purge himself from these vessels to dishonour. I saw that I was in a system that was ecclesiastical "iniquity," for, on comparing the Presbyterian system in all its branches, as well as its doctrinal basis, discipline, worship, and ministry, with Holy Scripture, it fell before it as a thing that had no basis or warrant therein; and, on examining all other sectarian Churches of all the varied ecclesiastical patterns, I found that none of them answered to the pattern of the one body and the one Spirit, which characterised the apostolic Church: and so I gave all human institutions called Churches "a wide berth:" I would join none of them; but fell back on the Word and Spirit of God, and am content with the blessed Christ of God, the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and the Church of God; and I find all the faithful who are truly enlightened by the Spirit and Word on the subject, and have Christ formed in them, are doing the same thing in all parts of the world. I was astonished to be told after I left you, and passed through Germany, that in that country there are hundreds of assemblies, gathered out the same as those you read of in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of the New Testament, without any human organisation or humanly-appointed ministry. I am told that there are also hundreds of them in France and Switzerland, in America and Australia, India and Africa, and even in Palestine; while in this country they are in most of the larger towns and villages. God's intention appears to be to give His saints in all lands an opportunity of taking up a right position with regard to

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Christ the Holy and the True, and to colour the whole of the Christian profession with the Holy Ghost's peculiar testimony to Him for these last days before He comes to take up saints to the promised Home with Him in the Father's House.

Will you then, beloved brother, still cleave to tradition, or have the special honour to be dishonoured with Christ, and suffer more distinctly for *His name* in your country? Does not loyalty demand it, and His dying love constrain you to do that which will, most of all, please Him, being so attracted by His person, that you will go forth to Him without the camp bearing His reproach? We are now at the very close of a failed dispensation; and the Lord's mind for this hour is to be sought out and met. There is a *right* position and place for all His saints to occupy at this time, when all in Christendom is ecclesiastically *wrong*.

The Scriptural thing for all the saints of God in all the world is to abandon that which is wrong; to "*cease to do evil,*" and be in the present current of the Holy Ghost for the honour of Christ, according to His present mind concerning us. We are His; and as our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, the call is—"Wherefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. vi.) It is with the body that we can shew our practical attachment to the Lord Jesus. I cannot glorify God with my body if I keep my body bound down voluntarily to the rules and regulations of any ecclesiastical institution formed by man on the face of the earth; I must keep my body for the Lord, in the unity of His body and Spirit, the Church of God. The outside place with the Rejected of men is the place for all His followers. Inside, in the holiest of all, is our place of worship; outside the camp where man's judgment was borne is the place of testimony to a cast-out

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Christ—the meek and lowly Son of God. Oneness with Him in the Spirit, in the presence of God, gives the soul the consciousness of a union which excludes all the unions of men, however pious, wise, and well-intended. United by one Spirit to the Lord in the heavens I am thereby loosed from everything that would hinder me from following Him beneath the sun. This is a time when those who will prove fully faithful to the Lord are but a mere remnant: "Let *him* that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." Read also Rev. iii. 7-13. It is an individual thing—"If *a man purge himself*" from these, &c.; but when we do so, we will not want for companions in the separated path to Jesus our Lord, for 2 Tim. ii. 22, says—"Follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, *with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*" In this way while the faithfulness is individual, true faithfulness to Christ cannot rest with "individualism," but must necessarily impel, as Christ's love must "constrain" all who, as to their ecclesiastical place, are led of the Spirit and formed in heart by contemplation of Him where He is, to press through all obstacles to Christ Himself at His table, separated as it is from all the sectarian tables of men, with all who are in the holy fellowship of the Spirit in "GOD'S ASSEMBLY."

THE SEATING OF THE LAMB ON THE THRONE.

"To another *the word of knowledge*, by the same Spirit."—1 COR. xii. 8.

In the Revelation, from beginning to end, we have a book of judgment. There we learn *God*. In the previous dispensation we learn the *Father*. The soul, in going on in inquiry after truth, scarcely likes to mark the passage

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

from the first to the second character. The name of *Father* gives us His *heart* towards us. We scarcely like to take one step from the threshold. We like the atmosphere of the *Father's* house, it gives rest to the soul, taking it away from the contention and evil that is in us and around us; but we have need of faith and patience, and *God* is to be learned as well as the *Father*. The book of the Revelation has nothing to do with the actings of the *Father*. In the first chapter we read, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him." This tells us how intelligently to open this book. There are two great spheres of judgment in it, the one of the *candlesticks*, the other of *the world*.

First we find the priest in the sanctuary, not standing at the golden altar with incense, where God was, but towards the candlesticks, with golden snuffers, to see if the lamp of the sanctuary would yet burn worthy of God. He is not represented as standing there to replenish them with oil, but with the snuffers (Ex. xxv. 38) to trim them, and to see for the last time if they might be made to burn brighter, and if not to remove them. The end is here, as always in the book, not in the Lord Jesus ministering grace, but in the Lord as Son of man, putting the candlestick (*i.e.*, the Church) on its responsibility. It is like Adam in the garden when the Lord said to him, "Where art thou?" or "Give an account of thy stewardship." From that day to this, the only place in which the Lord can own us is in being humbled and mourning, not lifting up our heads in the consciousness of not having answered the challenge of the Son of man. We may see a little bit of beauty here and there, but as having failed, our place is that of the shattered candlestick, and it becomes us to behave ourselves with humility.

In the fourth chapter we have the preparation for the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

second part of judgment, that of *the world,* just as in the first chapter we have the preparation for judgment on the Church, so the fourth and fifth are preparatory to the second; then we get the judgment of the earth—the outer sanctuary. In the fourth, I judge, we get the throne of Him (v. 10, 11), to whom all blessing, and the very title of creation belong; around the throne of such an one we see the rainbow, the sign of stability on earth, in the blood that the sweet-smelling sacrifice of Noah typified. Then we have the living creatures, the lightnings, the seven spirits, &c.; in all these we get the exibition of the instruments to redeem the earth by judgment from under the power of Satan. The lightnings and thunders, the judicial acts by which the earth is redeemed from that power—the elders, &c., the exhibition of the power by which "the world to come" is judged.

The Twenty-third Psalm starts with the flock of God on their journey homeward. Whatever the circumstances may be in the hands of the Good Shepherd—whether the rod or the staff, still "goodness and mercy follow them," &c., and they are led in safety to the house of the Lord. The character of this psalm sweetly harmonises with the whole Gospel of John. But the 24th does not describe the flock going home, but the co-heirs of Jacob going up to the golden city. We have just this path prepared in the Revelation. Here in the fifth chapter we have "Thou art worthy to take the book," &c.—God's title which Satan cannot touch, "He hath founded it on the seas," &c. But then, as of old, God set up Adam as head of the creation, so now He designs to set up the last Adam as head over the second creation. Then we have the question, "Who shall ascend," &c. Whom shall God put over the forfeited dominion of Adam? "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart," &c.,—Jesus.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

In the 23d Psalm we have not the fulness of the Father's house as in the 24th, it is only "He that hath clean hands," &c.; but, though "the Revelation" goes much farther and deeper, it is only the expansion of the same person unfolded in dispensation. John led us, in his gospel, no farther than to the Father's house, but the Revelation prepares us to travel from the Father's house to the golden city. The 24th Psalm ends with "Lift up your heads," &c., "The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of glory," and the golden city is the close of this book. There are two paths—that of the children home to their Father, and then as co-heirs with Jesus to the golden city. God's blessed love has not only given us that beautiful golden city, and the Father's hand leading us up to the Father's house, but the Revelation displays those judgments by force of which the inheritance is redeemed into the hands of Him who made and redeemed it for His Church to rule over.

One thing here strikes me, the connection of *power* with the government of the world (4-9.) We know from the eleventh chapter, that the government of "the world to come" will go on in this way; we have ourselves, in the persons of the cherubim, as attendants on the throne of God. In the holy place they were made of one piece with the mercy-seat, perfectly reflecting the mind of Him who sat between the cherubim. In the garden of Eden, when the Lord drove out the man, He placed at the east of it the cherubim and a *flaming sword.* Why was this? Because the attendants of God reflected His mind; but in the holiest the sword is gone, and they have their wings spread over the mercy-seat, and in delight searching into its secrets, tell us all the blessed joy He has in GRACE. Their full union with the mind of God is seen throughout the Scripture. In Ezekiel, Jerusalem being a defiled place,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

we do not find the wings of the cherubim stretched over the mercy-seat, but stretched forth to carry Jehovah away. In Exodus xxiv., the God of Israel rested, and the glory of the Lord abode on Mount Sinai; but now in Ezekiel the apostasy had disturbed the rest of God, and the aspect of the cherubim is quite different; their wings are down, and we see one of the cherubs stretching forth his hand to take fire to throw on the devoted city.

In "the world to come" I do assuredly judge the attendants on the throne will no longer be angelic but human in their character, Heb. ii. 5. The first great glory is that we are co-heirs with the Son—the second, that we enter into the place of cherubim glory. The angels are made to open their ranks to let us in; the cherubim are not only in the midst of the throne, but in the midst of the elders. In the 5th chapter we have the title of the Lord Jesus to redeem the earth, and to occupy the throne, discussed and settled in heaven. In Daniel we find the Son of man brought to the ancient of days, &c., (Dan. vii. 13, 14,) and in Luke, xix., the Lord likens Himself to a nobleman, who went into a far country to *receive* a kingdom, and return. The Lord's title to the kingdom is settled in heaven, before the action of the book goes on at all; Jesus goes up to take the book from the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne, as owning the power to be in God himself, and God owns the power as being committed into the hands of Jesus, and allows it to pass from the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne. Then every one in heaven, the Church, the elders, the angels, all own the title of the blessed God to take His place, and Jesus to have the sceptre of righteousness, and nothing but joy runs through all. The Revelation SHOWS us what the Epistle to the Ephesians tells us is going on (iii. 10.) The Church is now made

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the display of the manifestation of God's GRACE, and this teaches lessons to the angels, but in the Revelation it will be the display of God's GLORY.

If the action of the book begins at the sixth chapter, where is the Church? Taken up at some indefinite moment between the third and fourth chapters. Why do I judge the Church is taken up after the third? In the fourth it is seen in heaven, and from the sixth to the nineteenth we find the Church never stepping down from this place of joy and intelligence in the heavenlies. Their continuous joy may be traced.

In the seventh we find the angels sealing the tribes. Was there any delight in this? Surely, beloved; and we find the angels standing round the throne, and the elders and living creatures worshipping God, and saying "Amen" to the praises of the innumerable multitude themselves, breaking out into a song of praise; and in chapter nineteen, where the marriage of the Lamb is announced, we find an ecstasy of heavenly joy running throughout the whole sphere. Every now and then we find the expression of not an interruption, but an elevation of joy, not mingled with the earth, still around the throne.

From the sixth to the nineteenth holds the same place as the book of Joshua in Old Testament history—it is the account of the redemption of "the Inheritance," and of its being taken out of the hands of the usurper, and made ready to be given into the hands of Man; it is "the root of David" (see chap. xxii.), who presides over "the inheritance." The Lord will not resume Israel till the fulness of the Gentiles is come in. The Church is taken up before the second scene of judgments on the earth, in which the Church is not made an instrument. The Church will be made the instrument of RULING the world when it is brought into blessing, but not of REDUCING it. "In Judah

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

is God known." These are the instruments of power, the Lord's "goodly horse in the day of battle," "out of him" come forth "the battle bow" (Zech. x.) The difference between the Church and the Jewish remnant is as that between Enoch and Noah. The first was rescued out of the judgment, the latter was preserved in it. Before the judgment came through which the other was carried, Enoch is taken out of the scene and translated into heavenly blessing. This, I believe, is shown in Thessalonians to be the case with the Church (1 Thess. iv. 19.)

When I reach the sixth chapter, I find my standing in the attitude of the disciples on the Mount of Olives when they asked the Lord, "When shall these things be?" then we get the signs corresponding to those which the Lord gave in Matt. xxiv. I see the seals govern the action of the whole book, and are given in answer to the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" The Church (which is in heaven) has no place in the action (which is on the earth.) Then it may be asked, "Why have we the book?" It completes the account of the actings of God. We do not exhaust the Lord's mercy to Israel till we have passed through the book of Joshua—till He had proved Himself to be the redeemer of "the inheritance" as well as the heirs of it. We have the children of the Father brought fully out in John, and by the ministry of Paul fed and nourished, but however gracious this is, yet there is another thing in the mysterious actings of our Joshua that is most blessed. He takes us himself into "the inheritance." The bride of the Lamb is brought out as the golden city. That result we get in the twenty-first chapter. In the nineteenth we have the Lamb, and the marriage of the bride, which, I judge, takes place in the Father's house.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

When speaking of the coming of the Lord, *we* look at it indistinctly if we speak of His coming to the earth. This is not what *we* look for, but for His descent from heaven—this is the first stage. Thus by the voice of the trumpet we shall be called up in joy of soul to meet the Lord, not in Jerusalem, but "in the AIR," there to be "presented to Himself," and be taken by Him, with all "the Church of the first-born," to the Father's house, according to His own word of promise (John xiv. 3). Then in the Father's house, "the marriage of the Lamb" will be celebrated.

Do you think in the 24th Psalm their so often repeating the question, "*Who is the King of glory?*" was because they were ignorant who He was? No; but they delighted to hear the *sound* of His glory: so we "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." We get in the nineteenth chapter the marriage celebrated, and the Church with the Lord prepared to take the glory, then we get into the kingdon in the twentieth chapter. This chapter is an answer to "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" The Lord is there placed on His throne with His bride. Thus I conclude that the Church is taken up before the thrones are set and the judgment begins. All the judgments contribute to place the Lamb on the throne.

What is *the kingdom* that we look for? Its influences will come just in an opposite direction from whence they do now. Now, the influence is from Satan to earth, then from heaven to the earth; the ladder will then take its right place: the top of it will be in heaven, the bottom on earth. Do you delight in the thought of the earth's standing in righteousness? It will be so when the ladder brings down its influence from heaven, and earth ceases to be influenced from hell. The sceptre of righteousness

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

will be in the blessed hands of the Son of man, and the Church is brought into the place of government.

In the midst of the glory I see a throne as in the fourth chapter, but it is the throne of God and the Lamb. The inquiry in the 24th Psalm and in the fifth chapter, "*Who is worthy?*" we see answered by this, *the seating of the Lamb on the throne.* The action confirms the result, and the action—vial after vial may be poured out, but all contributes to *the seating of the Lamb on the throne*—all to let "the King of glory" in through "the everlasting gates," all to give the Lamb the fruit of that title which is already His. May our hearts be right in the promise of the Lord, "Surely I come quickly," and may our cry be "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." If He presents Himself as our only delight, may our hearts be true to Him.

It will be the joy of the Lamb's bride to be side by side with Him who gave her everything. There is no surrender too great for the love He had to the Church —blessed be God for His grace—our hearts can taste this now. The Church not merely gets a husband, but one who has shown towards her a love that was stronger than death; this is He to whom she is betrothed, and this present time is the season (before the bride and bridegroom come together) when the lesson of joy under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, that we have to be learning, is all the grace and love that is in His heart towards us, as it is said, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." We have now to be learning the devotedness of the love of our expected bridegroom. We are nothing less than the Lamb's wife, the bride of the One who gave His life for us! What a glory! what a joy!

J. G. B.

The Bible Herald 1877

WHAT DOES THE COMING OF THE COMFORTER MEAN ? *

I have no pleasure in mere controversy, and as I noticed Mr G.'s previous article† on the church only at the request of those interested in the subject, I take notice of his reply for the same reason, but only of what refers to the main subject, which is all important.

I have no doubt, though unacquainted with him, that Mr. G. is a good man, and I have no wish to violate in any way the amenities of Christian charity with one who is a brother in Christ, as controversy tends to do. One should ask oneself now "Is this what I should wish it to have been when I come before the Lord ?" If I should fail in this I must, anticipating, beg Mr. G. to forgive me. I have no consciousness of an ungracious feeling, but Mr. G. will not deny that "What is the Church ?" is an important question for us all.

I will reply, then, to his article in *Our Banner* of April 16, in what touches that question, and even so, I do it reluctantly. Positive truth is happier service. Mr. G. insists that the Church was Israel. That it was at first composed of Jews no one denies. God, as I said before, waiting on Israel in gracious patience, consequent withal on Christ's intercession on the cross (Luke xxiii. 34); the third of Acts, not the second, being the reply of the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Peter thereto. This was not only

---

* Serving as a reply to the second article on "The Church in the Old Testament" in "*Our Banner*" (an American Periodical), April 16, 1877.

† See *Bible Witness and Review*, Vol, 1, p. 240.

The Bible Herald 1877

addressed to Israel but about Israel, calling them as a nation to repent and Jesus would return, the words of the Holy Ghost answering to Jesus' prayer. "When the times of refreshing" ver. 19, should be "*so that* the times of refreshing;" ὅπως ἂν has no other sense in Greek. The Jews' repentance would be the occasion of God's intervention in their favour, and then the blessing and peace of the world promised in the prophets would be established, commonly called the millenium. But in this case there was no gathering. The Jewish authorities would not even allow the Apostle to finish his speech. But Mr. G.'s argument as to Acts ii. has no force whatever. The Apostle's sermon was addressed *to* the Jews, to Israel, if you will, but what has that to do with the Church being Israel? The effect of the sermon under the power of the spirit was to gather out of Israel, three thousand, to form, so far, the church—to begin it among that people, though the doctrine of it was not taught till Paul's time. He was a minister of the church to fulfil or complete the word of God (Col. i. 26). But to argue that the church was Israel, because Israel was preached to, and many gathered out of Israel to form it, has no possible force. If a missionary gathers a body of christians from among the heathen in India, converted to God by grace, are they still heathens, and christianity a continuation of their religion? No doubt they were by natural birth, as the Jews were Jews, but to say that the church is heathen is absurd. Those called out from Isreal who were saved from that untoward generation, were the church, or assembly of God. Israel remained Israel, and was, for the time, hardened in the heart and cut off.

Mr. G. must allow me to complete the quoted prophecy of Joel, "The promise is unto you and to your children." There Mr. G. stops. The Apostle adds "and to all that

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

are afar off, even to as many as the Lord your God shall call." Now that God did not reject the Jews till they had refused to receive a glorified Christ, as well as crucified a humbled one (a measure of sin and unbelief completed in the stoning of Stephen, who sums up their conduct from Abraham to that day ; where also Paul, the minister of the church, first comes upon the scene), is quite true, and hence that God waited and did not reveal all His counsels as to the union of Jew and Gentile. But the language omitted by Mr. G. throws it open in principle, and if it does not, why does he omit it ?

The promise was given to Israel especially, but by adding all flesh, the prophecy was in prospect carried out farther. It is the accustomed term for this in the Old Testament. "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." "By His fire and by His sword shall the Lord plead with all flesh." The "specially to Israel" does not exclude this. He was to be a light to lighten (to reveal) the Gentiles, and the glory of His people, Israel. Let my reader consult Jer. xxv. 15-33, where the Lord declares He will plead with all flesh, beginning with Jerusalem (18-29, see Num. xvi. 22). So to Christ, power is given over all flesh. But let the reader only take a concordance, and he will at once see the force of these words, its absolute universality, and where needed, contrast with Israel. He will readily understand why Mr. G. omits it, and what is far better, how God uses it, and how, while preserving the promises to Israel, it extends blessing and judgment to all, and putting the Jew first, goes out to the Greek.

Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in His name, beginning at Jerusalem. So even Paul, who knew no difference, for that all had sinned, yet went to the Jew first, and also to the Greek, saying that Christ

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written. Till the Jews rejected a glorified Christ the patience of God dealt with them as a nation for repentance, and gathered the members of His assembly from that people, calling then Cornelius by Peter, that all might be one, but using Paul as the instrument for unfolding the doctrine of the assembly and the ministration of the Gospel to the nations, a mission the others gave up entirely to him (Gal. ii).

Did Mr. G. see the Lord's coming and the setting up of Christ's kingdom by power, I might go further into this. Let him here only ponder this, that the little stone, cut out without hands, did not become a mountiain to fill the whole earth, till after it had executed judgment. The knowledge of this would help in the understanding of Joel* and interpret many passages now obscure and falsely applied by those who do not see it. But I must now confine myself to my reply.

As regards my alleged mistake of taking organization for privilege (and christian privileges do occupy the greatest part of my paper), I shall only quote Mr. G.'s words, "To them (the Jews) pertained the adoption, glory, covenant, giving of the law, service, and the promises (Rom. ix. 4). Nothing more can be said of the church now." Any one can decide whether this applies to organization or privileges, and whether it is not an assertion that they had all that the church has now.

As to the coming of the Holy Ghost, the most essential

---

* Thus in Joel it is before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes that there is deliverance in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and with this chapter iii. is connected.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

point of all, I do mean to say that the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, did not come till after Christ was glorified. The word of God is positive and express as to this, and it is what is at the root of the question. What I have said about this, or rather what the blessed Lord and the word have said of it is quite plain. The Holy Ghost as God, is everywhere. "He inspired," I said, "the prophets, and wrought all through the divine history." But and if Christ and the divine word tell us the truth, we must so believe, the Comforter could not come until Christ went away and was glorified. "Christ," I remarked, "had created the world, but He did not come till the incarnation." "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father."

I shall repeat what the word of God says on this point as it is the real and vital question. It is a scriptural fact which constitutes Christianity, and the denial of the plain scriptural statements on the subject, or the neglect of them, is what has judaized Christianity, plunged the assembly of God into the world, and made it as it now stands, the powerless prey to infidelity. The death and resurrection of Christ are the foundations of Christianity, the presence of the Holy Ghost as personally come into the world, that is, to believers in it, is the essential living power and characteristic of Christianity and the Christian.

And I add now, that Christ glorified as man, received Him (the Holy Ghost) afresh when so glorified, to shed Him forth on His disciples. Christ had not received Him to this end till after His ascension, Acts ii. 33. "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."

I am not going to reason as Mr. G. does, but to quote the word of God. Mr. G. speaks of "pouring out," as giving

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

in abundance, and that such only is the difference. When *was* the Spirit of God poured out before Pentecost? But I will quote the texts, and to them I can claim the submission of every child of God. I have done so, but I press this point as a cardinal one, constituting Christianity as revealed in the New Testament.

In John vii. Christ not then showing Himself to the world according to the yet unfulfilled type of the feast of Tabernacles, says on the special, last (eighth) and great day of the feast, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," and the Evangelist adds: "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet (given), for Jesus was not yet glorified." Compare Acts ii. already quoted. There is no question of a greater or fuller measure. What is said is the Holy Ghost (πνευμα ἅγιον) was not yet. That is, as come and dwelling in believers. So the baptizing with the Holy Ghost was the second of the two great works of Christ. He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but He on whom, as man, the Holy Ghost descended and abode, He it was who would baptize with the Holy Ghost. This took place, as regards the one hundred and twenty, on the day of Pentecost, according to Christ's word (Acts i. 5), and Christ being exalted and glorified according to John vii. shed forth the Holy Ghost according to the promise in Joel. The difference of the Spirit in the prophets, and the presence of the Holy Ghost as come down from Heaven, is clearly marked in 1 Pet. i. 11-13: "The Spirit of Christ which was in them testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory (glories) which should follow. Unto whom it was

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." There was a testimony beforehand, by the Spirit of Christ in the prophets, but with the gospel the things were, not brought, but reported with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and then we are told that the things will be *brought* to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, for which we must wait. The distinction, then, is perfectly scriptural, and the distinction made in scripture, that distinction being marked by "sent down from heaven." But further I add the positive texts (John xiv. 16), "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter that He may abide with you for ever;" (25, 26), "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things." (xv. 26), "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth." (xvi. 7), "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; But if I depart, I will send Him unto you, and when He is come." And the Acts and Epistles confirm these plain testimonies. The former I have quoted. I add (xix.), "We have not so much as heard whether the Holy Ghost is." The same words as in John vii. So Eph. i. 13, "In whom also, after that ye believed ye were sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise"—till Christ was glorified, promised, but not come; but now come, and given to believers as a seal. Their unity was the unity of the Spirit; there was one Spirit and one body. They were not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

by which they were sealed to the day of redemption (Gal. iii. 2), "They had received the Spirit by the hearing of faith." (1 Cor. xii.), "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will." "By one Spirit they were all baptized into one body." Christianity is the ministration of the Spirit, in contrast with the law (2 Cor. iii.) And it is a great mistake to suppose that miraculous gifts and prophesy were the special and most important effects. The disciples were not to rejoice that demons were subject unto them, but rather that their names were written in heaven. Men might have supernatural power (1 Cor. xiii.), without being converted, and in the Old Testament we have instances of it, but if sealed with the Holy Ghost, it was as believers, and for the day of redemption. They could then (Gal. iv.) cry Abba Father, being sons by faith in Christ Jesus, they (John xvi.) know they are in Christ and Christ in them (1 John iv. 13.) They know, and that by the Spirit given to them, that they dwell in God, and God in them. His love is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given to them (Rom. v. 5.) Their bodies are temples. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, helps our infirmities; we are led by the Spirit, mind the things of the Spirit: He which establishes in Christ, and has anointed us is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Cor. i. 21, 22). He who hath wrought us for the self-same thing (the glory), is God, who hath also given us the earnest of the Spirit (2 Cor. v. 5). All this is more than power and prophecy. It is the Christian state, and is contrasted (Gal. iv.) with the Jewish believer, consequent on accomplished and known redemption. The more the reader examines

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the Word, the more he will find the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer and in the assembly, essentially and distinctively characteristic of Christianity.

(*To be continued.*)

WISDOM JUSTIFIED OF ALL HER CHILDREN.

BELOVED BROTHER,—The perusal which I have given your letter left in my mind the text, "Say not thou what is the cause that the former days were better than these?" The answer is as important, and even more important, than the question—"for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning *this*."

The two axes, on which everything under the sun turns round, are, I suppose, that God is always good, and man is always evil. The wise man in Ecclesiastes had more to do with "the former days," which would terminate in "the greater one than Solomon," when born into the world; and who, if accepted, would eclipse all that was prior, "and fill the earth with the glory of God." Travelling upon *this* line, the further we run the race the brighter and the sunnier it becomes, for God is always good, and doeth good. He makes the future even brighter than the present, as witnessed by *their* coming millennium, or as manifested to the whole universe of God, by "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

On the other hand, man is always evil, and therefore his "latter times" must be awful, as they darken in colour and deepen heavily in guilt, by the elongation of that sin of sins at the cross and the crucifixion of the true Son of David.

"Dispensations" come into the grand circle of the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

heavens and the earth, in the history of God and man, and the devil, and turn upon their own little centres, and describe their own little orbits, and often puzzle us, because we think they are to God's counsels what they are in relation *to us.* On the contrary, these subdivisions have their "times and their seasons, which God keeps in His own power," so that they come and go, leaving behind them their histories, which Moses, and the law, and the prophets, record to us. In these little enclosures, out of the immensity of God's own circle, where the Son is the centre, round whom "all things in heaven and earth are to be gathered," we have the *former* house and the latter house, in the Old Testament language, or even as the Apostles of the New declare to us the *latter* times, and the *last perilous* times.

These characteristics, which the knowledge of God and man open out *in time,* where Satan is at work, ought not to complicate "the faith of God's elect" so that the old men should have dismal pictures, and "bury their faces in their hands," by remembering the glory of the first house any more than the young men (or the Philadelphians of to-day), should be carried away by the joy of a present position. Both "the shoutings" and "the weepings" (Ezra iii. 11-13) ought to be overstepped and outmeasured by the objects and ends which God has in view, and which He is surely reaching without let or hindrance, for His own glory and the place reserved for Christ, as lord of all on earth and head over all things in heaven. If *these,* as the ultimatum, do not stay the soul in any and *all* times, former or latter, joyful or sorrowful, we shall not bear the true impress of God, but carry along with us, and be fashioned by what we have picked up by the way, whether pleasing or adverse according to our own standards and thoughts, and very likely carry the savour

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

about, not of "the things which be of *God*, but those that are of *man*."

In short, the wise "old men in 1 Kings" do not suit any more than the counsel of the "young men," neither will the glory of the former house, nor the deficiency of the latter house much affect us in a time of bankruptcy. The heavens themselves can alone supply the gigantic lack below. Dispensations won't suffice for this. The second man must supersede the first, and the Holy Ghost take the place of fleshly energy. "Wisdom" must take the place of every counterfeit in a proud and evil day like this, and "be justified of *all her children*." Every other hope must be refused, except the one "blessed hope" of the Lord's coming and the Church's departure into heaven to meet Him, as the turning-point of every "right enquiry concerning this."—Yours affectionately,

J. E. B.

DOCTRINAL DEFINITIONS.

1. PURCHASE means that Christ's blood or death has bought the world, and all that are in it, to Himself and to God. See Matt. xiii. 44; 1 Cor. vi. vii; Heb. ii. 9; 2 Pet. ii. 1; Rev. v. 9, xiv. 3. But there is this difference, that the believer owns the purchase, the unbeliever disowns it, and denies Him who purchased all by His blood.

2. REDEMPTION is by power founded on the shed blood of the lamb, as we see in Exod. xii.-xiv. By the resurrection of Christ the Christian now knows this for his sin, that is, for his soul, and will know it for his body when Christ comes again, who will make it good for Israel in the day of manifestation.

3. RECONCILIATION is the bringing back to God what had been severed by sin, and this is applied to both persons and things, as we see typically in Lev. xvi., doctrinally in Col. i.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

4. ATONEMENT consists of the two parts, united for us in the bullock, analysed for Israel in the two goats of Lev. xvi., which set forth Jehovah's part in propitiation, the people's in substitution.

5. JUSTIFICATION means that the believer in Jesus, though in himself ungodly, and confessedly so, is accounted righteous with God by virtue of the work of Christ, the full measure of which is Christ risen from the dead. (1 Cor. i., and 2 Cor. v.)

6. FORGIVENESS is the remission of the sins of those who believe in Jesus through faith in His blood; not their pretermission merely, as of old, but their remission. Rom. iii.

7. SANCTIFICATION of the Spirit is the setting apart to God of all that are born of God, to obey as Christ obeyed, and the sprinkling of His blood (1 Pet. i.); and this personal or absolute sanctification is followed up by practical sanctification in the measure of their faith, and therefore relative; it should also be progressive. There is also a position of sanctification by blood in Heb. x., which might not be vital, and hence be lost.

8. ADOPTION, in the Christian sense, is the sonship which the believer receives as his new relation to God through faith in Christ Jesus.

9. PERFECTION means that full growth, which is the characteristic of the Christian who goes on from the elements of truth in Christ after the flesh to Him, dead and risen, and ascended to heaven, and our place in Him.

10. GLORIFICATION means the application to our bodies of that power of Christ risen, which will conform us completely to His image in glory, Rom. viii., Phil. iii.

11. REGENERATION goes beyond "new birth" in John iii., which is a change purely subjective, and was always true of saints since the fall, where παλιγγενεσία is objective and imperfect; that change of place only which enables one to say, "I am in Christ a new creation, old things have passed away; behold all things are become new."

W. K.

The Bible Herald 1877

FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST.

Notes of G. V. W., Lecture on Phil. i.

THE definite notice we find in the beginning of this chapter relative to the former order of the Church at Philippi is remarkable, because the epistle is all about eternal life in the believer, and the heart of Paul labouring in prayer for these Philippians; and there he takes up the subject of the epistle—eternal life—displayed on earth so that people could see it; he was the servant of God in prison, and the eternal life shining brightly.

I would refer to John xiv. 20—"At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father," &c. It is not feeling but knowing that I want faith leading to action. Three things ye shall know "at that day"—1, "I am in my Father;" 2, "Ye in me," "I in you," "and for their sakes I sanctify myself," &c. If Christ had not gone up, there could be no sanctifying for us now. Of all truth He "in the Father" is the most important. It is most brought out in Col., and "*Ye in me;*" in Ephes., and "I in you;" in Phil. "I am in the Father," is the most important, and "I in you" next. Paul begins with "I in you." There is very little of that in the teaching of the present day, *i.e.*, a person walking down here, by Christ being in him and the Holy Ghost taking the direction; and 2nd, "I in him." People say responsibility must not be pressed. Truly, as descendants of Adam the first, you cannot give account of self, it would be low if so, but if you say God has no claim over a believer, and if you strip him of it, you cripple him. "Be ye holy," &c., not as a man could I do it, but as a command, in connection with light in me.

The Bible Herald 1877

A believer says, when light comes on any thing, "I shall not do *that;* it is not holy." The question of sin being entirely settled, God says, I have not a word against you as to that, but if you do a single thing contrary to me you shall hear of it. It is a word that comes to a child from the Father—as one with the blood on me, I am to walk not as the world walks.

Paul is in prison. Paul in this position is hedged up, everything against him, and yet how bright is his heart! If any saw it so in me, in sorrow or trial, might they not say, that is not what belongs to me as an individual? The Lord knew Paul as Saul, and Paul was as unlike Saul as light is unlike darkness. There he is, and if surrounded by all the wickedness of men and of false professors, he cannot get his eye off Christ; that is not like *Saul* of Tarsus, it is a great deal too like Christ, to be like Saul of Tarsus! he says "the things that happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." What! to account being in bonds a good thing? Yes! it has stirred up the courage of believers without, who even passed through deeper waters than Paul! He was a model man; he said, do not pity my bonds! It is for Christ's sake I wear them. I have got the mark on me of following Him, and these bonds stir up the courage of others to witness for Him. If I get suffering here, I shall get glory with Christ. If trying, as is said, to walk to heaven in silver slippers, you will not have the thought of glory, as had Paul. What! *give up* that, or the other! don't say a word of it—when *Christ died* and is up there, don't say a word of all you can give up, when He is up there, saying, "if your shoulder is worn with the harness, mine was—that is the path I passed through, and like master like servant." It is joy, not sorrow, if His gospel is ours, and we have to suffer for it. In times of persecution the gospel has been

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

talked of, in the ears of those opposed to it—what then, "in every way," etc. Paul wanted the name of Christ to be announced by every means and everywhere.

How is it your hearts are not full of Christ? thinking of Him in everything? He, the one eternal lover of your souls, who has borne with your bad manners, in the wilderness! the One, who is coming for you, on the cloud; now on the throne, occupied with you, and can you say, how could Paul be so full of this Christ? We think of paying out for Christ, instead of dwelling on what He paid in for us, up there divinely. When God calls a soul, He reveals Himself as entirely for that soul. Salvation is connected with three distinct things. We have the "soul" saved now, but not the body—that will (if the Lord do not come first) go into the dust; the purchase-money has been paid, but the application of life-giving power to the body not yet till Christ comes to raise the dead and change the living. Now, a process is going on, God working to make me like Christ, and sorrows and trials are not only like sand and grit used to polish a stone, but that I shall be made to taste, through the troubles, what *Christ is to me.* The twentieth verse is very sweet—Paul's "earnest expectation and hope" here, not the coming of the Lord, but another hope. He could count a place, where all were in darkness and the power of Satan rampant, a place of blessing if Christ might there be magnified in his body; and what ought a believer to be doing now if not magnifying Christ? Paul wanted his circumstances to make Christ much more tangible, and so it was: the anointing was so perfect on his eye he could not see anything but Christ, and in connection with those persecutors and false professors Paul said, it is Christ I want them to see; I want to be like a lens, to magnify Christ. It was what Christ was to Paul that is seen here. It is very

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

important to let what I am taught of God and of Christ appear before men—because of teaching them what God and Christ are to me. Paul had Christ, in the power of His eternal life, so ruling every desire and thought, that, with a chain on his foot and hand, all he thinks of is, that Christ should be magnified; he wants Christ to be known. It was Christ he was suffering for, and he knew His heart was hearing him; he felt His love, he *tasted* it, he could say, did He not come and tell me He would go with me to Rome? Did He not give me a word, when all were in despair, to make all the people in the ship know that my God was everything to me?

Which of you could say, there is that singleness of eye, that earnest desire to live Christ, saying, till Christ comes I want Him to be shining out? Some say it more than others. The Lord some day will have to put many into the furnace, to destroy what is of the world. You could not be a bit the same as Christ: He was holy and undefiled, you have the law of sin and death in your members: you can walk like Christ, but not be like Him. Paul could say, "follow me as I follow Christ." Paul had every evil in him (as we have), he takes care to shew he was what we are on the bad side, let us take care to shew we are what he was on the good side. How blessed if any were so walking that persons could say—looking at the walk of that one—I see more of Christ than I ever before knew.

But if conscious of being under the eye of Christ, one knows that *He* is taking notice of everything. Paul had to face persecutors and false prophets, but he knew the eye of One to be upon him, whose love would not let a single circumstance pass unnoticed (not even a grey hair); and that becomes the moulding process of His love on me. If I live or die, in the act of departing I

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

should find Christ there. In everything about me, I have the blessed consciousness of Christ being there. "To me to live," etc. Not a single thing that should not be the means of bringing out Christ. "To me to live is Christ," takes in more than the outshining of Christ into the heart, as the smitten one, whose blood flowed, to wash away all sins; to all who have faith in that blood light flows; one spirit with the Lord takes in all, not the question of my having life in Christ, but of *manifesting* it, as a saint. Have you a little stock of your own, to trade upon; or, saying no! nothing of my own; "to me to live is Christ" *to-day.* There is a certain power of life in Christ, that is to be told out, in a very precious way, in each one of His own; "Having loved them, He loves them to the end." I am His; He had owned me as His, in all my wanderings, and He will love me to the end. If an angel were to come to my bed-side, to tell me Christ was occupied with me, as a member of His body, should I be *more certain* of that love, than I am? It is no delusion, but a fact, *that Christ loves me,* and *will love me right on to the end.* He won't cease making me to know it, till He gets me into the Fathers' house, to be for ever in the full fruition of it. He is in heaven now as our advocate with the Father. If occupied with the outgoings of self, it is like a great mountain of snow, but if I get into communion with Him, self cannot come in. You cannot say "To me to live is Christ," if you have not got the *motive love to Him.* If pleasing your father or mother, without a thought to please Christ, it is nothing, but if doing it, because of its being part of life in Christ, that you would manifest, it would be quite different.

Christ stands with His people. If you take up a thing in His name, you may be quite sure, He is near you, and will carry you through it, by His sustaining power. If I

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

were to die to-morrow morning, Christ would be in it. He puts us to school, and does not take us out till He has done His work in us; then "to me to die is gain." We get a beautiful picture in the way in which the eternal life, which Christ had with the Father, before the world was, was brought out in the life of Paul. His eye ever fixed on Christ above, his whole soul knit up with Him in heaven, ever drawing power out of that Christ, to live to Him. What a happy people we should be, if we were mirrors, reflecting Christ in the perfect consciousness of all our weakness, but looking at Christ in heaven, bearing up amidst all the evil coming in like a flood, because He is in the glory with God in heaven. Instead of gathering up all the imagery on earth, to be magnifying Him in these bodies, whether by life, or by death, ever our happy condition.

THE SEPARATING POWER OF THE PERSON OF THE CHRIST.

I HAVE received your esteemed letter, and see what you say about your state.

In reply, I would say that it is very certain that you will never see exactly as I see on this subject; for each one who is called of the Lord into the path of moral separation to Himself, is led into it by light which comes so distinctly and individually to the man himself that there are no duplicates; the work in each case is an *original* work of God, as distinct as that which converted him and led him into living contact with the Lord Himself as the head of the new creation.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

It is not a communication that one can make to another that will effect this mighty moral revolution in a man's soul that separates him in the living grace of the Holy Ghost from all the most cherished things in which he has lived, both mental, circumstantial, and ecclesiastical, in conscience, mind, heart, and ways, to the person of "Him who is holy, Him who is true," and gives him absolute moral and spiritual command over his whole being; it is entirely of God. It is an entire break with the world in its most cherished social and religious aspects that He demands; that is the preliminary to soul-commanding moral attachment to the Christ of God, where He is, and as He is.

But when there is such a divine and all-pervading sanctification achieved as leaves the soul alone with Him, in such entrancing enjoyment of Him and sense of His worthiness, as made Saul of Tarsus give up all, his position, influence, and prospects, and count all that was gain to him but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, and not only so, but occupied him with knowing Him as the one object of knowledge, and induced him to press on to have Him as his prize in the glory of God, though it were through sufferings like His own, and even death itself; then nothing will keep a believer from forsaking all, taking up our cross and following Him.

As long as the Lord Jesus is only looked upon as shedding His blood and being our substitute, saving us from our sin and hell, and simply saving us, it is possible for man to be of some importance; but when we are justified from all things, and are assured of our interest in Him, not to settle down as better citizens of the world; but, finding Him an object for our hearts, and sharing in God's delight in His risen and glorified Son, whom man

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

cast out and crucified in the day of His tender love and goodness, then we are sanctified or separated to Him,—for sanctification is not the removal of the evil from us, but separation from every evil thing to the self-sanctified Son of God, at the Father's right hand. (John xvii. 19.) "For their sakes sanctify I myself." He was raised by the glory of the Father, and "in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." He is set apart, or sanctified, as He calls it, in the heavenly glory, that He might have us sanctified by the truth that He is there in the perfect delight of God, and we in the same position and place by faith and the Holy Ghost, as said the holy Apostle, who knew the fellowship of the Father and of the Son in ineffable love—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love," &c.

When the person of the Lord Jesus is before the soul, and the Spirit reveals God's Son in us in all His moral glory, and gives us to contemplate Him as the all commanding object for our hearts, then there is a holy spiritual power in the soul, that must burst every barrier and break through every obstacle to get at Him. "For me to live is Christ." The soul now finds a new centre: Christ in all. God has thus a two-fold way of sanctifying, by the Son's person in the Father's presence; and by the Father's truth. "Sanctify them through *Thy truth*" —Father-truth. I have now a father, and know Him to be the Father of Christ; and the Lord also says, "for their sakes sanctify I myself;" and henceforth the person of the Son is the divine object that draws my heart heavenward as to my home.

The Bible Herald 1877

MINISTRY—SELF-SACRIFICE.

THE way in which the New Testament presents Ministry is truly wonderful.

God is the Great Minister, surveying His creatures in their various orders and degrees of relationship to Himself, with corresponding blessings. Thus, He serves out to all the rain and sunshine, giving fruitful seasons; and to the Church, higher and richer blessings, as we know, for they stand in another degree of relationship to Him.

The LORD was the great personal manifested Minister; in every passage of His life being the servant, knowing the while how entirely all this was answering the mind and the way of God, and that it could therefore only issue in His own final joy and glory, as we read in Phil. ii., and Heb. xii. 2.

THE HOLY GHOST is now the great hidden and efficient Minister, constantly tending the Church, and serving forth to each saint the things of the Father and of Christ, sustaining him by His presence, and in all conflicts and sorrows, even by His own groanings (Rom. viii). And thus we get a marvellous display of ministry in God: whether in the Father, as surrendering the Beloved; the Lord, in personal suffering and trial; or the Holy Ghost, in the constancy of His presence in a place that thus draws forth the groan and intercession.

But we get ministry in the Church too—ministry that results at *once* from communion and peace with this blessed God; and which, therefore, shows this communion with Him, or is the necessary outflowing of it.

The Bible Herald 1877

It may have various forms; but it is divine ministry, of that quality which we have seen in God, in the Father, the Lord, and the Spirit—ministry which serves others at a cost or sacrifice. Thus, the apostle speaks of the teacher, the exhorter, the giver, the ruler, and so on; but shows them each, in the exercise of his ministry, acting *with respect to them* as debtors to others, and not in honour of themselves. Each is to profit all, the whole growing together by virtue of each (Rom. xii. 1.; Cor. xii.; Eph. iv).

Peter also shows that the ministry is to have two distinct qualities; 1st, according to the grace received from God, and *not beyond* that measure; 2d, according to the need of others, and therefore, as a steward not *below* that measure (1 Peter iv. 10, 11).

But second Corinthians is the chief place where ministry is discussed. The apostle presents his own there, and shows it indeed to be one unbroken course of self-sacrifice and labour for others. For the *nearer* we get to Christ, the brighter this ministry shines; and an apostle like Paul stood the nearest to Him.

There we see in him sympathy with every infirmity of the saints. Who was offended without his burning? The *care* of the churches came upon him *daily;* if he were *afflicted* or *comforted,* it was still *for them*—"All things were for your sake." He says death worked in him that life might work in them. Whether he were beside himself or sober, he could still account for it on *self-sacrificing principles.* He followed his Lord so closely, that while he says of Him, "He became poor that we might become rich;" he says of himself, "as poor, yet making many rich." He was ready to spend and be spent for them, and that too in the spirit of entire self-surrender; "though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." He

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

wanted them to do no evil, though he should be himself *as* a reprobate; and he was glad when he was weak and they were strong. A blessed display of divine grace and ministry this.

This epistle shows us ministry in the person of an apostle, as the Gospel of Mark shows it to us in the person of the Son himself, the one being behind, but still in the *track* of the other.

But let us get more distant than an apostle; yea, as distant as we can among the ranks of the saints. We are bound to look for *ministry* of the same *quality*, if not of the same *quantity* or strength.

Every saint has some office to fill in the great ministry of reconciliation; and thus, in a sense, is an ambassador for Christ, or represenative of God in grace, in some measure as Christ was in fulness. This is taught, as I judge, 2 Cor. v. 17-21. If I wash but a saint's foot, it is still a part of the great ministry of reconciliation, for it is so far a reflection of the grace of God—a taking my place in the great embassage of the ambassador's suite, which has come down from God to this world of sinners.

Every man in Christ is thus to know all things in a new way—to see himself in the reconciliation, and go forth *from that* ministry *according to it* to others.

And thus we have ministry down from God in the highest, to the weakest and most distant companion in the blessed ranks of the redeemed.

But I would not omit that we have it in the intermediate hosts also. For His angels are *all* ministering Spirits, and those of them who stand nearest to God, like the apostles to Christ, are perhaps the most abounding in ministeries, as Gabriel. And it may be that Satan would not take his place in this great system of ministry or divine benevolence; he stood in *pride* rather than in

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

service, and thus fell into condemnation (1 Tim. iii. 6); he abode not in the truth, refused to take part in the economy of grace and truth, which, as we thus see, occupies the service or ministry of God himself with the Lord and the Spirit, the hosts of angels above, and all orders and estates of men in the Church or on earth. And when the glory is revealed, and the heavens and the earth are filled according to God, ministering will still go on, and the *less* will still be blessed of the better; for the Heavens shall hear the earth, and the river shall flow from the Throne through the City, and the leaves of the tree in the heavenly Jerusalem be for the healing of the earthly nations. For ministry, while it calls for self-sacrifice, expresses also intrinsic glory and strength, and thus the *less* is always blessed of the *better.—MS. of J. G. B.*

"THE ROOT AND FATNESS OF THE OLIVE-TREE."

(ROMANS xi. 17.)

WE find such things in Scripture as "the vine of the earth," and an "unfruitful fig-tree," also "*the root and fatness of the olive-tree,*"—our distinct privileges. We find no such thing as an olive-tree become earthly or fruitless. I do not say that it has not to do with earthly things, but there is no such thing in Scripture as an earthly olive-tree, in the same sense as we read of "the vine of the earth." This is a matter of great importance to our souls. How entirely separate is it in all its joy and fruit, from what the vine and fig-tree hold out, even if they were fruitful! This is *grace*: the other *responsibility.*

We are partakers of "*the root and fatness of the olive-*

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

tree." What is spoken concerning "the olive-tree" in Judges ix. 9? "Should I leave my fatness wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted," &c. In Ps. civ., too, "oil to make his face to shine." How can this be? By sending into man's heart the blessed emotions and feelings of the living God. I am sure the way in which the soul is separated from earthly things is by having things that are worth obtaining—things that keep and preserve themselves. In the prayer of the apostle, in Eph. i., we have "the root and fatness of the olive-tree" brought out, and, in chap. iii., the soil in which the root is planted. Jesus is the root, as we all know. He is the one root from which everything that is "fat and flourishing" must spring.

The Spirit is the One who ministers everything that is worth possessing. And where is all found that is worth possessing? In Jesus. Whence is it that all that is good or joyful really flows? From "the Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." We are in the root of the olive-tree that one day will make those who are blessed in that day to have their faces to shine in the knowledge of the living God. None of those blessings are lessened to the Jews by our being made partakers "of the root and fatness of the olive-tree;" but our hopes are different. Our hope is a *heavenly* hope—*our* standing a *heavenly* standing. Our Jesus? Is He here manifesting the glory of God, so that all eyes can see Him? Or has God shed abroad His Spirit on all flesh, so that there are none whose joys do not come from God, whose sorrows are not assuaged, and whose rights are not avenged by God? God will be the avenger *by and bye.* Jesus, as hidden in God, is secretly ruling everything, ordering all providential arrangments; but Jesus' heart is occupied about the saints of God, about His elect: with

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

what our hearts are so little occupied. This is a sufficient occupation for the children of God.

When Paul was converted, and brought to see the union of the saints with Jesus, what was he taught? "How great things he must suffer for My name's sake." What did the Lord teach Paul? Nothing about the order of the world, simply those things which concerned the heavenly people.

The Spirit of God, with all His communications of "the things of God," the unfoldings of the graces and glories of Jesus, and enjoyed, living communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ—is "the fatness of the olive-tree." The root is Jesus, in the bosom of the Father. Where is the fatness? In Jesus in the glory, but ministered to us by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. What has the Holy Ghost to teach us? All about the Father and the Son and our blessed inheritance; and this is what separates us from the world, and gives our souls such a consciousness of the irremediable badness of everything *else*.

Paul sets before us the way of our blessed Lord more distinctly than those who were with Him when on earth; for he knew Him as the risen Man at the right hand of the Father. The apostles, who were with Jesus here on earth, could add nothing to Paul when they came to confer with him. Here Paul got his instructions how to walk in the world. He was planted in the root, settled, and anointed, for "it had pleased God to reveal His Son in him." He came down as it were from the glory, willing to die daily, taking all the comfort of Scripture, as ministered to his soul by the Holy Ghost, "knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also by Jesus," &c.

We here find what the root and fatness of the olive-tree does. It fashions and conforms us to the expression

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

and feelings of Him who is in the bosom of God. Thus the thoughts of God ought to be coming out of us fresh and full, as in the first Psalm. What a description of man do we find there!

When the Lord came, did he fail (Isa. xlix.)? As concerning the gathering of Israel He failed (ver. 4); but beloved, it was not in vain: all He did was prosperous. The Lord was going through this and that, expressing the mind of Him from whom He came, but they refused Him. And after He had exercised great patience towards them, they were broken off for a time. But the Lord will not fail in His promises. We may preach, and there may be failure, but those whom God has chosen will receive the word; and there is this comfort, "Yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength." What we are doing won't prosper if it be not done in the Spirit and in the grace of Christ. We must always be doing our things as those who are rooted and grounded in love.

"The fatness of the olive-tree," the anointing, is for special service. To be kings and *priests* is what we are anointed for. How little do we know what it is to be priests. Its fulness is reserved for a future time, as well as our kingly office. I believe we have to wait for this. We cannot come out now with Melchizedec, and pronounce the blessing which he pronounced on Abraham. Jesus, as our Priest, bears our names on His breast and on His shoulders, as those who are going through the wilderness unto the rest that remains for His people.

The proper exercise of what we get from "*the root* of the olive tree" is that of *prophets*. Our portion is to have "the mind of Christ," to be the revealers of the thoughts, the intentions, and the purposes of God in all we do. The Lord never took up His priestly nor His

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

kingly character on earth. They were not fit to be governed by Him. As a prophet he explained, to those who had "ears to hear," those things which were necessary to be known. Is the honour or power of this world any part of the endowment of the saint? Surely: but in glory. "Let the saints be joyful *in glory*, let a two-edged sword be in their hand. This honour have all His saints." But we are not *in glory*. Till then our simple plan is to be *prophets*. We shall find plenty to do, without descending into the things of the world, in getting into "the root and fatness of the olive-tree."

WHAT DOES THE COMING OF THE COMFORTER MEAN?

(Continued from p. 231.)

I may notice one passage, as it makes a difficulty of some, John xiv. 17. It does not touch the question, if we take it as Mr. G. and others do, namely, that the Holy Ghost had come down on Jesus as man after His baptism, and dwelt with them in that sense, but was not *in them*. This only confirms what I have insisted on. The Holy Ghost coming and being in them was future: "and shall be in you." That was not yet. But the truth is, I do not believe this to be the sense of "dwelling" with them. The translators had an avowed and unhappy practise of translating the same word differently in the same sentence, as in John v. "judgment," "condemnation," "damnation," are one identical word in Greek. So here "dwell" in ver. 17 is the same as "abide" in ver. 16. The Father was to give another Comforter who was to abide for ever with them. Christ could not; He was to go away to the Father. When sent, He was to abide with them,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

and be in them. Christ was there with them, but He could not abide with them ; was with them, but not *in* them. This other Comforter would *abide*, and be *in* them. The "cannot receive" of the world is as much the present time as "abide." It is when sent. And the truth is, abides or dwells, is just as much future as present. It depends on an accent (μενέι or μενεῖ) and in the early MSS. there were no accents. But taking it in Mr. G.'s sense, the Spirit was there in Christ as man, and so with them, but *in* them was, on the contrary, future.

The word of God, therefore, testifies positively that the Comforter did not, and could not come, till Christ went away and was glorified. There is nothing about any previous pouring out, but a promise of doing it in the future. Nor does even *shaphak* mean giving in abundance, particularly, but simply pouring out. Further, in speaking of less and more, His *personal* coming is denied ; a very weighty point. "When *He* shall come." *He* is sent, comes, wills, distributes, works, and, I repeat, Christianity is distinguished by that presence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. I repeat here the immensely important truth that God's dwelling with man is the consequence of accomplished redemption. He did not with Adam, nor Abraham, nor other saints. When He had redeemed Israel out of Egypt He did. "He dwelleth between the cherubim" (See Ex. xxix. 45, 46). So the Holy Ghost could not come, till man sat at the right hand of God, the glorified witness that an eternal redemption was accomplished. Of this we have seen in John vii., Acts ii., John xvi. 7, the positive testimony. The whole character of christianity depends on it. We are not yet in the christian state and standing if we have not the Spirit (Rom. viii. 9-11).

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Mr. G. says that the work of instituting the church is nowhere ascribed to the Spirit in scripture. That the church was not yet built or building when Christ was on earth is certain, for He says, on this rock *I will* build my church. Till Christ died the foundation was not laid. Here only is the church spoken of in His lifetime and as a future thing. But He died to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad, and the two characters in which the church is spoken of, body and house, are both attributed to the Spirit, baptized by one Spirit into one body, and the habitation of God by the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22). "In whom ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (εν πνευματι). There is one Spirit and one body. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, Jews or Gentiles, &c." (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13). Even if we come down to the low ground of external organization, Mr. G. says, "Christ instituted the Lord's supper, Christ instituted baptism." Well then, they did not exist before Christ, as so organized. But when Mr. G. says, "Christ gave the organization of the New Testament to the disciples," though the expression "the organization of the New Testament" be somewhat unintelligible, will He tell us when He did so? I read in 1 Tim. of such organization, and historical facts elsewhere connected with it, but for saying that any such were given by Christ, there is not a shadow of ground.

If by organization he means baptism and the Lord's supper, it is a proof that as He instituted them, such organization did not exist before, and it was when the Holy Ghost came they were carried out. Baptism to Christ's death could not be till He had died, and the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Lord's supper is a symbol of the unity of the body of which an exalted Christ (Eph. i. 19-23) is the head.

As to Christ not loving the church till it existed, it is false doctrine. In its fulness and completeness in God's purpose it does not exist yet, at least we trust that souls will yet be brought in. "Yet to be made and defiled," says Mr. G. Did He not love the souls He saves now, before they existed? They were defiled in their own nature, and of these the church is made up, loved before they existed, defiled as sinners, and Christ died long ago for their purification, and they constitute the church when sealed. Christ did love the church before it existed. Did He only give Himself for what existed then? This is very sad. He gave Himself for it *that He might* sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself, a glorious church without spot. What He will present to Himself certainly did not exist when He gave Himself for it. There could be no church but by His giving Himself for it. Its cleansing, in time, comes after this. He loved the church that He will present, glorious, to Himself.

This only shows how if one truth be given up, others, if touched, will crumble with it. If Mr. G. had given himself the trouble of examining the Greek in Eph. iii. 4-11, he would have found that as the English proves nothing of the kind, in Greek there is no ground for what he says as to the Jews being the body (a monstrous assertion, really) at all. The word is *σύσσωμα*, which could not exist till both were formed in one, according to chapter ii., to make of both one *new* man.

The concluding remarks scarcely require any on my part. There is not a word in scripture about any people using Melchisedec, not even Abraham, though he owned his greatness. Abraham acted as priest for himself con-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

tinually setting up his altar, as did Isaac and Jacob, and the family altar has been generally recognized by christians. There is not a shadow of any assembly of believers, or professed believers, before the exodus. Melchisedec is introduced as a mysterious personage whose priesthood and life were coincident, not what priests were, or the great high priest is now, to intercede for the ignorant or out of the way, or to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin as the apostle insists; but to give, and to bless the Most High God, and Abraham from the Most High God, when through His power he was already wholly victorious. And if Mr. G. had taken the pains to read that one of the songs of Zion (Ps. cx.) to which he alludes, he would have found that it was setting Christ at God's right hand *till* His enemies should be His footstool; and that the sending the rod of His power out of Zion is future. Then His enemies will be made His footstool. Hence when the apostle shows that there arises another priest not of the order of Aaron, Christ being that priest, he makes the present exercise of His priesthood exclusively according to the analogy of Aaron's, though He be not of his order (Heb. viii. 9), because Christ is yet sitting at the right hand of God, and His enemies, if scripture is to be believed, not yet made His footstool. A priest is not the priest of a church,* unless in popery, that I know of. The essential character of the present time is that Christ is *not* sitting on His own throne, but on His Father's, at God's right hand, *till* His enemies be made His footstool, and the Holy Ghost sent down while He is there "expecting," having by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified through it. I do not admit that there was

* The church is never spoken of unless in Heb. xii. 22, where the whole heavenly and earthly order is spoken of.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

an order known as elders when Moses returned to Israel in Egypt. There were elders, but no order known as elders. If there were, let the institution be shown. There was one established when Jethro came (Ex. xviii., Deut. i.), but this was subsequent; and a special one of seventy (Num. xi. 17). But as to this I am quite indifferent. The congregation was not formed, but they were a separated people, and if there be no testimony of it, for aught I know there may have been some known elders, but no such order is spoken of. Nor even in the New Testament is any appointment of elders spoken of amongst the Jews.

But if there were a congregation connected with Melchisedec, of which there is not the slighest trace, or that there were elders in Israel organized as an order among the people, which is not said either, what has that to do with union with Christ by the Holy Ghost, with the glorious head of the body, or even with the habitation of God through the Spirit, formed consequent on Christ having broken down the middle wall of partition, and set aside Judaism? Were Melchisedec's fancied congregation members of Melchisedec's body? Yet that is what constitutes the church in its truest character: "the body of Christ."

How the habit of mere human arrangement blots out of the mind the divinely given revelations of a glorified Christ at God's right hand, and a body united to Him by the Holy Ghost. A priest must have a church, an utterly unscriptural thought, instead of a glorified Christ and union with Him by the Holy Ghost; Christ, too, fancied to be exercising His power as King now, instead of sitting at God's right hand expecting till His enemies be made His *footstool*.

I trust no harsh word has escaped me. I do not deny it

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

is an exercise of patience to go over and over again what constitutes the characteristic existence of the church, and christianity itself commencing from Pentecost. My only consolation is that it brings out, clearer and clearer, for christians, great fundamental truths of their own standing. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. J. N. D.

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Translated from the Italian

CHAPTER XVIII.

THERE was but little fruit in this gifted but frivolous city; for God has chosen the foolish, the weak, and the despised things of the world, to bring to naught the things that are; and the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. The Apostle pursues his journey to the other important Grecian centre, Corinth, a commercial city in a superb situation, but deeply corrupt, being dedicated to Venus, whose priestesses were given up to vice. Even at this time wealth abounded, and the town had become proverbial for luxury and dissoluteness.

The ambassador of God appears in the midst of this luxury, as a poor workman of the world; and we know from his letters that he refused to take anything from the wealthy Corinthians, while he received with joy the offering sent as the fruit of their love by the simple brethren of Philippi. There was afterwards another special reason why the Apostle would not receive money from the Corinthians. This was that false teachers, seeking to profit by the work of Paul, pretended to labour without receiving anything; and Paul desired to take away every occasion of influence from these evil men, and that they should not pretend to that which was not equally verified in him.

Arrived then at Corinth, he finds two people of his own trade, and with them he lodges and works. There, in the simplicity of

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

christian life, the work of God begins. The Jews had, and have always, a trade. We are apt to believe that the Apostles soared above all difficulties, because armed with divine authority, and that they were free from all fear. We, no doubt, who believe they have the Lord's authority, receive them as sent by Him; but the Gentiles recognized neither the Lord, nor those sent by him. They were in the presence of the enemy's power. God had committed His Word to them, that they might convey it to the world, which lay under the power of Satan; and this Word they possessd in the weakness of the flesh. By faith they knew that the Lord would be with them; and certainly his faithfulness did not fail. But this is known by faith; and they felt all the difficulty of a work which introduced the light of God and the authority of His testimony in the midst of darkness, where the enemy reigned over the spirits of men.

It is a serious thing to make and carry on war for God against the prince of evil. We must know what we are doing, what the enemy is, and what He is whom we represent in this war, so that we may consider it according to the rules of a war of God, that He may sustain us, that the consciousness of His call may be with us, and that thus our faith and confidence in Him may not be interrupted. See how the Apostle speaks of his entrance among the Corinthians: "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power" (1 Cor. ii. 3, 4). One cannot do better than read the first four chapters of the first epistle; and for the question of money, chapter ix., what was the testimony, the life, and the feeling of the Apostle in 2 Cor. iv. vi. and x. And how deep and real his testimony in chapter xii. and especially in verse 9, the source of his power in the midst of weakness. For in this epistle, as elsewhere, we find what the Apostle's own feelings were, and what his labours. His heart appears. In 2 Cor. xi., the effect produced by sufferings is shewn.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

With fear and much trembling then, he commences the work in this seat of satan. First he reasons in the synagogue, as he did everywhere, "to the Jews first and also to the Greeks." From Athens, Paul had sent Timothy, who had joined him there (according to Acts xviii. 15, 16; 1 Thess. iii. 2). Now Silas and Timothy return, and are found with Paul (Acts xvii. 5). Pressed in spirit by their presence, he bears still stronger testimony that Jesus was the Christ. He had laboured faithfully during their absence; but the presence of other christians gives courage and strength to his spirit according to God. The feeling of what christianity is, fortifies the heart, and the state of unbelievers is more present to the mind, and more urgent to the heart. But the rights of Christ hold the first place in the Apostle's heart; and when the Jews contradict and blaspheme, he leaves them, and shaking his garments, says to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."

Leaving them, he enters into the house of a Gentile, one who worshiped the one true God. There were many such among the Gentiles, who, weary of the folly and iniquity of idolatry, worshipped in the synagogue, although they had not become Jews. It seems that he had left the house of Aquila and Priscilla. The house of a Gentile who owned the one true God was suited to his work; and to him the work was everything. Still, he does not go far away from the synagogue; and Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, is converted with all his house, whether from the testimony rendered by Paul in the synagogue, or after he had left it. Moreover, the testimony now reaches the Corinthians, and many believe, and are baptized. The work, rejected by the Jews, is now established in the city; for, notwithstanding its wickedness, the Lord had many people there.

Besides this, the Lord encourages Paul by a vision in the night, saying to him, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace." The Lord was with him, and saw fit to hold the door open. All things were in His hands, and He would not

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

permit the enemy to hinder the work because of wicked men. "He openeth, and no man shutteth." It is interesting to see how the Lord watches over the work, and over the hearts of His labourers. It is possible that direct communications and visions may not be given now as they were then; but God has not ceased to guide those who labour faithfully in His name, to manifest Himself to their hearts, and He holds still, as then, the keys, opens, and no man shuts. It is sweet to see that, when we work for Him, He is with us, to speak to our hearts, and to direct us and regulate all our circumstances for His glory, and that according to a divine wisdom.

At Corinth the Apostle remains a year and a half, teaching the Word of God. The Jews, roused by the folly of their enmity against Christ and the Gospel, seek to accuse Paul, as of a crime, because he preached the Gospel. They bring him before the judgment seat of the Governor, a man profoundly indifferent to everything religious. The Apostle is accused of having persuaded men to worship contrary to the law. The pro-consul, Gallio, drives them from the judgment seat. He was right. His office was not to maintain the Jewish law, but to preserve order and peace in the country. It was only another proof of the unreasonable and unbridled hatred of these poor people, who had refused the grace of God, and nourished themselves on enmity against all.

The crowd take Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things. For him, the Jewish religion was a miserable and contemptible superstition, because it separated its professors from all the world; for the human heart loves not the truth that condemns the falsity of the world and of its ways. If the chief of this religion were beaten, it was nothing to him; in his eyes he deserved it, and so they could do it. Unbelief despises superstition, and yet supports it; but it hates the truth, and, if it can, persecutes it. The poor Jews united these two characters—the truth of the oneness of God, and superstition in ordinances, which separated them from all the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Gentiles. Contempt and persecution were the only fruits of their assault on the Apostle.

The position of this people is shewn in a special way in the narrative before us. But Paul's relation with them is also shewn; we see to what an extent he was still bound to Jewish customs. He takes a vow and shaves his head in Cenchrea. He feels obliged in his heart to observe the feast at Jerusalem; and gives this to the Jews at Ephesus as his motive for not then remaining in their city. He is a true Jew, and acts like one; and the Spirit records these facts that we may understand the bonds which still held the spirit of the Apostle. The state of a soul with regard to religious habits is a different thing from the energy of the Spirit of God in the declaration of the truth. We shall see the effect of these bonds strongly pronounced at the end of his career, whether toward the Christians at Jerusalem, or in his submission to their wishes.

He leaves Corinth then with Priscilla and Aquila, after a work largely blessed. The history of this assembly we read in the two epistles addressed to it. We may remark that it is an example of the influence which the world, in the midst of which it is placed, exercises on the assembly of God. It is always in danger of following it; it breathes the same atmosphere, its habits in thought, the effect on the mind of surrounding things, which ever resound in the ears of Christians, and, alas! too often in their hearts. It is difficult to avoid being more or less associated with what surrounds us universally. What we need is faith, which lives in things unseen.

Paul does not stop at Ephesus, where the Jews were disposed to listen to him, but expresses the hope of seeing them again. Leaving Priscilla and Aquila, two quiet people, but faithful and consecrated to the Lord, he goes on towards Jerusalem. There he salutes the assembly, and sets out for Antioch, the starting-point of the Gospel for the Gentiles, and from whence he had been sent by the Holy Ghost. At Jerusalem he merely salutes the assembly, for here we are on Christian, not Jewish ground.

The Bible Herald 1877

"JUSTIFY MANY;" "TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS."

THE verb, *Tsadak* to be righteous, has the sense in Hiphil of making righteous. This can be done in two ways—either by justifying a person forensically, or by making him righteous practically. In this latter sense is it used in Dan. xii. 3, and Isa. liii. 11. As regards Dan. xii. 3, this is no new thought. The Vulgate has rendered the passage, qui ad justitiam erudiunt multos, translated in the Douay version, "who instruct many to righteousness;" and the A.V. practically agrees with it, rendering the Hiphil participle, *matsddikim* "they that turn many to righteousness." On the correctness of this sense, lexicographers, as Gesenius, Fuerst, Lee, and critics as Rosenmüller, are at one as regards the passage in Daniel. The context, too, shows that it is the right meaning. For who of men could make righteous forensically their fellows before God?

About the true meaning of *yatsdik* in Isaiah liii. 11, there is less of agreement. Grammatically speaking, the sense of making righteous practically, which the Hiphil participle teaches in Dan. xii. 3, can be applied to the Hiphil future in this place; and with this Gesenius, Fuerst, and Rosenmüller are of accord. But the A.V. has, by its translation, which here agrees pretty much with the Vulgate, made its readers familiar with a very different thought, viz., that the prophet is speaking of people being justified forensically and not practically. Now, is this the case? Let us examine into it.

According to the rendering of the A.V., the last clause of the verse is taken as explanatory of the preceding one,

The Bible Herald 1877

whereas really it is a statement in addition. For the prophet wrote, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant make righteous many, and he shall bear their iniquities." Two things the Lord is here described as doing. The last speaks of His atonement. The former tells of the effect of His ministry. By His knowledge He was to make many righteous. The prophet thus explains how it would be done—not by faith in Him, nor, be it remembered, by knowing Him, as it is so often thought, but by His knowledge. A clue to this thought we have in Ps. xl. 9, where the Lord says, "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation." This He did when on earth (Matt. v. 20), and the effect on those who received His teaching would be to make them righteous practically.

As grammatically there is no objection to this sense, so exegetically it is demanded, when one understands that by His knowledge means what He knew, and could teach ; not that man knew Him. And the two clauses come out clearly and distinctly. As a matter, too, of doctrine, it would appear, that this is the only sense which is admissible. For, do we ever find that the act of justifying forensically before God is ascribed to any but God ? It is God that justifieth. It is not the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost, but God. Now Isaiah is here writing of the Lord as man, who as such is never elsewhere surely said to justify souls before God. That God should justify seems fitting. That the Lord by His teaching should make many righteous practically we can all understand. But, that He justifies us before God, is a statement which receives no countenance from the New Testament, though we are justified by His blood, and He is made unto us of God righteousness, etc. (Rom. v. 9. ; 1 Cor. 1. 30.)

The Bible Herald 1877

CHRIST JESUS OUR PATTERN.

Notes of G. V. W.; Lecture on Phil. ii.

I WAS looking last time at the 1st chapter, as presenting the measure in which, by a man of like passions as we, eternal life was exhibited down here. This epistle being a sort of practical commentary of that word in the Gospel of John, "*I in you.*" We find the power of eternal life in Christ dwelling in and being manifested down here in a man (Paul), and Paul could get into circumstances to write a letter to his beloved Philippians, and let out most strikingly this eternal life dwelling in him. In chapter i. verse 20, he says, "In nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so *now*, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." In circumstances where everything might be supposed calculated to bow down the heart, but no! The only thought in that heart was, that Christ might be in him, magnified.

We find in chapter i. the *principle* of eternal life—"For to me to live is Christ;" and in the 2nd chapter the *pattern* of the eternal life in the blessed Son Himself. Here very remarkable words are used. It is not English to say "To me to live is Christ." Here it points to what was that life of the Son, in the 1st chapter, the power of Paul in manifesting that life. He could say truly "To me to live is Christ." As the hands of a clock tell of that which is working inside, so Paul's life told of what was in his heart. He couldn't have said "To me to live is Christ" without the throbbing of that life in his soul.

Verse 1st. "If there be any," etc. Here he teaches notes well known to himself and these Philippians, calling on them to answer by a walk becoming the servant of Christ. He is a man full of the anointing, seeing

The Bible Herald 1877

everything in the presence of God. "Fulfil my joy;" "Consider one another." Let every one be the mark of another, not occupied with self, but with those who are the objects of Christ's love. If I see you trying to build one another up, it is the joy of my heart.

Verse 5. "Let this mind," or, let this be minded by you. People read this, as if it referred to the power of God in the mind, but it is very different; it is the power of intelligence as to the mind of God. He has a mind of His own—man has not that mind, but he can understand the things of God. He has given us eternal life, we have the principle, and are to exercise it as Christ did. From first to last, Christ was the servant, the Sent One, doing God's will—"Let *this mind* be in you." It is the thinking, as Christ thought—not the mind of God—but the principle he has given, and what He is ever sustaining. His name be praised, Christ's whole heart was set on His Father's mind. God had not two thoughts. He carried out the one thought of the Father's mind, and to do it, had to come down here, to the death of the Cross. If I want to be thoroughly ashamed of self, it is when reading this chapter, contrasting self with that Divine One, He who through His whole course never had a will. Every day, as a saint, I find I have a will that must be kept under. Paul does not care what he suffers, or what becomes of him, so long as Christ be magnified in his body—he attained to an immense extent like-mindedness with Christ. We do not illustrate that eternal life Christ has given us, as did Paul, looking at the character of the glory of the Son here; it is not the humiliation only of the Son of man (the Spirit of God is very guarded) He being in the form of God, verses 7, 8. Who was that babe in the manger? Ah! that manger was a good place,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

by way of contrast with the glory of the titles brought out there. *Who* was that babe? The one over whom angel's sung, the only begotten in the bosom of the Father. He came down and lay in a manger—the one who thought it not robbery to be equal with God. He emptied Himself, He *did* make Himself of no reputation, washing His disciples' feet. This blessed One laid every thing aside. All the divine power was in Him. He, the one by whom God made all things, when He came down and died, He laid it all in abeyance. I could not do that; if I tried to lay aside any thing that distinguished me from others, it would be sure to come out, just when I did not want it to betray me, but He had perfect, *absolute* self control over Himself. I could not trust to your patience or forbearance with me, but I can trust God's perfect patience. Where should you find a man that would willingly abide under a yoke? The will tosses there, and Christ has to put His children there, to break *that will down*, saying "Now, I have done *that*, you can walk under *my* yoke and find it easy." Who but God could have gone on 4000 years with man, finding nothing but *sin*, *sin*, *sin*, till His Son came, the only one without sin and (He having been put to death) going on again 2000 years longer, and at the end, still unwearied in patience and goodness. What a heart the Lord Jesus must have after 6000 years of nothing but man's sin and the failure of His people, saying at the end, "Behold! I come quickly." He has a heart not like ours, but the contrast of all that we are. Adam's desire was "to become one of us (Gen. iii. 22.)

The blessed Lord *was* the Son, and the object of all worship, not a thing to be snatched at. He was *it*. "Being obedient unto death," going to the cross, with the consciousness that He was the Son of the Father, in

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

whom all the Father's eternal counsels stood, and saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will." He could go down even to the death of the cross. He said, "I have power to lay down my life," etc. I do not bring in the thought of atonement there; it is the perfection there of obedience, shewing how entirely His mind was subject to God and the Father. Everything He did He did as the servant of God. We can turn to Him and say, there is One whom we can trace from the manger to the cross, and never find but on two occasions the expression of a will of His own, and that expression each time was perfect. The first—when anticipating drinking the cup the Father had given, and it would not have been perfect unless thus. Was it nothing to that holy One to think of all the billows and wrath He was going to bear for sin? The Gnostics said he did not suffer at all—it was a dreadful heresy. If not there as *sin-bearer,* all the fruits of His having died would have been at an end. He would not take the cup from man's hand, but at God's. The second expression of His will is in John 17th, "Father, *I will,*" &c. What a blessed expression of perfect satisfaction in those poor things. He was soon going to leave them, and He could say, "Father, I have kept them in thy name," and I am coming for them, "and will that they should be with me where I am." He would not be alone in glory, He would have them sharers of it.

You and I have wills that are constantly working. You should get your will judged by the contrast between you and Christ. Get the beauty of Christ coming down, without any will, saying, "Lo, I come to do *Thy* will," and but for that will having been perfectly fulfilled, you would have been writhing eternally in hell. Adam snatched after what he thought would better his circumstances, and he got satan to be his patron, to get some-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

thing for self. Christ walked down here perfectly will-less. Man had done what he liked, but God had stood behind and given the cup (that was what *man* would not see). The cup was not what He met with from the hand of man, but from God. It was the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God that He should die, and that as a man, because of carrying out all the counsels of God, he should go up to the highest place—everything in heaven and earth to bow down to Him. Oh, how just God is! Did you ever snatch at a thing which God would have given you? Paul had a will, he would go to Jerusalem and had to go to Rome, but the Lord said, I shall go with you. Now *will-less*, I am as Christ, whose will it was to be the subject servant of God, *nothing else*, and there He is in the glory now, still in this character.

How little one's heart thinks of Him. Paul thought a great deal of Him. When could He get water enough, even to turn that wheel? Water enough to keep his heart fresher and fresher as he went on? Oh! It was the person of Christ revealing Himself, that and only *that*, kept his heart fresh. That one, now on the Throne, in the highest place, because of His most perfect subjection: what a thought, that He is the eternal lover of souls, and all that I have is in Him, and it is all given me by the Father, and He will keep it. The Holy Ghost sent down by Him, seals it upon our heart, so that we can say, we know whose we are, that we are loved by Him—"God working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure." He would have a people, with all the freshness of the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ for them. If God is working in us, there is no distance between the potter and the vessel; it is in the potter's hand fashioning it, and his hand is *very close to the clay.*

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

It is very blessed to be a temple of the Holy Ghost, but we must take care to remember that it is *God* who is moulding and working in us, as He did in Paul, that Christ may be magnified in these bodies, whether by life or by death. There is not a thing I may be doing, that is bright to me now, that will continue to look bright *in heaven* unless Christ be the object of it. It is the expression of the life of Christ in a person that must be made manifest, one may be in bed sick, another running over the earth preaching, another in prison, no matter where it be, if Christ be in him, that set of circumstances he is in, is just the place where the life of Christ is to break forth and to shine most brightly. If a believer had to take to his bed, for six weeks, and came to Christ, saying "Lord fill this chamber with Thyself," what brightness there would be! You do not find with many now, that Christ is first, Christ *second*, Christ *third*, not the rock, whence all supplies are to be drawn, not all handed up to Him, as the one teaching His child to read. You do not find likeness to Christ coming out, not like a seal with a good engraving, from which, if you gave me wax, I could make a good impression. Let Christ be *inside* and Christ will shine out; but if you let your heart be filled with care and trouble Christ cannot shine out, you will know what joy is when He can shine out; "Work out your own salvation," and when Christ has revealed Himself to me as a Saviour, and I know the question of sin is settled, having eternal life, God says, "Now I shall teach you what a *will* you have, how unlike you are to my Son." God wants to have this body, soul, and spirit, all for Himself. If you see any beauty in Christ, and say "I would desire to have that," God will work it in you.

In verses 15 and 16, we have a picture of what Christ

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

was down here. Christ *shined forth* all through His course. We are called to follow Him—"to be blameless," &c. Paul adds, "that I may rejoice," &c. There is one thing very sweet, and that is the communion of the saints in glory. Paul could say, "I shall meet you in the glory, and I want your walk to be such now, that you may be my joy and crown of rejoicing in that presence." If Paul stand there, with those beloved Philippians and Thessalonians as his crown of rejoicing, the great principle is brought out, that every thing done down here for Christ will then shine out, and people will have the joy of it coming out there. The real question of sin is, the wanting to have a will of your own. Christ had none. He never found anything to be bitter, because He took it all from the Father's hand. We fret because we think things are so cruel, and complain because satan has got such power; but all is under the hand of God, and there you get God's love, God permitting these things for blessing afterwards, as in the case of Job. When I have looked back at trials, and I have seen how I wanted that process, and if inclined to glory in gifts—how God took away things to strip self of every thing—that one might find Him enough, I got down on my face and there I found *He was enough.*

THE MODEL OF LOVE.

MAY we so live with Jesus that in aught but Him no loveliness we ever may see. May it be the very end of all other loves to reveal the immeasurable depth and tenderness of the love of Christ; may it be the model after which all other love is built—pure, unselfish, untiring, inexhaustible, and most tender.

The Bible Herald 1877

THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.

2 Kings vii.

THERE is one singular characteristic of the Bible, the book of God, which you will not find in any other book. For while other books treat of the misery of man, and some treat upon his future state, and what he possibly might be, and what might be the end of that condition, there is only one book in the world, and that is the book before me, that proposes a real relief for the misery of man at the present moment. There is only one book in the world with that peculiar characteristic, and that is the Bible; and that is what makes it the Word of God. I put that in the face of every caviller. He may deny the contents, but he cannot deny that it presents perfect and permanent relief for man in his misery this moment. Is there nothing to rest on here (if you are a restless soul) if such a thing should be proposed to you as a present, a perfect, a permanent relief, from the misery of your condition, that you dare not contemplate? I say, beloved friends, it is an astounding characteristic, and I challenge the whole world to bring anything to contradict it. But you may say, How can I be assured that it is true? Well, beloved friends, it stands not upon external *evidence* but upon inherent *virtue*. And the very argument that would not stand for a moment about the most trivial things, about the most trivial pain—that argument is allowed to stand regarding that which is of the deepest concern to every one; and that is the state of your souls. And what is that argument? If I can show a remedy that will relieve the commonest pain, and if I have a dozen witnesses to establish the validity of that cure, I would be believed.

The Bible Herald 1877

But then I start from the fact that God comes in all His greatness, and He says, I provide a relief for the misery of man, and I do not relegate it to the future, I do not postpone it to the future, it will be in its *fulness* by and bye, but you shall have it now. What a marvellous characteristic? It is unspeakable, beloved friends.

And before I go into my subject, I say one word more: there is not one thing that any soul on this earth can do that delights God more than to say, I am perfectly happy this moment in what God is to me. For the soul to say, "Well, I am perfectly happy in what you are to me," makes God delighted. He delights in your perfect happiness. As the scripture puts it, "This shall please the Lord better than an ox or a bullock." No amount of sacrifice or of devotion could please the Lord better than the fact that I am perfectly happy, under any circumstances, in the knowledge of His favour.

The very fact that he has that feeling towards me shows what an interest he takes in us.

Well, now, I say that in this book (having stated that great characteristic) it is put beyond all cavil, I do not argue for its authenticity, but for its virtue. That is the way to prove the validity of the cure. How do men bear witness to the validity of a cure? They give a number of testimonials, and people say, Well there is a cure. And was there ever a cure had more testimonials than the fact that he that believeth in Jesus has everlasting life? I state that first because of the cavilling that there is abroad, which only shows how little people are prepared for what God is in His goodness, and how little they know of the goodness of God in dealing with men.

If He is good he must reveal Himself. Here is man upon the earth, and will God reveal Himself? If He is good He reveals Himself.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

The Old Testament is dealing with man as natural. It is not that it is a history, but you get instances recorded in the book in order to set forth how God will act in grace toward man. And you get in the Old Testament instances in the simplest way, so that the child can understand it. You understand the nature of the grace: you get it in the simplest form; addressed to any capacity.

In the New Testament you get it presented in the permanent spiritual action. It is first presented naturally in the Old Testament, and then it is presented spiritually in the New.

Now, here then what we have presented is this: It is a great famine and the famine, was so great that we read in the previous chapter, at the 25th verse: "There was a great famine in Samaria: and behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver."

The famine is the first thing brought before us. God has to do with realities, and there is no use in proposing to relieve unless you have the pressure. There is no use of proposing a relief unless you are suffering from something. Hence the first thing, the first reality, is that I am under a terrible pressure—under the pressure of failing life. Life is failing and there is a famine—because a famine is the sense that the supply of food is gradually diminishing and life is gradually ebbing. Death is brought to stare you in the face, and you have to stare death in the face. The food is gradually failing away, and you are gradually feeling, Well, I am getting weaker and weaker; I am approximating to death. Death is the judgment of sin.

The first great thing you get in the prodigal son is

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

how he awoke to his condition. That is the first great reality: you awake. The Philipian jailer retires to his rest at night quite satisfied with the way that he has done his business as a respectable man. He is awakened by the earthquake, and he sees the future in all its dark outlines before him. That man was not spiritually awake when he went to his rest that night; now he is awake. Why? He sees the famine.

I put it plainly to every one (I have been brought to it myself), Have you ever been brought to look death straight in the face? Have you been brought to the edge of the precipice, and you were hanging over it, and a voice said "Look up, look up, if you look down you are lost." You do not know what relief is, if you have never had pressure.

When young I was brought by the fear of the cholera to lie upon the floor and read the Bible four times a day. I was afraid to die. Did you ever come to close quarters with death? You cannot understand what real relief is unless you have.

God brings the famine to let you understand the reality. There are only two realities: the one is the reality of your state under the judgment of God; and the other is the relief from that judgment.

Let me say a word about Satan. People say they don't dislike to be saved and to hear the word of God. Yes, I say there is no natural reluctance. Man suffers from two forces. He suffers from the force of the evil power that acts upon him, like the maniac; and he suffers from weakness, like the woman who had spent all she had upon physicians. One is the force of violence that acts upon him in spite of himself—that is Satan; and the other is the force of weakness. If any unconverted soul here were to see the coil of the serpent that is round his heart it would

The Bible Herald 1877

terrify his life out. What would I say if I saw young people going down the street, and I saw a great giant coming and bandaging their eyes. Would not I feel my blood stirred to relieve these poor youths? What is that in comparison with satan blinding their eyes, to shut out the light of God's own Son. He is shining here at this moment. Why does not every one see it? Because satan hath blinded their eyes. I think it is enough to terrify a person when you come to understand it. If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded their eyes, that they should not see the glory of God in Christ Jesus. He *is* shining. You say you do not see him. It takes an eye to see. Many a man does not see the light of the sun. You may see natural light, but you do not see spiritual light. You have to get an eye to see.

The first thing God brings in is the famine. They are in this state that things are coming to their worst. They are gradually a day older and a day worse. What the world as a rule is like, is the consumptive in an hospital. They are becoming worse, but they do not think they are to die. I knew a lady in that condition, who lately told me that she thought she was getting better, and she died that day! They think they are retrieving ground in their condition. You don't feel the pressure.

The great expression of the grace of God came out in the night of death, when you read in Exodus that there was not a house where there was not one dead. That was the night that God said, Now, take the blood, and when I see it I will pass over. Why? Because the reality of things was there. They were brought to the reality of their state. When the soul sees it is under the judgment of the holy God, that is where the grace comes in.

Here is the death that is before me; here I am like the

The Bible Herald 1877

thief on the cross, he is just on the verge when the Son of God steps in, and says, I will bear the judgment; let him go free. That is grace: I am in the enjoyment of grace when I see what is done.

Here you have the famine, and now comes in the very height of it the prophet of God, and he announces grace. He says, "To-morrow at this time flour shall be sold at an incredibly low price." That is grace. The lord on whose hand the king leaned says, "If the Lord would open the windows of heaven, might this thing be." And the prophet said, "You will see it with your eyes, but you won't taste it."

It is a sad case when a man will not believe what God says. And so now I meet a man and ask him, What do you think of God sending His Son into this world to die for you? Well, you are like this great lord, you won't believe it. It is a sad thing that any should hear of the grace of God and not believe on His Son. Scripture says, "It is the greatness of a king to pass by a transgression." Where is the greatness of God, I should like to know? The greatness of God is to give His Son a ransom so that he should be able to forgive sin—not merely to pass it by, but to forgive it. God's own arm has brought salvation, and He has so loved the world that He gave His own Son. If there is any soul here that feels his heart beating at the prospect of the awful gulf that is before him, what a relief he has here, to know that God has provided a ransom; that God Himself has sent forth His light into my heart. The famine is over; the bread of life has come. The unbelief of this lord is a sad sight to look at.

It is a pleasant thing now to turn round and ask who receives it. And we have this in the same Scripture.

As I say, the Bible is not a history; it is a collection of

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

incidents put forward in order to describe to us the manner of God's dealing with man. First, the Old Testament describes how he dealt with Adam; and man in every instance was a failure. The New Testament is occupied with the Second Adam, where everything is done according to His mind. The first has to go out, because He was a failure; and the second has to come in, because he did everything good. The first ruined me, and the second saved me. Which do you belong to? There is no excuse for any one. But I say I was born with the first Adam. But if you look to the second, you are saved. He that looked, lived—he that believes on Him shall be saved.

I sometimes hear people say, I don't know whether He died for my sins or not. I answer, by asking this question, Have you ever seen Him? Seen Him! How can I see Him? But that is the point for you. I see Him by faith. Don't ask me whether He died for me or not. Did you ever see Him? You will find that he that looked lived. Don't you try and make difficult what God makes plain.

There is an old saying, that might is right. But Christ says that sight is right. Sight is Right. Tell me would you see Christ? Look not to Adam but to Christ; because He will judge the secrets of the hearts by Christ. He will judge you by what is in you. And therefore it is the question now, What think ye of Christ? don't tell me what you think of Adam, but of Christ. I turn now to what is more interesting to us; and God grant, beloved friends, that these things I set forth now may not rise up in judgment against us.

I turn now to those who have received this blessing, and who eventually became the great evangelists of it—because the way to be an evangelist is to learn of Christ ourselves.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

The first evangelists were angels. They came down and evangelised the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, saying, "There is born unto you this day a Saviour who is Christ the Lord." The shepherds refused their rest that night when they heard of this. They dropped the flocks—let them mind themselves—and went off to see the Saviour.

Is that in your heart? I want you to drop your flocks and what is nearest to your heart, and go to seek your Saviour.

The shepherds became the next evangelists, they went about and told everybody what they had seen.

Well now, I turn to those who received the blessing. There were four lepers, and now we will look at them. These four lepers "said one to another," as we are told. "There were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate; and they said one to another, why sit we here until we die? If we say we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here we die also."

Now we have got the true state; we have got the reality. They said, if we sit here we die, and if we go into the city we die there. That is the great reality. That is what Jonathan saw when he saw Goliath; there is death staring him in the face. He was first in the anxious state when he saw David go out to attack him. And when he saw Goliath on the ground, he is in the hopeful state; and when he saw David take the sword and cut off the giant's head and hold it in his hand, he is in the assured state. Why should you not be as happy as Jonathan to-night? He could say—"I saw him do it; I saw it all done; and now I am not taken up with the giant, but with him that hath killed him."

"If we sit here we die, and if we go into the city we die

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

also." Our state is truly deplorable. If there is any one here that has not found that his state is deplorable, I don't know how to picture it. It is like one on the edge of a precipice. A father seeing his child there would be almost afraid to touch him, lest he should fall over; but he shuts his eyes, and drags him back, and he is saved. People say you will make people terrified if you speak of death in that way. I would be delighted to see you in an agony of fear. It is the man that has the most desperate pain that has the most grateful sense of the relief that has been given him. And so it is in everything else. According to the measure of the pressure, must be the measure of the relief. That is what makes weakness among saints—they never had a real sense of their danger —of the judgment of God in all its terrors.

What drove man out of the garden of Eden was that he had a bad opinion of God. and that is what has been the peculiar misery of the lost, when he awakes too late to find, I had a wrong opinion of the living God. You cannot have too great an opinion of God. You say, who will verify that opinion? Why, his own Son, He comes into this world to remove the terrible aspersion that has been thrown upon him in our hearts by Satan.

Now, what do those lepers do? They said there is no hope for us but in mercy—mercy where we have no reason to expect it. They are our enemies. There is no hope for us but in mercy. Have you ever dealt with God in that way, and approached Him saying, I have no hope but in your mercy. I have not the least more title to it than these four leprous men had from the Assyrians. Get mercy from their enemies! Did you ever hear of such a thing? Their case was deplorable. They had no back door. If they sat still they died; if they went into the city they died. There is no hope for them but mercy

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

where they had no right to expect it. But they said, If we live, we live; if we die, we die; and they entered. A terrible witness these leprous men will give against you, if you have not come to the gracious God, who has done every thing good, and from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift, and who is the Father of lights, and who delights to let you know His mercy.

Well, now they venture, and what do they find? What every person will find that turns from his sins. The famine was all over. It is like the poor Philippian jailer. He cried for mercy. But there it was for him. The servants of God were there ready. What a trouble God was at to bring in this man. He was awake to the reality of his condition before God, and God saw. There is relief. The famine is over. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The famine is over. Well, there is relief. The joy of believing was commensurate with, was in proportion to, the pressure.

You will see now what the extent of grace is. They came to the camp and they did eat and drink. There are two parts in grace which we get set forth in this scripture. First they get the grace, and then they are to go forth and be the proclaimers of it. Well, the first thing is they come in and eat and drink. The famine is over. A child can read this story. It is just a story to bring it plain to your conscience; to show how God delights in mercy. And transfer that now to the mighty transaction of the gospel, and you will find that you have to travel the same way. The great beauty of the Old Testament is that it shows us how the transaction goes.

We get the practical personality in the Old Testament. If a man reads the New Testament exclusively he gets quite dry. If he reads the Old Testament only, he

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

becomes quite legal. But if he reads them both together, he becomes personal.

Well, the first thing is they find the famine is over and the enemies gone. That is peace. The enemy is gone and peace is come, and the famine is over. That is the relief to a soul that has found Christ—a wonderful relief, but that is not all. They get a store. They get raiment, silver, and gold. He says, I don't relieve a person for the present only, but I set him up.

Suppose I meet a friend, and I say to him, There is a friend of yours in the debtor's prison. Well, he says, I will go there and get him out. Well, I meet him again in a few days, and he says, I have got him out. Well, I say, have you done anything else for him? No, I have not. Well, I say very likely that fellow is going about perhaps seeking for a situation in a poor wretched state. He may be miserable. That is what many believers are. They have not got a fortune. While they can speak of being free of the fear of the famine, they do not give you the impression of people who are really delighting this moment in the happiness which God gives, and so satisfied with what God has done that they are not roaming about for something to make them happy. He completes the thing. The same grace that made them eat that food gives them the store. What right had they to that food, or to that gold, or to that silver. No right whatever. But they saw it, and whatever they saw they took. That is grace; "all things are yours." What an astonishing thing! Am I free from all my debts in the sight of God?

Yes, the famine is over. What else? I have got an inconceivable fortune. I am not only clear of all the danger and all the misery that lay upon me, but I am rehabitated in the most inconceivable circumstances.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Just as if the friend should say, I gave him a fortune that he could never spend. Or put it in this way, I gave him such a fortune that the more he spent of it the more he would have of it. These men get a store. It was in the darkness: but when it comes to the break of day, they say, we do not well, we must go and tell these tidings.

It is of immense importance for the soul to understand the greatness of the place that God wants to put us in. God wants not only to take your misery off you, but to give you this moment the most inconceivable happiness. I want your countenance to beam with the consciousness of possession. You are not fit to be an evangelist until you are conscious of possession. If we stop till the morning light, mischief will come upon us.

What had these men to tell? They had to tell this combination. Not only the famine is over but that they have a store. And so we are to go out to the world and say, I have a happiness that the world knows nothing of.

What a wonderful thing to go out to the world and say that we have got the Holy Ghost: it is in me a well of water springing up to everlasting life. Is that in heaven by and bye? No; in the place of the misery, we ought to be in this way. As Christ said, Take up thy bed and walk, and go and tell thy friends what the Son of man hath done for thee.

These four lepers, if I look to their deplorable condition, they had nothing but to cast themselves upon the mercy of their enemies. The day of salvation had come. The light of it had shone. They find now, we have done nothing, we only take possession of what royal grace has provided. And as I said before, sight is right.

All I wish to say in conclusion is this: How many of you can leave this meeting now and say, Thank God, thank

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

God, I have seen the sight. I not only know the famine to be over and the enemies gone, but I see what the grace of God is; that it has not only relieved me of what is past, but it has given me in Christ inexhaustible resources. You see, beloved friends, it is impossible to explain the language of Scripture, because it is so beyond human comprehension. "You shall never thirst." I think that believers ought to give such an impression to others that they will say, Well, I don't see what you have, but you are the happiest man I know. And I believe, as I said before, and I thank God for it, there is nothing delights the heart of God so much as the simple fact of my perfect happiness in what He is to me—in what Christ is to me. This is what pleases the Lord. It will be far better not to be dissatisfied, but really to have a sense of what the favour of God is, and to say, what God is to me makes me feel perfectly happy—that will be more to Him, and He will value it more than any amount of sacrifice or devotion you can render. "This will please the Lord better than an ox or a bullock."

The Lord grant in His mercy, that none of you may pass out of these doors without coming to the Lord Jesus as the one whom the Lord has sent into this world to relieve you of the misery and disease that are upon you, and to give you to experience what He says:—"He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." J. B. S.

Edinburgh, April, 1877.

THE ASSEMBLY CHRIST'S BODY.

MEN talk about union among Christians. They are one already in Christ, and by the Holy Ghost. Let them abandon all partition walls, and keep to this "unity of

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the Spirit." They have not to form a unity, but relinquish those things which form the disunities.

I observe that at chapter iv. of Ephesians, at verse 3rd, we are enjoined to "keep *the unity of the Spirit* in the uniting bond of peace," and verse 4th reads "[There is] *one body and one spirit*, as *ye* have also been called," &c. It seems to me that "the unity of the spirit" and "one body and one spirit" both refer to "an outward organisation"—not to an ideal or mystical thing—and the passage you refer to, 1 Cor. xii. 27, is very plainly "the outward organisation" of the Church at Corinth, and verse 28 as clearly points to outward organised "unity of the spirit," the whole Church then on earth. For it must be an outward and visible institution before God could set in it, "first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers; then miraculous powers; then gifts of teachings; helps, governments, various tongues." These people were surely set in the visible church on earth. I grant that it began with the outward and the spiritual being one and the same with the "outward organisation," having been made a living organism by the all-pervading life of its risen Head, transfused throughout every individual of its entire membership by the Holy Ghost, who had come down to form all into one with the Head on high, and to be the one bond of its union to Christ in the heavens. It is a risen body as to its privileges; on earth as to responsibility. This being so, is it not too strong to say, as you do of 1 Cor. xii. 27, "Where no reference is had to an outward organisation?" It was an assembly—the apostle writes in so many words to the Corinthians—"*Ye* are Christ's body." The assembly at Corinth was Christ's body, then it was surely outward and visible, and not merely "spiritual," but (unhappily at that time, as the apostle charges them, chapter iii.) "carnal." But I

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

do not press this. They were members of "Christ's body," and that is what you mean by "spiritual."

Again, farther on you say, "an external for a spiritual and visible church." Now, Scripture says, all three—"external," for it was a known and recognised assembly; "spiritual," *for* it was the unity of the spirit, *i.e.*, the unity made and pervaded by His presence; and, "visible," for "all that believed were together;" "one assembly;" "their own company;" "one body." The "invisible" Church was invented centuries after; it was a visible one at Pentecost, and in the time of the apostles (Acts ii.-vii.); and only after the sad fact had become obvious that it was no longer "the light of the world, a city set upon a hill." But an invisible church, an invisible light, is not the Church formed by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost; and visibility is one of the marks of the Church of God.

What you say of Christianity not being intended as a mere civilizing force, is quite just.

The vine and the branches is fruit-bearing rather than union. If it were life-union, how could there be taking away of branches "*in me?*" It is on the earth that the vine is planted. Men do not plant vines in heaven. It was the then state of Christ and the disciples. He was the vine, they the branches; but this was as associated with Him before His death on earth. Judas was in this sense a branch of the true vine, but he did not abide, and there was not fruit, but taking away. "*He went* immediately *out*," and went ultimately "to his own place." (Jo. xv. 6; Acts i. 25.)

Christian union, such as is known in the Church on earth, is union with a risen and glorified Head in heaven, by the Holy Ghost come down, and results not in making those who enjoy it branches of a vine, but members of a body—"the Body of Christ." I fully admit the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

moral principle of the vine and its branches ; but it is communion which we must maintain, not vital union as in the body of Christ, which is formed independently of our endeavours. "For by *one spirit* are we all baptized into *one body*," &c. "Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular."

SECURITY, COMMUNION, AND CONFIDENCE.

Notes of an Address on John xiii. 1-23.

IT is a fact with which many are familiar, that the account of our Lord's washing His disciples' feet, and the four following chapters, are found in the gospel by John, and in no other portion of the Holy Scriptures. The time was exceedingly and peculiarly solemn. The blessed Lord had ere this openly taken His farewell of Jewish things. The beautiful temple was soon to be a heap of ruins—"not one stone left upon another;" and a new order of things of a spiritual and heavenly character was to be brought in. Hence the washing of the disciples' feet, the disclosure to His own of the Father's house, the promise of the descent and abiding of the Holy Ghost the other Comforter, and His marvellous operations, as also the blessed hope of our Lord's coming to receive us unto Himself, now have their place. It can easily be perceived how fundamentally important such instruction is to us, but how entirely foreign to Jewish ideas! We do *not* find here the declaration of the mystery of the church, the body of Christ, because, according to the counsels of God, it was reserved for a subsequent revelation; yet these chapters clearly announce lines of deeply precious instruction suitable to us during the whole period of our Lord's rejection until He come again.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

These chapters, therefore, contain lessons of richest worth, which could not have been brought out while the Lord was presenting Himself as the Messiah to the nation of Israel; but, having been rejected, He could only leave them in desolation, darkness, and unbelief, until they shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. xxiii. 38, 39). The time, therefore, was now come for setting forth great and precious doctrines for us, in this kind of transition period, between the giving up of the Jewish nation, and the calling and formation of the Church of God.

In the verses which we have just read, there are three points of instruction to which I would direct attention—the believer's security, communion with the Lord, and confidence of faith. This is the order in which these subjects are here presented, and no doubt it is divine. For until the believer is established as to his everlasting *security* in Christ, how can he enjoy *communion* with the Lord? And if not walking with the Lord, can he expect to have *confidence* in the Lord when adversity comes?

1. As to the question of THE BELIEVER'S SECURITY, several remarkable points are clustered together in the beginning of the chapter. In the first verse we read, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Love, divine love, is certainly the *source* of all our blessings. Our everlasting *security*, therefore, flows from divine love. It is His love to us which is *first*, for "we love Him, because He *first* loved us." It is His love, not ours, which is the spring—"Not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This love then has been manifested in all its fulness, perfectness, and suitability—"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

world that we might live through Him." (1 John iv. 9, 10, 19). Most souls when anxious and awakened to a sense of their obligations to God as His creatures, think that all their blessings are based on their love to God. They therefore try, and try again, most sincerely, to love God; when, after a constant sense of failure and sin, they learn the precious truth that God's love in the gift of His Son is the *source* of peace and salvation, and not their love to God. They say, "I am trying to love God," but until they know how marvellously God's love has come out to us, while we were yet sinners, they never get peace. All believers in the Lord Jesus, therefore, can say, "We have known and believed the love which God hath to us." This love, too, is unchanging, for "whom He loved when He was in the world He loved them unto the end;" that is, He loved them through all their failings, mistakes, and ignorance.

"His love's unchangeably the same,
And as enduring as His name."

It is divine love, the love of God to us in Christ in all its fulness, perfectness, and unchangeableness, which is then the *spring* of our eternal salvation, and therefore imparts to us the first sense of our everlasting security. And let us ever remember that it is not God's providential kindness to us in our circumstances, gracious as He may be in these things, but it is His love to us in the gift of His only-begotten Son that tells us of His infinite grace. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting live" (John iii. 16). There can, therefore, be no peace, no sense of security, where the spring of our eternal blessings is not known as flowing to us in the gift of Christ; and until that is the case, souls, if truly awakened and earnest, will be looking

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

to their own love to God, their feelings, their doings, the performance of their promised resolutions, and the like, which only increases their misery, and can never impart rest and peace. Happy those who can so perceive the love of God in the person and work of Christ, and its suitability to us, as to enable them to realise in their own souls the preciousness of the truth, "Perfect love casteth out fear"!

Then we have brought before us that which sets forth *the death of Christ*—"the supper," (v. 2); for nothing less than the death and blood-shedding of the Son of God could meet our need, or satisfy the claims of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. Nothing less than the unsparing condemnation of our sins could satisfy divine *justice*, and nothing less than our having everlasting life and salvation could satisfy divine *love*. The death of Christ, then, was absolutely necessary, and is the alone *ground* of peace and everlasting security. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth alone; but, *if it die*, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). Precious love, that could thus manifest itself in cleansing and saving us, and bringing eternal glory to God! By the death of Christ, the question of our sins is for ever settled, according to the strictest claims of justice and truth as well as love. We are told that "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree," that "He suffered for sins," "died for our sins," "shed His blood for many for remission of sins;" that "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, . . . and with His stripes we are healed." We have thus in the death of Christ an immoveable ground of peace, and that which purges the conscience, because of remission of sins, on the ground of sins having been judged by God in unsparing wrath in the person of His beloved Son, who was "made sin" and

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

"made a curse" for us on the tree. If the *love* of God is the source of all our blessings, the *death* of Christ is the foundation of our everlasting peace and security, for "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Here we see the demands of *holiness* vindicated, the claims of *righteousness* met, *justice* satisfied, *love* manifested, *sins* judged, the *sinner* that believes saved, and *God* glorified. God, who condemned sin, now justifies the sinner on the principle of faith. "Jesus knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father," and "the Supper" tell us of His death. It is the death of Christ then that has justly answered for us every charge of sin and guilt, and which sets our conscience at rest before God; for if the question be asked, Who is he that condemneth? the answer is, It is Christ that died, and it is God which justifieth. Thus we sing—

> "The Lord of life in death hath lain,
> To clear me from all charge of sin,
> And, Lord, from guilt of crimson stain,
> Thy precious blood hath *made me clean*."

But more than this. The Lord is in spirit at this moment on the other side of death. The language is very remarkable—"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God." Here we have the Lord presented to us in spirit on resurection and ascension ground, "knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands." We need a Saviour who could bring us to God—bring many sons to glory; a Saviour therefore who should not only save us from our sins, but be the Conqueror of satan, and rise victoriously over death and the grave. This Christ did when He rose from among the dead; for, through death, He annulled him that had

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the power of death, that is the devil, and thus set free those who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage. In the resurrection of Christ, we see not only God's testimony to the finished work of Jesus on the cross, but we also see satan, who had the power of death, completely triumphed over, and a new and living way made for us into the presence of God. And further, being now in the place of power at the right hand of God, we have life, righteousness, and acceptance in Him. Thus, if a doubt arises as to our having eternal life, it is met by the scripture that "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life *is in His Son.*" If it be a question of righteousness, we are told, "God hath made Christ to be unto us righteousness." If an enquiry as to our acceptance is raised, we are told that we are "accepted in the Beloved;" that is, are before God in all the acceptability of Christ himself. If nearness to God be considered, we are thus as near to God as Christ is, and this always, for "in Christ Jesus ye who sometime were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Thus the believer, who was dead in sins, has been made alive, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, in whom the Father hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings. So that not a question remains unanswered as to our everlasting security and blessing.

(To be continued.)

A HOLY MOMENT.

THINK not on a holy *life*, but a holy *moment* as it flies. The first overwhelms the heart by its immensity; the other sometimes refreshes by its precious and present stimulus. Yet a succession of *holy moments* constitutes a *holy life.*

The Bible Herald 1877

SECURITY, COMMUNION, AND CONFIDENCE.

In the death of the Lord Jesus, our sins have been judged, and thus purged; by the resurrection of Christ, satan, death, and the grave have been triumphed over; and in Christ ascended we have eternal life, righteousness, acceptance, nearness to God, and all spiritual blessings; and His almighty power and perfect changeless love being to usward, we are kept for the inheritance in glory, and the inheritance is reserved for us. I need scarcely add that the Holy Ghost is given to make all this known unto us, and to unite us to Christ. Thus, not a fear nor a doubt can come in a soul that is stayed on the accomplished work of Christ, and God's testimony concerning it; and in this way we realise the truth of that scripture, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." How wondrous are the depths and heights of divine grace! Well might the apostle call it a "great salvation." Happy indeed are those who so grasp God's own declaration as to what has been accomplished for us by the death, and in the resurrection and ascension of Christ, as to "rejoice in the Lord always." Do we know, beloved fellow-believers, what it is thus to rest and triumph as accepted and blessed by divine unchanging love in Christ Jesus in heavenly places.

2. The precious instruction of *communion with the Lord* comes out immediately after the remarkable words already quoted—"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God" (v. 3); which shows that He was in spirit on the other side of death, when He addressed Himself to the mystic service of washing His

The Bible Herald 1877

disciples' feet. We expect therefore to gather instruction from it, as setting forth one of the glorious offices in which He is now actively engaged on our behalf while in the glory. That there is more in this gracious ministry than the mere act of lowliness—marvellous as it was in this respect—is perfectly clear, for Jesus said to Peter, "What I do *thou knowest not now*, but thou shalt know hereafter;" which remark would have been unnecessary if the act was only intended to set forth the Lord's deep humility. But the Holy Ghost having come down since this scene was enacted, to take of the things of Christ and shew unto us, this and many other of His gracious words and ways are now made known to us.

It is well to notice that the Lord is alone engaged in this service. No one else is allowed to help in it, as on some other occasions, nor was it needed. "He took a towel, girded himself, poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." Now the question is, what does this mean? Peter's ignorance and rash expressions are overruled to bring to us the Lord's own thoughts of this service. When Peter hastily exclaimed, "Thou shalt never wash my feet," it elicited from the Lord how indispensable this service was for communion, or having part with Him: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me" (v. 8). And when Peter again, with equal rashness and ignorance, said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (v. 9), it became the occasion for the blessed Lord to give a fuller elucidation of this service, by saying, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (v. 10); by which we understand that he who has been in a bath, washed all over, only needs afterward to have his feet washed, so as to cleanse away the defilement his feet had

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

gathered up in walking in a defiled and defiling place. He had been washed once, and was thus "clean every whit;" but now it is a question of removing the uncleanness which *the feet* had since contracted.

Peter's thoughts exactly meets many characters in the present day. They think, when conscious of having sinned since they believed in Christ and had peace with God, that they must come to the Saviour as sinners, as they did at first, and be again washed in the blood. But when a believer sins, it becomes a question between him and the Lord, not of salvation but of communion. Saved people, servants having part with their Master, is what we have here. Let us not fail to notice that the necessity for this service is that we who are servants of the Lord may have communion with our loving Master—have *part* with Him. "If I, your *Lord and Master*, have washed your feet." Having part with Him is surely not *salvation*, but *communion*.

A child of God hates sin, and desires, in obedience to the Lord's word, *not* to sin; yet, through failure, he does sin. This not only makes him sad, but communion with the Lord is interrupted. Of this he is sorrowfully conscious, and longs to have part again with his blessed Master. This bows him in self-judgment and confession, and earnest desire for restoration to happy communion. The question is, Does he want to be washed again in the blood? or, as some put it, Does he need a fresh application of the blood? We reply, Certainly not. Where does Scripture speak of a fresh application of the blood? It is not washing with blood here, but with water. The truth is, that every believer is by the one offering of Christ perfected for ever; he is a child of God, and is always before God, as we have seen, in all the nearness and acceptance of Christ Himself. But by the cleansing

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

with water we understand the application of the word, as Scripture says, "the washing of water by the word" (Eph. v. 26). The priests of the nation of Israel after having been at the *altar of burnt offering*, had to wash their hands and feet with water, at the *laver*, when they went into the tabernacle of the congregation. So we, having been once washed from our sins in the blood, need afterward that the defilement contracted in our *walk* should be cleansed, and the heart comforted, as this blessed service of the washing of the feet with water and wiping them with the towel seems to imply. This ministry of our Lord to us now by His Spirit may be either directly from Himself or through instrumentality, but in either case the word is so brought to bear upon our troubled souls as to restore us to communion with Himself. For our blessing we are assured that, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" How comforting, too, is that word, "If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged" (1 Cor. xi. 31). To walk with the Lord, to have part with Him in His thoughts, affections, ways, and service, is surely a wondrous favour; and our carrying about with us an evil nature, which has been judged on the Cross, need not hinder this. But if we give way to fleshly lusts, they war against the soul, grieve the Spirit, and we cannot enjoy part with Christ till we are restored. This feet-washing is surely a most gracious provision for us during this present time, and does it not sweetly assure us of our Lord's warm desire that we should be keeping company with Him? And is not this desire of the Lord further brought out by the expression that we should carry out this same restoring ministry to others? "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them" (v. 14-17). So that as He by the action of the word seeks to relieve and restore His failing and distressed servants, so should we in meekness seek to minister to our fellow-servants the word of God, with the hope of thus restoring and comforting them. Happy indeed are those who thus walk in the Master's steps!

3. CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD flows out of communion. Those who have trusted Him most and walked with Him most, know Him best; and those who are so practically near Him, and taken up with His word, as to drink in His thoughts, observe His ways, and enter into the secrets of His heart, are able to confide in Him in the time of adversity. Blessed are those who "hearken" to Him, for such shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from evil.

The sudden and unexpected announcement of the Lord, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, one of you shall betray me," must have filled them with surprise and distress. It was a most solemn moment. With indescribable sadness "they looked one upon another, doubting of whom He spake" (v. 21, 22). They seemed thunder-struck, and knew not what to do. Why did they not cry out to the Lord about it at once? There was one only who appeared to be up to the emergency. None but he could confide in the Lord about it, and at last Peter made a sign that he should ask who it should be of whom He spake; and the disciple who had been leaning on Jesus' breast, unhesitatingly, in all the confidence of love, "said unto Him, Lord who is it?"

Here I close these remarks, only suggesting whether

The Bible Herald 1877

we are not sweetly taught by this brief narrative that if we would be ready for emergency, and have confidence in the Lord in adversity, we must be dwelling in the Lord's love, and walking and serving according to His own mind, having part with Him. We know who said, "Abide in Me," "Learn of Me," "Sup with Me," "Follow Me," and "If any man serve Me, him will my Father honour." May the Lord Himself so truly engage our hearts, that—

"With His beauty occupied,
We elsewhere none may see."

H. H. S.

PERFECTED WORSHIPPERS.

Read Heb. ix.

THE saints are always looked at as worshippers—"*Him that did the service*," or in other words, *him that worshipped.* They came to present themselves before God. This is the great point which the apostle takes up in this epistle.

It is *this side* he takes of the law and priesthood: not the commandments, but the coming before God as worshippers. The commandments brought out failure, as the sacrifices whereby Israel approached to God referred to it. Though God, dwelling among the children of Israel, was to be worshipped, there was a need of the repetition of the sacrifices, showing sin was not put away, and that they could not make them that did the service perfect.

There are two things here to be considered. (1.) *The repetition of the sacrifices* demonstrated that sin was

The Bible Herald 1877

there uncleansed. (2.) *Worship* always detects the real *condition* of the worshippers.

This is true of the community of saints or an individual. Nothing shows more clearly a man's state than his prayers. A person may have what is called "a gift of prayer"—great fluency of words; but his state is shown by the way he dwells on the truth of the gospel, whether he is at *home* with God, whether he is in a spiritual state or not. I say this is true of individuals as well as of saints brought together. A person may fancy that he has not been in God's presence, also that he does not find an answer to his prayers, whilst, in fact, the very presence of God detects the state of the heart as carnal, and God meets them in their prayers, showing such what their true state is.

Another most important truth is, that when our worship is spoken of, it is as men brought into God's presence, not out of it, but in it. If you bring a man to God you bring out the condition of his conscience. Salvation and the knowledge of it cannot be separated. When faith is really working, he cannot say, "I know the value of the blood of Christ, but have no peace." No man has had the knowledge of the blood given to him, but he is brought to God, for God is not telling fables, when he tells us that "thereby we draw nigh to Him." I know not, it is true, the value of the blood as He knows it; but I know that "thereby I come to God." What is God seeking but worshippers—such as worship Him in spirit and in truth (John iv.) A person dreads God's presence that has not found peace; but when the value of Christ's blood is known there is really true peace with God.

Another blessed truth contemplated in this chapter is bringing man into God's presence with perfectness in his conscience. The Word may be working on a man's

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

heart, drawing him to the Lord, but there is no actual going into God's presence now but by going into the holiest. It was not so with the Jew ; the vail was then standing, but the vail is now rent from the top to the bottom, and it can never be put up again. Before, the Jew could draw nigh but not see nor be in presence of the glory, but this cannot be now ; a person coming must be purged clean by the blood of the Lamb. For we walk in the light as God is in the light, if we are with Him at all. *Here* we get the character of the knowledge of God. He could not reveal Himself to hide Himself again. He must have purged the conscience of the man *absolutely*. He is made perfect as concerns the conscience. Whenever, as approaching God, we get out of the condition of a purified worshipper, we are, unwittingly, perhaps, rejecting the gospel ; we are quitting the only sacrifice, and there is no more sacrifice for sin. The *holiness* of the position of the worshipper and the settled *peace* of his conscience go together,—secured together in this one sacrifice. I do not say if our walk is wrong and we slip, God may not chasten us, but the gospel finds no further remedy for the conscience of sins as regards guilt. It is said "If we hold fast the confidence steadfast to the end," also "there is no more sacrifice for sin." If we get out of the character of a purged conscience, we are giving up the only foundation, for we know Christ cannot die over again.

The more we seek to know and to enjoy this privilege, to be standing in the presence of God, the more we shall be able te detect our sinfulness, our selfishness, our self-confidence, our self-importance, our self-righteousness, those subtle foes ; for nothing sticks so closely to us as ourselves ; and here is growth in Christian experience and in reverence, so to be brought out of ourselves and

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

separated to God; for *Christ will eclipse self.* We may stumble in our walk, but there are *no degrees of standing before God.*

If faith lays hold on Christ's blood, we can refer to our sins, without having them on our conscience, but not without shame and horror. Paul could tell Jesus of sins that made him "not meet to be called an apostle." He could tell them all to Jesus in the fullest confidence of love. He could say, "I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee." Peter could tell men of sins as ruining them which he had committed, not with any allowance for the sin (he knew the horror of sin), but with *perfect peace of conscience,* because he had been washed once and for ever.

I never connect my walk with the blood of Christ in *His presence* for my acceptance. There is nothing about sin *there.* This I know when I have learned fully His holiness and my total emptiness. In my own thoughts I may be connecting my walk with my acceptance, and then I can have no peace, but in the presence of God I cannot do this. If I were always consciously there, I could not have a doubt of my acceptance.

Those worshippers who had to offer the sacrifices year by year continually, had not an abidingly cleansed conscience; but the work which enables me to come into the presence of God is an accomplished *fact* to be believed in. In analogy to the high-priest taking blood into the Holiest,—Jesus Christ, by the power of the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself to God, and there my soul rests. Christ has offered Himself *once* and on that *must I depend;* it is accomplished! My soul rests by faith on *that which is already done.* I present this sacrifice: that is communion. I may speak of this in praise, in communion with God, but no longer as having sin to be atoned for.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

At the close of this chapter it is written, "Christ appears in the presence of God *for us.*" He is always in the holy place presenting the blood. He stands there as the representative of His people. I do not present the blood, but He appears there, and that is my acceptance—my never-varying position. If I go to worship God, it must be in the living power of Christ. Christ never moves; He is always there. In the strength of that we go. We cannot repeat the shedding of blood over and over again; that would be fresh suffering. If sin is imputed to me, it must be laid on some one, and Christ must suffer again. But where do you find that sin must be imputed again, and there must be a fresh sacrifice of Christ?

If there is anything that hinders the access of a Christian to God, there must be a fresh sacrifice; but we *know* that "Christ appears in the presence of God for us"—that "now *once,* in the end of the world, He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"—the end of the world morally at least it was, for all God's moral dealings have been wound up. There has not been a single element in man that has not been brought out, and since man could not be mended, God brought in a new thing, even the sacrifice of Him upon whom His heart rested, the Son of His love. In every condition man has been tried—before the law, in giving the law, and then by His Son; as Christ said, "If I had not done among them the works which none ever did, they had not had sin, but *now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.*"

He long continued His long suffering, but now He must "put away *sin*" or the *sinner*, and "*He dies to put away sin,*" for the saving of the sinner, at the winding-up of the ages.

Supposing you had run riot with the antediluvians,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

or had built Babel, or in despite of God, had broken His law, or had even crucified the Son of God, all is put away in the blood of Christ for the believer, and man is brought in as a worshipper, with "no more conscience of sins." All that requires death and judgment has been met; man's natural appointment is death and judgment. Death ends the man here, and then comes the judgment. Up to death, man may go on without God, but when death has set his seal to his doom, God brings him into judgment for all these things. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;" all the sins due to the believer, and all the judgment, have been borne by Him; and he is at liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. But is the believer not to see Christ? Is Christ never to return since He comes no more as a sacrifice? Yes! He is to come, and I am *looking for Him*, not as coming in judgment, but as the One who has borne my sins. He comes "without sin." He first came about sin, and, though perfectly holy, was, in perfect love and grace, "made sin for us." "He appears the second time without sin unto salvation;" nothing to do with sin, that being already settled, having had it before by His grace imputed to Him, He comes to the saints for their full blessedness and entrance into glory.

Here is the contrast between man's natural portion and the gift of God—the sinner's portion, *death* and *judgment*; the saints portion, the sins borne and *salvation* and *glory*. Faith looks to Christ, and Christ only; and there is for me no imputation of sin—none at all. God considers this not as a theory, but as a real thing to bring us into His presence; and there is not a more complete evidence of our sin being "*put away*," than our being able to judge ourselves, and to use the lanuage of Psalm cxxxix., "Search me, O God, and try me," thus

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

willing to have purged out all that hinders communion, and therefore pray to be searched, because there is nothing in the conscience, being *absolutely* perfect in conscience in God's presence. It would be madness for a man to be asking to be searched thoroughly, if he had not a purged conscience; but the saint can do this; and there is no such blessed evidence that the conscience is cleansed, as a thorough hatred of sin, and true desire that God may search.

Let us remember that the blood of Christ brings us into the presence of a holy God, and there we can look at ourselves as settled, and press after conformity to His will. There will be "reverence and godly fear," for a purged conscience is a tender conscience, a conscience supple to the will of God.

May we enjoy these two things in their power—*a conscience perfected for ever by the blood of Christ*, and *God thus bringing us in to be worshippers in His presence.—MS. Notes.*

REDEMPTION, LIBERTY, AND GLORY.

Read Deut. xvi. 1-18.

THE great purpose of God is to gather a people around Himself for blessing.

These feasts are the witness of this. They had all to go up to a certain place three times in the year, but the object was that, as God's people, they might be around Himself for blessing. God is, so to speak, sufficient for Himself. He needs nothing else to make Him happy; but he wishes to make others taste of His happiness and

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

blessedness. At the tabernacle or temple this was the thing declared.

By turning to Exod. xxix. 45, 46, we see the reason why He made them set up the tabernacle—"*That I may dwell among them.*" They were saved when the Egyptians were slain; they were emancipated from Egypt when Pharaoh and his army perished. But what consummated their happiness was, that they had God to dwell amongst them, and be their God. This the Church will fully enjoy in the coming glory. Now we know it in spirit and by faith. God's children are redeemed that they may gather around Him, and that He may make them happy in connexion with Himself.

These three feasts here mentioned have each a different character which applies to the varied experience of our souls. They mark the three great paths in our journey.

They are, 1st, *The Passover*; 2dly, *The Feast of first-fruits*; and 3rdly, *Tabernacles.*

The feast of tabernacles has never yet had any antitype. The other two have. Christ slain on the cross for us answers to the passover. The resurrection of Christ, the first of first-fruits, and day of Pentecost answer to the feast of first-fruits. Israel was to keep the feast of tabernacles in the land, but to find their rest it will have its great celebration in the coming age. The Church will keep it in glory, and the Holy Ghost now gives our souls the savour and joy of that day of Sabbatic rest and eternal glory. In all these feasts the one great circumstance was, they had to go to God; and so is it now with us, for whether it be the redemption of Christ, or the Holy Ghost, or glory, all must take our souls to God. We now turn to look at the specific character of each feast.

1st, THE PASSOVER.—The first thought is what we are brought *from*, not what we are brought to. So long as

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

we look at Christ's death as merely saving us *from destruction*, it will be only like Lot escaping for his life. It is no doubt a great thing to see ourselves snatched from hell and destruction, and in the sense of this, though with awakened confidence in God's love, we must first come, but this is not the great end of God in saving us. We are to pass on to know His love, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and this leads the soul into *communion*. We can never lose sight of the value of the blood. This is impossible; but I may look at the blood either with the eyes of God, as it were, or with the eyes of man. When it is the latter, I view it with the sense of *mere need*; then this need being satisfied, I may just rest in what I have got, without much communion with God about its value. Mere *need* was the first thing with the Jew in Egypt. In the darkness and dead of night the angel was doing his awful work of destruction, and the sprinkled blood pleaded for him.

In this state he was led out of Egypt. "The Lord brought thee out *by night*." The light of day had not yet broken upon him, but still he was safe. *Man's need* being the character of this feast, it is not characterised by communion, the Jew who kept the passover turned in the morning and went to his tent.

But this feast was also to be kept "*with unleavened bread and bitter herbs*." As cleansed by the blood, they were to put away all uncleanness from their dwellings. To be holy, we must mortify the flesh and deny its cravings, and holines has the character of an obligation, a necessity; and so it is. As a mere necessity it is not pleasant.

Another thing in this feast is that *they knew God only in the character of a Judge*. Of course His own love had directed them to the blood, but still the character in

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

which He is seen is that of a Judge. The blood then stands between them and God. They are sheltered by it; He passes over them.

So is it when we first look at the cross. We see God as a Judge executing the sentence on the head of Christ. This surely teaches us that we are not to be destroyed. This is a great thing, but it is not the *full joy* of the Christian. To keep God out is not our full blessing. The first thing that brings the soul to Christ is its need. We may know very little about Him, but we know none but Christ can save us. At first we cannot look at Him as a precious object to discover and delight in its properties, but as a starving man would look at food which his hunger forces him to eat.

2. First-Fruits Feast.—This feast is the consequence of the former. The resurrection of Jesus follows on, and in one sense results from, His death on the Cross. By this the soul gets into its true place—it gets into *liberty*. This is intimately connected with the presence of the Holy Ghost. By this the soul is set at liberty (see 2 Cor. iii. 17; Gal. iv. 1-7; Eph. i. 13, 14).

Here, too, for we enjoy this by the Holy Ghost, the soul is led out into thanksgiving and praise, and beyond its own wants to think of and minister to the wants of those around. The soul now walks in a large place; they are here in the presence of God. No question now about sin. They are *out from* Pharaoh and *in with* God.

They keep the feast with a tribute of a free-will offering. Love constrains: the fatherless, the widow, and all have their portion here. They were all made happy by the outgoings of this full joy, which God had diffused around Himself and His people.

This has its antitype in the Church, and is displayed in Acts ii. 42-47: "And they continued steadfastly in the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to them daily such as should be saved." Along with "gladness and singleness of heart, praising God," the tribute of a free-will offering, "they had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all as every man had need." "The love of Christ constraineth us," is the great motive for Christian liberality and devotedness. This is based upon redemption, but effected by the Holy Ghost. But in the height of all this joy they would never forget that they had been in Egypt (see ver. 12.) If we can minister to others we must do it in the remembrance that we had been in Egypt, and that God has brought us out of it.

The next thing is watchfulness. Joy in the saint often leads to weakness—it should always lead to worship. But diligent obedience is the fruit of the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost, as well as praise, and love to others. Here joy was according as they were blessed.

3d. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.—This takes us on beyond the Holy Ghost's presence in the Church to the day of glory. Then there is no watchfulness, no doing—God has blessed them in all the works of their hands; therefore, they were to rejoice in this feast; this is the moment the Church looks for, it cannot rest short of this.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

It has joy and peace as its present portion, but it looks for more, and all its expectations shall be satisfied, for at last we shall find ourselves in glory. God will reap his harvest, and when He gathers in all His corn and wine, then there will be full and eternal joy. But we know the things that are freely granted us of God now. We may note these three things :—

1st, *The soul is redeemed*; 2d, *It has full liberty*; 3d, *It looks out for that full rest in glory that is coming.*

The more I know of God, the more joy I'll find in Him, and the less I'll be able to find in the world. We see this in our blessed Master, and we will be like Him. God will bring in a rest and a glory worthy of the blesser. It is Himself He has to satisfy, and in the end everything will fully answer to His own boundless desires. In conclusion, I would ask, beloved friends, where are our hearts *now?* Can I say not only that I am brought out of Egypt, but have also passed into the joy of the feast of first-fruits, and in what measure; and, besides, that I am now daily looking out for all that glory that is fast approaching!

What God looks forward to is to have us around Himself, not merely saved, but in His own house; just like the prodigal's father—he makes a feast, and says, "Let us be merry," when he gets his poor lost son home. There is an hour coming when there will be nothing but festal joy in our Father's house. May we all long more for it. Then will be the true feast of tabernacles for us while the world itself will have rest in that day. —*M.S. Notes of a Lecture.*

The Bible Herald 1877

THE PASSOVER IN EGYPT AND IN CANAAN.

I DESIRE for a little to compare the PASSOVER as celebrated in Egypt with the PASSOVER celebrated in the land of Canaan, and the practical condition of the soul indicated in the two.

The passover in Egypt was celebrated at the moment of deliverance. They were slaves there under Pharaoh. It was bringing before them their deliverance from slavery, as the Cross shows that of man from Satan—showing that God is stronger than the adversary; in its spirit, it was a matter of *deliverance.*

Now mark here the character God has for Israel. No doubt, He is a Saviour, but especially (whatever was going on), as one who was going to smite in judgment. If the blood was not there, His holiness must be avenged of their sin. If God is not to judge sin, there is no need of the gospel. Blessed to be *within* when destruction is abroad! The storm may gather; there may be the scourge of God's judgment; but *the blood* being upon His own, even in the presence of judgment, they are secured from it.

The character of this passover then was deliverance from the oppressor. They were secured from destruction, and were about to haste away from slavery. They were to eat unleavened bread, not the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, but the bread of affliction, the character and nature of their passover was, they were going out *in haste,* escaping from sin, judgment, oppression, bondage. (Exod. xii. 33, 34, 39.)

We begin to know the *power* of God when the soul is escaping from Egypt. In Egypt there was no conscious-

The Bible Herald 1877

ness of God being for men—only *not against* them—till they came to the Red Sea. There is in the passover no doubt this character very distinctly shown of the work of Christ, that it secures the soul from God's judgment, and preventing God coming near to slay us; but it is a different thing to be able to say, God has saved me, and in the power of His love, He has adopted me as His child. When I come to resurrection, I find the whole energy of God's power to deliver me out of death, and from the terrors of the enemy.

Israel had passed through the wilderness without keeping the passover, excepting once at Sin; they could not keep it because they were not circumcised (v. 45). No doubt it was their own fault. When they were come to the land, Joshua led them across. The passover *in the land, in Canaan,* was a remembrance of the efficacy of the death of Christ, as the ground-work of their deliverance and introduction of the believer into his own place before God. He goes where the work of Christ brings him. Having passed Jordan, death and resurrection in spirit with Jesus, we get into a new state and experience. Beloved, that is our position as thus in the land. God has *made* you sit there in spirit; He does not invite you to do so. This does not alter the fact that we have also our journeys to perform—as in fact in the wilderness. Faith thinks and judges with God. Whatever it meets, it sees it as God sees it. Israel saw Goliath as a giant; David saw him an uncircumcised Philistine. See also Jonathan. (1 Samuel xiv. 6.) Faith sees thus, according to the revelation of God in His sight. God having set Christ at His own right hand in heavenly places, and having by His Spirit united us to Him, He has made us sit there also. You will find in this very Epistle to the Ephesians an account of our warfare. (Eph. vi. 2.)

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

May God make this sink deeply into our hearts! God has made us in His presence what would satisfy His love. My love could not be satisfied in my child, if he was in difficulty and sorrow in my presence; and God in His holy will has chosen us "*that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love*" (Eph. i. 4).

The moment Israel crossed the Jordan they were in Canaan, and regarded themselves as possessors of it. Joshua acted on this at Ai, though he had fought but a single battle: "and the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide; and as soon as the sun was down Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down." Why? Because the land was holy; it was God's land, and must not be polluted. So when we have obtained a *title* to our estate, we have a right to deal with all as ours.

The next place which they came to from Jordan was GILGAL. The reproach of Egypt had not been rolled away; they were not circumcised. Here the reproach of Egypt was abolished. Circumcision as regards the saint does not refer to the position in which we are in Christ, but to the application by the Spirit of God of the truth of God, we having died in Christ to the mortification of all that is of the flesh; and this must be before we can sit and eat our passover in the land in peace. We cannot enjoy our blessings till "circumcision" comes in,—till we come to Gilgal. When God has set us in heavenly places, He then comes by the power of the Spirit and writes life on us; but not on the flesh, on it *death*. "Ye are *dead* and *your life* is hid with Christ in God." All upon which death has not been written, in principle, is the reproach of Egypt; for it belongs to the condition out of which we have been called, and gives us the consciousness of Egypt, not of Canaan. Every evil habit that has not been repressed is the reproach of Egypt.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

This is a different thing to being "dead" as a sinner in "trespasses and sins." We have died to sin, and mortify all that is of it practically. When the soul is dead in sins, the poor awakened sinner does not know what to do. God says, "I will deliver you, I will make you come out of Egypt." When this has been done, we escape from satan as from a serpent.

But there is another thing needful for the peaceful enjoyment of heavenly things,—the operation of the Spirit of God upon all that is mere *nature*.

Now, just one word as to the different character of eating the passover in Canaan. Escape from *sin* and *judgment* we have nothing to do with here: nothing to do with the passover in Egypt, which represented these. In the passover in Canaan we have the precious, sweet recollection, that though we were in bondage, there is now no more of that. We are in blessed, peaceful quiet *in the land* (we shall have conflict of course); but God has brought us in here in grace and power to eat the unleavened bread, not of escape from sin but of sincerity and truth; and to eat "the old corn"—the fruit of the land. We say now "To what a place are we brought!" not "From what a fearful place and evil we are saved!" The reproach of Egypt is rolled away. Holiness of soul is the fruit of our own land; we may eat and enjoy it. The "old man" has been annulled—death written on nature and the flesh; and we are made partakers of a "new nature." Our "unleavened bread" now is the growth of the land: we live on "the corn of the land." We sit down at the Lord's table, delivered long ago—perfectly in peace. Not that we have no conflicts; but God has opened a passage for us, brought us into His presence, and put us in His possession, and shut the door; and we are now sat down in the land to which God has

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

brought us to eat the fruit of it. If we rise to the conflict, God goes before us. If we have known the sentence of death in ourselves (as 2 Cor. i. 9); it is a very hard lesson to learn; but it must be so before we can eat the old corn of the land; if "the reproach of Egypt" is "rolled away," if we have got to GILGAL, we can sit down in heavenly places. Our conflict will be our *practically* taking possession of the Lord's Land. The camp was always at Gilgal; there the circumcision must be. If there is not subduing of the flesh, there will be no continued conquest. But whatever our victory may be, our camp must be at Gilgal. In the secret energy of God's Spirit, setting nature and flesh aside, we must sit down and eat of the fruit of the land.

Beloved, can you say this holiness and this experience are yours? Are you feeding on "the old corn of the land?" Have you understood God has put you there? There are not two sorts of Christians; there are not two *positions* for us as Christians; there may be two sorts of *states*, but all *God's saints* are set down in Christ in heavenly places.

Beloved, can you say you are there, and eating the fruit of that land which He has given you? Do not say I am in conflict. Joshua had not a single battle fought when he and the Israel of God celebrated the passover in the land; but he could peacefully rest in the possession of the land.

The Lord give us to understand He has brought us there! Do not be alarmed if you find God beginning to write "the sentence of death" on "the flesh;" it must be so, or you will not have the abiding consciousness of the peace of God in your hearts. It is not the heart that keeps God's peace, but His peace that keeps our hearts in the conflict. Is the ear ruffled by the storm, Jesus has

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

braved it. He has entered the land in peace. When we are realising our position in heavenly places, we celebrate the passover, feeding on it, enjoying and delighting in God's love.—*MS. Notes.*

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THE love of God is known fully by us in that which has been wrought for us.

The death of Jesus has closed the door against sin being imputed to us. Everything inconsistent in us would be sin on our conscience, if the Holy Ghost had not revealed to us what Jesus, sitting at the right hand of God, has done for us. But as to communion, Christ being our righteousness and the propitiation for our sins, as our advocate with the Father is occupied with our sin, which never reaches God as guilt. Whatever God sees inconsistent in us, the Spirit, consequently, through the advocacy of Jesus, reveals to us.

Believers are not only justified, but being justified, they are enabled to have respect unto the recompense of the reward. Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own work. Of course, if this were in the slightest degree to be mixed with the ground of our salvation, it would be ruinous. We are quickened consequently on Jesus being on the Throne of God; our righteousness, therefore, is already wrought. Our standing before God is in Divine righteousness; consequently, that matter is for ever settled. Now, righteousness is only known on the Throne of God; the fruits of it are found here.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

St. Paul in writing to the Philippians prays that he may know Him, that he may be found in Him, "if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Believers are called by glory and virtue; the energy of the Spirit of God works in them according to glory. And how? Better for us if, by any means, dear friends, by any sacrifice, by any death to the flesh. We are saved by hope; because of the energy of the divine life we crave after glory which we have not, even for that time when the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

But, dear brethren, is it the hope of reward that sets me to work? No, it is written, "the love of Christ constraineth us." But what is it which encourages me in the trouble and trial? It is the hope which is set before us; thus it was with Jesus in His trying life. He, of course, was not seeking after righteousness, but it is said, "for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross and despised the shame."

We have the ascertainment of righteousness to begin with. Jesus, of course, had it in unity with the Father; Jesus' sitting at the right hand of God causes us, through the Spirit, to know this righteousness. Having this confidence, there is not one thing to accuse me of. In the simplicity of the new man, the believer seeks after fresh acquirements, fresh knowledge of Jesus. When the flesh comes in, it always hinders this, and dims and darkens our faith; for is there any association between glory and sin, which the flesh always works in? The Lord supply that energy of the Spirit which discovers sin to us! Where this is felt and departed from, there is no need of the Father's chastening, but even when we are chastened, we are judged of the Lord, that we should not be con-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

demned with the world. But, dear brethren, remember the Father is more intolerant of evil in His children than anywhere else; it is totally unsuitable to that glory which is their portion, and therefore our Lord says, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman . . . every branch in me that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. In this is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." The prodigal son is not brought in all his rags into the father's house,he is first clothed in the best robe. But still there is discipline; though the believer is clothed and complete in Christ, there is the Father's chastening to bring the soul into deeper acquaintance with Jesus . . .

"These things write I unto you, that ye *sin not; but* if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," &c. If we do sin (although it is our privilege not), the propitiation remains in all its efficacy for us. And the righteous one, Jesus Christ, who is our righteousness before God, is ever at His right hand. Thus as priest, Jesus continually maintains our cause before the Father, and as advocate ministers to us the supply of the Spirit, to show us what sin is. We see the same character of sin in ourselves, in spite of our growth in knowledge, as in our unrenewed state; and this shows us the irremediable nature of sin, and especially when we see sin mixing itself with our most holy things. For instance, suppose the spirit of self-applause comes in when I am speaking of the love of Jesus in giving Himself for us, I thus come to have a much deeper sense of the entire evil of my nature than I ever had before, my selfishness being brought into contrast with the amazing self-sacrificing love of Christ. Now I am to learn this through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Dear friends, if I were speaking to you as doubting your

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

righteousness (in Jesus), I should be wrong at the very foundation, but that being for ever complete, I expect from you to walk worthy of God who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory. Why do I expect this from you? Just because He has called you to have fellowship with Himself and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. What has the Lord called us for? Just to be witnesses of "*the fruits of righteousness* which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God," to be the exhibition of God's triumph of good over evil, just as in the fall of man evil triumphed over good. We need never be surprised to find evil in the heart; but whenever you do so, dear friends, judge it, bring it into the light of God's holiness; don't make light of it.

When the righteousness of the believer is established in Jesus, the Father's chastening begins. Where there is not the continual exercise of a conscience void of offence before God, the Father certainly will take cognisance of it, because we are called into glory. We should have growing revelations of the Father; we are to recognise the flesh as dead, to seek in the energy of God's Spirit received through the exaltation of Jesus, daily growing acquaintance with Him, that so we may be able to judge the old man.

Be entreated then, dear brethren, to use all diligence, if you would live blessedly, in communion with the Lord. If you would die (if it pleased Him that you should die) with the brightness of God's countenance on you, seek in everything to live in fellowship of the Spirit with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, which is the portion of His children. May we follow after holiness, seek after nothing else, knowing that we are called to walk worthy of Him who hath called us to His kingdom and glory.—*MS. Notes.*

The Bible Herald 1877

IT IS HIMSELF WHO IS COMING.

THE Lord brings us back from the prophetic testimony to Himself—"I Jesus have sent mine angel,"—"I am the root and offspring of David, [this is in connexion with His being source of promise and heir of it as King in Zion —'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies,'] and the bright and morning star" (Rev. xxii. 16).

But the moment He presents Himself as the bright and morning star, "the Spirit and the bride say, '*Come*;'" the Holy Ghost in the Church says, "*Come.*" This response is what is connected with *Himself*; the mention of Himself attracts and awakens the answer of the Spirit; this is the character in which the Church herself has to say to His coming. God, in the love of His own heart, has associated the Church with Jesus, and the very mention of His name awakens the cry, "Come!" for it touches a chord which gives an immediate response; and, therefore, He does not say here, "Behold, I come quickly." The question here is not *when* He will come, but that it is *Himself* that is coming. He does not speak of His *coming*—blessed though that thought is—but He reveals *Himself*; and this it is that awakens the response of the heart, by the power of the Holy Ghost. We are *for Himself*, and shall be *with Himself*—it cannot be anything short of this, for He calls us "His body."

What a glorious place this is! Not merely *wonderful*, but glorious—identification with the Christ of God! No explanation of prophetic Scripture, however nice and true it may be, however useful as a solemn warning as regards this world, can ever take the place in the soul that is taught of God, of knowing its living union with a coming Jesus, of the present waiting for Himself.

The Bible Herald 1877

No mere explanation of His coming as a doctrine is the proper hope of the saint. That hope is not prophecy; it is the blessed and sanctifying expectancy of a soul that knows Jesus, and waits to see and be with Himself.

The bride alone hears the voice of the Bridegroom, which at once calls out the expression of her desire of His coming. To this He responds, assuring her of it, and then the revelation closes, leaving this as her own expectation, whatever he may have previously communicated to her concerning the judgment of this world, to which she does not belong. The Lord Jesus is represented as descending Himself, and coming and taking His bride to be with Him. Then, when the world is saying, "Peace and safety," sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape.

"WATCHING FOR THE MORNING."

BRIGHT, bright home! beyond the skies,
Where Jesus is enthroned in glory,
Thy beauty gleams before mine eyes,
Thy portals glisten now before me,
Bright, bright home!

Dark, dark world! I would not stay
Amid thy painted scenes of splendour;
I hasten toward the golden day,
Thy tinsel treasure I surrender,
Dark, dark world!

Sweet, sweet dawn! so fair and near!
Before the eastern skies are glowing,
I see the Morning Star appear,
The mountain-tops in silver showing
Sweet, sweet dawn!

Come, Lord, come! we wait for Thee,
We listen still for Thy returning;
Thy loveliness we long to see,
For Thee the lamp of hope is burning!
Come, Lord, come!

The Bible Herald 1877

"THE FATHER OF MERCIES."

THE dealings of the blessed God in this world of ours have more simplicity of purpose than we imagine. We have to look at God passing from one dispensation to another—yet in all, we are taught that there is but one purpose before Him, and that is, to manifest Himself in richest blessings, in love and mercy to poor sinners, unto His own eternal glory.

When the Saviour commented on all that had gone before His ministry, He said—"My Father worketh hitherto." There we are let into the secret of the purpose of God. He came forth in the law to test what was in us; yet "*our Father*" had a deeper purpose than that—one with which His heart mixed itself. Mount Sinai was never the place of the *Father's* ministry; Moses and the angels might work in Sinai; but deeper than all, "*my Father*" wrought, said Jesus. Though a little hid under a large and more public thing—yet the mind of Christ coming to apply itself to all that had gone on before, He said, "My Father worketh hitherto." This lets the soul into this—that God from the beginning had been working in *grace*. The operation of the *Father* is another mode of expressing God working in grace. Here we get the unity of the divine design, from the beginning to the end, to be this—to bring Himself out to us poor sinners as "the Father of mercies." Whether He be manifested to us as destined for earthly or heavenly glory, it is still as "the Father of mercies" to poor broken-hearted sinners.

What is the Gospel of St. John up to chap. x? A trial whether man had learnt that secret—that the *Father* had been working hitherto. In chap. viii. we have the

The Bible Herald 1877

Lord's mind brought out in contrast with the Jew on that point—"If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also." Why did they not receive Jesus? Because they had not been seeing the Father "working hitherto" —not learning God as poor broken-hearted sinners—not learning Him as the *Father*. If we do not learn Him in this character, we shall never learn Him aright.

What is the glory which passes before us in that Gospel? "The glory of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth." This Gospel of John is the passing of *that* glory across this ruined world of ours; but no eye of the children of men could discern it, save the eye of poor convicted sinners.

There are many signs of this throughout that Gospel. It may shine in the world—may pass from scene to scene, but it is the eye of the poor conscious sinner, and of none else, that meets it; it is the conscious sinner alone that understands it, that is gladdened by it, and falls into the train of it. Thus when John says (chap. i.) "Behold the LAMB OF GOD!" Andrew follows Jesus in that character, and the door of Jesus is opened to him. He had followed Jesus as the LAMB OF GOD—he had gone after the "glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," and if any follow Jesus as such, His door shall be open to them. Just follow Jesus as the "LAMB OF GOD," and He opens His house, His heart, His glory. All opens to us at once. Nicodemus comes not so (chap. iii.), and he has to go back to the brazen serpent, and there get the faculty to apprehend the glory of the Father, and the things of the kingdom.

In chap. iv. the poor Samaritans receive Him, and He goes and dwells with them for two days. In that village "the glory of the only begotten of the Father" could unbosom itself, because He was received in character.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Where there was an eye that had learnt Jesus as the Friend of sinners, there the glory could go. This is the way to receive Him in character, and all that Jesus wants is to be thus received. We see the opposite to this in chap. ii., where He says, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" He was shining in "the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" and if His own mother could not see Him *in that glory*, He had nought to do even with her.

So in chap. vii. His brethren are distanced from Him, for they looked at Him in a glory that suited the world—but in the next chapter, and again in chap. ix., a convicted adulteress and a poor outcast, excommunicated one, are brought and kept near Him, for they learnt Him in that glory which met their necessities as poor sinners.

Thus is it through these chapters. And it is comforting to our souls to keep the path of this glory before us. And in chap. x. we see this blessed Son of the Father, as the Shepherd full of grace in the midst of His flock—His *flock of poor, convicted, believing, accepted sinners.* And after all this, we see this same one looking upward to the Father's house. For in chap. xiv. this glory of the only begotten of the Father, that had been thus shining down here to poor sinners for a while, is going again to its place; and Jesus says, "In my Father's house are many mansions—I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and *receive you unto myself;* that where I am, there ye may be also." I rest on this promise of Jesus. When he comes again, He will receive me unto Himself. Is there not *intimacy* here? It is the first hope to rest on the sinner's soul. He is gone to the Father's house until all are gathered; when everything is ready He will come out to receive the children unto Himself—He "will come again to receive"

The Bible Herald 1877

these poor redeemed sinners UNTO HIMSELF—to meet them in the air, and then they will all go together to the FATHER'S HOUSE. This is the immediate hope, beloved, of POOR SINNERS such as us!

This, then, is the trial in John. It is the application of "the glory of the only begotten of the Father" to the eyes and consciences of men, to see if they would receive Him in that character.

SORROWS AND TRIUMPHS.

THERE is no comfort like the thought that Jesus has entered into all our sorrows. This is the very way God has met the need, and want, and wretchedness of our nature. Supposing that Adam had never fallen, we could not speak of God with the comfort that we now can, since He has come in sympathy to us, through the means of the incarnation of our blessed Lord. The Lord Jesus having become a man is the source of all comfort. The Lord has entered into all the depths of sorrow, so as to give us all the depth of comfort, in order that we may know that God knows the very secret of our case. He lets us see the feeling of Jesus in entering into it, and in the expression of His thoughts and feelings whilst in this place; so we come to see how He entered into all our sorrows. And this is the channel for all His love to flow into our souls.

The book of Psalms brings before us Christ entering into the depth of our circumstances, and making them His own, saying, "Mine iniquities have taken such hold of me, that I am not able to look up." Some of His sorrows arose from His holiness. "Mine eyes gush out," &c. All the depth of sorrow was in Jesus. His putting

The Bible Herald 1877

Himself in this place makes us understand the depth of His love towards us. Jesus brings the capacity of God to feel in the circumstances of man that were to be felt about. His feelings were therefore those of holy sorrow. If we see any expression of sorrow in the saints, it is only the expression of the Spirit of Jesus in them.

We find some passages in the New Testament showing what was passing in the mind of our blessed Lord, such as His conflict in the garden of Gethsemane, and when upbraiding the cities in which His mighty works were done. We then see what the Lord felt, the outbreaking of that which was pressing on our Lord's soul. But, ordinarily, in the Gospels, while glimpses often break through the veil, it is the grace and perfectness of Jesus in the midst of, and in spite of, His sufferings that is shown—the perfect grace of the Man; and all the scorn and sorrow which was heaped upon Him we see only made His love shine the brighter. But the Psalms bring out what was passing *within*. The individual soul often finds comfort in the Psalms, in a measure in having something of the same feeling; and God can look at these very expressions of sorrow with delight, even though they are often mixed with unbelief, though they may be groanings that cannot be uttered. He that searcheth the hearts knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God; but we must look at them in Jesus to look at them aright, to get all the comfort of them. It is an evil thing to be always groaning, but it is a blessed thing to know that Jesus groaned. Those who are weary and heavy-laden in a world of misery are in circumstances to understand the blessedness of Jesus feeling with them.

The perception of Jesus being the Son of God in these sufferings is shown, in Matt. xi. 25, to be, by the grace of

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

God, revealing these things to our souls. Jesus having come into this world of sorrow, and having found no rest in it, says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." "If there were any rest here I should have found it; if there had been any spark of love to be found in man's heart. But there is not, therefore you must come and bow; but know the sympathy, too, of Him who bowed first." Jesus says—"I sought the Lord and He heard me," &c.; the Spirit takes it up—"This poor man cried," &c. God does not say, "Stay in sorrow till I bring you into a condition where there is no sorrow," by and bye, but comes down into the sorrow; but His love is found where the want of it is so much felt.

There was in Jerusalem the concentration of all wickedness—there was Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the one, so to speak, next to our blessed Lord—Judas, just the type of Antichrist. Amidst all the sin and sorrow of the world—sin, but sin when God had taken all the pains outwardly to bring man out of it, when "God looked down from heaven to see if there were any that would understand," &c.—where should He look if not to that nation whom He had chosen for *His own*? "a nation so great who hath God so nigh," &c. Where expect anything good but here?

But when He came there was no man—when He called there was none to answer. The place where the Lord Jesus was, as among these, was a place of special grief, for all the pains that God had taken with His special people only brought home to the Lord the perfectness of the enmity of His creatures towards Him. "What could I have done more to my vineyard that I have not done!" &c.

The Lord's name, too, was in Jerusalem, and the place

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

where His name was He saw trodden down by the Gentiles, and He could not interfere in the matter; and why? Because God's people had departed from Him and His ways—they were become worse than the heathen, and therefore, by virtue of His own character, it was impossible for Him to deliver these, His own people, on the earth, because He would have been vindicating depravity. The feeling of holy indignation there must have been in our blessed Lord in seeing His Father's name so dishonoured, was shown when He made the scourge of small cords, anticipating the day of judgment, and drove the sellers of merchandise out of the temple, saying, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." This was truly being angry and sinning not. Because of the iniquity which was defiling His Father's house, judgment must begin at the house of God.

The spirit of Jesus was bowed down under the universal depravity—"the wickedness of His own people," &c.—and He could not, in one sense, deliver His own people but by giving His back to the smiters. He found His spirit pent up—entirely shut up in Himself. There was nothing to meet or answer it—none in whom He could find an answer, even His holy feelings of love none could enter into, which really is sorrow; and they found vent only in prayers and supplication to God. And all this wretchedness and sorrow was felt according to the purity and love of Himself.

In the Gospels we see the unfailing exhibition of grace toward man. In the Psalms we get the expression of His pent-up feelings of love and holiness and righteousness to Jehovah, when for His love He only received hatred. When the spirit of Christ is in us we enter into all this, though feebly, perhaps. The heart that felt this is just the same. Our hearts may spend themselves

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

in feeling, God's never can; we are only the stream—God the source, unexhausted, inexhaustible. His love is ever fresh. When we get to the Lord we find one who now enters into our feelings of sorrows because He knows and understands them quite well. According as we know Jesus, daily we find sympathy. He is the pillow on which to rest the aching head. But it does not end here. Jesus was still looking out for the great result of all these sufferings "for the joy that was set before Him he endured the cross, despising the shame." Our proper portion is joy, but as in a world of sin and Satan we also find sorrow.

These two Psalms are the expression in two different ways of the interest that the soul of man could take in Christ and His deliverance (Ps. xxi.) The spirit of Christ, the remnant of the Jew hereafter looking to Christ in sorrow and suffering, see Him through the resurrection in joy and glory (Ps. xxi.) and look to him as *coming back* again in glory—we identified with Him. This shows the place we are in—the Church begins after the resurrection of the Lord. The Jews looked in amazement that Messiah should suffer. The thing that met all this was Jesus being recieved up into heaven. The Holy Ghost then comes down from heaven to form the Church, witnessing that the atonement has been made, that, "having by Himself purged our sins," &c., the place of the Church, begins in the joy and glory of Christ.

Of this Paul was the type—he had been no companion with Jesus in His sorrows, but the first thing that was shown him was the glory, to show the riches of grace, called in his sins to be an apostle. The Church is one with Christ in glory; like Paul it begins by the revelation of glory, and then it is taught that it is to be a partaker of His sufferings. Ananias had to show Paul (*after he had*

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

seen the glory), how great things he must *suffer* for Jesus' name's sake. He was able to testify that his calling was all of grace—This Jesus whom I have been persecuting and killing in His members has taken me and made me an apostle—this must be of grace. Here (Ps. xx. 1,) the remnant of the Jews are looking at the Lord in trouble, and they say (ver. 2), "The Lord hear thee out of *Zion*." Zion had been the place where they had been accustomed to look to for help, as God's being there; but all there was very dark—he found only trouble. Zion was the place where the heart's core was shown to be enmity against God. The council-chamber of Jerusalem was the place where counsel was taken against God and His Anointed. Then in the next Psalm we have "Thou hast given Him His heart's desire." The desire must have been in Christ's heart, or there would never have been any desire in our hearts towards Him. "Grant Thee according to *Thine own heart*." This could be said of none but Christ, "We will rejoice in Thy *salvation*." In our hearts there is too much evil. They could ask this, but knew not what His counsels were. The resurrection begun to be understood. They look now at the resurrection as the sign of the exercise of power on His behalf, and say, "Now know I that the Lord saveth His Anointed;" from *thence* He will hear, though *not* from His earthly Zion. "Save, Lord," &c. And then we have all the expression of the joy of the Jewish remnant in the discovery of the manner of their deliverance by the resurrection of their king.

The Church begins with the knowledge of this deliverance and salvation. Having the testimony that Jesus is on the right hand of God, we can tell what His counsel is—that He came to give Himself as a ransom for us, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. What the remnant will be looking for, the Church has—knowing

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Jesus as ascended gives the Church its peculiar character, "as He is, so are we in this world." This makes them know the glory to be theirs, and makes them willing to suffer now. The Church stands as the representative of Christ on earth (and it should be so practically), and bearing His reproach as united to Him in glory, as Jesus bore His Father's reproach, as united to Him in the glory. The remnant see Him coming back as King, we by faith see Him *now*. We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of God. The Jews *shall* see Him then. Thomas is a type of the Jews; "Blessed," &c.—the Church. God's mind and thought is to set out Jesus in this blessed glory, and the thoughts and counsel of His heart shall be fulfilled. "His glory is great in thy salvation, honour and majesty hast thou laid upon "Him." But ver. 8 will be in *righteousness* on those who have rejected all His love. It is not till men become adversaries that the fire of the Lord destroys them. (ver. 9.) We were once the children of wrath, even as Thy *grace only* makes us to differ. (ver. 10.) Judgment of the quick specially. Now is the time between those two psalms, that, as regards us, the glory is ready and the Lord not slack; He waits—"long suffering," &c., "not willing that," &c., "now is the accepted time," &c. It is hard for the saint to say whether he delights most in the cross or in the glory, in the sufferings of Jesus or the glory. He looks at the suffering, and can say, "It *was* for us" —this shame and grief of heart to see His suffering, and the saint looks at the glory. Still it is (John xiii. 31), and he can say "it *is* for us."

J. N. D.

The Bible Herald 1877

COMMUNION WITH THE LORD.

MARK vi. 30

WE must ever remember that communion with the Lord is at once our joy and our security, the life of all service, and the power of all knowledge.

Whatever knowledge we have that does not connect us in spirit with the Lord, is a vanity of the mind, even though it may even have the *form* of the truth, and be fully *orthodox, as it is termed.*

How often do we gather sorrow and shame in the end of our doings and ways, when we might have reaped joy and assurance, because we did not walk in the Spirit, or in fellowship with the Lord, through the circumstances as we should have done?

This is frequently illustrated in Scripture. As, for instance, in the striking and varied histories of Lot and Abraham; the former walked in the light of his own eyes, and he reaped shame, and loss, and sore disappointment; the latter walked by faith, and was brought to power and high estate, and great *favour* with God; and yet they were both in the main righteous.

I have been just meditating on a scene in the Gospel of Mark which illustrates this, chap. vi. 30. You will observe on the return of the disciples to their Master, wearied and somewhat faint in their labour, He in tender consideration for them draws them aside to take rest and refreshment; in this He acted in the Spirit, as ever entering into their necessities. You can find Him moved with pity towards the scattered and unpitied flock of Israel, and again regardless of Himself, he turns to

The Bible Herald 1877

minister to them, and began to teach them many things. Here also He was not pleasing Himself but others, to their good to edification (Rom. xv. 2). But here we find the disciples ceasing to sympathise with their Master. His heart was set on the urgent necessities of their spiritual wants, and He began to teach them. But towards evening the disciples seem to interrupt His work, and present to His attention their temporal wants, and would fain have them dismissed, that they might go into the villages and buy themselves victuals.

Now in this they were not walking in the Spirit, they were not of one mind in the circumstance with Him. However, He does not rebuke them *there;* the rebuke was to come afterwards, as we shall see in the fruit of their ways. He, still as the minister of the need of poor necessitous man, sets Himself to meet the occasion, and He supplies the multitude with bread. When He had thus done, He sends His disciples off in the ship, while He remains behind with the people.

Now I believe that He resumes His teaching of them, for by the words, "He sent away the people," I understand that He dismissed them in a solemn manner, giving them godly admonition, and testifying further of the Father to them. But you observe the disciples forfeited all title to take part with Him in this service, and therefore He previously constrained them to go away in the ship. They had forfeited this honour, inasmuch as they had not been one with Him in His compassion for the multitude, as I before observed; for you know we cannot suitably *instruct* others, or take part in ministering to their souls, till we feel for them.

We then find the blessed Jesus, having sent the multitude away, in the mountain at prayer. There you see Him still in spirit, fervently labouring in secret with

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

God, walking in the light, in full fellowship with the Father.

The disciples meanwhile began to gather the bitter fruit of departing in spirit from the Lord; while He was in prayer, they were toiling in rowing against contrary winds. He, in the fulness of power, and as the Lord, who is mightier than the noise of many waters, who spreadeth out the heavens and walketh upon the waves of the sea, having finished His course of ministry and come down from the mountain, that had witnessed the fervency of His spirit, gathers glory, the reward of His ways; He appears treading on all that was the occasion of His people's travail and trial, and they were amazed and confounded in the presence of His glory.

They did not understand it. They cried out and were troubled, and all this because the heart was hardened; had their hearts been tender, had they continued in full sympathy and communion with their Lord through the previous circumstances, they would now have stood in the presence of His glorious power, not abashed and confounded but in assurance and joy,—and so with us.

Let us now, in this time of His absence, seek communion in spirit with Him, and then when He appears we shall not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

I do not speak of loss of the *glory*, as in this scene you find the disciples *with* their Lord safe over the storm and *together* on the other side of the lake. His blessed grace and power reserve the glory for us; but I speak of the presence of that glory not putting us to *shame*, as it surely must if we now walk in fellowship *with that which is not of its own character.—MS.*

The Bible Herald 1877

SINS BLOTTED OUT AND GLORY SEEN.

THE knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ gives perfect and entire peace.

There is often great difficulty in the minds of men in seeing how a person can have "*no more conscience of sins*," when at the same time he is conscious of failure and of sin. But it is when the soul is fully purged, then it is there will be most consciousness of sin, and past and present failure; but no sense of imputation before God, or sense of Christ's work.

We see in this chapter (Acts xxii.) how *perfectly conscious* the apostle was of his sins, and yet how *completely purged* was his conscience; and that it was which enabled him to be most *conscious* of his former sins. We see the same purged conscience in Peter (Acts ii. 14). He charges the Jews with what he had done in a worse way himself. The soul cannot bear to rest distinctly on that which it knows will condemn itself, and therefore there must be always more or less guile in the heart where there is not certainty as to forgiveness. When our transgressions are seen by us to be completely "*blotted out*," we have no interest in extenuating our sinfulness. If I am bankrupt I shall be ashamed to look at my books, because they will show me that I am a ruined man; unwilling to own all my indebtedness, if one came to see my affairs or claim payment; but if one in exceeding kindness had paid my debts for me, I could go and look through all my books, and if I found that I had owed a thousand instead of one hundred pounds, it would only enhance my sense of the greatness and value of the love that had paid all for me, and thus increase my gratitude and joy. This would

The Bible Herald 1877

produce guilelessness of heart. If he came to pay them I should tell him all.

In this chapter the apostle refers to all the things that he had done (see verses 19, 20). He puts the Lord in mind of the *greatness of his sins* as his *suitableness* for giving testimony to the Lord's grace. Nobody can tell of grace like the man who has experienced grace. An angel has not known the value of grace for his own forgiveness, and therefore could not testify of it like a poor sinner who has been saved by grace.

When Peter stood up and accused the Jews of the very crimes of which he himself had been guilty, of denying the Holy One and the Just, do you think that Peter was not *conscious* of the sin which he had done? That was not it, but with a purged conscience he stood before God in the knowledge of his acceptance, because Jesus, the risen Lord, had brought him into the presence of God, and made him know the greatness of the sins that had been blotted out, and the greatness of the love that had blotted them out. Jesus had died for it meanwhile, and He had received the Holy Ghost.

Observe (in chap. ix. 10,) the familiarity with which the Lord talks to his disciple, opening His mind to him as to a friend, mentioning to him the circumstances that affect His own mind. Then Ananias answers in the same blessed confidence, "Lord, I have heard by many of this man," &c. Of course Ananias had to obey the Lord, but it shows the unbounded confidence with which he could open all his heart, because of the intimacy of Jesus with him.

The Lord has been pleased to give us glory with Himself, and He enters with the fullest interest into every subject that concerns us as with us. The Lord revealed, especially to Paul, that truth that He views His people as Himself, saying, "Why persecutest thou *me?*"

The Bible Herald 1877

In regard to the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the first thing we see manifested is the love of God—it was not only the Son of Man lifted up, but the Son of God *given.* In the person of the Lord Jesus there was the exhibition and expression to the world of that which was suited to man's heart and feeling. Every expression of all that was *grace* in God we see in the Lord Jesus. It is quite true that, as regarded the natural man "we saw no beauty in Him that we should desire Him," but wherever His person was understood it was, "we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, *full* of *grace* and *truth.*" The Lord Jesus *clothed* all the glory of God *in a condition* that was suited to sinners. It was not only that they "wonder at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth," but there was that confidence produced in Him which, when the heart was broken with grief, it could open what it was that broke it more easily to Him than to any friend or relation; but Christ being so full of grace and righteouness, only made Him to be more alone in this world of sin. If His heart was satisfied as with marrow and fatness in communion with the Father, it made Him but the more understand what it was to pass *alone* through this world.

There was in Jesus all the expression of Divine fulness and of human graciouness, but this only proved that man was far from God. It was neither the mind of Jesus nor the counsel of God that he should abide *alone.* If the Lord Jesus had taken the "*all things*" that were His on the earth, He must have taken them "*alone.*" He might have had twelve legions of angels, and have returned to the Father, but He must have then returned "*alone.*" This could not be—the counsels of God would not then have been fulfilled; and He drank the cup. He takes the cir-

The Bible Herald 1877

cumstances of glory after He had finished the work of redemption *alone* on Calvary.

In the first place, there is the power of death, and atonement for that which hindered our entrance into glory; and then we get a new life, that we may be able to enjoy that glory. The promise made to Abraham was confirmed to Isaac after he had been received in a figure from the dead, and so with us. The power of atonement has blotted out our sin, and the life we have consequent on the resurrection of Jesus is beyond the power of Satan, for it is *life in the risen Christ.*

The first grand testimony to the world by the apostles was, "God has made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." This gave distinct confidence to the disciples that God had made Him, whom man had spit upon and rejected, *Lord of all.*

Peter's ministry invites the people to return "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted;*" and thus Jesus would return; but Stephen's charge was, "*Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.*" He was looking up into Heaven, and seeing the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Soon after they had rejected a humbled Christ, on the intercession of Christ on the cross, the Holy Ghost came down from heaven, and proposed to them a glorified Christ, calling them to repentance by Him. Thus they finally rejected Stephen's chrage, bringing it all to an issue where all things that had a beginning, began. He was (εγενετο) God the creator, but a distinct person "with God." Before the Cross, in the person of Jesus, there was something *on earth* on which the glory of God could rest; but now, Jesus being no longer on earth, but in heaven, Stephen turns his eye up to where Jesus was.

Paul could give no testimony to what Jesus was during His life on earth, but his ministry *begins with the glory*

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

of Jesus, as the Lord in heaven. He appears to him in the glory of His Sonship, and Lord is the title by which Saul addresses Him—"*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*"

"*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?*" is the expression of Christ and the Church, being one. The interests of the Lord were thus shown to be centred in His poor, rejected, and persecuted people. In this we see what the place of the Church is on earth, to have the same heavenly interests with *Christ on high* which makes us willing to *suffer with Him here,* that we may also be glorified together with Him.

That which is the daily comfort of the feeblest saint is that he has *a glory above* the brightest glory of all dispensations. That Christ and the believer are *one* is the very highest glory, and yet this brings him into fellowship and intercourse with Christ about common things. The knowledge of the Lordship of Jesus keeps the mind in quietness, and enables the believer to leave all to the Lord, that in the certainty that in the world to come all the promises of God will be "to the glory of God *by us.*"

While we have full interest *in the glory of Christ,* He has an interest in the *smallest thing* that concerns us, and our portion is to suffer with Him, as having a common interest with the Lord—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me?*"—suffering here because the world is against the Lordship of Jesus.

We are not only accepted because of what Christ has done, but accepted as *children,* having the very same interests with Christ, being heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. We have personal interest with Christ about *Himself.* (If my finger is hurt I am hurt, I do not say that my finger is hurt as if it were some one else.)

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

The very glory that is given us is that we are loved as Christ is loved; but the glory is not the greatest thing, but the blessedness of union with Christ. The Holy Ghost is the witness of this. Through the Holy Ghost, Christ is formed in us, and we are made one with Him in presence of the Father. Union with Christ Jesus separates me from the world by giving me identity of life and feeling with Christ. We being "in Christ," and "Christ in us," if we come to look at suffering and trial, He is in us, and suffers and sympathises with us in it, "and when Christ who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory."

The glory that is given to Him is given us by Christ as the token that the Father loves us as He loves His Son. It is consequent on that on which it is *founded*, which makes Him love us as He loves Himself; and union with Christ gives the full blessedness of the heavenly character to the believer. May we walk in the full blessing of the confidence that "all things are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's." "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Our union with the Lord gives life and communion to our souls. The unity of the Church must be solely of the Holy Ghost—"by one Spirit ye are all baptized into one body," &c. As the sanctifying power, He gives its character to the sanctification of the Church, leading it "to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing."—*J. N. D.*

PRIESTHOOD IN ITS GREAT OUTLINE.

THE 25th of Numbers, together with the 8th and 9th of Leviticus, gives us somewhat of a complete view of

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

priesthood; and the 13th of John will fall in company with a meditation on these chapters.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is, as we know, rather the New Testament writing upon this subject *in its details;* but I speak of these chapters as giving us a perfect view of it in *its great outline.*

In Numbers xxv., we see the *title* on which the office of priesthood rests. It is illustrated in the person of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron. Aaron himself had been "called" into this office on the eighth day, the resurrection day—the day that was afterward to put the Son into the same office. But Aaron does not, in his history, illustrate the *ground* or *title* on which his office rests. He did not exercise zeal on the behalf of the glory of God, and the redemption of Israel, ere he received his office. He was *called* to it, but he did not *acquire* it. Phinehas acquired it. The Son acquired it, like the true Phinehas, and was then called to it, like the true Aaron.

Phinehas turned away the righteous wrath of God from Israel. He made atonement. He was zealous for God, in entitling God to let mercy, in His dealings with His guilty, self-destroyed people, rejoice against judgment. He enabled God to be just, while He was a Justifier. And this God owns as zeal for Him; for *it was doing for Him the very thing He desired*—affording Him a way whereby He might, in full consistency with His own glory, bring back His banished ones—enabling Him, and entitling Him, to gratify His love without sacrificing His honour. This is a blessed sight, not only of the work on which the priesthood rests, but of the heart of Him who accepts that work with zeal and delight. And all this is a shadow of Christ on the cross, and of our gracious God. Phinehas went through this work of atonement of his own heart. Moses did not require it of him. It was the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

motion of his own spirit, because he had a zeal for God, and for the salvation of Israel, according to God's desire. What a shadow of Christ! What a secret about priesthood! Phinehas gained the priesthood, the covenant of grace (precious title for the priesthood), by this zeal, and the atonement it made. *Atonement was the ground of priesthood*, and He who made the one entitled Himself to the other; such was Jesus.

The title to this office being thus acquired, it remains to see in what *character* this office is now to be exercised, and who the *person* is.

The garments of Aaron are the mystic witnesses of this, and come, in their time and place, to satisfy us on this matter. We read of them in Leviticus viii.: the broidered coat, the robe of blue, the ephod, the girdle, the shoulder-stones, and the breast-stones, and lastly the mitre, elucidate these garments. They tell us of the person of Jesus, that He was perfect Man, in all the various unsoiled perfections of the nature He had assumed. Such was the broidered coat. They tell us that He was a heavenly Man also, though simply and truly born of a woman. Such was the robe of blue. They tell us of the unity of the same person, though with these two natures, divine and human. Such was the ephod, where the gold was found in company with the fine twined linen, the purple, and the scarlet, and the blue. Having thus the *person*, we then learn the *characters* and *virtues* in which this blessed, wondrous Person exercises His ministry. The girdle tells of His service, that He has given Himself to this priestly ministry, and owns it as that for which He is continually set in the sanctuary of God. The stones on the shoulders and on the breast, bearing as they severally did the names of the tribes of Israel, tell us that our Priest has imparted both His *strength* and His

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

affections to us—that "His love is as great as His power, and neither knows measure nor end," and that therefore our blessing is sure; for as none can gainsay the title of such a one to act for us, so none can question His competency, or our salvation, under the hand of such an advocate, in whom power and love thus meet together for us. The golden plate on the fore-front of the mitre, then, lets us read the light, the unsullied light, in which we appear at all times in the presence of God—that it is nothing less than unspotted clearness itself, such as the person of the Son carries, and such as the Throne of God cannot but recognise. "Holiness to the Lord" is inscribed there, as the names of the tribes are inscribed on the breast-stones and the shoulder-stones. The elect dwell in the light, rest on the strength, and are happy in the love of God in Christ Jesus. If the priesthood be exercised on the ground of atonement, it is exercised by such a person as these mystic garments thus present to us. What has been the counsel of God, what the energies of God, what the affections of God, about us, wretched, worthless sinners!

These garments were put on the priest in Israel, before he was called into office; and when we look at the Lord Jesus, the true Aaron, we see that He was wearing them in spirit all His life. He was the perfect, heavenly Man, the divine Man, the God Man, from His birth, as I need not say, giving witness again and again, through all the activities of His life, that He was serving His saints, imparting His strength and His heart to them, and in a way and measure cleansing them, being fully accepted of God while serving them.

In John xiii., however, His ministry on earth being now over—His public ministry—and He in retirement with His elect, He is seen anticipating His ministry in

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

heaven; that is, His priestly ministry in the sanctuary, which He was then soon to enter, and which God had pitched, and not man. Accordingly the supper is over. As we saw in the history of Phinehas, atonement sustains priesthood; so here, in the history of the true Phinehas, we see the same. The washing of the feet follows the supper—the one being significant of the priestly service of Jesus in the heavens; the other of His sacrifice, His atoning, reconciling service on earth. And then He is seen ascending this heavenly sanctuary with all His mystic priestly garments upon Him. He is the God-Man in His person. He has the priestly girdle upon Him. He has the breast-plate upon Him, loving His saints unto the end, ever carrying them in His heart. He has the golden plate on the mitre upon Him; for He imparts, under God's own eye, His own cleanness to them. He shows Himself after this manner, by anticipation, as already in the heavens; and what comfort to faith flows from this, that He who is ascended there is the One, the very One, who had been all through His life here acquainting us with Himself.

We know Him as He is by knowing Him as He was. Blessed to tell it; and all we want is simple faith to believe and enjoy it. And the issue of all this service is glory. His priesthood shelters and assures us till we reach the Father's house, as we see in John xiii. He washes their feet at the beginning and at the end, introducing them to the Father's house. Heaven is now a sanctuary for their purifying, till it becomes a home for their dwelling.

The Bible Herald 1877

"THE BEING WITH THE LORD."

My Loved Brother,—I think I have had my mind more occupied of late than ever with the subject which your letter suggests—*the being with the Lord.* I am sure it is deeper, happier, fuller acquaintance with Himself that our hearts need; and then we should long and desire and pant after Him in such a way as nothing but His presence could satisfy. I know souls in this state; and yet it is not *knowledge* that gives it to them, but *personal acquaintance* with the blessed Saviour, through the Holy Ghost.

I alighted, as by chance, the other day on some fervent thoughts of an old writer, in connection with this dear and precious subject. In substance they were as follows, and almost so in terms, only I have somewhat condensed them: "It is strange that we, who have such continual use of God, and His bounties and mercies, and are so perpetually beholden to Him, should, after all, be so little acquainted with Him. And from hence it comes that we are so loth to think of our dissolution, and of our going to God. For naturally, where we are not acquainted, we like not to hazard our welcome. We would rather spend our money at an inn, than turn in for a free lodging to an unknown host; whereas to an entire friend, whom we elsewhere have familiarly conversed with, we go as boldly and willingly as to our home, knowing that no hour can be unseasonable to such an one. I will not live upon God and His daily bounties without His acquaintance. By His grace I will not let one day pass without renewing my acquaintance with Him, giving him some testimony of my love to Him, and getting from Him some sweet pledge of His constant favour towards me."

The Bible Herald 1877

This is a beautiful utterance. It expresses a character of mind which, in this day of busy inquiry after knowledge, we all need—personal longings after Christ. May the blessed Spirit *in us* give that direction to our hearts. It is a hard lesson for some of us to learn, to reach enjoyments which lie beyond and above the provisions of nature. We are still prone to know Christ himself "after the flesh," and to desire to find Him in the midst of the relations and circumstances of human life, and there only.

But this is not our calling—this is not the *risen, heavenly* life. It is hard to get beyond this, I know, but our calling calls us beyond it. We like the home, and the respect, and the security, and all the delights of our *human* relationships and circumstances, and would have Christ in the midst of them; but to know Him, and to have Him in such a way as tells us that He is a stranger on earth, and that we are to be strangers with Him, "this is a hard saying" to our poor fond hearts.

In John's Gospel, I may say, among other things, the Lord sets Himself to teach us this lesson.

The disciples were sorry at the thought of losing Him in the flesh, losing Him as in their daily walk and conversation with Him. But He lets them know that it was expedient for them that they should lose Him in that character, in order that they might know Him through *the Holy Ghost,* and ere long be with Him in *heavenly* places (chap. xvi.)

And this is again perceived in chap. xx. Mary Magdalene would have known the Lord again, *as* she had already known Him; but this must not be—this must be denied her. "Touch me not," the Lord says to her. This was painful, but it was expedient—good for her then (just as it has been already good for the disciples in chap. xvi.),

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Mary is now taught that she was to have fellowship to know that she was to lose Christ in the flesh. For with Him in the more blessed place of *His ascension.*

So the company at Jerusalem, in the same chapter. "They were glad when they saw the Lord." But this gladness was *human.* It was the joy of having recovered, as they judged, the One whom they had lost, *Christ in the flesh.* But their Lord at once calls them away from that communion and knowledge of Him, to the peace which His death had now made for them, and the life which His resurrection had now gained for them.

All this it is healthful for our souls to ponder, for we are prone to be satisfied with another order of things. The "sorrow that filled the hearts of the disciples" at the thought of their Lord going away—the "Rabboni" of Mary Magdalene—the disciples being "glad when they saw the Lord," show the disposedness of the heart to remain with Christ in the midst of *human* relationships and circumstances, and not to go with a risen Christ to *heavenly places.*

How slow some of us are to learn this, dear brother! And yet our readiness of heart to learn it and to practise it is very much the measure of our readiness and desire to depart and be with Christ.

But all this I say to you as one that suggests a thought —would that it were the experience of the soul! But I desire to have it so.—*From Unpublished Letters of J. G. B.*

EVERYTHING SHOULD COMPORT WITH GOD'S PRESENCE IN US.

BUT, besides the new man, there is, in order to our being imitators of God, the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. We are told (Eph. iv. 30), "*Grieve* not the Holy Spirit of God,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

whereby ye are *sealed*," &c. It is not only that there is a new nature, but the Holy Ghost comes into the vessel, as we see in the case of the cleansed leper, in Lev. xiv.; and leprosy in Scripture is a standing type of sin. He was washed in water, sprinkled with blood, and then *anointed* with oil. The water is the word applied in power; Jesus said to the desciples, in John xv., "Now ye are *clean* through the *word* that I have spoken unto you." The word of Christ had been applied to them in power through grace and by the Holy Ghost, and they were washed. Then we have the blood of Christ applied to the conscience; and next, we are *sealed* with the Holy Ghost, the "holy anointing oil," the unction from the Holy One. We have the "new man,' the new nature from God, and according to God; and also the Holy Ghost, God Himself, comes and owns the person. He seals him, and abides there, and we are not to grieve Him, but to walk as though God were seen by us at our side. Everything should comport with God's presence in us; and if we are walking with a good conscience according to our measure of light, we are then free to think of Christ. The Holy Ghost occupies us with Christ, and leads us on in the knowledge of Him (Eph. i. 17). And it is in this there is growth; in the fuller knowledge of Christ, and conformity to Him, we are led on by the Holy Ghost. If walking up to the light we have received, we have in coming into His presence, communion with Him, and we enjoy and grow in the knowledge of Him. If, on the contrary, we are not walking godlily, the Holy Ghost will make us think of ourselves and judge ourselves. So when we are not only living in the Spirit, but walking in the Spirit, all we are and do will represent Christ. His aim and purpose is that we should be in all the moral features of His character, the reproduction of Himself.

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

"HE IS NOT HERE."

"HE is not here!" Ah, no! I seek in vain,
Mid fairest scenes of earth, my heart's delight;
"He is not here!" else would those scenes remain
Unscathed by aught that speaks decay or blight.
Death like a shadow rests on all below,
E'en brightest landscape wears a tint of woe.

"He is not here!" the One my heart loves best.
Then can I join the giddy thoughtless throng,
Who heedless of His absence, careless rest,
Or fête that absence with gay mirth and song?
No! He is gone: and not the brightest ray
Can gild the scene to me while He's away.

"He is not here!" Oppression, anguish, strife,
On every side, with solemn voice declare
Him here no more, the Lord of grace and life.
How can I then but garb of mourning wear?
They call me absent;—well, perhaps they may;
I'm listening for His voice while He's away.

"He is not here!" I want Him every hour;
My soul would weary of His long delay,
Save that, like perfume from a hidden flower,
The fragrance of His spices cheers the way;
Yet fills my heart with more desire to prove
The fulness of Thy presence Lord above!

"He is not here!" but oh! He's gone above,
The earth-rejected One has found His place.
The Paraclete, His messenger of love,
Witness alike of power divine and grace,
The Guide unto all truth, to us is given
To speak of Him whom now we know in heaven.

"He is not here!" but where His steps have been
We tread. Our home's with Him, our living Head.
In yon bright realms, whose floods of glorious sheen
On lowliest path of faith their lustre shed;
Tracing with golden threads our way below,
Till, in full blaze of light, as known we know.

"He is not here!" He's risen, and soon shall call
His Bride, His undefiled one, to the skies.
Then in full splendour reign as Lord of all,
Where now, alas! He's hated and despised.
Swell, swell the strain! bow down the head! adore!
The CRUCIFIED shall reign for evermore.

The Bible Herald 1877

THE EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

Notes of G. V. W.'s Third Lecture on Phil. iii.

THERE is a peculiar order in this Epistle. Paul presents in it the mind of God in a peculiar way. We see, in himself, (as a model man), how all the principles of the life of Christ acted.

In chap. i. the leading thought in him was, that he had only *one thing* to do on earth—to magnify Christ, in that poor perishing body of his—in *that body, chained to a soldier.* He would magnify Christ, whether he lived or died. Any one walking in the Spirit would say "what a wonderful place he had!" he saw that the whole heart of Christ was set on him, and his was set on Christ; and, if so, what else could he do, but in his body to magnify that Christ? As Christ was, when down here, the representative of God—so Paul desired to be the representative of Christ.

Little do we know how the heart of Christ is set on a believer. Christ looks down on him saying, "There is one who was given to me, before the foundation of the world, I washed him in my blood, and as I died for him, I want him to live to me." It is this Christ, who is the fountain of life to a believer; and is it wonderful that Christ should look down, saying, I would have that one's whole heart set on me?

The 2nd chap. presents the perfection of Christ, in doing the work He came down to do. His whole course says, "ah! ah! ah!" to the first Adam. He had a will of his own, the Last Adam had no will of His own; He was the only will-less man on earth, all the time He walked down here, making nothing of self; all that the Father gave Him to

The Bible Herald 1877

do, He did, meeting the Father's mind and will, and He the *only* doer of it. In the perfection of the way He did the Father's will, we get the strength of God Himself as to salvation. If, as a sinner, I am connected with that work, I get into the very secret of the delight of the Father in Him, and invested with the whole glory belonging to His Son's work; He would have me say "Abba," with my whole heart, making it known He is "Abba" *to me*, even as to that only Son of His love. I get the springs in Christ and the fountain flows from God, through Christ's work and His having entirely met the Father's mind. He can look on me saying, "The Father gave you to me, how can I but love you?"

The results of the true circumcision as to walk, we find in chap. ii., but in this chap. iii., Paul gets to where he found these springs, in the revelation of the Christ, through the Gospel; then he goes on to the third part, *i.e.*, the Saviour Christ coming to perfect the body. There are *three* parts of salvation. The salvation of the soul, you must know that; then, working out salvation by the power of God working in the believer; then, an end flows, from walking consistently, and that is the glorification of the body.

One sees how an inclination to heresy comes in, from people losing sight of the sub-divisions marked in this chap. iii. People take up the notion, that God makes no difference in His dealings in giving salvation to an individual, and His dealings with that person afterwards—but we get the difference clearly marked here. The first part of salvation is the poor sinner being brought to Christ, the Rock smitten. Ah! don't we see how the streams flow forth—precious streams of living water gushing out—not to God's people only, but to weary ones round about. We are so grossly selfish, it is always, where am *I?* what have *I* got? *I* stands up first, and that is the

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

"old man"—but God does not begin with me, but with Christ. In the Father's house, will it be *I* and nothing for the heart to be interested in, save things connected with self? or will you there find Christ so completely the Centre of that scene, so completely filling it and His love so precious, that you cannot have the least thought about yourself—so wrapt up with that Christ in the very light of His presence, that you can find no place for the *I*, the *self*, that fills up the thoughts in the present time. *We* have two centres down here, and *I* comes in before *Christ.* Paul had two, and had to give up self. If you were to pick out the best down here to be a centre, you would find in him only the first Adam. What a different centre, to wind things round, is this Christ of God; if He made Himself the centre, to wind a man like Paul round, every thing that Paul passed through of sorrow and difficulty, only became the means of winding him more and more round this Christ in heaven; and depend upon it, the brightness of that Christ would come out, not only to the joy of Paul, but of God Himself, to find His servant letting it out in a place of all others the most difficult. (ver. 3.) "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

We have the mark of the people blest by God, "we are the circumcision." Here the Spirit and the flesh are contrasted; Christ cannot shine in the flesh; it is only in the Spirit He can shine. All connected with the first Adam, is a judged thing—the knife goes round to cut everything of flesh. In Eden, nothing that the hand of God could give enabled man to taste His redeeming love; but in the Paradise of God, we find a place of His own joy —a place where all His people will be gathered, and nothing to remind them of the first, save the name—not a

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

place where man as a mere creature could find his joy. If we take the end of Revelation, and compare its descriptions with Eden, we find God in everything, shewing the superiority.

"Beware of dogs"; this was very severe from the lips of a Jew; a dog—a thing unclean altogether. Jews turning back to their own works, were these *dogs*. Next see the biggest beads he can string together on this human nature, v. 4, 5, 6. The first circumcision was like a finger-post, very important as shewing that God would have a separated people, but that was practised on Ishmael's family as well as on Abraham's.

A Pharisee, means a separated person "Concerning zeal," &c. To the Jew it was blasphemy (and very naturally so) to suppose the Eternal Jehovah dwelt in the Nazarene. The very Jehovah of Isaiah vi. tabernacling in flesh—was spit upon and buffeted. Paul's zeal came forth to exterminate, if possible, the darling delight of God's heart—the Church. This was the thing against which all the fiery zeal of Saul came forth, not only to persecute, but in blasphemy and injurious words; he did not know any word too bad to give to Christ's followers. Of course he did not, he could not have such a thought as *He*, the *Eternal God*, having left heaven, to become a man, a despised Nazarene, to go to the death of the Cross, to deliver poor sinners from judgment, by bearing it in their stead. Yet utterly impossible to find any other thing than that He who hung on that Cross was the eternal God, or the most wicked impostor that ever lived. "As touching the law blameless." Afterwards Paul discovered the law had claims on the inward man, not the outward, and that there is no power in a rebel to turn round to God and say, "all my springs are in Thee." He found the "law was spiritual," &c., "he, sold under sin." When the excellency of the knowledge of

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Christ came, what was all he had counted gain for Christ? He suffered the loss of all things.

We see the contrast of the two Adams: no possibility of comparing them together. The thorough mistrust man had of God is a very painful thing; to feel that there is One that you cannot trust, that that One is the originator of whatever He likes;—that He is perfectly arbitrary and wills everything in the universe, and you cannot shut Him out. "If you take the wings of the morning and flee," &c., even there His hand will find you. He will turn everything to His own glory; His love to sinners being rejected, He knows how to throw back the whole of man's shame on himself, and *he*, to have to say, I owe to myself all my ruin, I chose to perish in my ruin, rather than be carried off as a sheep on the Shepherd's shoulder—the trophy of His love—I owe it to none but myself. Satan is not independent, he is subject to One who called him a "liar and murderer from the beginning." Neither are you independent, but you must either be subject to one who would like to tear everything to pieces, or to One who delights to bless; either you belong to Him, or if not, you will be spued out of His mouth. Every man living is in the one place or the other; you cannot be in both: either nothing but a football of Satan, or a poor withered flower, picked up to be worn by Christ, in His infinite grace. When Solomon had gathered everything that earth could yield of beauty and delight, the bubble burst, and all was vanity and death. What can suffice to fill the heart of a ruined creature (let everything be heaped up round him) if not subject to the One who came down, as the One in whom the heart can rest!

What broke in on Saul was the beauty of the eternal Son of God, who had come to Calvary, shed His blood

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

and gone back to heaven, and there that Son of God had a heart to look round the earth to appropriate to Himself, one who was an enemy and a blasphemer, to make of him a model man. Who was *this man* ? and who the One who looked down on him ? *He* was "the Resurrection and the Life," saying, "You Paul have death in you, and if you go to the grave, there is the second death and nothing else for you; but if I, 'the Resurrection and the Life,' have taken your shame, and have gone down into death and the grave and am risen up out of it, then you and every one, if connected with Me, will come out of the grave too." This blessed One was raised up and planted by God, at His own right hand, as the centre of all, and of every heart. God said, "I have brought in a new man altogether." Have we got self as our centre, or this One who is the centre of all God's dealings, and all His delight ? a living man in heaven, making all new. This is the one presented in all beauty to Saul. I get the person of Christ in the gospel as the alone channel of blessing, the smitten rock from whence the waters are to flow, to prepare a people, so that He up there as first-born of many brethren, may have them with Himself in that scene of glory, where God and the Lamb will shine forth.

In the present day we have got the gospel corrupted and brought down to an infinitesimal measure of truth. I rejoice that any one should get the feeblest ray, but that would not be any acquisition in a badly presented Christ, or an excuse for only presenting one point, and not presenting the *whole truth* of God, and leaving it to work in the heart. Paul knew, not only Christ's blood as that which meets everything that unfits for glory, but he knew *Christ Himself,* as the centre of the glory, and the one round whom all the counsels of God roll; he had Him ever fixing his eye, as the most beautiful of all ob-

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

jects; and he lived by the faith of that Christ who had loved Him, and gave Himself for him.

And what was the end to be? A very blessed one. The Lord would come forth to change His body of humiliation, to make it like his own immortal glorious body. He gives it by putting forth power to subdue all—everything to be filled up by Him, by that mighty power. Is He the One who is to give me a glorified body, and what else? Ah! (Paul said), He is the one who has guided me all through the wilderness—what else? Ah! is not His living person up there ever shewing to his servant down here His perfect acceptance, saying, the whole question of sin is settled, and here I am occupied with you. No one knows the path you are to walk save me; you are to walk where I walked. "I shall put your feet into the prints marked out by mine."

There is something very full in the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ." It is clearly the revelation of an object by God, on which his eye rests, an object whose beauty was beyond all thought of man; that Nazarene whom man despised, He it is who is there. He is my Lord. He loves me and I love Him. Do you know that Christ as a living person in glory as Paul did? and, if you do, is it the fruit of your own intelligence, or has God given you power beyond nature to look up and see Him, and as you do so, is it a place of gold—precious stones—that fixes your eye? No! it's *a person,* one who *sees me*—one that came down here to die for me, one who loves me and allows my heart to twine itself round Him as a person to be loved. Two things: an object presented to the heart so really attractive that I desire to draw near it because so attractive; and that object the Lord Jesus Christ in all His beauty on the throne of God. Ought not I to love the One who had a longing about me before

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the foundation of the world as one given Him by the Father. If I draw near to God, it is because I find Him on the throne with everything, not only for perfect rest of soul before God, but having, in Himself, everything attractive to the heart.

Poor pitiful things are we, but as a people connected with the Sonship, by the Father choosing us in the Son of His love, before the foundation of the world, the thing that feeds our hearts, as it did Paul's, is the person of that Christ, His love to us so realized, that it is the one object of our hearts to love Him. Not one weakness, not a sharp. flint to cut the foot—but He just lets us see how He is taking the occasion presented by it, to shew His love. You, poor Peter, will deny me, but I shall come again to fetch you to the place I am going to prepare for you because I want you. What rest to one's soul! What attractive power in His love! I find in self such waywardness of mind; I find things ruling me; I do not like walking here, I do not like the way I have to go; but what rest to know amidst it all, that He is up in heaven, and the flock under His hand and His power for them, as for a flock belonging to Him, and just where faithfulness fails His power comes in; for the sheep are His property, and He will surely guide and keep them to the end.

And what is it when it is the question of suffering, or the loss of all—He is ours! What did Paul give up? God says Christ is mine—I gave Him up for you—what have you given up for Him? There is a cup of water. Now have you displaced the water by putting something heavier into the cup? If you have a heart full of lusts and vanities —well how are you to give it all up? it is by the precious gold poured inside the vessel, and all there, is displaced by it. If I had a few copper pieces in my hand and a purse of gold were given me, I should lay the copper pieces in

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the street where a beggar could find them. Don't talk of what you have given up! If God have given you Christ—can you spare Him? Are you not obliged to say, Father Thou knowest what that gift of Thine is—Thou knowest about His cross and glory. And in the glory, oh what heart can conceive what it will be to look in that face! What will you say then of the beauty of Christ? The woman of Samaria said, "Come and see a man," etc., He had talked at that well with her half an hour and she could say He read, not only this unclean heart, but all that I ever have done, and He hadn't a heart to condemn me. Oh when we think of what that Christ is personally, who shall read the fulness of the Godhead in Him and not feel like a little child looking at the Father who gave Him, and feeling He knows all about Him, and there the heart rests.

Evangelists say, How can the gospel suit a person that does not know he is a sinner? It did me. I found by it, that God had given Christ, and the Person of that Christ, as a living man, with all human affections occupied in heaven with me, was revealed to my heart, first bringing out a flood of affections, the rest came afterwards, and I had to learn all my sinnership; but I got my heart caught by the beauty of that Christ. I have not got Him yet, but God has got Him for me; rays of light shine down from His face, but I shall not see Him till He come to take us up, but I can raise my voice and join the saints in songs of praise, till I see Jesus and am glorified together with them.

CHRIST HIMSELF OUR ONE OBJECT.

Notes of Lecture iv. on Phil. iii.

SUCH words as we find here, are the expression of the Divine mind; not to be narrowed and cramped, as if they

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

were the words of man. People come to this chapter with their own thoughts. When Paul wrote this, he did not suppose the state into which nominal Christianity has brought things now. But now, as then, if any come as ruined creatures to God, they will find what Paul found, just suited to him, in the Person of that One who is at the Throne of God; that One who met all his affections. The Spirit of that Christ came into his heart, and he was perfectly satisfied with Him. The Lord Jesus Christ, as a quickening Spirit, had laid hold of the heart of Paul, and that heart responded to Christ's love. It is Christ, not only meeting need, as to sin, but Christ as our life, and that life to be manifested in all circumstances down here, which is often lost sight of by Christians to their great loss; not so with Paul, it was his *one object* to shew it out. It was Christ that produced and led captive all affections in him. Christ, revealed to him as the anointed man gone up, had spoken to him from heaven, and directly he heard this Person, a bright light shone in his soul, and then, what became of Saul's estimate of all that he, as a ruined creature, had been trying to do to accredit himself with God? He said—"There, in heaven, is that One I thought to be an impostor, with thoughts about me, and wanting me to be a servant of His, and here have I been toiling to shew my hatred to Him—utterly despising Him." Remark, verse 5, the excellency of the knowledge of a living Person called Jesus, that One presented so that Paul must say, He is *my Lord.* He found this Christ a life-giving Spirit, and himself as having one life with Him; and in Col., all the perfection of God's very self is set forth in this Person; and here was this One, who had been rejected from the earth, the centre of an entirely new system, in glory; One who could take up all He chose for servants and distribute gifts just as he liked. Ah!

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

when one gets to see the beauty of this Christ, how the heart owns it as something altogether *matchless,* in human form, with all the glory of God. He could not but be set forth in heaven and earth as the most beautiful of all beautiful objects. Paul said—"All of beauty, all of perfection is in Him, that living Man on the Throne, and He has looked on me and claimed me for Himself by letting the light of His glory shine into my soul. I will be His all through my course. He, the One to magnify whom is my only end in life—He, the only One I want to be like! The doctrine of the gospel, as in the *Person of Christ,* is a lost thing in the present day, because it is always presented on the side that suits man, and not God's side. If I know that One who is the darling delight of God's mind, I do not want anything else. If my soul knows Christ, Christ is the answer to everything—I begin and go on with Christ, matchless in His beauty—and He goes on with me. Secondly, I desire to be *His* and nothing but His; and Paul presented Christ to others thus: he knew Christ to be the life-giver and never stopped to argue about it, or look for proofs of having life; if Christ be my life, I act upon it, and do not stop to prove it, and if so acting, anyone will find themselves so occupied with doing things according to life. If indulging in worldliness, Christ will say to you, that is the flesh and not my Spirit acting in you; it must be judged—the life judges *everything that comes in. But if I say Christ is* mine, and I am putting forth in my little measure the life of Christ, I am not driven to try to prove that I have life. Paul beautifully carried it out. We get in him that sort of appreciation of the beauty of Christ that he could give up everything and count it all dung, to follow Him. He could say, I walked as this Christ could claim of me as being His—I have presented before them

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

the manifestation of His life. Now people are not satisfied with Christ, only a place must be given for self, and a large place in some way. If not identifying ourselves with Christ all the way, looking to bring glory to Him, we are not like Paul; not but that there will be self-conflict and warfare between the flesh and the spirit, at times very sharp indeed—the Holy Ghost finding in us everything contrary to his own mind. I wonder if any here ever had such a want to live to Christ, that in connection with all they find in self contrary to Him, they are saying "That thing is only fit to be buried with Christ."

The only thing that the Holy Ghost could do, to get rid of the old man, is to identify a believer with all the depths of Christ's humiliation—"buried with Christ—dead with Him:" if not realising that, there is no rest of soul, in regard to the old man. "But what things were gain," etc. We have here the estimate of human righteousness. God provided Christ, and would you come in, with something of self, unlike Christ? Paul said, I count everything of self I gloried in but loss for Christ; He has claimed me, I am His, I love Him so much, because He loved me. He is the most attractive Person my heart can think of. "I count all things but dung, that I may *win* Christ." Mark! that I may *win*, for that brings out the character of Paul's gospel. What! a saved man talking of winning Christ? Oh! any who say that, do not understand Paul's gospel—he could say I have Christ before me, He has claimed me, and it is the beauty of that Person in glory that I want to see—I want to be with Him in a glorified body—God gave Him to me, and me to Him, before the foundation of the world, and He washed me in His blood. Is that all? No! that Christ has claimed me and I claim Him—He is before my soul as a claimer of the life He

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

has given me. He is gone on high, and I want to run up to Him to win Himself. What a blessed thing when I am with Him. It was Christ in his heart, Christ his only object from first to last; and he could not be satisfied but to find himself with, and like that Christ. When people discover Christ, as a real living Person in heaven, it is like a new revelation! What a different thing when people can talk of him, as a *living Person,* occupied with them, searching their hearts; and when He is revealed for the first time, as a man in heaven, the beauty of that Christ gets hold of their hearts, and it is quite a new revelation. Paul could see Him, and knew himself to be connected with Him as a living Person, and that that Person's eye was ever on him, giving brightness to his heart, in all his circumstances. It was resurrection, as one of the great characteristics of redemption power, that Paul wanted to know, and he was pressing on to the time when Christ would come, to pour out power from Himself, to give the fulness of eternal life to this body; but not only that, Paul said, but I want this body to be filled up now, that the life may shine out; and if so, Paul could not be without all sorts of afflictions, that the power of life might be manifested—tasting death and resurrection down here in a body of sin and death, what were difficulties and trials to Paul? He said, all I want is, for this earthen vessel to be filled with the power of life, so that Christ may shine out. Paul wanted fellowship in the sufferings of Christ. These sufferings were not all of one kind. 1st, there must be suffering from being in a world where none knew Christ, where all were under the prince of this world, and those around Paul could not make out what he was about. In connection with the sufferings of Christ Himself, in such a world as this, the divine perfection of His whole moral character, brought the vivid sense to

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

His heart, as to what man was, in contrast with Himself. He knowing who He was, they looking on Him, only as "the carpenter's son;" He knowing all the glory of God was in Him, and none here having a heart to recognize it. Again, what suffering to His heart connected with the rejection of the love of the heart of God, by man, He being sent, and coming with the message of mercy from God, and man would not have it, he had no taste for mercy. When it came to atonement, He was alone in suffering, no one could taste that—none take up the question of being a *Sin-bearer* save the Son of God. He did it, and was raised up to God's right hand, Head of everything. And Paul was connected with this Son of God, and he wanted to shew it to all, have all know what family he belonged to, wanted to be like Him in every part of his course, not only know Him in resurrection, but go down to His death. Have you known fellowship in suffering with Christ, known deep waters, you will have to go down to them. If you do not get sorrow in fellowship with Christ, you will get it in discipline. If Paul had borne the mark of being a ruined creature, and Christ had taken him up to make him His, would he not have a mark to reflect the person, who now said, you are mine? Not only did he wish to purify himself even as Christ is pure, but evidently in every thing he desired the mark of being Christ's, even the lashes. Something beautiful in the way he could glory in all that Satan or man could inflict, because he would be like his Master. When an object so glorious, so attractive as that Christ, was revealed to him, what henceforward could he do, but shew what that object was to him. It is true with the hearts of men, when they have any objcct they love, they will accommodate everything to that object. It is impossible to say Christ has revealed Himself to me as the one who loves me, and has cleared

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

me of all that God had against me, and yet not have it the one desire of my mind and heart, to set myself to be His whilst it is called to-day—living to Him. Paul loved his master, and could not help living to Him. I ask you to look carefully at this portion. It shews you the life of a man down here, who had one life with Christ, seeing all through his course its connection with this—I have made thee mine. If a person have only one object down here to live to, that object will be his one desire.

LOOKING FOR THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOUR.

Notes of Lecture v. on Phil. iii. 17.

SALVATION, in this epistle, is always looked at as a future thing, "Whence we look," &c. The ground of that is expressed in the 12th verse, "Not as though I had." If the Lord Jesus Christ has taken possession of me for a certain thing, the question is, whether I have got it. The soul's confidence is not shaken by a future salvation when I look at Christ and say He has taken possession of me and what is it for? the answer is in His mind, there has been no shadow over it, nor thoughts of turning in His mind, for 1800 years. Have I got it yet? No! Shall I have it? Yes! as certainly as that I am His. People do not see that Christ is the one to whom they belong, the one to whom the Father gave a people, before the foundation of the world. When was that understood? In the garden of Eden? No! God's great dealing in the old Testament was proving that from first to last, the creature was so completely ruined, he could not hold any good thing in his hand, and often the very magnitude

The Bible Herald 1877

of the failure caused the good thing to be given. The Lord was pleased to bring out the question of will in the creature, and when this came out, sentence was pronounced against him, and from that time the creature was on the ground of being completely ruined. Christ was not affected by it. He was the only perfect will-less man. He met Satan, and Satan found nothing in Him. He went through the world absolutely perfect, before God. You are not the same; you are ruined; and the ruin is seen first of all within you, in self-will and the want of subjection to the will of God, and in not having any intelligence as to what the mind of God is.

In the word, I find (as one who has life in Christ) that before the foundation of the world, God gave me to Christ. He did not come till 4000 years afterwards, and having accomplished the work, to open the way into heaven. He went back to heaven, and sent down the Spirit, and He reveals God's thoughts about things in heaven before the world was created. He had got a heaven which He purposed to fill with a people chosen and accepted in His Son, and given to that Son as a heavenly bride. The sons and daughters He would bring in there, were seen as clearly in His mind, without a cloud, before the foundation of the world, as when they existed on earth. Paul could say, He apprehended me for that glory, as clearly as possible. He saw Paul and each since that time, and each particular individual who is to make up the complement of that body, of which His Son is head. Each distinct member was ever before the Divine mind: like the tabernacle, not a stitch not foreseen and worked out. He might have closed up the whole thing in Peter. From the time He took possession of you, the Father could say, *that* person belongs to the Son of my love, not a shade between Him and the angels, in their

The Bible Herald 1877

seeing Him occupied with poor things down here. We do not get occupied, as we ought, with God's thoughts in heaven. In all the actings of Christ to Saul, He did just as He would to any other sheep down here. Principalities, and powers, and angels, have not been stupid observers of all the marvellous dealings of God with man. They saw Him who was in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, down here for thirty-three years, they knew Him in the three years and a-half of His ministry, and at the last, in that wondrous work, on which the security of redemption hangs.

They saw the law despised; and the Jews having murdered their Messiah, they saw Him then quietly in heaven sending first to those Jerusalem murderers, and from that time waiting quietly till the time when He will come and take all up. The angels see us and know His dealings with us. He loves the whole family with the same love. Not only that love came out to the eleven, washing their feet, but He lets it come out to all. But if He does so love all, He has not got them with Him yet, but He means to get them where He will say, "Behold I and the children," &c., and they will be like Him. He will "fashion these bodies of humiliation like unto His own glorious body." Is that done yet? No, but it is as sure as if done; but we have to wait. The guardianship of the Shepherd over the greater part of the flock is ended, but He has not yet brought all in. He waits to bring them, every one, in; and then He will come to take all up. In this chapter the first Adam was the centre of the system of Saul of Tarsus, and he discovered that there was a Centre in heaven—the Lord Jesus Christ—and in Him was eternal life.

Christ came down, but did not take the place of Life-giver till smitten, and He has power to produce in

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

believers the very eternal life He had before with the Father. He is the giver of it to us, as the smitten rock, whence eternal life flows down to us here. We get the character of it in the Apostle Paul getting a taste in the wilderness of that which is of all things the most precious, saying, As the Lord Jesus has taken possession of me, I shall have possession of Him one day. I shall run up to the goal, and see him at the end. The glorious body is to be given, but much more precious the blessing connected with what I get here, than what will be mine at the end. The heart of the Father will never be more set on me than now, but when I get to heaven I shall have a glorious body. Will it be the beauty of that or the Father, that I shall be occupied with? if the Father I have the best part already. Paul with that eagle gaze saw Christ up there. Did he think that when he should get there, the best part of it would be a glorified body? or being with Christ? Ah! He loves me—it's not the glory but Himself—but then my body will be the medium to reflect Him better than this poor body. Here evil comes in, and this body wants a thorn to guard it. Not so in my glorified body. Do you not say, if you find a thorn, Oh! Satan has done this. Paul saw that it was Christ's love that permitted it; but when He brings you to heaven there will be no more thorns needed there, there will be no joint in the harness to gall the flesh; there, no heaviness. Poor Daniel sick, and John falling as dead at Patmos, but the body will become the medium of tasting perfectly what that Christ is, that followed with unwearied love the course of each down here. Is it the thought of any, that in the glory they shall be nearer Him than some then, or brighter than others. Ah! that is something for yourself. Paul won't be among the eleven apostles. Will he say, Oh! what a place they have got!

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Paul has no place in Revelations xxi. 14. But if the Son takes him by the arm, and he walks into the glory, leaning on the Lord, or the Lord says to him, You Paul, get behind that pillar and look at the people you brought into the glory. Ah! Paul, I am the one that you alone desired to look at. Yes! Lord, Thou art the Lord who knew how to heap up things upon me, who kept pulling the vessel down into the waters and filling it up. A large vessel holds more than a smaller, but it is Himself, only Him, and Paul says I shall see Him one day and run right up in a glorious body, to be with Him (v. 18). It is a solemn thing, that these were not gross evil livers; there is not the question of putting them out, but certain ones of whom His heart stood in doubt. It is a searching thing to all hearts. If I have Christ as the centre of the system I am in, I have communion with Him, in the power of the eternal life He has given me, and I have to walk as one whom Christ knows to be in communion with Himself. People take the power of the Spirit to be marked by the manifestation of *joy* in a believer; so it is, but connected with it will be the fulness of self-judgment. If near Christ, I shall see the utter contrast between Him and self, and self-judgment will be followed by fulness of joy in Him. The Church, as a system, is set up on earth, and soon there comes in corruption, and corruption of the highest thing is always the most disgusting. A sweet flower may become corrupt, but the corruption of that would be far less than the corruption of the body of a beautiful child. The corruption of Satan, as one of the highest angels, was far more dreadful than that of a subordinate creature. God chose a people, first of all before the foundation of the world; but second, there is the exercise of His grace and power in calling and bringing them out as His own people; as in the case

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

of Israel—God takes a people out of Egypt. When the power of God is put forth in revivals, people go out, but God passes them into difficulties. If He choose us, to bring us out, so He looks to see, afterwards, whether we choose Him, and are separated from things down here, to go with Him. He says I picked you up for the Son of my love to take you to heaven, and if so, you take care to go after Him. He sees all ruin in me, but He says you have not walked as you ought, but you are mine and I mean you to be there. If God has given me salvation, He lays claim to me, as His own property. The way He shews His sovereignty you get in the call of Saul of Tarsus. Had not He a right to put two extremes together? Enemies of the Cross, they could hardly be inside the Assembly if they rejected Christianity, but they would not have the Cross between them and the world. The life of Christ was a life of humiliation. He came out of the Divine glory, down to the death of the cross, and if I have His life, I ought to want to carry that cross. I ought to want to have the same mind that He had. He came from off the throne eternal, from the highest to the lowest place, and I want His life in me, to act as His, I want it to be a life of humiliation.

Rome, as the system of corruption, sits as queen of the earth: and in Protestantism the monarchs of the land became nursing fathers of the Church. Henry VIII. became independent of Rome because he could not marry another wife: and if we look around, where shall we find the Cross and Nazariteship amidst the mitres and jewels and costly things of those who are living like princes, in many instances, I doubt not, feeling it a painful duty to do it—but where shall we find all that in connection with the Cross of Christ? And when we come to individual believers, do we find the Cross coming in to separate them

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

from earthly things ? Do many so see the beauty of the Son of God coming down, making it manifest through His whole course, that He was not of this world, and ending it in the death of the Cross, that they are saying, Oh ! I want to be like that blessed One. I want to reflect that meekness, that lowliness, and if so, what a crowding of other things saying, and in such and such a thing I want to be like my Master, shewing Christ's mind in everything,—all starting away and dropping off from you, that is not like Christ, minding God and the Father; on the other side every thing crowding upon you in which to be like Christ in all you are passing through down here. How blessed that man up there, who has been most like Christ down here.

Then, the next blessed thought is, "our citizenship. &c." We are there already in spirit, and we look for Him to come, that we may be there, body, soul, and spirit.

There is something exceedingly beautiful to my own soul, that God gives us so little about to-morrow, except as connected with the coming of Christ. If translation could take place now, the expectation of it would take me off waiting for Christ to come as the Resurrection and the life, to fill up every part of me with the fulness of the power of eternal life. He soon shall come out of heaven to fill up every one now waiting for Him, and He shall bring them home as vessels filled up. He only is to do it. Something so sweet in God's thought, waiting till His Son has gathered the last of the people given Him by the Father, before the foundation of the world.

Soon He will come. He is to gather up all the sheaves, fitted by Himself, to go into the barn, and they will then know all His delight in them.

As we look at these poor bodies saying now, I have a body where I have a thorn, where the law of sin and

The Bible Herald 1877

death remains, but I do not mind it, He meant it to be so till He come, and then what a blessed deliverance! What a thought of that Lord, before taking me home making this body like His own, by the working of "His mighty, power subduing," &c. Was dragging His people out of Egypt, and through the Red Sea, *All?* No! He was going to take them into a land flowing with milk and honey, and He led them all the way. That is His thought, and He will not come till the work is done.

He does not call Sauls and leave them to walk alone No! He is watching them day and night. But when He gets those people into the Father's house, He will not be able to add anything whatever to them. The Father, saying of those people, after they are brought home, you are the fruit of my Son's work, and His glory is to be displayed through you. It is a very blessed thing to feel as those to whom Christ has given the light of eternal life, that not only all our springs are in Him who died to give it to us, but that the light is so to shine out, that the path of each one, however humble, may be marked by the spark of eternal life shining out the whole way.

PERFECT PEACE.

Notes of Lecture vi. on Phil. iv.—1869.

THE first chapter shows us the life of communion which Paul had, expressing itself in all his service, and the marked feature about it, is his triumph in and trial by the way. Every step of his way was a step of triumph though also of trial. In the second chapter we get the perfect standard of life down here, not as in the first the picture of the measure to which men of like passions with ourselves could attain; but the Son of God, the Son

The Bible Herald 1877

of man—no imperfection whatever, and that alone what the standard could be of the eternal life put down here.

Then in the third chapter he gives where all the power for this is found—all that Paul saw in Christ is what gave his soul its strength and liberty before God. It was the same thing moulded all his thoughts and affections. In the fourth chapter he shows more to us the bearing of these things on those to whom he was writing; and in verse 2 that which may have guided his mind in the line he took in the epistle.

I do not think the scope of what was present to the apostle, when he spoke of any one as "his crown," can be understood except by turning to the Thess., "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye," &c. It is a most beautiful expression of the perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ in all His unselfishness. *We* think He only puts Himself before us as our crown and joy. True, in its highest sense certainly; but it will be joy to the heart of the Lord to see all these Thessalonians gathering around Paul, and recognizing that he was the vessel through whom they got all their blessing. Directly He can, the Lord brings in His disciples into company with His work. It is the beauty of the Lord's love in it I want to point out. He does not want a place for Himself, He likes to see His people in every way associated with Himself, verse 4. He puts forth the Person of the Lord as the matter of joy. There is nothing that will get us over our difficulties, or over our sense of rights, as joy in the Lord. If the hearts of Euodias and Syntyche had been flowing over with Christ, they would have stood back like Abraham with Lot. The consciousness Abraham had that he and God *were together* put him in complete freedom to let Lot choose what he liked—*God* was quite enough for him. So with these two individuals

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

if the heart were full of Christ, the heart and hand would have been open to let everything go, because they had Christ. God does not tell us what kind of thorn Paul had; people then might say, "oh, it is not what I have." Everything that discovers to the believer his own weakness in the presence of God, is a *thorn,* verse 5. It is just what we see in the Lord, just what the apostle did himself, verses 6-9. Here we get what brings the peace of God into the soul. We are passed through very difficult circumstances very often; and very often we are called to look forward as Paul, who had to carry the whole state of the church in his heart. Well! if he had done that, as a man, there would not have been strength for it; but in the midst of all, he had the bosom of God to turn to, and he could let out all his heart there, and so he could have confidence in God about even the Corinthians. He lets all his heart out to God, and *there* is God in his heart, and there is *perfect peace*—"the peace of God." It is no new thing, for the Lord says, "My peace I give unto you." What was His peace? Never did things appear more right to him, than when they were perfectly wrong, as to the circumstances He was in; even the very cup gave Him the opportunity of showing out the compassion and mercy of the Father above—there was perfect peace in His heart. You take care to empty out all your wants to God. A strong current may trouble the waters, but it cannot trouble the rock. (verse 8, 9). Here there is another thing, are we so walking with God as to find Him with us? the heart looks up and knows Christ as the only answer to every need; but Christ says, if you treasure up my words I will come to you, and the Father will come to you and you shall have a bright light shining all around you. It is not only that you are to roll all your care off, you

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

have a certain walk. God is *absolute* in His breaking in on the soul. Saul of Tarsus could not keep Christ out. The same power that broke into the dark covering of Saul's mind, called that man to walk along a certain path, and he *chose* to walk along it. Will *you* walk in that path? Israel refused. It is a most glorious thing for God to say to a people, "I have chosen you, now will you walk with me?" We are the choice of God, and He expects to be our choice, and that in the midst of this world, (v. 10, &c.) A strange life is the life of a Christian, he never finds himself so full as when he has got nothing. If we had asked Paul, "What have you got now?" he would have replied, "I have got Christ, and Christ and I understand one another well." Let that word from verses 10-13 go home to your heart. In detail it is more full than what we have in Ephesians. Many a saint has missed seeing that everything that *wears* them so, if walking in the Spirit, is a matter of thanksgiving—"I know how to abound." It is part of the Lord's wisdom in dealing with us, to let us abound; it is the same Christ that is required in power to enable me to walk in abundance as in other circumstances. Changes of circumstances are often allowed because He will not allow a *mere habit formed;* what he wants is *life.* We find the same Christ in Bethany as in the temple and on the cross, because there was the power of *life* (verse 14). He saw Christ in their contributions. Do we know the power of praise? Because the apostle was very fond of praising, and so was the Lord. If you can get hold of what is Christ in a person, and point it out to him, you have no idea how it cheers the heart (verse 18). Paul was not a man who used language at random. Everything that has been the expression of a saint down here, having tasted His love, is counted by Christ. He knows exactly what His people have been

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

here. How He will surprise them by and bye; they will say, "When saw we Thee an hungered," &c. Ah! but He knew it all, and will mention it all too (verse 19). We never really give, till we come to deny ourselves before we give; if the thing we give cost us something, it is the offering of love; and the effect of it on the hearts of those to whom it goes will be to move their hearts with a savour of Christ, if they know it comes as the expression of self-denial. We are so very little living in the liberty of the life of Christ, that we do not know the difficulty of the heart in viewing such an expression of love.

Perhaps a poor widow has put in her two mites. Well, says the apostle, I cannot refuse it; but "My God," the God that gave me to His Son before the foundation of the world, the God that sent His Son into the world for me, the God that I have well *proved* ever since He called me by His grace, the God that will just do for me according to His own perfect wisdom, that God shall supply all *your* need. He was perfectly sure that God would care for the people who had stripped themselves for Him. What was the limit to Him? It is not only the God that has been true to me, the God of the wilderness—but now it is the God of the glory, of Canaan, of the land flowing with milk and honey. It is one thing for Paul to say, the God that has never failed me; but another to say, He has a land of His own, a blessed place to which we shall come, where everything that can satisfy the mind or the spirit is communicated, and *that* is the God that shall uphold you, and *there* is *my comfort.* And then, in concluding, he just expresses the desire of His own heart for Him, that there should be glory to God, "*forever.*" Well! the *time* state was part of that "ever." We often forget that. How are you, Paul, walking to His glory

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

NOW? We can glorify God in the *wilderness*; it is part of the eternity. *Now* it is that all the love that is in Him flows into our souls, enabling us to do all things here to Christ, and for the Lord Jesus Christ. The joy of salvation, while we are triumphing in all the trials of a wilderness course, is never tasted more than then, because of the very contrast. "How shall I get," says the world. God has given me to Christ, says the saint; and the heart passes through it all, making the wilderness to resound with songs of joy, giving a special sweetness to the soul, who, having *nothing*, yet possesses *all things*.

HIS PLACE OURS,

IN HEAVEN OR ON EARTH.

ONE place have I in heaven above,
The glory of His throne;
On this dark earth, whence He is gone,
I have one place alone.
And if His throne in heaven I know,
I joy to find His path below.

We meet to own that place alone,
Around the broken bread;
The "dead" whose life is hid with Christ,
Remembering Jesus dead.
For us is quench'd all earthly light;
Above, the glory—here, the night.

Dear as the place beside Him there,
His footsteps here below,

The Bible Herald 1877

The Bible Herald 1877

Where He has gone thro' scorn and wrong,
There also would I go.
Lord, where Thou diedst I would die;
For where Thou livest, there am I.

One lonely path across the waste—
Thy lowly path of shame;
I would adore Thy wondrous grace,
That I should tread the same.
The stranger and the alien Thou—
And I the stranger, alien, now.

Thy cross a mighty barrier stands
Between the world and me:
Not yielding with reluctant hands,
But glorying to be free
From that which now is dung and dross
Beside Thy glory and Thy cross.

I see Him there amidst the light,
The Father's blessed Son,
I know that I am with Him there,
That light and love my own.
What has this barren world to give,
If there in His deep joy I live?

Sent hither from that glorious home,
As He was sent before,
Of that great love from whence I come,
To witness evermore.
For this would I count all things loss—
His joy, His glory, and His cross.

The Bible Herald 1877