

Food for the Flock.

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“THE WORDS OF THE WISE ARE AS GOADS,
AND AS NAILS FASTENED BY THE MASTERS OF ASSEMBLIES,
WHICH ARE GIVEN FROM ONE SHEPHERD.

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THE "OLD MAN," THE "NEW MAN," "I."

"If, as Scripture teaches, our old man is dead and crucified with Christ, what is it in me that needs purifying and cleansing? The old man is dead, and the new man cannot sin, and thus needs no improvement; what then remains?" This was the question of a sincere Christian lately, and, although it may not appear to be a very intelligent inquiry, it is yet a question which exists in many minds.

Without doubt there is much confusion of thought amongst Christians, as to the difference between the "old man," and the "new man." There is a proneness to dissect self; so to divide self into an old man which is to be reckoned dead, and a new man which is God's creation in Christ, complete and perfect, that the individual "I" is lost sight of. Thus the presence of evil, and conflict in the heart, are unaccounted for, and cause difficulty and distress.

But first of all the heart must be established with grace; rooted and grounded in love. A soul really happy in the love of God, will never be much troubled with these questions. Though they may not be able to explain the force of Scripture terms, yet, knowing in whom they have believed, they can afford to leave with

God the questions which they cannot answer, and be content that He, who has bestowed such manner of love upon them, will make good in them, and explain to them, His words and ways, in His own good time and manner. Still some souls are troubled, others perplexed, and many that are true-hearted, mistake and misuse Scripture expressions.

The believer is looked at in the word of God in a triple aspect, in each of which, however, he is spoken of by the personal pronoun "I."

First, as a man — an individual — whether sinner or saint, having an individuality, and responsibilities; the latter of course greatly differing, whether as sinner or saint.

Secondly, as a sinner whose responsibilities have been assumed by, and imputed to, Christ upon the cross, and the punishment of whose sins, and the condemnation of whose self, have been borne in the person of the Lord Jesus, the sinner's substitute.

Thirdly, as the possessor of eternal life, the gift of God, and thus a new creation in Christ Jesus, indwelt by the Holy Ghost, and so able, and responsible, to live to God as a saint, and as a son, in the same scene in which he once lived as a sinner.

Man, whether sinner or saint, is an individual being, having an identity of his own. Each man and woman lives, breathes, eats, drinks, loves, hates, sins, and acts for himself or herself, and for no one else. Each then has his or her separate individuality, which cannot be shifted to, or shared by, another; as it is

written: "Every one of *us* must give account of *himself* to God." This then is man's state, and thus each man stands before God. When the soul of man is brought into God's presence, this individuality and the responsibility attaching to it are felt. From fallen Adam downwards, it is the same tale. "*I* was ashamed," was the first expression of the first sinner; and, in every fresh case of a soul brought into the light of God, will there be the same expression, though varying in terms, of this sense of individuality, of responsibility, and of failure.

Man's individuality seems to be so self-evident, as hardly to need dwelling on; but it is important when considered in connection with the Christian's standing and state before God. It is always recognized in Scripture, whether as a person or persons. Thus, "I" and "me," "we" and "us," are words repeatedly used to describe both sinner and saint; both what the Christian was, is, and will be. For instance, "We . . . *once* children of wrath even as others." "Behold *now* are *we* the sons of God." "*We shall* be like him, for *we* shall see him as he is." Here are the past, present, and future of believers as individuals, once sinners, now saints and sons, and to be inheritors of eternal glory.

There is great reality and comfort, to the believing heart, in this recognition of an identity never to be lost, and to be assured that our transfer to a scene of glory, with spiritual and bodily capacity to enter into and enjoy it, though it must involve unspeakable changes

in the condition, and circumstances, will not involve a change of personality ;—that the "I"—who once was of the world, a sinner—who have been brought to know and taste the grace of God, and love of Christ, and to prove them in the path of the saint and of the servant through the world—shall still live on in the glory, with the full remembrance and experience of the past, to enhance the apprehension of the then glorious and eternal present. Thus the saint's hope is, not to be transformed into an angel, or any other being, but, to be with Christ, a man in the glory of God for eternity.

How the sense of this should incite us to redeem the present time, and to "lay up in store a good foundation for the time to come," that so "an entrance may be ministered to us abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Indeed it is a solemn thought, that "I" live for ever; that my individuality, which began at my birth, runs on into the eternity of God.

But then it may be asked who is the "old man," who is the "I" who have been crucified with Christ?

The expression "old man" occurs but three times in Scripture. In Rom. vi. 6. Eph. iv. 22. and Col. iii. 9. Thus: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." Again: "That ye (have) put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the

deceitful lusts." And again: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." In each of these cases the old man is only spoken of as in the past; as having been crucified, that is judged in Christ's judgment; or "put off," that is set aside by the Christian, both by faith and in practice.

The old man thus expresses the believer in his past state as a responsible sinner, which state has been met and judged in the death of Christ upon the cross. It is, in fact, me in my state and responsibility as a sinner, for whom Christ died, and which state and responsibility the blessed Lord assumed, and was condemned for in death. It is therefore of the past, and not of the present, and it is the "old man" because it is of the past; and the state and responsibility attaching to it have in the counsel of God, passed away, as it is written: "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God." It is not me, the person, in my individuality, for in that sense I have not died; but it is in that state and character of responsibility which have been met and answered by the death and cross of Christ. It is a figure of speech, if we may so say, expressing that Christ has so fully accomplished deliverance for me by His death, that I can identify myself, *by faith*, with Him upon the cross, and see, in His death, my own death as a responsible sinner before God. In the same sense it can be said, "I am crucified with Christ." "The world is crucified

unto me, and I unto the world." That is "I" and "me," in my responsible character as a sinner for whom Christ died. So also: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh;" that is, by faith, they see and acknowledge the execution of God's judgment and sentence upon them as men in the flesh, in the cross of Christ.

But it is by faith, and not in fact, that the believer has died. Actually, it is Christ who has died under judgment, and not the believer; and the believer, "I," lives in very deed, in the very body, the very scene, and generally in the very outward circumstances in all of which he was as a sinner. Yet by faith he can look back to the cross, and say: "Our old man has been crucified with Him."

This gives not only rest of heart, but a true sense of power against sin and the fear of death. It is not that I am as yet out of the scene and circumstances of sin and conflict, but that, by faith, I have learned in this scene the value before God of the death of Christ for me as a sinner, and thus know, not only peace with God, but the moral power, and victory, which the identification of myself, as a responsible sinner, with Him in death, can alone give to the soul. Therefore when sin is presented, the question and answer are: "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" for the "I"—the sinner who sinned—I may reckon dead. If the fear of death, as the penalty of sin, be pressed upon the soul, and the heart ask: "Who shall deliver me?" it can also reply: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," for

I know that the bitterness of death, as the penalty of sin, passed on Him.

Again, we repeat, it is not that there is no present suffering, no conflict, no sin, no death, but that, through faith in the death of Christ, the believer is morally superior to all these things, and can with joy revert to the great fact, that "our old man has been crucified with him." God says so, and faith lets God be true, and adds its "Amen."

Now while the term "old man" thus expresses faith's apprehension of the manner in which God has dealt with us in our state and responsibility as sinners, the expression "new man" shews what we have received as newly created in Christ.

Directly that He, in whom was life, came into this world, and took up His service amongst men, so soon did He declare, that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It was the will of the Father who sent Him, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have everlasting life, and be raised up at the last day. That as Adam brought in death through sin, so Christ should bring in life, and a life not liable to sin or death.

Man's life having been forfeited by sin, he needs a new creation, an everlasting life not liable to forfeit, if he is to see and enter the kingdom of God. Though Christ by His death has delivered the believing man from his state as a responsible sinner before God, and its consequence in death and judgment, and as identi-

fied with Christ, he has been freed from sin, and death in its full sense, yet does man need a new creation—to be born anew—that he may be fitted to dwell in, and enjoy the glory of God. "Whosoever believeth on the Son of God, hath (this) everlasting life." It is the gift of God to the believing sinner. "This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Wherefore," it is written, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." Not merely that he believes that he is so, or that he is morally changed, but he *has* life, a new spiritual life, bestowed as really as he had natural life bestowed at his birth into this world.

As of old, the question is still asked: "How can these things be?" But why should it be thought strange or impossible with God, in the exercise of His grace and power, to give life from a new source, even as He gave the old. As possessors of life, of which God is the giver, and Christ raised and glorified the source, the believer is a "new creation;" as "having put on the new man which according to God is created in righteousness and true holiness," he is to walk, not merely according to the measure of a justified and forgiven man of the old creation, but according to the measure and standard of Christ, the Head of the new creation, in whom that life is, at the right hand of God. Its source and its proper circumstances are heavenly, and suited to the highest glory of God, and, as having it and knowing it, the

believer is called to live and act down here, an imitator of God as a dear child, walking "in love, even as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."

Now it will thus be seen, that neither the crucifixion of our old man, nor the putting on of the new man, abolishes our own constant individuality, nor our present responsibility. The believer dwells in the same body, and moves in the same world, as before his conversion. Faith, and faith alone, makes good to him through the word of God, the blessings and the wonders of God's grace. He looks back to the scene of judgment where the just One was made sin for us the unjust. He looks up, and he knows that the same One now lives for Him at God's right hand. He looks on with the conviction and confidence that He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry, and that He will take us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. He knows that God has given to him eternal life, and more, the earnest of the Spirit, that he may know the things so freely given to him of God. Thus walking by faith, he is conscious of the power of the divine life within, drawing out his heart to God, and towards His people, and so can say: "We love him because he first loved us." "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." The Spirit of God in him and with him makes him a temple of God, and leads him in God's ways. Now he walks in the Spirit he does not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, for as the flesh lusts against the Spirit,

so the Spirit also against the flesh.

The believer thus, in his own person, is the scene of a conflict, in which the divine nature, and the spiritual, is overcoming, and does overcome the natural and sensual. His individuality remains unchanged, and his humanity in all its aspects, whether good or bad, remains with him; but it is his privilege to look back to the time past of his life with all its sins, as of the past indeed. He can by faith reckon himself as a sinner to be dead with Christ. and that all his sins and responsibility as a man before God, were ended at the cross. He knows also the presence and power of the Spirit of God, as the strengthener of that new and eternal life which God has given him in Christ. By this Spirit he mortifies the deeds of the body. He presents his body a living sacrifice, He has purified his soul by obeying the truth. His heart has been purified by faith. Abiding in Christ he purifies himself. Thus his own very body, soul, and heart are brought under the present influence of the Spirit of God.

It is sometimes asked, is it the old heart that is spoken of? But, we reply, Scripture never speaks of the Christian as having two hearts. What it does teach is, that the energy and fruit of the divine nature are to be expressed by the believer, in and through the very capacities, and in the very person, in which he formerly lived and walked as a sinner, for "the body is for the Lord." So the mouth which was full of cursing and bitterness, is now filled with the sacrifice of praise; the

heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, is now the dwelling place of Christ by faith; the feet once swift to shed blood, are now shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; the hands which stole, now steal no more, but labour, working the things that are good, that the believer may have to give to him that needs it. Christ is to be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. The new power is put into the old vessel, there to work in the overcoming and destruction of all evil lusts, and in the subjugation of the will of the man, so as to bring the whole spirit, and soul, and body of the believer into subjection, and preserve them blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. His power to overcome is by faith in these truths of the death of the old man, and the existence of the new man before God. Because God says he is "dead," he mortifies, that is, he *puts to death practically, everything that is inconsistent with the death and cross of Christ.* Because his life is hid with Christ in God, he seeks the things which are above, and lives on the earth as a heavenly man, bringing God's thoughts and principles to bear on every detail of his daily life. He remembers that death passed upon the blessed Lord, when He took the sinner's place in judgment, and so by faith he passes the same judgment on himself, and on all his past state and circumstances as a sinner, and on every present movement of, or appeal to, the flesh.

This, and nothing short of this, is Christianity, and it is in the individual, personal, Christian,

as indwelt and led by the Holy Ghost, that God is to be glorified in this world. In resurrection glory the believer will receive a body like unto Christ's glorious body, but, for the present, God's purpose is to have a people so living in the power of the divine life, as that He may be glorified in their bodies, which are God's. Such an one can say: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Here then are the three "I's." "I," the old man crucified with Christ; "I," the new man, Christ who lives in me. "I," the individual who lives in the flesh, but lives by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*. Mark, He loved *me*, not the old man, nor the new man, but *me*, the individual, once a sinner, but now, by His love, constrained to live not to myself, but to Him who died for me and rose again.

There are two truths connected with the new man which must be distinguished: firstly, the fact that the believer has eternal life in Christ, the gift of God; secondly, the moral effect of this truth upon his existence in the world. So, firstly: "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son;" and then, next, says Paul: "To me to live is Christ." He lived not his own selfish life down here, but was for another, even Christ, who was raised from the dead. So also John: "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he

walked."

Finally then, the individual Christian is thus responsible, and has power conferred in order, to reckon himself dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God. As in Adam he has died, so in Christ has he been made alive. Yet it is himself who to faith is dead, and himself who, through grace, is alive to God. Nothing is more mischievous than to attribute all evil found within to the old man, as though the believer himself were not responsible to maintain holiness within or without. Moral responsibility is thus lowered, and there is a danger of accepting with more or less complacency, and as an inevitable evil, the working and fruit of sin in the members, instead of judging and mortifying it in the power of the Spirit of God.

Strictly speaking, the old man has no present existence. It is a term, as we have before said, to express the past state of responsibility met in the death of Christ. It is the believer, "I," who lives still; and the believer in Christ, not merely his "old man," can sin, but is *not* to do so. "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." "My little children, I write unto you that ye sin not." Christ's grace, and the power of the Holy Ghost, if counted on, are the believer's sufficiency. "Sin shall not have dominion over" him, and he is not to let it "reign in his mortal body." But, if he find sin there, he must not plead for it in excuse that it is his "old man," but must honestly confess that it is *himself*; and, "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and

just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But, as we have before said, he may as a resource and motive against its admission, by faith turn back to this blessed fact, that "our old man has been crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

The answer then to the original question is, that "I" remain. I, who once identified with Adam, was under sin and under judgment, now am identified with Christ, and, through His death and resurrection, delivered from the past state and responsibility, and brought into a new state to which neither sin, nor death, nor judgment pertain. In the path down here I must act according to one relationship or the other, either as a child of Adam, or a man in Christ and son of God; and by faith it is my power and privilege, through death and resurrection, to dissociate myself from the first man Adam, and associate myself with Christ, the last Adam, "the second man, the Lord from heaven." Thus, "I," the individual, the believer in Christ, redeemed, justified, quickened, and waiting for the glory of Christ, am left in God's purpose here on the earth, a responsible being, for a little while to show forth the praises of Him who has called me out of darkness into His marvelous light; and to live out in the world all the truth revealed by the Spirit in the word, and prove its sufficiency, not only for the glory to come, but for the victory in and over this "present evil world."

H. C. G. B.

THE CONFLICT.

EPH : 6. 10—12.

There are two things which, when considered, bring out into light, in a simple way, the position in which the Christians at Ephesus were standing when the apostle addressed them.

First, we find the intimation of better things to come connected with the scene in the garden of Eden : “ The seed of the woman.”

Second, that particular development of the truth in which we stand ; that that very “ Seed of the woman,” having had His heel bruised, is up in heaven, the Head of a body, which body is on earth filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.

I should like to rest a little in detail on these two points. They seem to bring out the need—be of suffering for a redeemed people.

When Eve had been beguiled—when she had got under the power of the adversary—there was One spoken of by God as “ the seed ” to come, and, in what He was to do, there was a ray of light for the man and the woman ; there was a hope introduced ; but a hope which brought with it the certainty of suffering for those who were the possessors of it. If I look at it—this intimation thus come forth from God—it is plain that the setting up of a power in opposition to what they had sold themselves to, must be at some cost to themselves.

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There is great joy in seeing God's Son put in the place of power—Lord of all—all put under the sway of this "Seed of the woman." Test your thoughts of the gospel by this; not merely its meeting the need of your lost soul, but my God, setting up His own power in the hand of His own Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

But how could it come to me, devil possessed as I am by nature, without suffering? How can this light come in contact with darkness? It will find that in me which is ever ready to lend itself to Satan, even "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." Can this new thing meet all the evil in me without there being conflict from beginning to end? Our position must be one of *endurance*—of *suffering*—of *wrestling* "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places." God is going to establish His power, and that will overthrow all the natural thoughts of my heart.

Observe the exquisite grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in connection with redemption as displayed to us. Are you saved sinners? That enables you to say: "Not a cloud above; not a spot within." Is it something *you* have done? No; this something *God* has done for you; and every step of the way afterwards too it is the same; *all is God*. God will not let the people come out of Egypt under *His* power, and then leave them under their *own wills*. When they were out of Egypt He left the way apparently open for them, to prove whether they had a God

or not. If they would go back He would stop them; He would not head their retreat. He would *break them down*; He would have a "willing" people—would make them take *His* will for *their* will; His position for their position; He will make us take His God for our God, as Ruth said to Naomi; He will form us in heart to be *willing* to have the portion of our Lord here below.

What was the difference between Paul and the Hebrews? It was that Paul was not satisfied just to begin; he would hold fast—would be "firm unto the end." They went forth, their hearts failed them, and then they let slip.

But these Ephesians had got fast hold of the truth, and the truth had got fast hold of them; so to them Paul writes, led by the Spirit, to strengthen them for conflict. He would have them above the fear of the power of darkness; if *these* were high, *God* was higher still. They need not be daunted; He would have them raising their heads; would have them know that there was a living Head for them in heaven, as well as a head in heavenly places to their enemies.

"Be strong in the Lord."—How could they stand in such a position—living members of a living Head—how could they stand down here where He had been, occupying a place between Him and the enemy, and not be suffering? Impossible!—He, when in this world, was the "man of sorrows." In His grace He had left them down here, that it might be truly brought out that there was such a thing as a heavenly Christ. And all who are partakers of the heavenly portion are

born to suffering—dare not expect exemption from it; far from that, they must be willing and ready to endure it.

I found it one thing, when God, with mighty power, let His light into my conscience as a prisoner in the world, having the joy of salvation, and getting out of the house of bondage; and quite another, the being there alone in the wilderness with the God who has brought me out. It is one thing for God to have brought me out of Egypt; it is another thing for me to be on the other side of the Red Sea. And when He says: How do you like walking with me alone in the wilderness? there comes in the thought of the leeks, and the onions, and the cucumbers; not, as before the deliverance, the pinch of the prison, the oppression of the task-master, the escaping from the spears of the Egyptians under shelter of the blood; but being in the wilderness, having to learn what is in our hearts.

God challenges our hearts as to how far we prefer wilderness fare with the living God, to Egypt's fare without Him. Do not be discouraged if you find yourselves on the other side of the sea beginning to count the value of a leek or a melon. You *will* think of them, just because you are poor wretched things. God counts on what you are; He counts not to find a single amen to one single bit of grace that He has given you. Do not be discouraged, but take care not to fall as Israel fell. They fell, *not* because they found their hearts did not tally with God's heart, but because of their *determination to have their own will*—to have ways and resources that

were not God's, and the not seeking in brokenness of heart to know His; this was why they failed.

Take care it is not so with you. He can give you hearts not to know a leek or a melon. There is nothing He cannot do. If I know my God, it is not with me: Oh, the sorrows of the way! but: I am in the place where God would have me. I am with Christ, and it is far better to be without a leek than to be without such a Christ. I can bear the yoke with Christ.

And God can form this in our hearts for us. *He* does not want to learn that there are no springs in us, but He wants *us* to look in and see that there are none. We must learn it by failure, or in His presence in communion with Himself.

Just notice the peculiar position of those who came in from the time God gave the first word about the "Seed of the woman," till the time when God shall be all in all. When He set up a kingdom in man's hand, He was obliged to make good certain things against the powers of darkness. When it was an earthly testimony, the Jew found that obedience did not bring him into poverty, but into wealth. But it was not so with the Lord Jesus, and we are heirs with Him. He was *poor*, yet He did not *want*—never wanted. God would take care to feed His Son. And there is a monstrosity comes into our minds when we think with anxious care about our wants, or think that, because we follow One who had not where to lay His head, we are to want. Did not God take care for that Son of His? You would not think of temporal need, and fear it, if

you were in the light of the Lord Jesus. It is quite a different thing for Him to hide from you the *channels* through which He will care for you, and His *forgetting* you.

This winding up of the epistle is most important. Paul's heart was enlarged; how should he stop short of God's thought about them? He had blessed them with "all spiritual blessings;" how could the apostle help reminding them that these were given to them that they might use them, and that, too, at the present moment for God's glory.

We go to the Lord with a burdened heart, and bring it away with us, because we have the cross still, and do not understand His way. But, when we know Him better, we are content the cross should be there, because He cannot take it off until it has done its work upon us, and so His Father be glorified. We say: The cross is too heavy. He says: No, my Father put it there, and, if I take it off, the flesh will break out; the cross must remain until the will bends to it.

You will often find yourself in a Pi-hahiroth; sit still and watch. Moses' sister was in a very blessed position; the little ark had gone out among the bulrushes, she sits down and watches. It was a blessed place for faith to watch, and see what was done. If you cannot sit still and wait for God, you are not in the right position. Do you say: But we have given all up; now what will the end be? How will the Lord show Himself?—Sit down before God, and say: Thy ways are too great for me; what wilt *thou* do?

There is a largeness about His ways that

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beggars our understanding. It goes *beyond* His people's requests. Many of the restrictions the people of God suffer come from themselves, because there is not simplicity to say: What wilt *thou* do? Abraham's intercession stopped at ten; but God goes farther, and takes up the desire of his heart. If I leave God to act He will act much more munificently than if I say: Do this, or do that.—“He that spared not his own Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

“The wiles of the devil” are methods—methodical actings; it does not mean “fiery darts” merely. Leighton observes: “It is not the half-laden caravans he cares to attack.” He may retire when the heart is not keeping watch; and elsewhere just come in, and cause the heart full of joy to get a fall.

Christians want more quietness. There is often too much haste in accrediting what we fall amongst. Much truth may be believed—many high truths assented to—such as union with Christ, and the like; and yet it may come out after all, that the heart has never known the *taste* of grace, not knowing itself the chief of sinners. What then is the good of all that knowledge? There has been much of the wiles of Satan in it. You get no good from truth unless it bring your heart into communion with Christ. It is God putting home the points of truth, and making them home-stores, that is really good. There may be quantities filling the imagination, and much talked of, and written about, but the question is: Do I know this Son

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of God who became Son of man for me?—He who came down into all my need as a Saviour.

“ We wrestle.” We must not only be prepared for active service—for going forward; but we must be ready to stand against the immense array of opposing power. And this is much the more difficult of the two—to hold fast for your own soul what God holds fast for the church in Christ. I do not think the thought of “ flesh ” and “ world ” is excluded here, but it is not these only, but their “ rulers.” It is not only the world, it is the master of the world; not only the flesh, but the master of the flesh, that we have to contend with. It is not a question whether you can break this or that bad habit in yourself, but there is that great power of darkness above you, who only found his match in One. When the Lord was here he tried Him, but could not overcome Him in anything; and the way *He* acted is *ours*. The more power Satan put forth, the more Christ left Himself in the hands of God. And none can be a match for Satan now but He who baffled him entirely, and set him aside. Christ did not either exhaust His power in doing it; He carried a perfect righteousness all through. And now I can overcome, because the blood is what Satan can never stand against, and God has said He will destroy Satan under our feet shortly. Trial you will have; you will be tried to the very bottom. Would to God you might be always “ more than conquerers; ” but depend upon it, whenever you are, you will have nothing to boast in but Christ.

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Another thing of importance is faithfulness to others and to one-self. I see two souls, one, perhaps, carrying a burden a thousand times heavier than others; and he walks quietly, just having as much as he can bear, and no more. I see another, with a very little burden, who breaks down. None but God can judge about these two; God and Christ can. Remember you have not come to the end yet. To one who has a trial which seems to him past all bearing, I would say: Cannot you identify yourself with God's counsels? and say "I will glory in my infirmities."—In judging, you must consider not merely the weight of the trial, but the character of the vessel, and the nature of the strength given. The weakest vessel cast into the hottest furnace, if the Son of God be there, will come out unhurt; while the strongest will be burnt up if the Son of God be not there. Is my girdle broken? Shall I say He has laid too heavy a burden on me?

It is a very important thing to see what my walk has been, and what the state of my heart is. Perhaps He will say to me: Your eye is not single enough; you are truly looking to me, and desiring my glory, but you do not see yet how I am sure to meet you. God says: I do count my Christ worthy. Do you ask me to fill you up? Well, I count *Him* worthy, and therefore I *can* fill such a vessel as you! It is not a question of whether I will give it to you, but whether I will give it to my Christ.

It is often the case, in trial and conflict, that we give ourselves credit for something more than we have; then he has to make us open our hand

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to let it go. I must take the place of having nothing, and act simply on what God is, and on what Christ is, and not be vindicating myself as Job did. When *God* comes in to vindicate, how graciously He does it!

There must be patience. God will try you; He will make you know that the springs are not in yourself; He would have you sure that you have none in yourself, just by your being filled up with those springs that are above, that others may see it too.

EPHESIANS VI. 13, 14.

One remark I would make as to the quiet way in which the apostle assumes it is all right in the hearts of these Ephesians.

He had drawn a striking picture of how God, to please Himself, spontaneously from His own heart, had come in and taken up a people out of a state of devil-possession, had revealed Himself, and made them members of Christ, His Son at His right hand, the Head in heaven. Last time I was looking at the position taken by God down here, Jesus of Nazareth being up there at His right hand, as the Head in heaven. He has the answer down here in a people who know His name, and who have to make good a certain position according to it, in spite of all Satan can do.

Think, dear friends, what grace! God in heaven making good in you a position by the Holy Ghost, answering to that of His Son in heaven. Grace, for height and depth beyond the creature, reaching to the glory of God in the

face of Jesus Christ. Grace, which comes down to us under all our ruin, even when we were "dead in trespasses and sins," rolled about by Satan as the withered leaf is tossed by the wind in autumn—those whom he had in his possession.

Who are you, that in you God should make good this answer? Yet to us He says: You are the proof to Satan, and to the world, that my Son is sitting on high as the Head; and this is the position in which you have got to stand.

How quietly the apostle assumes, as I was saying, that the tone of their hearts was right, as well as that they were ready to live to Him who "died and rose." There is no stirring them up—no pleading with them to take the position he was putting before them; they are *in* it. How different the people of God are now! we see them having a thousand objects but the one the Holy Ghost would cause to thrill in us. How ashamed we should be when we see what is around us, and then look closer home, and find our houses unpurged, our heart unjudged, and He still having to say to us as members of that living Head!

He speaks here not of motives but of position. He supposes the soul to have a character suited to that of sons of such a Father—of vessels sealed by the Spirit, and filled with the Spirit. How different the church of God was to what it is! They had a single eye—one object—seeking in everything Christ's glory—light bearers in the world. And what decrepitude in us! how it shames us!

With regard to this armour for the church militant, whose soldiers are you?—God's?—And what for? Pleasure? or conflict? And how far are your hearts interested in the conflict? Are you only taking it because "no cross, no crown?" or has it taken hold of your hearts as the spring of your souls?

"Her seed shall bruise thy head."—How far are you counting that all connected with Satan is shortly to be bruised? But nothing connected with the Son of God shall be bruised; He will not let you be, because you are connected with His fortune. How far does *that* tell on your hearts?

Then with regard to this conflict, is it for ever? No! there is a time when rest will come: "They shall learn war no more." There will be a happy end to it all, but now we are learning to endure. And, as to the service whilst we are in it, what provision has Christ made for us?—This brings us to the armour.

"Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth."—Do you know the value of a girdle in regulating and increasing strength? As Christians we cannot do without the girdle; it tells home upon us, and speaks much of the grace we have to do with. Truth is the girdle; it comes searchingly home, it surrounds us. Have you a clear idea of what it is? Can you put it into other words so as to satisfy yourself? There are certain things true to God's mind, and certain things which are not true. His word tells us this. If you have his word close round about you, you will find it uncommonly searching.

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The eye of Christ was always on God's word. When Satan came to Him, He could say : That is not truth. I am bound to what is truth.—Satan tried to misapply truth, and what is misapplied is not truth. It was not that Satan could not quote Scripture ; he did ; but he applied it to Christ, not as One going down, down, down—as the Servant come to do His Father's will—but as thinking of Himself and not God. Truth was the girdle to Him, and He had power to endure. What a contrast in Peter : “ Be it far from thee, Lord : this shall not be unto thee.” He was not a Nazarite—his heart filled with a single desire ; with him it was not always the thought : Where is my God in this thing ? So there was weakness.

I believe if this were entered into more in our own souls, it would explain much as to our failure in walk. There is such a thing as the truth of God—God's thoughts about *you*—coming down into your very circumstances, which, if applied to you where you are, will be the strength of the Nazarite to you, and, while faithful to Him who has separated you, none shall be able to bind you. It will be ever with you : “ Lo, I come to do thy will.”

The thought I have about the girdle is not that it is merely truth in contrast with error—God's truth about Christ, and the like ; but it is truth coming down to me here, and encircling me right round where I am in my circumstances. People are often astonished at what happens to them—borne down where they expected to stand. When I look back, I see that I have not had the

experience of Paul "in all things more than conquerors," if I have not had the girdle on. I should avow it. Perhaps I was a soldier for myself, and not for Christ. Perhaps I have had a girdle on of my own, not the girdle of *truth*.

How far I ask you is your eye single? The single eye is that which sees God as He is. None but Christ did that perfectly. Many saints who have heard about the grace of God, and can confess that they are the chief of sinners, yet, when you get to their hearts, you do not find mercy and grace there, and the knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ, as you should expect to find it. It is a very solemn thing to see how imagination may dress up and play with truth; the mind filled with phantasies, instead of the heart being in the dust before God, bowed down in His presence, and tasting, as individuals, mercy and grace.

Do you know God for yourself? Are you familiarized with God in Christ—that Christ who is the model God looks at Himself, and has given to you? Has God looked into your heart in power to show you Christ, in whom is all His delight, as the One into whose likeness He would have you moulded? He has seen loathsome, creeping things in there, and He has made you to see what you had no idea of. Christ is to be there, instead of everything else, in the end; but you will see at first how mercy alone suits you. If you do not see what a horrid black thing you are in contrast with Christ, you have no true thought about God's mercy, and should not take the place of a soldier, but go and look for "the

girdle of truth." You must have it quickening and taking hold of your heart, or you will not be able to take the place of one fighting the good fight of faith.

"And having on the breastplate of righteousness."—I know not how better to take this up than by contradicting two errors. The Protestant error, in connection with justification by faith, has been to make the righteousness of Christ applied to a person who has been previously occupied with Christ—*imputed* righteousness. This is untrue. The Romanist says there is no such a thing as imputed righteousness. The Protestant would establish some ground for Christ's favour by his own happy feelings and so on; and, when these are gone, the whole process has to be gone through again of getting his soul into that state once more. He only sees *imputed* righteousness, and not *imparted*; and this error has arisen in answer to the Roman Catholic notion of *imparted* righteousness only, with no imputed righteousness. These say, when you have overcome all the evil in you, God will give you the benefit of imparted righteousness.

But the breastplate is not according to either of these views. It is something covering the front of the person all over, and protecting it. Is it that a certain power has come inside me, and will in the end cast out all evil? No, it is more than this. The Christ that spake to Saul, took him up, and made him *one with Himself*; Christ's life throbbed now in Saul. The members here are in vital union with Christ the Head, and this union links them up in one life.

Where do I begin when I talk of righteousness? *With God.* I say: It was righteous of God to raise Christ from the dead, and thus to vindicate Him as worthy of all glory; it was righteous of God to show out what the world was, to show out the impotency of Satan, and to show out what He Himself was too, by raising Christ from the dead and putting Him there on the throne of God, everything put into His hands by right and title. "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Here is the perfectness of righteousness.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;" there is value in the blood to put them away. But there is more than that. He has *stores* of righteousness in that One up there, which He could throw over the sinner. But He does more than that. He makes the pardoned sinner *one* with that Christ—with that *righteous* One. God looks at us not in ourselves, but in Christ; and thus the righteousness I have is perfect; it is "the righteousness of God."

The tempest tossed conscience, knowing its feelings about sin, but not seeing the full measuring out of its guilt on Christ, needs to see the question of sin for ever settled—needs to see it as connected with the great plan of God. The foundation is Christ. The separate stones do not give the value to the building; it is the temple as a whole, and the foundation on which it stands. The righteousness of God, who "when we were dead in sins, quickened us *together* with Christ." Different this, to the thought of a white robe thrown over me.

It is not my mind at work on God's truth ; it is God's truth at work on my mind. If you have the unction from the Holy One, you need to look to God to have His truth so brought home to you. A person may be holding truth himself, instead of having it as a girdle round him. There is all the difference possible in our grasping at truth, and truth holding us.

The righteousness we have is not only imputed, which gives the idea of something thrown down to me from a distance, but it is mine by the power of a life communicated. Life is there ; the seal of the Spirit is there. To be without any power but my own would be agony ; for then all the purposes of my heart must be found, like Peter's, to be insufficient. God must keep all, as well as lay the foundation. The Spirit of God teaches me, that it is the righteousness in life of a Christ who has died and is risen. Christians want quietness, but it must be quietness of life—of resurrection life. I would rather be a poor, dark, uninstructed one living on Christ, than have all the blaze of truth without Him. The one who has intercourse with the living Christ has the power of life.

There is no power of living Christ, and quitting ourselves like men, but by living out here the life He has communicated to us. Of course it is no question now of guilt upon the conscience : there would be no *living* Christ to us unless He had been a *dead* Christ. But I would rather see any one in bondage, not knowing what to make of the contrast between himself and the Christ who has given him forgiveness and divine

righteousness, than to see much liberty, in the sense and knowledge of grace, and no self-loathing at the contrast. Doubtless, I am to have liberty, but God would have me see *myself*, and learn that I *shall* be a blessed person when I awake in His likeness.

Oh, beloved friends! one thing is pressed much on my heart for you—for many whom I see individually, and for all collectively. It is that you may feel the importance of living, practical holiness before God. Having life—having righteousness—to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken away, as the living members of Christ before the throne, you should individually most earnestly seek to walk before God.

EPH. vi. 15, 16; LUKE ii. 34, 35.

No sooner does Mary know the sweetness of having this Babe, than it is told her, while she might well count herself blessed, “a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also.” No sooner was He born into the world, than nothing but slaughter of babes is heard of. And so, in our hearts, no sooner is Christ there than Satan, who does not like to give up his power, brings in conflict. Some old suppressed habit will, perhaps, break out with new power. Do not be surprized if Christ has displaced Satan in you, that Satan should try to regain the mastery. We cannot stand without knowing this.

The first thought with a newly-saved soul often is : Now I have God ; I have Christ for my peace ;

and now all will *go on quietly. Instead of which we find that we have to do with a God who brings in death and resurrection on all that is in us, that we may know that the excellency of the power is of God and not of us. We are connected with the triumphant party—with the One who has conquered; so there is peace, in spite of all that Satan can do, made good by God in the very field where Satan seemed to have triumphed.

“Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”—The shoe-sandal, not for strength, but for comfort. The heart uninstructed in God’s ways is often tripped up, where, if it knew the ways of God—if it understood His thoughts, it would find cause for thanksgiving.

God does not come off His own ground in dealing with us; He expects us to come on to His ground. Often when Christians get a quiet standing before the Lord, and look back on their past history, they see how their restlessness arose from want of understanding God’s way. They thought to get something for themselves; God’s thought was to get something for Himself. God does indeed hold forth something good for us, but his thought is to train us to know that He has taken us up for Himself. He does not always care for us according to our own thoughts for ourselves, and then we are astonished. He told us before that it would be a desert—a conflict—but we have not taken in what He told us.

You know the position God has claimed for Himself. You know how He took up at Pente-

cost a people connected with the Lord Jesus Christ, and subject to the guidance of the Holy Ghost. You must not then make yourselves the centre of your system, but you must take in this God with whom you have to do.

“Taking the shield of faith”—That by which all the counter movements of Satan are met. You have a wicked one to contend with. I, individually, have to compete with an enemy who has been well nigh six thousand years skilled and versed in the heart of man; an enemy who has tripped up every individual but One, because he has found in every other in the world something of which he could say: There is a tender spot in you, in which I can put a ring, and lead you captive. He has given servant of God after servant of God heavy falls, and has found but One who could bruise his head, and who will shortly bring it down bruised under our feet.

If you go into the battle thinking it is a fine scene, you will soon find out the solemn truth that Satan is against you, and will give you no quarter. He thoroughly hates Him who puts you forward in the battle; he abominates from the bottom of his soul the object God is making good through such poor worms as you and I are—that he should have, through us, a witness for Himself on earth.

“Ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”—It is important to judge whence evil is. It is all in one sense from Satan; but, when in the presence of God, judging yourselves, you cannot always quietly put things off on Satan, for Christians often tempt Satan, in-

stead of his tempting them; they often put themselves where they know there is temptation, even if Satan were out of the way. They lay the train, and invite Satan to put the spark to the tinder. *They* then bear the moral guilt of it before God.

We cannot calculate about fiery darts hurled by Satan. God will put up an object before a young Christian, and Satan will hang up another. You may set off thinking of God's object, and, on the way, Satan may get you off to another; and God will teach you by it. You did not know it; but perhaps you loved money—a little bit of power—something of that sort; and you ~~have~~ perhaps learned that you did by a fall. Or again: there may be some service God is going to launch a man in, and He may allow Satan to come in and try him with fiery darts, so that he may be humbled right down before Him at the first, and then may go into the work softly.

There need be no setting on fire, for the shield of faith is ours. And which is best? for God to teach us the evil of our hearts by fiery darts, or by falls which dishonour His name? Mark, I do not say it is necessary to learn your hearts in either of these ways, but you must learn them in some way. Peter learned something of his by his falls. Luther learned his, to an immense extent, by fiery darts from the enemy. The proper way is to learn them by that which comes from communion with God, and using the shield of faith. Satan stands plying his fiery darts, and the man of God stops, holds up the shield of faith, and shuts them out. The child of God in

communion with his Father can say: I know what you are about. The Christian taught of God finds in God's presence what Christ is, and how Satan could not get one bit of dross out of Him, for there was none there.

Satan's ways with us are three fold. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." The temptation will take the form of the mind, and of the position of the person addressed. Where is the answer to each? Is it the lust of the eye? and is my answer to be: Oh, I am to please my eye? I am to admire what is beautiful?—When I get to the scene *God* tells me to admire, I *will* admire it.—Is it the lust of the flesh?—I am no debtor to the flesh to minister to it, for it is because I have this bad flesh, that will lust, that Christ died.

If you cannot get to see that your portion is not here—that you are passing through a world that crucified Christ—I do. Something for myself, is it? and my Lord not glorified? Oh, the power of knowing that God has taken you up for Himself! Oh, the power of a single eye enabling you to meet all that Satan can do against you! What would trouble you in your troubles if you had this thought; God has set me here, and He would have me here—*exactly here*.

A cross on one shoulder, and a cross on the other, and is there not peace? "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" God says: Take that weak body. And can you not take it from Him? Fiery darts coming in thicker than hailstones, and can you not say: I will bear them all for the sake of

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Him who has called me to be a soldier? Would they disturb your peace, if the sense of *God's* having put you there were fresh in your mind?

One thing to notice is, that Satan does not make a stand with a passing shot; he will keep to it. But God does not like to be constantly troubling the quiet walk; so He will sometimes let things accumulate, and then take the soul apart to learn it all at once. So the enemy may be allowed to ply his fiery darts a long time before God will come in about it. Evil suggestions—a sort of whispering in the ear—sometimes it is a heresy Satan-inspired, which none but God could meet. You cannot account for many things without seeing that they come direct from Satan into the minds and mouths of persons.

EPHESIANS vi. 17 18.

Before entering on the helmet and the sword, I desire to recall what has been said on former occasions, as to the way in which the Spirit of God shows us in the context a certain position taken up on earth by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that He has a people whom He has placed in that position, which they have to make good against the power of the adversary. ☞

The minds of people have often been confused about this passage, by their not seeing that it is not a question of aggressive warfare, such as the work of an evangelist; but that it is the saints

of God standing fast in the camp—holding the position in which He has set them.

“The helmet of salvation” is the next thing connected with the panoply. It is important to bear the principle I have spoken of in mind in connection with this, because, in another place, the fifth of the first of Thessalonians, we find the helmet spoken of in another way. There it is: “Putting on for an helmet, the hope of salvation.” A soldier may have a helmet of one kind for one position, and another for a different kind of warfare; just as the different shields that are spoken of; if standing under the wall of a besieged town, he would need the large shield to cover him completely; while in active warfare the light small one would be used.

People want to reconcile the two expressions, but they do not need to be reconciled. If you do, you rub out the distinction. It would spoil the whole, if it were said here “the hope of salvation;” because God says: I have put you to stand in a certain position; if you do not *stand* in it, you will be driven back from off it. Therefore it is not “The *hope* of salvation,” but “salvation” itself which is the helmet.

What is our helmet? Just as, in connection with the feet being shod, it is the gospel of peace, so now it is the helmet consisting of salvation. The head—the vital part—is protected by it. It is a finished salvation; you take your position as a saved man.

But there is more than this. Just as the breastplate is not only righteousness imputed individually—a true view but defective—but

God's righteousness in Christ; so here it is the salvation that becomes the Saviour-God; it takes in *God's* work, and not only meets the contingencies of my walk here. The Saviour-God has done the work. I must look up there, and see Him the centre of a new system, in which my salvation is comparatively but a small part. My head is here encircled by a glory connected with all that *God is*. My salvation flows from this, that He is the Saviour-God.

I have no claim or title. God says; I reckon you perfectly guiltless, because I did reckon the guiltless One guilty for your sake. I can look down on you through Him, and cannot separate the feeblest member of His body from Himself. I look down on you as those on whom descends all that He has, all that He is, and all my delight is in Him.

Most blessed, but even this is not all. God did not set Himself in movement because of what we were—for our individual salvation. He delights Himself in salvation; and He bids us look up, and see in Him the measure of this salvation—a salvation for eternity—for the earth—for the heavens—showing out the riches of His grace, according to His eternal character as the Saviour-God.

So the apostle speaks here of the helmet of salvation, as what I know as the answer to Satan—the answer to the world—the answer to my own soul, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ on the throne of God as my Saviour-God.

“And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”—Here again we find the importance of

attending to the context. The sword is mentioned in different ways in the word. In Hebrews iv. 12—15, we have the Lord Jesus as One who has “passed through the heavens,” and is on the throne to sympathize. His sympathy is with God first; and next He sympathizes with what is of the Spirit in us, not with what is of the flesh. He will not strengthen the flesh, but the Spirit.

What do you want? Do you say God’s glory in you? Then He may have to put you through discipline. There are many things in your heart that He may see have to be removed, for He will ever sever between the heart and the cherished idol, and the word will be like a lancet in the hand of a surgeon to us.

Mark that in the fourth of Hebrews there is no question of the adversary as there is in Ephesians. It is Christ dealing with His people for the glory of God, looking after the people He loves, and, therefore, judging hearts.

In the second of Revelation we find “the sharp sword with two edges.” He comes out of His place to judge, on the one hand; He will go right down to discern the “thoughts and intents of the heart.” On the other hand, He will not be deceived by false testimony. In Revelation it comes in, when failure was amongst the candlesticks, to see what light they were giving, He being One whom smoke would not deceive; but, at the same time, so used to handle the sword, as to be able to give deliverance by it to any in the evil having “ears to hear.”

Here, in Revelation, it is Christ outside; in

Hebrews, it is Christ within the veil, judging His people; in Ephesians, it is the saint standing in testimony—that is, in a position he has to make good. What is the use of the sword there? Much. There is the adversary against you, and you have to withstand him.

In the fourth of Matthew, in our Lord's temptation, we have the brilliant illustration of this use of the sword of the Spirit. Mark, it is before the Lord begins His aggressive work that He goes through the fiery ordeal. What grace was there in this to us! In grace Christ stood in the wilderness to measure Satan, and well he could stand in that position against the enemy. There are three things connected with it. But first, always in connection with the right use of the sword, is the single eye. Christ being led up by the Spirit to be tempted, takes His stand as a servant to defend Himself with the sword; answering always from Deuteronomy, He takes the place of the humbled One.

First, it is the lust of the flesh: "Command that these stones be made bread." Does God like His people to hunger? Thou knowest His delight in thee, put forth thy power. Mark the answer. Ah! if it is blessedly true that there is such a thing as Jehovah's loving to feed His people, there is something more blessed still than being fed; there is the being sustained by God without it. Man does not live by bread alone; man may be without bread, but not without the word of God. Thus Satan was foiled by Christ's taking the place of perfect dependence.

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Next it is "the lust of the eye," and such a promise brought to back it as that "angels shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." But Satan garbles it, as he did to Eve. He presses home on the Lord something that the eye can see. He had got Israel down in that way: they wanted a sign. Does he never get you down thus? Do you not want something to look at, or to feel, instead of the simple word of God? If Satan come to you, and ask you to give him some visible token of God's care for you, answer him with: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Why ask for signs—for feelings—when God Himself is close at hand? The emphasis of "Thou shalt not tempt" is, thou shalt not challenge God for signs. Why do I want a sign? Because I cherish lust. He says: No; thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Then Satan makes another attempt with what belongs to him. There is no sense in asking whether Satan had the power to do this, for there is no use in asking if a liar can speak the truth; it might, or it might not, be; but assuredly Satan can do nothing but as God allows it. As with Balaam, he could not curse Israel.

Satan has no power over a saint of God unless he yield it to him; could he ever succeed with a child of God who is using the sword? Never! If he succeed, it is because you have betrayed yourself into his hands. It was thus with Eve; it was thus with Israel before the calf; it is thus with the church, unfaithful likewise; and the saint unfaithful to God puts himself into the enemy's hands.

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The third thing I would notice here is the "Get thee hence, Satan." He had not said this before. It is remarkably connected with the use of the sword of the Spirit. If you put yourself into a place of temptation, you have no right to say "get thee hence, Satan." If God lead you into it, as Christ was led of the Spirit, you have to bear it.

It was not when Satan was merely tempting Him that Christ uses this language, but also when God's honour was touched. When Peter took upon himself what belonged to God alone, it was: "Get thee behind me, Satan." And when Satan does this with me, then I am justified in saying the like. Satan will sometimes so turn things round, that he will go beyond himself; and then there is rescue for you; while before, you have had only to stand in the temptation—to endure—whilst having no power to put an end to it, at last a question comes up which does not in the least tempt your heart, that before may have been tempted; something that seeks openly to set aside God; and then without difficulty you can turn round and say: I will have nothing to do with that; "get thee behind me, Satan."

All this teaches us forcibly the meaning of taking the sword of the Spirit. It is to be used in the active energy of service, but it is to be used also, ~~not~~ only standing on some corner of a rampart, utterly unable to go forward in anything. Even if a bed-ridden saint, you will not be able to make good your position, and Satan will betray you to yield, if you are not skilful in using the

sword of the Spirit.

The temptation of our Lord gives us an immense amount of experience ; it shows up the ways of Satan ; he would throw us into a dilemma if he could. The Lord met him in the spirit of a servant—as meaning to be a servant. Then Satan puts Him between the two horns of the dilemma ; he tempts both as a servant and as God. Christ passes through and maintains both.

We are in a position to be tempted all day long to give up ; and where he succeeds with us so often is through our not having a single eye—so contrary to Christ's : “ Lo, I come to do thy will.”

Then again, there is with us the want of understanding God. Some lust begins to move in our heart ; we think of what we like, or of what we do not like, instead of delighting in God ; and immediately we are in danger. Never so with Christ.

Closely connected with the armour is the spirit of the believer—the spirit of dependence it must be, for with the soldier there must be prayer—hanging upon God. Not only getting this feeding supply hourly from God to meet his need individually, and to meet that of all the church militant, but also that all his springs are in God.

“ Praying always.” God often puts His people into new paths—paths unsought and unthought of by you. Why are you there?—God would see whether you have the spirit of prayer there or not. The Red Sea is before you ; the enemy behind you ; then a waste howling wilder-

ness beyond, but it is no waste howling wilderness to *God*. He can go through it. We learn in these new scenes how little we know of these feeding-springs in Him for us, and He would have us learn them. The question is, not as to the springs being there, but as to whether we know how to draw water from them. Sometimes, when the saint has learned the lesson, he is taken home. God says: Why should I leave him there any longer? he may go home.

“Supplication for all saints.”—The spirit of the camp is to be the spirit of dependence; each saint looking for—drawing for—all the rest, the consciousness of God’s supplies being all full for every heart.

Ah, beloved friends! you cannot do without the camp. And whatever your outside position, remember you must have the spirit of dependence. You had far better be a living saint, walking in dependence on the living God, though very ignorant, than one who knows a great deal about position, and so on, but who is meanwhile double-minded and lukewarm, knowing little or nothing of this “praying always”—of the springs that are in God.

Oh, that our souls may know them to His glory!

EPHESIANS vi. 18—24.

The closing portion of this chapter divides itself into three parts. Prayer; interest in the details of the work in prayer; and the benediction. The great subject in which the Ephe-

sians ought to have been interested was the glory of God : and their prayers would have flowed forth about it, in the intelligence of renewed hearts that know what to pray for.

There is such a thing as drawing near to God, conscious that there is something He has got to give. I cannot tell what, but He that searcheth the hearts knoweth.

If I am a soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is a happy thing to see the special need of the work, so as to be able to present it definitely. As to prayer, much is often passed heedlessly by; whilst in others, there is often more correctness in the heart than in the understanding.

There was no such thing as prayer in Eden ; prayer is the expression of want. Directly I find a person praying, I am sure there must have been sin connected either with himself, or with the place he is in. The blessed Lord, when He prayed, was in the place where sin was. Paul prayed when he found out there was a God in heaven whom he knew nothing about.

The opening of the subject of prayer in Scripture is in the case of Cain. There was in him no dependence whatever upon God ; but when God had pronounced his judgment, then he says : " My punishment is greater than I can bear ; " he makes an appeal to God ; and God takes care that nothing of what he dreaded should take place. What does Cain do with the gift he gets in answer to his appeal ? He settles down quietly to make himself as happy as possible without God's presence on earth. A solemn thing this in connection with prayer ; the fallen

heart may appeal to God, and God give an answer, and, as the result, the heart, being un-renewed, only makes itself as happy as possible out of God's way.

Persons constantly say: I am safe, because I pray. Take care. If *God* says of you: "Behold he prayeth," it is well, but not otherwise. It is not a question whether God gives you gifts, but what you do with them. Is it for yourself that you use them, or for the glory of God?

Our blessed Lord took the place of one who had put in abeyance all His power—who held *Himself* in abeyance! He took the place of a servant. His being able to do this proved who He was. Man cannot hold himself in abeyance, for his character is too strong for him. Sin is in, and sin will come out. Look at the Lord's prayer in Gethsemane—the only instance of the kind, and replete with instruction for us. He goes into Gethsemane, to pass through, in solitude with God, all that was upon the threshold—all that was coming upon Him. And what is it? "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." The Lord, holding the place of the perfect Son of man, could not forget what rested on His bearing that name—even the question of guilt. But how was it possible, if He were perfect, for Him to think it an unimportant thing for God to hide His face from Him? He would not have been perfect if He had not shrunk from only this one thing. He did not shrink from the temptation in the wilderness; God led Him into it. But there was in this what was

anguish to His soul in the very measure in which He was perfect.

Human nature, in all its perfection, may present desires before God which will not be received. On the other hand, there is such a thing as man entering into God's counsels. This comes out in Paul, where he says: "Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Now, as a good man, could he do otherwise than abhor Satan's messenger? God says: I will not take it away. I give you my light to show you my reason, and leave it there to throw you upon Me. Better rudely to strand your vessel on the shore, if it make my strength perfect in your weakness; you will then pour out your heart before Me.

There never was a case like that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul did not stand in the light of the divine counsels; that was why he did not like the thorn in the flesh. But Christ stood in the full light of the thoughts of God, and, therefore, He could not but hate that cup.

There is the flowing-out of grace through human hearts down here. It may be felt that some Christian is so walking with God as to have the ear of God. And this is a blessed thing, but there is something above it, and that is a person so walking with God that you can go to him to know what God's mind is. It is a blessed thing to have the ear of God; but how much better to feel that the sympathies of Christ are flowing through my heart, and that I can *know* what He is going to do.

There is none with whom the power of prayer

is more remarkable than with the weakest members. A babe will get an immediate answer, whilst a father may have to wait, because he has, or ought to have, learned to trust.

If it be not on our hearts in the present day that there is a testimony to go out for God, we shall sink down into some little local interest. The apostle wanted them to care for the work going on then, not merely out of love and friendship for him, but that he wanted their souls to bear part in the work by bearing it on their hearts before God. There is an immense burden on us before the Lord, connected with this want of sympathy with what God is doing.

God in dealing with the souls of His people, traces in His word the path for their feet, and marks out the proper subject for prayer. There may be in prayer a great deal of affection and thoughtfulness, and yet it may be all *human*. Persons might think God would say: Go; you pray for a wrong thing. But no; He often gives the answer, and then lets us learn by bitter experience how, if we had left it a little more to Him, He would have done far better for us. Often one is plaiting a scourge for one's own back, before one learns to place oneself as a child, and say; Take thou the lead, and I will follow. There will be pressing desires before God, and He will grant them, and let us see how we have been planning—not for God—but planning difficulties for ourselves. You cannot dictate to God. The blessed Lord only once said: "I will;" and then it was His Father's will.

Do you feel that there is this war going on

THE CONFLICT.

between God and Satan, and that you are connected with it? And that your heart is out and abroad in connection with it? If it be so, it is surely a special time for prayer. There are countries all the world over that need a testimony which none but God can render, but which we, if we are like men that wait for their Lord, may have laid on our hearts to pray for for them.

(G. V. W.)

Do you always take pleasure and rejoice greatly when trials and distresses are in the distance before you? How strange it is that heavy trials are often greater blessings than little ones! How is this? It is that little trials often vex saints, just because self is there to be vexed, whereas a heavy blow crushes self, and then there is none of it left to be vexed.

If self were always kept under the extinguisher, God would not have to send us heavy trials to crush it, or little ones to let us find out its unjudged presence, but only "a thorn in the flesh" to keep that, which has been extinguished on the cross, out of our own sight as well as that of other people.

H. H. M.

"GOD PREPARED A WORM,
AND IT SMOTE THE GOURD THAT IT WITHERED."
"TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST,
AND TO DIE IS GAIN."

A Reading on

JONAH iv. and PHI: i. 21.

You have to get through the fourth of Jonah, before you can know what it is to be in the first of Philippians.

You find in this book of Jonah, that there are two deaths that must be gone through by the soul to whom "to live is Christ." First, death on myself; and then, death on everything around me. Martha and Mary show out exactly these two classes of saints; those who have only learned the first, and those who have gone through both.

Jesus talks to the one; He walks with the other; He talked to Martha; He wept with Mary. There are none of the saints He will not speak to, but there are but few that He walks with. You get the two together in the fourth of Hebrews: "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." That is

the talking. And then : " We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." That is the walking, and the weeping.

You must know what it is to have learned Him in the path of death, before He can say to you : I will bear you company. It was there Mary learned Him ; and it was thus she was fitted for communion. It was first sympathy, and then communion, and so it must always be.

There is this difference between sympathy and communion. Sympathy is when the Lord comes to my side of things ; communion is when I go to His side. You *must* know His sympathy, before you can know communion. I have a Person who accompanies me on my path, and my heart forms itself by Him and is occupied with His thoughts ; and this is communion.

It is a wonderful thing to see, that death, which has been the terrible blot upon us, should have been turned right round by God, and made the door of so much blessing to us. Death is the great difficulty for the soul to learn. When I know deliverance, I am devoted ; but I must learn Christ in the *death* of all dear to me before I am a *devotee*.

I can give you examples of this in the Old Testament. Jonathan sees David, who is a beautiful picture of Christ. He risks his life for my sake. Now, in reaching perfect deliverance, there are three stages for the soul. David meets

the foe, and first, I am anxious to know the result of the contest. Second, I am hopeful; Goliath is down. Third, I am assured; his head is in David's hand. Then comes a change. Jonathan thinks no more about himself and Goliath; he is occupied with David. He says: *David* is my object! And he takes off "the robe that was upon him, and gives it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." He does it before all the army, for he thought of no one but David. He was devoted.

Now I come to Ruth, another example. Ruth is a widow, and her only friend is a widow. Naomi entreats Ruth to leave her, and go back to her own people and country; but Ruth says: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Now *she* is a devotee; she will follow Naomi *anywhere*.

There are two instances in the New Testament, that I can give you, the two alabaster boxes. In the one in the seventh of Luke, it is the sinner. She comes into the Pharisee's house and says: That is my Saviour.

Scripture not only communicates light to you, but it tells you how light will act upon you. It is not only the wardrobe to supply me with clothes, but it is the looking glass to show me how they are on.

She is behind Him weeping; that is the private thing; it is between herself and Him only. Then she takes the alabaster box and anoints His feet with the ointment; that is the public thing. She gave Him what she might have kept for herself; that is what love always does; it makes little of itself to make much of its object.

The second alabaster box is in the twelfth of John. Lazarus has died, and has been raised again, and now, at the supper, is sitting at the table with Him, whilst Martha serves. "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." Why was this? Why did she take all that she had most costly to expend upon Him? It was that He had taught her in that hour when death had done its worst for her heart, that she had "a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." And, now that that dark hour is past, she comes out in the saint's house with her alabaster box—not in the world, as the other had done. *She* had done it in the Pharisee's house: the world can see when a man is converted, and makes much of his Saviour. But Mary is in the *saint's* house: the world cannot appreciate or see a saint making nothing of himself, and burying all of natural value in the grave of Christ.

People are very unwilling to accept death; but, I believe, no one can know what Christ is personally, until he has passed through death with Him—until he has had to say: I have no-

thing but Christ. We have all some links to earth—some enjoyments here ; I say : You are not equal to being deprived of everything ; you are not fit to be without a gourd.—As to Paul, Jerusalem was a gourd to him.

I remember a poor woman once telling me of a time when she had been left with nothing whatever in the house, and she said : “ It was the happiest moment of my life ! ”—I said : “ Why ? ”—She answered : “ Because, don’t you see the honour the Lord put on me to trust me ? ”

The gourd was really a thing that softened him, and comforted him ; and, when God took it from him, he was angry with God. Scripture does not conceal things ; it just tells us out the plain truth. You may be saying all sorts of nice things outwardly, and be as angry as possible all the time in your heart. He says : “ I do well to be angry, even unto death.” Now, says God, I brought you through all this just on purpose to teach you my own feelings.

The fact is, death is a wonderful blessing, not merely for the person who passes away through it, but it has a wonderful effect on us who remain. I must find out Christ now in the place of the one whom God has taken from me. God lets you into His own feelings. He says to you : You are talking of your gourd ; why do you not get into my thoughts ? He took it away in order to get *Jonah* into His line of things. That is communion with God. He wants to show you what His heart is occupied with.

I do not say you always have to learn it through bereavement, for I believe you ought to learn it

at the Lord's table. There I pass through the greatest death that ever can come upon me—the death of Christ. I am going through this scene as one upon whom death has done its worst; but to whom also, at the same time, death has opened out the most wondrous Person. I have communion with the blood of Christ, and with the body of Christ.

There is no spiritual elevation without natural humiliation. There is no natural elevation without apparent exaltation. Supposing the Lord is wrestling with Jacob, and he gets a great blessing, he is lame first. In another case—Lot—he gets natural elevation, and he gets exaltation. “Well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt.”—Supposing the Lord takes my child to Himself, that is spiritual elevation, but I am humiliated. Now, instead of spiritual elevation, we are too often looking for natural elevation.

I never can know what the Lord is, until I am thrown entirely alone with Him, and nobody else there. That is really the force of those words in the seventy-third Psalm: “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and, with thee upon earth, I do not want any one else.”

Are we then to lose *everything*—to lose *everybody*? No, no! for God knows exactly what is best for me to have, and what I really need, and that He leaves me. But, when He does come in, and take loved ones from me, the heart must fall back upon this: This is a moment when I shall discover something in Christ, that I never had an opportunity of discovering before.

I say to Ruth : What do you follow that poor old woman for?—She says : I have found in her in the hour of sorrow what I could not find elsewhere. When none other cared for me, she stood beside me. She has been my stay, she has been my prop, she has been my solace, my comfort, the companion of my heart ; and my heart is bound to her ; I will never leave her.

Another point in the second alabaster box is, that He is going to die. Then there is nothing of value to me here that I will not put into his grave. And that is a wonderful thing to do ; it goes farther than Jonathan ; his was *devotedness* ; this is *devoteeism*. True, devotedness must come before devoteeism. People may object to the word ; we know that it is used in heathen worship, but I cannot find a better for what I mean.

Now it is a fact, that you never get near Christ that you do not see His death. When John looks into the glory, he sees “ In the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain.” The One who is on the throne is the One who has settled the whole question between us and God ; this is what Scripture sets forth to us.

As to the difference between the New Testament and the Old : I say, that the New Testament is, as it were, the science of navigation, and the Old Testament, is the log book. A man says to me after reading Ephesians : Oh, I see the heavenly calling perfectly !—I say : Come to Exodus, and let us see. Are you out of Egypt ?—Yes indeed I am !—Are you across the Red Sea ?—Oh, yes, I hope so !—Are you across the

Jordan?—Well I cannot say *that!*—Oh then I know where you are! The Scripture measures you.

A man who reads the Old Testament without the New will become legal. But go to the Old Testament with the New, and you will always get a practical illustration of what you have learned in the New.

What has made some poets celebrated is that they have dared to reveal thoughts that others never ventured to express; and that is just what the Bible does; it does not cover over things; it bring out the naked truth; it tell us Jonah said, "I do well to be angry, even unto death."

As to the meaning of the words: "God repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them, and he did it not." Repentance in connection with God means that He went back to His original thought. When we repent we cannot go back to our original thought; we have to repudiate our own thoughts altogether.

There is a natural shrinking from death, and yet it brings out all that is great and true by its presence. As a poet says: "There is no great thought but is allied to melancholy;" because, if you want to get to reality, you must get to sorrow.

When I come to look at the death of the Lord, I must say: All that came in order that God might say: I bring in a Man now according to my own counsels and after my own heart.

We must take Jonah as a converted man. God wants him to do a thing, and he will not.

JONAH.

Then, says God, I must break your will. Jonah insists on going his own way, and instead of bringing himself into easy circumstances, he brings himself down to the bottom of the sea.

There is a moment in the history of a converted soul when he finds that he is absolutely good for nothing. It is then that he becomes devoted, and then he is tractable.

Jonah begins to trouble about the work. He says: "I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil." And he sat down to "see what would become of the city."—Now, says God, you must learn that you have nothing to trust to but me. The gourd goes, and then he learns to be a perfect servant.

It is an extraordinary thing, but, even in the world, a man who passes through trials is always hardened unless he gets sympathy. When I see a saint, who has gone through a great deal of sorrow, very hard, I can only say: He has never had Christ's sympathy in it.

(J. B. S.) BLACKHEATH,
14th Nov. 1874.

FOUR THINGS WE HAVE IN CHRIST.

It is very striking to notice, when the eye is opened to see it, how the manner of Paul's conversion brought out to his soul the entire contrast of all that was in man, and what was in Christ. Every principle on which man could rest was gone; conscience had failed to be a guide; Paul thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. That was: his conscience led him, making him destroy Christ if he could; his righteousness, according to the law, wrought to the same thing; he could not have Christ, he was a Pharisee; his religiousness too made him bow to the authority of the chief priests. By conscience, law, and religiousness, he was against God. All the things which could act religiously upon the senses, which God had Himself appointed, and had been present Himself upon the earth to maintain, all had brought man to enmity against God. Paul had lived in it all, and found himself thereby only in activity against God. His religion as to the flesh was all smashed; it all went for nothing: of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a blameless Pharisee; all was gone! It had brought him into enmity against the Lord of glory. And, let me say here, that

ritualism, by which in these days people are seeking to build up all this again, is the *denial* of Christ; before it was only *ignorance* of Him.

When Paul by grace got hold, not of external morality, as to which he was blameless, but of the spirituality of the law, he found that by the law was the knowledge of sin. Very useful it now is in that way; but you cannot build up service to God upon that whose only true effect is to convict of sin, nor on the flesh that is not subject to God, but is enmity against Him; that is quite clear. It is of the greatest moment for our understanding God's ways, and for our having peace, that we should clearly see this. God bore with Judaising tendencies till Jerusalem was destroyed; but in Paul, for his deliverance, it was all smashed up at once. Blind outwardly, and his eye turned in, he found everything in him was enmity against God. He had been brought up in, what would be called in these days, a famous university; but now, instead of himself, he had got Christ, and all the rest was judged by this revelation of Christ.

But the philosophical wisdom of man is no better. It is never true, nor can it arrive at any true knowledge of God or of man. It is false in its basis. As legalism takes up sinful flesh to make out righteousness, so rationalism takes up man's mind to know God, of which it is so incapable, that what it is capable of cannot be God; for it must be master of the subject to know it rightly, which it cannot be of God. A God that reason is equal to, is not God at all.

God has chosen the foolish things, a gibbet, to glorify Himself by, so that no flesh should glory in His presence. What is all the wisdom of this world? Only that in which the flesh clothes itself. A conscience dealt with by God alone, puts God in His place and ourselves in ours; the moment I get the moral system of the world, I find what is not of the Father, and it is all judged. Paul started there, with human righteousness, and religious standing with God, razed to its foundations; all the more powerful as a testimony, that he was a blameless man personally. But our whole position is changed from that of being in the flesh: 'Of God are we in Christ Jesus'; we do not want a system that builds it up in ceremonial righteousness or rationalistic pretensions, for we are *of God*.

The Greeks were spinning thoughts out of their own heads, which, like spiders' webs, could catch flies and nothing else! Some said: God was too high to notice man. It sounded very grand, but then what was to become of man? Some would exalt man to an equality with God; Epicureism and Stoicism are of all ages. God puts man in his place as a responsible person, not a reasoner. The world by wisdom knew not God. Why did the Athenians set up an altar to the unknown God? It was the only bit of truth Paul could pick up to use among them.

God chose all the foolish things, the weak things, to put down what was wise and strong in man's sight—a parcel of fishermen; and to Paul he gave the thorn in the flesh, lest he should think it was by his own power the work was done.

Nothing has gone over the world like Christianity. Even the unconverted have felt its effect: people do not do in the light what they do in the dark, so it has had an effect where there is no conversion.

But then he comes to: "*of Him are ye;*" not only conscience and heart work, but the new life. Of God are ye: an immense and precious truth; we derive our own moral and spiritual existence from God Himself. It is not our puny reason, as we are, striving to fathom what, if it could be measured or known by it, would be proved not to be God at all, but subject to it.

Half a century ago a sentence of Cicero's shewed me there could be no knowledge of God by reason. The words are these: "*quasi materia . . . subjecta est veritas.*" (*De officiis* 1. 5.) That could not be God. I saw that faith only could put God in his place, and me in mine. Nor an attempt to satisfy God, as Judge, with what sinful flesh can do, quieting our conscience for a time with what never purges it. *We* are of God. But another truth connects itself with this, through what the law did do in the conscience: "I, through the law, am dead to the law." But, if only killed and condemned, that would not do of course; so he adds: "I am crucified with Christ:" He found Christ had taken the curse which the law pronounced, and death to sin was ours through Him, and Christ was living in him: "Not I but Christ liveth in me." Then there is also the Object of this life by which it lives: "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

But that we are of God thus, is only one side; what we are ourselves of God in Christ Jesus. Besides that we get what Christ is for us on the part of God; we are of God in Christ, a completely new thing; and He is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." We have all these things of and from God now. The passage gives us the character and quality of the things as *of* and *from* God. It is not righteousness, nor is it sanctification according to the law. In Philippians, Paul, for he does not here contrast it with sins, says: "Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is of *God*"—another kind. He had given up all thoughts of righteousness as a man; he was not ashamed of the gospel, for therein was the righteousness of God revealed. There are fruits of righteousness of course, but this is entirely of grace.

I get these four things: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption; there are many more, fellowship with the Father and the like: but we get these four things as the basis of all.

It is not of man. Christ is divine "wisdom" for us: God has made foolish the wisdom of this world, but "we speak wisdom among them that are perfect." He has "abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of His will" (see Eph: i. 8—10). The divine revelation of all God's thoughts and intentions is in Christ; "the wisdom of God in a mystery," which word means what only the initiated understand; like Freemasonry; I do

not know anything about it because I am not initiated.

God's delight was with the sons of men, before the foundation of the world (Prov. viii.). Angels were there already when the world was created, but they were not the objects of God's delight and purpose; they were the testimony that God could make a glorious creature and keep him. But we are the testimony that He can make an inferior creature, and, when he has fallen into sin, redeem him. All the display of what God is in redemption is unfolded in and through man. We are lower than the angels as creatures; so Christ became lower than the angels for the suffering of death. But all the result of that wondrous dealing of God, we get; we get peace with God, redemption through the blood; "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance."

Some have thought that, as Christ is made these things to us, the passage speaks of imputation. It does not however. Imputed wisdom, or imputed redemption, has no sense; other passages may shew that imputation is true in the case of righteousness, but here the thought is not found; it is, that Christ gives the true character and reality of these things on the part of God.

Christ is "made wisdom." All the mind of God revealed, which never was till the cross; this mystery of connecting persons with Him by the power of the Holy Ghost, was never revealed before. "Who hath saved us and called us..... according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world

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began, but is *now* made manifest." 2 Ti. 1. 9, 10, also Tit. 1. 2, 3. The cross, having laid the foundation of righteousness which was consistent with God—and more than consistent, for it glorified Him—those things are revealed which eye had not seen, nor ear heard. He gives us spiritual occupation in that way.

Then we get "righteousness"—the righteousness of God revealed on the principle of faith, so that we have no part in its accomplishment at all. Supposing you kept the law to a tittle, that would be man's righteousness, not God's. God's righteousness is revealed in His setting Christ at His right hand, as in John xvi. He shall convince the world "of righteousness, because I go to my Father." Christ having perfectly glorified God, it was due to Him on the part of God, to set Him in the glory, as He says: He will straightway glorify Him:" John xiii. 31, 32. "Sit thou at my right hand." *There* was righteousness! but it was done for *us*; and, because this work of redemption was done for us, we get the result of it all. "God is just, and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus." Not "just and *yet* the justifier," but just *in* justifying.

And it is a different kind of righteousness in which we stand. Man's righteousness is the measure of the judgment; but the righteousness of God is the measure of my place before Him. What a poor sinner needs is, that his sins should be met; and, thank God, they are met; but Christ has done more; He has glorified God. Where has God's love been manifested? In the

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cross. Supposing he had cut off Adam and Eve, there would have been no love in it, though just. If He had passed over all sins simply, we should have called it love ; it is what man calls mercy ; but then it were no matter about righteousness. But, in Christ dying on the cross, I get all that is in God perfectly glorified ; and therefore He puts the Man who did it into the divine glory.

He is "made unto us righteousness." It is of faith that it might be by grace. A man may believe me when I tell him I have paid his debt, but his belief does not add one farthing to the payment. All the good comes to us, but all the glory comes to Him, and He is worthy of it.

Then there is "redemption." He is "made unto us redemption," which is the full accomplishment, in full deliverance, of all God's plans and counsels as to us ; all these are in Christ.

And now we come to sanctification : He is "made unto us sanctification." People sometimes say this is imputed ; but we have seen that you cannot impute wisdom or redemption, though it may be true as to righteousness. But Christ is the whole thing. Whatever wisdom I have, is only the wisdom of God in Christ ; it is God's wisdom revealed in Christ ; so God's righteousness, and so redemption ; He changes our vile bodies ; it is what these things are in Christ Himself in every part. What is this wisdom ? God's in Christ ; He gathers together all things in Him.—What is this righteousness ? Christ.—What redemption ? Christ. And so with sanctification ; Christ still.

I desire to open out a little what is this

sanctification. We must remember that God is perfectly revealed in Christ. We walk in the light as God is in the light; that is our place as Christians; no veil now. The Jews had to be holy, but they had no idea of this; God's presence being there, they had to walk in a way suited to that presence in the tabernacle; but it went no farther. The way into the holiest was not then made manifest, but now it is, through the work of Christ. But then also I am set apart for God; the veil is rent; we have boldness to enter into the holiest; we have to do with God *in the light*.

It is no question of what man ought to be, but whether he is fit for that presence. If God is revealed, where do I get the revelation of God to bring me to Himself? In the rending of the veil. If I am not fit to be with God *there*, I am not fit at all. What is the vital measure of this? Christ, as gone into the holiest, the One who answered in everything to his Father's mind. He said of Him: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But I cannot be that down here, because in Him was no sin, and, if I say I have no sin, I deceive myself. But I am sanctified to God by the death of Christ; He offered Himself without spot to God; nothing kept back; no suffering stopped Him; not one thought or feeling that the blessed Lord kept back; it was all to God, and now: "In that he liveth, he liveth unto God." He has set Himself apart as Man in glory, that we also might be sanctified through the truth. Nothing short of what Christ is, as set apart in glory, is sanctification.

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You find it attributed to the Father in Thess. v. 23, and Jude 1. He has taken us up to be for Himself; we are sanctified to something, and that is to God; a great principle.

I get Christ, who perfectly satisfied God all His life long, manifested in His resurrection. All His life through there had been nothing but what was positive fruit according to the Spirit of holiness. That was as Man here. But now "the holy place," where God sets man, is up there; as the Father raised Him up from the dead and glorified Him, even so we also should walk in newness of life; it is a totally new thing, "That He might sanctify the people with His own blood." Heb. xiii. 12. "By the which will we are sanctified." Heb. x. 10. What puts an end to everything of flesh and of the world, is the cross. I am occupied with Christ—a rejected Christ as regards the world.

The whole Trinity is occupied in this work. The Father sanctifies, as we have seen; we are set apart through the blood; but, in the appreciation of it in our souls, in the effectuation of it in us, it is the Spirit who operates and applies it. All immediate action from creation onwards is by the Spirit; but we do not get the full value of what sanctification is, if we do not see the Father, as setting us apart for Himself; and, if we leave the cross out, we do not get its value. We are sanctified by God's will, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, set apart to God according to the value of His precious blood, and lastly as effectuated in power by the Spirit: "He hath chosen you to salvation,

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through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." 2 Thess. ii. 13.

It is a complete setting apart for God, according to the revelation He has given of Himself in Christ; in the light as God is in the light, according to the value of the cross, which has judged the world, written death on the flesh, and rent the veil. It is by a new life and nature: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." As born of God he "*cannot* sin;" not "*ought* not." He is of the nature of that which he is born of; so born of God by the power of the Holy Ghost in the soul, and this by the word, the revelation of His mind and thoughts, quickening and forming us. There are fathers, young men, babes; but the *nature* is there, and it is a *holy* nature.

He has opened to us all the treasure-house of His glory in Christ as an object, and He has given us the divine nature that we may delight in it.

The measure and character of this sanctification is Christ in glory; Christ up there. Is not that a Man set apart for God?—Surely He is! He never had anything of the spirit of the world at any time; our flesh ever has, and that is the difference. In Him there was no sin; if we say we have none, we deceive ourselves. What He was is not a model of what we can be. The flesh is in us, an unchanged evil nature, though we may not allow it to act;—not in Him; but then we ought not to walk after the flesh, we ought to walk even as He walked. "The life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," my mind entirely occupied with Christ. Behold-

ing with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image; the spirit takes the things of Christ and shews them to us.

“We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him,” and “he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” The believer has got the consciousness and certainty that he is going to be like Christ when He appears, and, having that before his soul, he runs after it. And the more our eye gets opened to see the blessedness of Christ, the more capable we become of doing so. But each step introduces us into more light, so that we are able to detect other things not of Him, which were before unnoticed by us; because we purify ourselves ever onward, as He is pure. As to my person, I am sanctified once for all, but, if I come to my heart practically, it is following after holiness, never attained here, because the thing that acts is the glory, and every revelation of the glory purifies and judges us, so that we can see more.

Paul says: “I count not myself to have apprehended . . . but I press towards the mark.” We go into the holiest, in the light as God is in the light, not only forgiven, but divine favour resting on us as upon Christ, and all that is there may be realized by us here. There is the divine excellency that is there, and the word communicates what is of Christ, and all the affections of the heart are linked up with it. “That ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height,” of all the glory into which you are brought—and

then he returns to that with which we are intimate—"and to know the *love* of Christ."

We have these two great principles: the new nature, holy and without blame before Him in love; Christ was holy and blameless, and always before the Father in love; He is our life, and that is what we are called to. I have a title in perfect boldness to enter the holiest, and besides that, I have a divine nature which has its delight there, and also the Holy Ghost, which is the power of apprehension to us.

What is the character and measure of that holiness? Christ—Christ Himself now in glory. Christ crucified is the end of the flesh, and of the world. What is there positively, if negatively I am crucified with Christ? I am alive unto God by the faith of Him, in Jesus Christ our Lord, and I live. And what else? Nothing! We fail I know, all do fail sadly, but that is what God's thought is. We have a new start in Christ; not of the world as He is not of the world; the measure of our sanctification is Christ in glory, and to be conformed to Him there. I have to learn what Christ is. As a person set apart, I am sanctified for ever; but, when I come to the Holy Ghost's work, I have to learn every day, judge every day. We are to follow after as Paul pressed towards the mark. If there is negligence, God will chasten us; He is very jealous over us in His love; but, when things are going on right, there is activity of soul—going on after Him.

Christ then is made all these four things to us. And when I say: What is all this? God's wisdom? It is all yours; "Ye have an unction

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from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Christ is our righteousness, He is our sanctification. Christ in glory, that is what God has set before me as the true measure of it. I wait for redemption, and look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change this vile body and fashion it like unto His glorious body. We get deliverance from sorrow, and the like, when we go to be with the Lord; but, what we wait for, is the redemption of the body.

It is not that a man will think about what is wrought in him, whatever his progress; as has been said of Moses, his face shone, and he was the only person who did not know it. Being occupied with Christ produces its effect in our walk and ways with others, but our hearts enjoy Himself.

We are always sanctified to something; you cannot be sanctified without having an object: "Changed into the same image from glory to glory." Fruit unto holiness there will be, if I walk in obedience; fruit here in separation of heart to God. Babes know the Father; even babes have the spirit of adoption, but the fathers know Christ—get their hearts enlarged (after all they are narrow enough).

And then we wait for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body.

I shall not have, save actual glory, a source of joy in heaven that I have not got here. The Holy Ghost is the power of joy there, and I have Him here. Christ's perfect love:—I am the object of it now. The Father's love:—He loves us now. Eternal life:—that I have;—the blood

that gives me a title there is effectual now. Here, no doubt, we see through a glass darkly; I may see obscurely through a haze on the window, but I see the same objects as if there were no haze. If walking practically in fellowship with the Father, we should see a great deal more.

The Lord give us to know His strength made perfect in weakness; but, at the same time, to know we shall never attain here, because the only object is Christ, made perfect in glory.

(J. N. D.)

Christ comes and, in grace, dies for my sins; and, if I am quickened, I am quickened with Him, and they are all left behind and forgotten; but I am quickened, not to live to myself at all. Now you will find that will cut to the root of many and many a thing. You say: What is the harm of it? I say: Is it living to Christ? What do I find in Christ's life? Why, that He never did a single thing for Himself. "He died that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again;" carry that into everything, and, if you can say about anything, it is for myself, then it is not for Christ. Where Christ is *all*, as He is *in* all; then He is the object. The claim that He makes is not a legal claim that comes upon me, but that He *died* for me.

(J. N. D.)

WHAT IS POWER ?*

2. COR: xii. 1—12.

You see the saint in this Scripture in two positions very different to each other : the one a position of unbroken enjoyment ; the other, one of conflict and power.

Enjoyment is for heaven ; power is for earth. You have the enjoyment all inside with God ; and this so great, that, as Paul says, he knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body. But now, having tasted enjoyment up there, he comes down to “take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake : for when I am weak, then am I strong.” There you need power.

But I want to know, beloved friends, who is the man that can take this place ? Who is the man of power on earth ? The man who alone can take this place is the one who has learned what he can glory in—the one who knows that he has the brightest scene with God above.

This principle, which to any student of Scripture is quite evident, you get plainly enough all through the Old Testament. In Joshua, for instance, you see the children of Israel, after they

* This, and five following addresses, delivered at Queerford, 21st and 22nd May, 1874

enter the land, have first to do with the presence of the Lord; (ch. v.) circumcision takes place—the inside thing; and then they go out in power against their enemies; they walk round Jericho, and the walls fall down flat. Power comes out—the outside thing—power comes out in opposition to everything that is against them. There could not be a greater contrast than there is between the fifth and the sixth chapters of Joshua.

Now, whilst we find *standing* clearly taught in the New Testament, it is in the Old Testament that we find the *state* of individuals plainly marked. The New Testament teaches me my standing; the Old Testament defines my state, and what my state is in keeping with my standing.

It is of the greatest importance to us practically, in such a day as this, to know what power is, and how it may be had. There has been a great deal of light given to us on the word of God in these times, but now, amid such breadth and clearness of statement of truth, the great want is *power*. Generally people do not fail in enjoyment of the truth, but they fail in power to carry it out.

In the Scripture we have read, the apostle had come from a scene of unbroken enjoyment, to find that there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. He was almost overcome by it. But the effect of it was to teach him, that what he was now to glory in was “infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, distresses for Christ’s sake; for,” he

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adds, "when I am weak, then am I strong:"—a sentence that is entirely inexplicable to the mind of man. Paul was to know the power of Christ in his weakness, and to find that that weakness was the very opportunity for the expression of power.

People are often sorely tried when they find that failure succeeds a time of spiritual enjoyment; the effort of Satan, at such a time, is to make the heart question whether there really was any enjoyment at all; and he often succeeds. This is where saints fail. Many a one is extremely happy in his private meditations; there is not a cloud when he leaves his room in the morning; but he comes out and he fails directly. Why? Because he trusts in his enjoyment instead of in Christ. His enjoyment is true, but he begins to question it, because he fails.

When Paul was in the third heaven, what a scene of inexpressible bliss it was! It could not have been added to. And thus, let me say in passing, you never can improve your acceptance. The person who thinks of improving his acceptance is all wrong. You never can attain standing; no ability of yours acquires it; it is a gift; and your heart ought to be simple in the enjoyment of it. You are accepted as perfectly the first moment you believe, as you are when you have been fifty years a Christian; you may enjoy it more then, but you cannot either improve it or increase it.

I will use a word which I think will make it plain to you. People confound their *acceptability* with their *acceptance*. You should never have a

question as to your acceptance, but you cannot be too anxious about your acceptability.

The great lack of the present day is that people are not anxious about their acceptability; but no amount of anxiety would ever make you one bit more accepted than you are. A rose tree *is* a rose tree, though it may never bear a rose; a poor thing truly, but still a rose tree; but it is not an acceptable one. A goldfinch *is* a goldfinch, though it never sing a note; but it is not an acceptable one. You cannot seek too much to make yourself acceptable; break your heart over *that*, and you will not be wrong.

“Enoch walked with God, and he had this testimony that he pleased God;” there was an acceptable man. “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous;” there was an accepted man. Therefore Scripture says: “We labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be acceptable to him”—not “accepted” as it is in our translation—“for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” This is acceptability. Faith, without a particle of works, gets me into the place God has given me; works determine my position, and it is important to keep this in mind.

I have not to do with enjoyment only. True, I am accepted, and I have the enjoyment of that acceptance in which God has placed me; but, as to my body, I am down here in a scene of frailty and infirmity, and the very weakness of my body becomes an opportunity for the grace of Christ to shine out, so that “when I am weak, then am

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I strong." The power is to be known in the weak point. This is a truth which comes home to every one of us.

There are two things I want to say. One is, what power effects in a person. Power is to be known at the weak point. Power is not so much what you do, as what you are. Every one is trying to *do* something, but you will never *do* anything except as you *are* it. The body is a poor weak vessel, but it is in that power is seen ; therefore the apostle says that he takes pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in things that affect him as a man in weakness, for he has learned that, because there was a danger of his being puffed up, "the thorn in the flesh" has been sent to him.

But, as I said, there are two things here : one, the power that proves itself in my weakest point ; the other, that I have *patience* ; and *patience* is the *greatest element of power*.

The man of power is known in a double way : wherever there is a defect morally, there you will find its opposite will come out ; there will be a virtue there. Suppose a man is a drunkard ; he is converted ; and now it is not that he abstains from drink merely, but that he has a taste for sobriety. You may suppress a vice in the power of nature, but that does not put a virtue in its place. You must not only pluck up the weed out of your garden, but you must introduce a divine plant in its place. I state, that when a Christian is walking in grace, the defect in his nature is supplanted by a virtue.

The action of power is different with respect

to a defect and to mere weakness. In the former, as I have shown, there is a virtue introduced in its place. In the latter, though the weakness—such as timidity, natural nervousness—continue, yet “my grace is sufficient,” and the power of Christ rests on you.

A person may say: I have great enjoyment in the Lord. I do not doubt it, but I might reply, you have not much power.—How do you know that?—Because you are very defective in your walk. I do not see you triumphing over this or that defect in your nature. If you had power, you would be triumphant in your defects and supported in your weaknesses. See Elisha, how he follows Elijah with the most devoted heart, but he has not power yet. Power is the carrying out in your body the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It comes out in the point where you are defective. You can see a person of power at once.

Take as an example that verse in the fourth of Corinthians: “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” I speak now of what power is in itself. That is the wonderful place the Lord puts it in—poor earthen vessels—“that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

I hear persons say continually: “Oh, you must make an excuse for me! that is my besetting sin, or my special weakness!”—I reply: I can make *no* excuse for you: that defect is the very opportunity for divine strength; that is just where you ought to be the strongest. What would you think of a medical man, whom you

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sent for on account of a head-ache, if he directed his attention to every part but your head, and did that no good at all? Why, you would say, you have failed in the very point for which I sent for you.

Is it not beautiful and fitting that it should be thus? You are upon earth still in the body; full of weakness and defects, but each counteracted by the power of Christ.

I will give you an illustration of what I mean from the way pearls are produced. A little bit of grit inside the shell of the oyster so annoys and disturbs it, that it covers it over with the lining of the shell, and thus a pearl is gained. That is how it should be with you. The bit of grit in you ought to become a pearl. We ought to be beautiful people! I admit the defect that is in my nature; but, where the grit or defect is in me, there the pearl should be—the beautiful perfect thing covering the defect, till *only* the beauty is seen. The Lord is keeping His eye upon it.

You get an illustration of this in the palsied man brought to Christ. Powerlessness brings me to Christ. If you are not powerless you will not come to Christ. If you had not an atom of your own power, you would be as happy as the day is long. If you had no power, you would go to Christ, and you would come away with *the power of Christ*, and carry your bed! The very thing that every one in this room thinks I can never give up, that is the very thing Christ's power will lead you to give up. That is where His power will express itself.

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Now you ask me for a passage to confirm this; but, in a certain sense, where truth is, you do not want a passage to confirm it, because all the tenor of Scripture is with you. However I will give you Ephesians iv. 28. "Let him that stole steal no more." There is legal righteousness. I speak now to people who hold to the law. If you stay there, I say, you are a very low Christian if you do not go beyond the law. The first line of this verse brings you up to the law. But let me follow it out; what do I find? "Rather let him labour working with his hands the thing that is good." Now mark what is there! Is it for his own need? Not at all! But "that he may have to give to him that needeth." Is not that a pearl? He is to toil with his own hands, that he may be a giver. The thief is to be a giver! That is power.

Power comes in in the most ordinary details of life; it affects a person in every relationship of life, if he is walking in power. The first part of power is, that it comes in to check every defect and weakness of the flesh. The Lord says: "My grace is sufficient for thee;" I am not going to take away the thorn, because you will find, that when you are weak then you are strong.—I want to show you that you will be humble who were proud; and, as to an ambitious man, when that man is in the power of Christ I find he is *not* ambitious. It is said: My greatest aim is to rise to eminence in the church. I say to such: My dear friend, you know nothing of what you are; if you did, instead of wanting to rise to eminence, you would be down on your face before God.—I hear others talk of "mastering" a truth! and to

such I say: My friend, you have made the greatest mistake, and have lost the idea altogether; you will certainly be confounded by it. Instead of your "mastering" truth, truth is to "master" you. The more the heart knows of Christ, and the more it knows of any truth, the more it learns its inability to master it, and its incompetency to give it out.

You will find in every servant of God, while he is acting in power, that he is true to the grace of God, and afraid of his own natural powers. Moses was naturally a man of great muscular strength: he could kill a man. But he must not trust to this at all; he just waves the rod, and everything is done without an effort; but the moment he falls back to using his own power—the moment he *smites* the rock twice—he is not to go into the land. Power does not use the natural thing; it comes in and says: You must be entirely for me.

Power is the most quiet thing that is. Divine power is a noiseless, majestic, resistless thing; everything about it is fitting and beautiful. I often think what a little sense I have of the magnitude of this divine power. As it says in the forty-sixth Psalm: "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted." There I have the majesty of divine power; it makes no noise, no parade, no ostentation, but it *acts*. I have always felt that the great potato blight was brought about by divine power, because it was so universal and so noiseless.

But there is another point of this power I

must allude to, which is perhaps more interesting. What *proves* power? I have given you the *evidence* of power; but the *proof* of power is *patience*. There is nothing so proves power as patience. I know we do not understand the meaning of patience. It means *endurance*. The man who holds out is the man of patience. The moment of the greatest power in a saint of God, has been that in which he has held out most. The proof of power then in a person, is that he holds out, and this power comes out where he is most defective; it is this grace of Christ, so that he can hold out.

In the tenth of Hebrews it says: "Ye have need of patience." We have not all got patience. It is the same word as that used for endurance when speaking of Moses in the following chapter. First it says, he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Now that is one part of power, but it is not patience. What I want to call your attention to is, that it is not the part of patience—either the "refusing," or the "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God." I see those who can refuse things, and those who can choose the best things; but there is a greater thing to come. I say you have to endure. "He *endured* as seeing him who is invisible." That is what I come to. There are the two parts of power. There is the refusing of the things that gratify me, and there is the enduring the pressure that comes upon me. I say: Why do you hold out?—Because "I know whom I have believed." The thing that marks patience is that I hold out; I do not

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give in. Paul says to Timothy : "Thou therefore *endure* hardness." And in the tenth verse of the same chapter he says : "I *endure* all things for the elect's sake ;" just what he says of Moses in the eleventh of Hebrews. Nothing can give you a more wonderful idea of what patience is, than to see a person under all the pressure possible, yet saying : I will not give in an inch.

You see how James presses it upon the saints in his epistle. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which *endure*. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord ; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." Now it was not that Job was a very quiet-spirited man, but that he would not give in an inch. People begin by giving in a little ; and when you give in a little, you are *done*—your power is gone. You may be sure that, when you do give in, and think it does not much matter about something which seems insignificant in itself, that you are giving up the best bit of truth you have. It is the best thing you give up first. It is the top shoot that goes first when the frost comes ; it always takes the bud of the tree ; and then you have lost an immense thing, though you may say, I have only gone back a little bit ; you have not held out.

Let me turn to the fifth of Romans. Here we read : "Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh *patience*." And in another place we get : "In your *patience* possess ye your souls." It is an immense thing

practically for the heart to come to the point: Well now I can bear it all, no matter what happens.

The great thing that qualifies a man for service is, not how he can do a great thing, but how he can bear tremendous pressure. When he is prepared for preferment, the question is: How much pressure can you bear? A man that can stand any amount of pressure is qualified for the highest place. Take Joseph in prison, forgotten by the man he had befriended; but he held out, and was thus qualified for the highest place in the kingdom. Take David: he was never in more trying circumstances than at Ziklag; he was deprived of everything. What does he do? He is patient. He says: The Lord is God; I will still hold on. He "encouraged himself in the Lord his God." And he was actually qualified at that moment for the throne of Israel; Saul was just then falling on Mount Gilboa.

It is a great principle. I see persons with Scripture at their fingers' ends, but look at them in their families! And I say to any such: You cannot bear that; you are not able to stand there; you are not fit for your duties; you have not patience. In the sixth chapter of this epistle Paul says: "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much *patience*."

When a person talks to me of power, I say to him: In what way are you taking everything? Can you bear up against anything?

Just turn to the first of Colossians; there we read, "strengthened with all *power*"—it should

be—unto what? “unto all *patience*.” All *patience*! This is the point that I want practically to get my soul to.

I look back at all the saints of God, and, from among them, I take Abraham as an example of what I am speaking of. When he goes into the land the second time, he says to Lot: You take your choice; I can *surrender*. And that is, I believe, the first characteristic of power. A person who does not begin by refusing, will never end by enduring. If the children of the captivity had not refused the king's wine, they would never have endured the king's furnace. They were separate in their position, but that is not enough. It was not only that Moses “refused” all that was in Egypt, but he “*endured*.”

One constantly sees this. Persons refuse a good deal, but they have not this *patience*—they cannot hold on. I say: I must hold on; I am not going to give up at all.—But, you say, things are all going to pieces!—I cannot help that. I am not going to give up; I must hold on with tenacity; like the old Athenian general who would not let the ship get away: he held on first with one hand; they chopped that off; then he held on with the other; and they chopped that off; and then he held on with his teeth; and they chopped his head off. There was a specimen of what mere nature will do in the way of holding on. Have you got the grace in you for *that*? Of Abraham we read: “After he had patiently *endured* he obtained the promise.” If a person yields, he has lost the practical power to maintain his ground.

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Well, beloved friends, I hope our eyes are awaking to the state of things we are set in. If you look upwards it is all a scene of brightness—one clear, unclouded sky. But alas ! I know the story for myself, and so I know it for others, how many a one leaves his room in the most unclouded enjoyment who is in a few hours, or even in a few minutes, cast down and depressed, because of the way in which he has failed. And why is it? It is because he is not dependent. Are you then to think that the enjoyment was a delusion? No! all remains true as ever; but you must learn to bear opposition; that is *patience*; and you must depend on Christ; that is *power*. It is not only that you must refuse; the question is: Can you bear? Have you patience? Can you say you will not yield, no matter what the pressure is? whether it be the saints that are against you, or anything else.

If you look at any of God's servants, what was the moment of greatest power in that man's life? I say, not the moment when he *did* most, but the moment when he *endured* most. Let any one put me a parallel to that scene when Abraham went up with his son to Mount Moriah. He says: Let the whole weight of things come down upon me; I have God with me; I am not going to give in an inch. "*After he endured he obtained the promise.*"

And this comes down to the little details of every day life. You are not to give up—not an inch in anything. Give way before the king's fire? Not a bit of it! It is not that when the moment of pressure comes, you are to be like

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Esau, and say I cannot endure it, and give way in a moment for a mess of pottage. Scripture says: "Consider him that *endured* such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Consider Him, the Lord Himself, "who for the joy that was set before him, *endured* the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

I say this: If your heart be affected by the things around you—if you allow them to have an influence on you—you do not come from the presence of the Lord with a sense of His having given you a place above it all. I come from the inside—from the scene of my enjoyment—to stand in the outside—the scene where everything is against me; but I come with the power of Christ, so that I am able to walk outside, and to bear up against all that is against me, whilst I know the enjoyment of His unclouded presence.

(J. B. S.)

He was the loneliest Man, but the most accessible Man, because He was love itself. He does not set Himself apart in the wilderness, but in heaven, and we are with Him there; every affection and moral feeling of my heart is linked up with Him who is on the throne of God.

(J. N. D.)

CONFIDENCE.

EPH: i. 15—23.

I DESIRE to say a word on the basis and character of our communion—to show how it all turns on our confidence and dependence upon “the Father of glory,” in what He has planned and accomplished as the “God of *our* Lord Jesus Christ,” by raising Him from the dead, and setting Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.

It is wonderful to see here, how the one great object of our faith and our communion is found in *this* Christ of God. We reach in this chapter up to that One in whom we were chosen before the foundation of the world. In previous times the Spirit of prophecy, or of God, had to witness that there was something to come, and to lead souls to look forward to that time. What a relief it is for us to know that the *best* thing has been now brought out, and that we have got it. We have God’s best thing—call it “the mystery” if you like. God Himself gave “patterns of things in the heavens” to Moses and to David, patterns for the tabernacle, and afterwards for the temple; but, to the apostle of the Gentiles, God gave not the shadows, but the divine and eternal realities.

The glory of the Lord took Paul up, but before it took him up, it crushed him; and so must it

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be with you and me ; we must be crushed if the glory is to take us up, and make us conversant with Himself. If I think of Paul apprehended thus, in that day, I see how he was to be prepared, and how he got the great realities which he gives us afterwards, in Ephesians and Colossians. So perfectly was Paul taught what these things for the glory were, that there must needs be a new prayer go up from his heart to God, for those to whom he is going to unfold them, "that the eyes of their understanding may be enlightened," etc.

When I open this epistle, and read this prayer, I judge there must be an altogether new element in our communion with God the Father, to comprehend all those counsels which hitherto were hidden, but which are now revealed to us by the Holy Ghost. The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places truly ; for not only have we got our Lord Jesus Christ in the right place on high, but the people fitted to the place, and seated together with Him. Oh, let us look up to the spring-head of life and blessing, and see what it is we are thus vitally connected with !

And, as I say that word "connected," I would add, that Paul could not have offered this prayer to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, if we were not connected in life with Him. Have you in your souls got hold of that fact, that we are connected through the Holy Ghost, with the God of our Lord Jesus Christ—the Father of glory ?

I press that word "connected." "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." What a way it is by which we have got into it ! Do we object to previous types and shadows ? Of

course we do not ; but we look through them to the God-man who fills up the shadows. He is the Alpha and Omega in every type. Christ takes the initiative, for He is the first as well as the last, in everything. And if I pass from the earth where He was, and see Him in the ascending steps of His pathway to glory, I see myself set with Him in that place, at the Father's right hand. People say we are seated in heavenly places ; but I ask : *How* are you seated ? Surely it is only as you know yourself vitally connected with Him, that "your joy can be full" in this fellowship.

Having thus shewn them their place, Paul offers up this prayer. I only dwell upon one or two points in it. The outward or natural eye is no good here : it is the inside and spiritual thing that is wanted, as the Lord says in John : "If a man love me, he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." God says, I have quickened you, and made you one with Christ ; the life is there, and in you.—Then, says Paul, I pray that the eyes, not of your understanding, but "of your *heart*, may be enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

Then we come to this *power* again, but in its application to ourselves—"the exceeding greatness of His power, to us-ward who believe." Power belongs to God, and, as I think of where Christ is, I see that a new power is come in, and has been exercised to raise this Christ

from the dead, and to place Him far above all heavens. But I do not touch it yet, and it does not touch me either—for it first occupies itself with Christ. This power of God says: I come after the righteous One; I am weary of driving out the fallen ones; I am coming in to answer the willing obedience unto death of that blessed One: I am now free to come in and act for “the fulfiller of all righteousness.”

Thus power comes in from God, and sets the second Man in divine title “at His own right hand in the heavenly places,” and not only that, but quickens us together with Him, and seats us there with Him too; and thus we are connected with God, and our communion is with the Son of the Father, the exalted Man in glory. God says, as sure as Christ is raised up and seated there, so surely will I raise you up, “because of His Spirit that dwells in us.” It is a wonderful thing! worthy of the Father of glory and of His Son.

Here I get Christ also as the *Head* of the church; and no wonder Paul has to offer a new prayer, or that he should speak of the eyes of our hearts being enlightened. If the natural eye—the flesh—comes out in any way, it will only hinder our understanding. Flesh can do nothing here. “Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour.” The fly is a bit of escaped flesh.

I will just read the second prayer too, because there are one or two points I would like to refer to in it. (Read Eph: iii. 14 to 21.) Notice the word *families*, it is not family. In the first:

prayer, we get the divine origin and Head of the church; in the second, it is "the Father of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named." I find the Father now, and the Father as known with families; and everything in order, as it should be. "He setteth the solitary in families," and these are the bases of our knowledge of God, and communion with the Father. Only think that we should be brought up to this, in the Son of His own love, to the Father's house!

The first prayer is our acceptance and place with Christ, as being new creatures; the second is that we may know God, as a Father. In the first we are connected with all the counsels of God. In the second we are strengthened with His might, according to His glorious power, that we may be able, as beloved children, to please Him. This brings in the Spirit—for it is "by his Spirit in the inner man."

Thus we are set in our proper places in these two prayers, and we are made competent—we become practical—and now everything in us goes to work. We find the measure of the blessing to be the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. In this we are set, and, in the eighteenth verse, it is in all the infinitude of "breadth, and length, and depth, and height." As to our perfection and completeness, it is Christ, and never anything lower than Christ.

Allow me here to say we are not only justified *from* all things, by His blood, but we are justified *up to* the glory. In one sense you cannot be nearer, but, at the same time our great care

should be about acceptability, as we have been considering. You get your acceptance in the first prayer; in the second you get the strength for carrying out your acceptance into acceptability. And what is the result of it? Why, that you may be able to know this love, and walk in it as dear children.

The second prayer flows from the Father's, and from Christ's, love to us. Do not come out from His presence, except with the strength of His Spirit in the inner man, through his grace; nor without Christ in your heart—that you may be “filled even to all the fulness of God!” What! this unfathomable fulness? Yes, for this is what the church is brought to! And what can you feel or desire as to things down here, if love like this fills you?

In the first out-goings of this love of God, did it not come down after the prodigal? Who first saw him? The Father. And who was it kissed him, and put the best robe on him, and killed the fatted calf? Was it not the Father? That is the character of the love of God. Have you ever been near enough to get into the personal enjoyment of that love? The Lord knew what the love of that bosom was, and He declared it to us, and has placed us there. It is no use making excuses for oneself in the face of these two prayers, by saying, I come so short; I know so little. God forbid that any of us should separate the second prayer from the first—our acceptance from our acceptability: that we may be “filled with *all the fulness of God.*”

The Lord give us, beloved friends, to steadily

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set our hearts on His own grace, and be both confident and dependent.

(J. E. B.)

It is well for our souls, especially going through such a world as this, that the Father has thought of us, and the Son come to us, and the Holy Ghost been given to us, and all this not for a small thing. Can we suppose that the blessed Son of God could have given Himself for us for small blessing? It is the heart getting hold of this, the clinging to Him, that delivers from the world. It has put us into a place where the world is crucified to us and we unto the world, not by the law, but by the object that governs our hearts. God has come down into this world and put Himself close to our sins, and has presented His Son to us as an object that fixes our hearts and affections, and takes them into heaven with Himself.

(J. N. D.)

God was in Christ down here, revealing Himself in Him. He was showing man in Him that the heart that had a need might trust Him with that need. All His words and miracles were to lead the heart to this, that it might trust God in love. This was *in* the world. When once my eyes have been opened to know He is there, as the poor woman at the well, I get to *know* God, and I can *trust* Him.

(J. N. D.)

“WE TESTIFY THAT WE HAVE SEEN.”

“What kind of gospel do you preach?” or, as many who read our question do not preach publicly: “How do you evangelize?” All God’s people should in some way or other be evangelizing, therefore the question is of moment.

The character of the crop we raise depends upon the sort of seed we sow, and the character of conversions God grants us largely depends upon the kind of gospel we preach. Indeed we may go further—for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh—the sort of gospel we preach depends upon the sort of acquaintance we have with Christ ourselves.

“But the soil has to be considered as well as the seed sown: the state of the hearers must be borne in mind, and you cannot get people to hearken to high truth.”—True, yet we have, by evangelizing, not only to meet a need; we have to create one.

See the zealous, devoted man, who, possessed with the belief of heaven and hell, preaches what he believes. He speaks of realities, and in a way that makes men bow to his convictions. What is the result? The Spirit of God uses his word to awaken in the sinner an uncontrollable desire to escape hell and to reach heaven. Thank God for his intense words.

Or look at him, whose very being is filled with

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God's grace in forgiving the sinner; he pours out of the abundance of his heart the God-given words, and God the Spirit graciously grants the longing for, and the knowledge of, forgiveness of sins to the hearing sinner.

No doubt each servant has his special service, as every bird his peculiar note; and we cannot give out one whit more than what by God's work is really within our souls.

If we know forgiveness we can by God's grace proclaim it; if peace, then we can in His power publish it; but there is more than forgiveness and peace to tell.

Surely the apostle Paul preached forgiveness and peace in divinely-given-energy, but he did more. He had seen Christ in the glory; his soul was laden with Christ there; hence he preached for the believer here, “Christ in you the hope of glory.”—He was not satisfied that converts should be saved from hell and safe for heaven, but he travailed for them that Christ should be formed in them. He laboured—he strove according to God's working, which worked in him mightily—that they might know the riches of the glory of the mystery, “Christ in you the hope of glory.” He longed that souls saved should be freed from the law, and from the earth, and be free for Christ, and Christ only. In his deep desires for Christ's glory, and his sympathy for souls and their progress, he had great conflict—even for converts he had not seen—that “all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery” might be theirs.

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Does our preaching so bring Christ Himself, as He is, before our converts, that they long to “know him?” We see, as the fruit of our words made powerful by the Holy Spirit, the sinner, or, shall we say, the quickened soul, longing after peace with God, or peace for his conscience; but do we see the soul, who has obtained the peace for which he longed, thirsting after Christ Himself?

The joy of having peace does not carry souls very far out of the world. It fails in very many instances even to separate them from their old habits of religious thought. In some strange manner they go on with the law as a rule of life, and with teachings contradictory of peace. Would this be morally possible if Christ were in them the hope of glory? Could they then tolerate law, or contradictory teachings? Is there not often a quiet kind of worldliness allowed, while peace—in the sense of no longer doubting the fact of being saved—is known in the soul? We must own that these things are so. Let us ask then, whether the realities of Christ being in the glory for us, and of His being the hope of glory in us, are as forcible in our souls as the facts of His blood having been shed upon this earth for sinners, and of present forgiveness of sins for all who believe on Him.

“He preached *Christ* unto them,” is said of Philip the evangelist. It is easier to preach what Christ has *done*, than who Christ *is*, and it is utterly impossible to preach Christ as He is, unless the heart be filled with Himself by the Spirit. The evangelist, or evangelizer, has a

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noble mission ; he is freighted with divine compassion to a perishing world, he is burdened with blessings for sinners, and his heart is fitted by God to yearn over the Christless souls dying around him. But his words are formative ; by his knowledge of Christ, his hearers learn Christ ; he is not a mere trumpeter, who blows his blast and goes quietly home.

Alas ! that any bearing the power of carrying the gospel of God to men, should have for their ambition the number, instead of the constancy, of their converts. And that, when told their conversions are not all God's converts, but poor plants withering away, they should, instead of weeping, hand you a fresh list of recent conversions ! Ah ! ye lovers of souls, where are the souls you love ?

“But,” say some, “the evangelist's work ceases at conversion : he leaves to others the care of his converts.” But who has drawn the line where his work and love should cease ? If the father cares not for his children, who shall do so ? If he who presents Christ to sinners, does not long to present the sinner God has saved by his poor means to Christ, who shall ? The true evangelist is a nurse to his converts ; gentle, affectionate, filled with love for them ; willing to impart to them, not the gospel of God only, but his own soul, because they are dear to him.

He who knows that he is safe for heaven preaches safety ; he who knows God's grace in forgiving his sins, preaches forgiveness ; he who rejoices in peace, preaches peace ; and he, who has Christ dwelling in his heart by faith—

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Christ, as He is, Christ, the hope of glory—preaches safety, forgiveness, peace, but all colored by his own personal acquaintance with *Christ*. The less does not include the greater, but the greater does take in the less.

H. F. W.

What a sunning thing the bright love of God is! How it casts its bright light on things which in nature are all darksome! Paul got on the light-beaming side of things.

(G. V. W.)

We come to God first as beggars or not at all, but, once inside, God can tell us things that do not concern us. God deigns to call us *friends*, and I do not only go to my friend to talk to him about business, but to tell him what I have in my heart, even if it do not concern him at all. “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” “I have called you friends.”

It is not a matter of indifference to be treated by God as His friends; but we must be in the place first; when there, the Christian’s heart gets an occupation that makes him grow. Our hearts want something to think of. Not only is our salvation settled, but God introduces us into a new world, where our heart is opened and enlarged by occupation with Himself until it can take in His thoughts.

(J. N. D.)

“STRENGTH MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.”

LU: ix. 10—56.

I desire to say a few words in connection with what was said this morning, because, I think, when the Spirit of God strikes a note, we should seek to follow it up, and I think I caught up one or two truths of what He then brought before us which I should like to follow out. I turn to a few points in the Scripture I have read which will illustrate what I mean.

We were hearing that divine power alone can elevate man. It does not develop man's resources; it makes a new man of him altogether. Human power can only develop what is already there, and an awful development it will be. When the Antichrist—the devil's man—will stand in the temple of God saying that he is God, that is what man's power, led on and helped by satanic power, can and will do. We know the end from the beginning, because we see that in the cross of Christ. I see there what human power can do, when allowed to go to its fullest extent against God; that is what man's malice did; that is the measure given us by God of the first Adam's power.

Now it requires another power altogether to come in, and take us out of the condition we were in by nature, and to use us when we are

out of it; and this is divine power. It comes in, and brings me into a new condition before Himself in identity with the Deliverer, and you must never separate your deliverance from the personal greatness and dignity of the Deliverer; it brings me into God's presence, and shows me all my necessities met by Another. Of course this is all anticipative of the chapter I have read. The disciples could not exercise the power that was with them until the Holy Ghost was given; but that day is passed now. The Lord says to them: “Give ye them to eat.” Why can they not do so? And why cannot they cast out the devil? Because they did not know the power that was in their Master; they could not cast out the devil because they were not occupied with Christ, and did not know the power that was with them. They had not come to the end of themselves, and of course they could not until they got to the cross. I believe many a dear saint of God is in the mud about this at this very day. When we get to the end of ourselves, we reach a point where we are met by divine power.

Let me illustrate what I mean by a little circumstance that comes to my mind. A few weeks ago I was asked to go to see a poor woman who was afflicted with a fatal disease, and who had been crying out for years that there was not such a wicked woman as she was on the face of the earth. I soon found out that she was occupied with herself—with her badness. She reminded me of some persons who will talk about their pains as long as you like; not that they like

pain, but that they like to talk about themselves. “Tell me, Mrs. So and So,” I said, “if you had been at the cross of Christ, would you, with your unrestrained heart, have smitten the cheek of the Son of God?”—“Oh no! Oh no!” she said; “I know I am the wickedest woman in the place, but I would never do such a thing as that; I am not so bad as that!”—I read her different Scriptures in the Romans and such like to show what the heart of man is, and then said: “Now after such a picture as this which God gives you of yourself, do you still think that the devil could not have twisted your unrestrained heart so into his own shape as to make you smite the cheek of the Son of God if you had stood by the cross?”—She burst into tears, and said: “Oh, I never knew I was so wicked as that! Oh, what love was His to die for such a wretch as I am!”—And immediately she found perfect peace. And I believe many a saint of God is there—just occupied with their badness, and yet, if put to the test, will deny it. I ask every one of you my fellow saints here to-day, are you as bad as that? Could Satan have used you, had you been there, to have nailed the blessed Son of God to the tree? If you see yourself there, you have got to the place where grace can reach you, and where a power outside of yourself can come in.

Christ here reproves the disciples. Why so? Because they were occupied with themselves; they were occupied with the power that they wanted to feel in their resources; they wanted to feel that they could do something; they wanted to be powerful; they wanted to be strong.

Now where are we in reference to this? I do not want you to say where you *ought* to be, but where you *are*. This morning we were thanking the Lord that that day was come of which He had said, “In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” That day of power is now come, and God has revealed it to you. If the Lord Jesus says to you: “Give ye them to eat,” I say: Yes, Lord. Why should I not say so? I say it because, though it would be an impossibility for me, yet it would be no difficulty for Him, and I have got Christ the power to meet the difficulty.

He cannot but rebuke them. “O faithless and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.” His blessed love does not give way for one instant, and, oh beloved! His heart abides with us ever the same. You say, the disciples were stupid people!—No! but it is *we* who are stupid people, who have got the Holy Ghost here, and who yet turn away from His power to seek it in our own resources.

How do I get hold of power? By dependence. It is through learning the want in myself that I am driven to look for a power outside me. Then we meet. Weakness is fit for power, and power for weakness. Just as hunger tells me that there is such a thing as food; hunger is not power, but it tells me there is such a thing as bread which will give my body power. Just as weakness tells me there is such a thing as strength; my very weakness tells me there is power to meet it. And, if my body lean on

kindly and supporting strength, I become acquainted with more than strength; I become acquainted with the kindness and grace that ministers the strength. God's power is just fitted for the saint's weakness, and the saint's weakness is just fitted for God's power; so we suit each other.

Here they were “all amazed at the mighty power of God,” but they were not at all amazed at the power of the devil. How often we are like them! How often saints are astonished at the grace of God; we ought really to be astonished at the reverse. I think there is something of my own resources left if I am not occupied with God's power outside me.

There are three reasons which God gives us in this chapter why the disciples could not use the power that was at their disposal, even if they had understood it. I could not help thinking of them this morning when our brother was speaking of the bit of grit in the oyster. Here we find three bits of grit and three beautiful pearls that cover them.*

The first bit of grit is in the forty-sixth verse. “Then there arose a reasoning amongst them, which of them should be greatest.” That is personal selfishness: I like myself better than any one else. The question was “which of them should be greatest”—not here, but in the kingdom. Now let me put you to the test as to this. Do you want to get a better place than any one else in the glory? Are you thinking of what *you* will get, or is it what *Christ* will get in His

* See page 81.

people when He has them there around Him? Is it a better place in glory for you, or is it what Christ Himself will get in you?

If I have not reached my moral end in the cross of Christ, I have never yet got rid of self. You may try, try, try, to get rid of it, but you never will, and Satan will only laugh at you. There is no end for self but in the cross. There God is before me—God manifest in the flesh—God revealed in a man down here that I may look at Him. If He had not been a man he could not have been manifested that we might see Him; and if he had not been God He could not have spanned the distance that lay between us and God. But, having become man without ceasing to be God, in order to do both, He who once measured our distance on the cross, now measures our nearness in the glory. Thus self is gone. It does not cease to exist, but it is gone as to occupation with itself. If it intrude, it can but detach you from the One who, having won your affections, is the alone object that can fully satisfy the tastes and desires of your new affections. “I am crucified with Christ:” that is the grit. “Nevertheless I live:” that is the pearl. Instead of odious self I have the brightest object in glory to occupy me. “Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”—That is the first pearl.

And now I turn to another bit of grit, which we find in the forty-ninth verse. “John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils

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in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.” This is corporate selfishness. Here was “one casting out devils” in the name of Christ—exercising the power that the disciples had failed to exercise, because they did not know the One that was with them. God never made sects and systems; God speaks only of “brethren;” and when we use God’s words we always take in all saints. The disciples were not doing this here. Why is it we are “a peculiar people”? It is because we belong to *the* “my brethren” of the twentieth of John. The Lord brings us into His presence that He may reveal the Father to us, and place us in the same enjoyment and relationship as that in which He is Himself. The church, the body, is what God has made; it is not anything that man has made. What is the point of union to the believers of whom it is composed? The Lord Christ is the point of union—and the Holy Ghost is the unity—“the unity of the Spirit.” Could you make it? The thought is monstrous!

There is a thought here that I would refer to, as it is sometimes confused with another Scripture; I mean the fiftieth verse. “Jesus said unto them, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us, is for us.” You know there is another verse that appears to contradict this in the twelfth of Matthew: “He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” May I say a word upon this?

These two passages are in quite distinct connections. With regard to Luke it is a man

walking according to his knowledge, putting down the devil, and who exercises power too that the disciples had failed to exercise. But in Matthew Christ is personally assailed, and then the Lord says, you *must* take sides now. You see that the two connections are utterly different. When Christ's person is assailed by adversaries, you must not put “nice Christians” first and Christ second; Christ must be one and “his name one;” and, believe me, when Christ is first, your love to “nice Christians” will be all the stronger.

With regard to this second point, it is *human associations* that is the grit; *the church of God* is the pearl. This is what God Himself has done; this is the mystery revealed to us now; that Christ Himself should have a body is the pearl that covers up all human associations—all human fraternities—all human clubs. We can now have nothing but what the Holy Ghost forms; we can say: “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit;”—that is the measure of our union with the Man in the glory.

The fifty-fourth verse is the next bit of grit that we get. “Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?” Here we get human energy going out for Christ—mere human energy, and nothing more; but mark you! it is *for Christ*. Do not you remember when Peter went astray he was full of self confidence? What mistakes he fell into! First he says, I am a better man than any at the table: “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.” The next thing we find him asleep; and the next thing we

find him fighting; he draws the sword, but it is *for Christ*. Here they want to call down fire from heaven *for Christ*. It is human energy; and, let me say, that, when human energy is in exercise, though you may be working *for Christ*, yet you are not doing the work *of Christ*.—They go to another village; and afterwards what we hear of them is, that one gets his head cut off for Christ's sake in Acts xii., and the other is found, instead of calling down fire from heaven, conferring the Holy Ghost in this very same Samaria in Acts viii.

No power but that of the Holy Ghost will do. If you and I are active the Holy Ghost is passive; but if you and I are passive the Holy Ghost is active. Human resources are gone; human associations are gone; human power is gone; and the Holy Ghost alone exercises His power. Now we see where we are. Where is self? It is mortified! But you will never give up this self, until you find out that it is the most odious thing in the world. Then you are called to get rid of it, and that in the simplest way possible; just by getting another object instead of it; by having the Son of God before your gaze; by letting Him fill your heart to the exclusion of self and all its belongings, while you lay your head on His heart.

Thus we have seen first personal selfishness set aside by occupation with Christ. Second we have had human associations set aside by the church of God. God has formed a unique thing in this day, and we belong to it alone, and to no human association whatever; and we have

not made ourselves members of it; it is God who has made us members. And thirdly we get human zeal all gone and annihilated, and another power come in—the power of the Holy Ghost dwelling in believers and handling them.

Do you know the difference between the word handling you, and your handling the word? I hear people talking of handling the word, and a pretty mess they make of it! But, when I see it handling them, I find it soon makes an end of them! And, not only this, but it is then that you learn to love the word—to love the power that handles you. Does a child fear the power of its father? Look at the power of God; What use does He make of it? He has used it to put away your sins and enmities by judgment, in order that you might now be in the enjoyment of the bosom secrets of Him who once bore that judgment. All power was against Christ when the wrath of God was upon Him, yet, as we were hearing this forenoon in that beautiful sixteenth Psalm, He could say, “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places,” and that too in the intelligence of the divine mind as to all that awaited Him, including that dreadful cup which He deprecated. It was all the way through perfect dependence with Him. No mere creature could have said such words as these, with the wrath of God before him. But what is now the difference between Christ and you? It is this; that the wrath of God being now behind Christ, and as much behind you as behind Christ, you also can say “The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.”

Thus you see we have got rid of the three bits of grit, and have three beautiful pearls instead of them. I have not to ask God to do all this for me; it is done. Oh, to know what Christ has wrought for us! The apostle says, God has “wrought us for this self same thing.” Is not that Scripture language? And did God do His work badly? Did Christ do His work badly? No! Have I to ask Christ to make me fit for God? No! I do not want Him on the cross again, because the abiding efficacy of the work never loses its value, but I want Him for enjoyment—I want Him for communion—I want Him for fellowship—I want to learn more, and more, of Him through communion with Himself; I want to lean on His arm; and I want that the Father may be glorified in the using of poor things like you and me in this world that still refuses Him.

May the Lord give our hearts the simplicity of little children; for He says we must be “as little children.” Little children listen to the voice of their father, and believe every word that he says.

(H. H. M.)

What the world calls *mercy* (when they speak of hoping in the mercy of God) is simply indifference to good and evil; the hope that God will think as little about sin as I do.

(J. N. D.)

STANDING AND STATE.

EPHESIANS iii. 14—21.

I turn to the second prayer in Ephesians, and the first thing I call your attention to, is the importance of what the apostle is about to press in this prayer. Little touches of any kind mark the importance of the subject. He says: "I bow *my knees* unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is a little thing, but it shows the contrast between the two prayers.

As has been already said, there are two things in these two prayers: the one is standing; the other, state; and the state, as I will show you, becomes a cause of more anxiety to the servant of God than the standing; not that the standing is not important, but that the matter of deepest anxiety is state. I go further:—and I will show you examples from Scripture to prove what I say—everything you do here is according to the state you are in at the time—not according to your standing, but according to your state.

The danger with us who have learnt something of our standing is to overlook our state. We are anxious till we know our standing; there is a legality about us which makes us anxious until we do know it; when you first come to know it, it is like the sun rising after a dark night; but if you stop there you are sure to go down. Many a saint has felt the wonderful joy and

delight of discovering his standing which he had been reaching after, and then failed utterly, as to keeping this joy, through not maintaining the state corresponding to it.

You see how important it is when you come to look at the servant. He says: "I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." As has been often remarked, it was "the *God* of our Lord Jesus Christ" in the former prayer; in this "it is the *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here is the state into which we are brought with God; it is not only seeing the thing, but enjoying it—entering into it.

The standing is yours without any effort, yet it is always in the standing that you acquire the state. But then there is another thing. It is that not only I have a state Godward but I must have a state Satanward. You must have a state which is fitted to meet the character of the evil of this present scene, and, according as you have that, you are able to do "according to the *power* that worketh in us."

In the sixth chapter the point is, that, if you give up your state, you lose the benefit of your standing, though it is only because you have this standing that you can get the state. The danger first is that a person does not see his standing; that I will go into presently; but that is not so dangerous a place as seeing the standing and not walking up to it. There is a divine instinct in the saint that craves to reach the thing the heart wants—to get hold of the standing.

Have you read the history of Joshua? As

soon as the children of Israel got into the land they were warned not to forget God, for, if they did, they would be worse off than they were in Egypt where they had the river, for they would have no rain. I am sorry to say I have seen many who have accepted the standing, but who have then given up the state in keeping with it, saying that it was impracticable, and who have thus perished "off the good land"—rather have lost the blessings of the standing. They have no rain—no present ministrations from God.

In Ephesians vi. 10 I find: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Here I have come to the highest point: I am to be strong "in the power of his might." In the first chapter I get the power acting towards us: "The exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." That was the mighty power working to us-ward. But now you are to *use* this power that has been acting towards you; you are to "be strong" in it, that you may be able to resist Satan, and, that too, not now as an open adversary—not coming forth as a roaring lion—but, in the most subtle way possible, he is going to try to divert you from the path you are in. Therefore you must have on the whole armour of God, "that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Suppose a person gives up his state what good will his standing be? Satan will soon wile him off that.

That is just where the Ephesians themselves went wrong, so that we find them in Revelation as having "lost their first love." I do not doubt that they lost first what is asked for in this prayer in the third chapter. He says: I have shown you in the first chapter where God has set you, and now what I am labouring for is, that you should have from God directly all the benefits that flow to you from this standing. If you do not, you cannot act against, or withstand the power that will seek to divert you from this standing.

You will find, beloved friends, that there is a direct opposing power seeking to divert us from the place God has set us in; so the first thing the soul must get is a firm hold of that place. Therefore I will turn to: How I get a standing; and I will just mention two or three standings to make it plain to you.

I will take the first from the eighth of Romans: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." That is a standing. I have nothing in the world to *do* as to it, but only to accept what God gives me, and open my mouth wider that He may fill it. There is no such thing as my *getting* a standing; that is to say, there is no such thing as effort on my part to *get* it; but there is every kind of effort—of exercise—nay, more—of *labour*, when I have a sense of what a wonderful standing God has brought me into, that I may be practically what God has made me to be. I believe this is a thing that we are most defective in, and I say, I am labouring before God night and day, so

that my state may be practically up to my standing. A title, without means to support it, merely lays a person open to ridicule and censure. It is not now a question of the standing, but the question is: Have you means to support it?

The land of Canaan was a land that "drinketh water of the rain of heaven." That was the support. The standing was the land, but the rain of heaven was to support them in it—to keep up their state. So we get here in Ephesians: "That ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height"—the whole platitude—the whole domain—"and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God;"—in fact that you may be able to comprehend with all saints the love that has brought you there. Standing is not enough. You may be in the land "that drinketh water of the rain of heaven," but what if you are indifferent? what if you are neglectful? Then there will be no rain, and you will perish from off the land.

Now I take the very first standing which the epistle to the Romans sets forth. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." Supposing a person goes on carelessly, it does not at all alter the fact of his title, but he will lose the enjoyment of it; and I believe this is one of the reasons why persons want to hear over and over again of the putting away of their sins; it is just that they are not walking blame-

lessly—that they are not walking up to the standing that they have received.

I turn to a passage in the thirteenth of Romans to show that you must keep your state up to your standing. “The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Now mark, this is written to those who have been told of the fact of their justification by faith, and of their standing in “no condemnation.” God Himself had laid help upon One that was mighty; His arm had brought salvation; He had sent His Son. This Son was the righteous Man; He met all the mind of God both in public and in private life, until His path as a man culminated on the Mount of Transfiguration, where God accredited Him as His beloved Son in whom He was well pleased. There “his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light,” and, when His disciples “were awake, they saw his glory.” From this point Christ descends to go into death, and in that death man was brought to an end. Man is gone, which is what baptism expresses; whilst in the Lord’s supper I find the Man—the first Man in resurrection. And, in that resurrection, I find that I am not only cleared from the old thing, but that I am being formed into the likeness of the One who has delivered me; I am of the same order—of the stock and lineage of this last

Adam. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." It is not that He saves many—though He *does* save many—but the idea there is, that the corn of wheat shall have many grains—many like Himself.

I find saints do not know that they are new creatures, though they know that they have new feelings. Now in Christ, I get a perfect Man who bore the judgment that rested on me, and came out of it as the Head of a new order. I was a brother to the dying man, but now I am a brother to the risen Man. He was never a brother to me. I thank God, that I can say to-night that I am much more distinctly, and more irrevocably, a brother to the risen Man, than I was to the dying man. I am unalterably of the stock and lineage of Christ.

People may say to me: you do not act much like Christ. Well, that is what I am coming to. As we were saying this morning, I may be a goldfinch and never sing a note; I am one before I sing. If I were a goldfinch only because I sang, that would be making my standing dependent on my state. No bird sings before it flies; I have no way of exhorting you unless I can tell you that you are born of God, not merely that you have new desires. You are a new material—a *new creature*, and you ought now to have a likeness to Christ; and the problem is, that you are to work out Christ in the old frame-work.

But the frame was made by Himself. I will not let you find fault with your bodies, because He made them. You may find as much fault

as you like with the flesh, but that is not your bodies. Our bodies are "members of Christ." Christendom has fallen into the great mistake of making our bodies members of the church, which is quite contrary to Scripture. Our bodies are "members of *Christ*;" this puts us in the place where He is Lord of the body. He is the Head of the new man. Taken individually my body is a member of Christ: "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." You are a new creation; and this new creation is to be exhibited in you. This new creation is developed by occupation with Christ in glory; He is the power of it; the life of Jesus is manifested by "bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus." "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

A Galatian was a Roman who had gone back from the eighth of Romans. It was not that he denied *sins* put away, but that he did not see deliverance from *sin*; he had lost his true standing. What he stopped at was not that God had sent Christ to remove everything out of the way; but he did not see that God now forms me of the very same nature as of that once unique One on earth. As long as that blessed One was here, He was a solitary Man upon earth; but now He, being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, forms a new class of men of the same order as Himself; and, every believer is of this same class. And now the problem for the believer is to live Christ in his body upon earth.

Nothing explains truth like practice ; but, when I come to practice it, I find that I must have it fairly balanced, otherwise it is not workable. I often find in practice, that I have been extravagantly strong on some points and weak on others. Now, if I look at Christ in glory, I see the One who has accomplished the work, and brought in righteousness. Where is righteousness to be looked for? Only there. If I look at Him there, I am transformed "into the same image from glory to glory," But, if I stop there, I do not get rid of the old thing. I find in the next chapter another point; and that is, that I am to carry about in my *body* the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in my body. You will see, if you look at that tenth verse of the fourth of Corinthians, that it does not say to get the life *in* you, but to have the life *manifested*.

What I want you to see is, that the way I develop the new creation, is by being occupied with the Head of it—with Him who is the source of it. If we were angels, there would be no need of negation, but, as it is, there must be death in us; there must be the negative as well as the positive. We have to get rid of the bad; and, what is strange, the more good we get, the more bad we have to get rid of. We acquired, in the garden of Eden, the knowledge of good by doing evil, without the power to follow the good; and we acquired the knowledge of evil, without the power to withstand it. Conscience and knowledge, two things men boast so much of, were got by an act of disobedience; and neither

will ever bring a soul back to God. We have, by nature, no idea whatever of evil; that is why, when I hear a person say, I do not see the harm of it, that I answer: It is just because you have not learned enough good. And that is why a worldly saint will go through the world the easiest, and also do himself the least harm by going through it. It is only the worldly man who can say: I do not find it does me any harm. The man who knows most of Christ is always the one who is most apprehensive of Satan; whereas, if you get a dull Christian, and talk to him about the devil's power being here and there, he will say: God forbid! Do not talk of such a thing!—The fact is he is not walking with Christ. A saint walking with Christ sees satanic power everywhere;—the very air is full of evil spirits, and has a pernicious influence upon the soul.

True enough, I have to be occupied with Him who is the Head of the new order of things, but I have to do with negation besides: I have to carry about the *dying*, that the *life* may be *manifested*. It is not that the life is not there; it is that it may be manifested. Like a candle in a lamp; if the candle be in a dark lantern of course it cannot be seen; for the candle to be of any use, the lamp, in which it is, must be transparent. And so I have not the least hesitation in saying, that there is more grace in everyone in this room than they can express, because the body is opaque. And why? Because they have not denied self; self gratification hinders them in the manifestation of Christ. So we read: "I keep under my body." It is the body that

becomes the theatre of this wonderful grace. The body is the place in which all the evil has been done, but now the Lord says: I have redeemed it; it must now be my place—my garden. It has been growing all the weeds that Satan could plant in it, but now it must grow flowers for me.

Have you accepted the standing that “there is no condemnation”? Then you must walk carefully to maintain the state in character with that standing. In Romans we are told to “put on the armour of light,” which is a different thing to the whole armour of God that we get in Ephesians. This “armour of light” is our state: it is “put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.” If you do not keep up the state, what will be the consequence? Why that you will make “provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

Now it is most lamentable, but I believe it is most true, that many an honest hearted person comes to the Lord’s table with the thought, that Christ’s blood there washes away the sins of the past week; if it be not so, the hymns and prayers are inconsistent, for, the most of those that I hear, speak of the benefits that accrue to us by the death of Christ; and thus it comes to be a sort of repetition of the mass. I am remembering the results to me of the death of Christ. But let me ask you: What is the Lord’s table? It is a very different thing to this: I express there that I have communion with *the body of Christ*; it is not with the *benefits*; it is with the *Benefactor*. And I am

thinking of Him at the moment when He broke with every thing here; I remember Him where He was when He opened the door so that I might have fellowship with Him.

I refer to this, because I see that souls are losing what they have got in their standing. It is true that "there is now no condemnation," but there is another, and a very serious, thing that they have forgotten; and that is, they have "forgotten that they were purged from their old sins." And why? Because they have not kept up the activities of life; they have not kept up their state. You practically lose the standing when you lose the state; it is the state which really shows that you are fit for the standing. Among men a title is given because the one who receives it has the state fit to support it; of course I mean where a man is not born to it. So God says: I give you a standing, and I am determined you shall have means to keep it up—a state according to it.

With the Nicolaitanes the evil was, that they turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. But do you mean to tell me, that a man who is walking in the consciousness of being free from condemnation, will not loath sin? The danger is with us lest we should get clear in our minds as to our standing, without being exercised as to whether we have the state that is in keeping with it. Surely attaining it should be our one great aim; it ought to be the labour of our heart to reach it.

I now come to another point; but I hope that I have made it clear to you that the standing is

entirely God's own thought for us; He has wrought it out Himself; He meets us *in* it.

Now, when Abraham came to the land, the Lord met him in the place where He had told him to go to, and there gave him a standing: "Unto thy seed will I give this land." But, when he thus had the standing in the land, he gave up the state and went down into Egypt. Lot gave it up in another way. But it was the state they always gave up. Jacob did it in a still more remarkable way. After all the trouble he had had in getting back to the standing, and after the night of wrestling, he lets it drop—gives it all up—and gets overwhelmed in the world: he settles down at Shalem. There God says to him: Go up to Bethel, and get the state that belongs to you.

But, whilst the standing is entirely of God's grace, and He never alters it, yet I lose all the benefits of my standing, if I lose the state in keeping with it. In the Ephesians you get the very highest standing, and the state in keeping with it. But I find, in the second of Revelation, that the candlestick is to be taken away from its place for this very reason, that they had lost their state: they had "left their first love;" they had lost their love for the Lord personally. The candlestick was what they were to hold as a light here.

I need not go through all the passages that I could to prove this to you. We find the Corinthians were indulging themselves; the Galatians were trying to correct themselves; and the Colossians were trying to make the old man

religious. But I would say one thing more about standing before I pass on, and that is, there is nothing so painful to the Spirit of God as your not accepting your standing. I refer you to the third of Hebrews for this. He calls it there "the day of provocation." What was that? That they would not go up to their standing—they would not take possession of the good land.

People say: I do not assume to be heavenly. I know why; it is because you do not *want* to be heavenly.

It was "the day of *provocation*." Why would they not go up? Because they thought the difficulties greater than God. Christians say: If I take that ground I shall never be able to keep it up. I say: I am glad to see you have a conscience; but it is God's standing, and woe betide you if you do not take it up, for it is not *my* calling but *God's*. It is the "evil heart of unbelief" that refuses it. The standing is the simple, free gift of His own love to us. I do not believe there is any moment of more ecstatic delight to the soul than the one in which it finds that God's place for it is its own. It is a moment of unspeakable delight; it has reached the climax of everything, and it knows that it is there. It is a wonderful moment, but, I say, woe betide the person who is satisfied with stopping at it! What the Lord warns them about, on their getting into the land, is their *state* in it.

Grace shows me where I am; I discover the feebleness of my nature in reference to God, and I must act accordingly.

I turn to just one passage more, in the tenth of the first of Corinthians, to show you how the Lord's supper is brought in again. There we read, at the end of a long list of failures: "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer." I believe this is put the last on the list, though chronologically it happened second, because, unless souls get beyond this—unless they accept their standing—there can be no progress. How can I progress, unless I accept the place God has put me in? How can I progress, unless I am in the Father's house? You may tell me you are a standard rose tree, and I do not doubt it, but I see no rose; and there will be none either, if a shoot be allowed from the briar.

There is only one spot that will satisfy God's heart for you, and will you not accept the position that the Father's love has secured for you? It is not *sin* that keeps men from the great supper; it is *the world*. Poor, wretched one! is this world going to keep you from God's great supper? "The great supper" is not *salvation* merely: it is *entertainment*. One said: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." That is the millennium. Oh! the Lord says, there is a greater thing than the millennium that is coming: there is the great supper *now*—a soul that is *now* in the peace, and rest, and enjoyment of the presence of God.

Now, in closing I shall make rather a strong statement, and that is, that the whole scene will close with *state*—not with standing. "The Spirit and the Bride say, come." Is not that

state? It is true that if they do not know their standing they can never say that; but you are never able to compete successfully with anything, unless you come into the combat in a right state. I do not believe what is so often said, that you do not know what the world is until you get into it. I read: "Who is blind as my servant? and who is deaf as my messenger?" It has been said a person never ministers so well in any meeting, as when he comes in as a stranger, knowing nothing of the troubles that are in it.

Just so with the worldlings. What people call the world is but a step above themselves; people think they are not worldly if they do not aim at what is above them, and only keep what they have been always used to; there is no thought of surrender in them. If they have not grasped the peg above themselves they think they are not worldly. Thus every one becomes a judge to himself of what "the world" is. I come into a room and see a mirror, and I say: What is that for?—To look at.—Oh! then there is no use in that; and, if it is not for use, it is only for display; and that is worldliness. If I come from God's presence I may not know what all of you are doing, but I know what God's mind is about you. I do not need to read the newspapers to know what the times are. The way a newspaper writer forms his opinions is, he goes about in the clubs, and picks up people's thoughts on the subject in vogue, and then writes an article to support their pre-possession, so that a man reading it is only the more built up in his own ideas.

But a man of divine power comes into the world for God, and forms his judgment of things from Him. He has been so occupied with Christ, that, though he may not know what is going on here, yet he comes with Christ's mind and colour into the world, and is not prejudiced by the things he has to do with. Just as with Moses. He comes and finds the whole congregation gone off into idolatry. Does he say: What ought I to do?—No; he knows what is suited to God; he takes the tabernacle and pitches it outside the camp.

It is God's purpose that we should know our standing, and I have nothing to do with obtaining it; but, when I come to state, I come to what is my enjoyment of the standing in which He has set me. And here I would say a word on one point in the sixth chapter of this epistle, and I speak it anxiously, beloved friends. It is, that standing will not do in itself for Satan; nothing will do for Satan but *character*. You must have "your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit." In fact you have to be a man in armour.

I believe, that it is quite possible for a person to enjoy in a measure having to do with God, and yet to be practically careless. But, the moment Satan finds that I am set on gratifying myself, he says: I will have you there. Immediately he calls in question my standing, because my state is not up to it, and tries to divert me from

the place of a heavenly man. He comes in with his wiles, and how am I to be preserved from his attacks? Nothing can keep me but character. Satan says, Oh, but you did such and such a thing yesterday!—Very true, perhaps I did, but I am not going to do it to-day. Peter denies the Lord; yet he can turn round on the Jews and say to them: “Ye denied the Holy One and the Just.” He may have denied Him yesterday, but he will not do it to-day. Often in going to a worldly Christian’s house I have said: I must button up my coat here, for I shall get no quarter; there will be wiles all round to trip me up, and then afterwards the casting it at me that I have fallen into them.

I have unbounded resources, but they are not here; and I must not lose my connection with Christ, if I would draw from them. It is not simply joy, but I must be practically connected with Him: as He says “Without me ye can do nothing.” There is no practice like those armed men going round Jericho: there was patience, and prayer to God; they were occupied with the power of God. Do you think God has set us in this wonderful place, and made us strong in this mighty power, and that then we are not to know what God is to us in this place? We are practically deficient in this; there is a great lack of armed men.

And then comes: “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” It is not here praying for ourselves; it is praying for one another. And

here the world cannot touch me; Satan cannot touch me; I am invulnerable to Satan whilst dependent on God. I never am conscious of being happy in praise or prayer to God, except as I am sure that He has taken it in. There is not a practical sense in souls of having to do with a great and wonderful unseen God. It is only thus—having the sense of this divine power being for you—that it is possible to resist the force that is against you—to resist the power of evil that is setting in on every side to turn you away from your true place. I would say again, that, if you lose your state, you lose all the privileges of your standing.

Well, may the Lord direct our hearts into it in such a day as this. I can only press it upon you. The apostle says: "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;" he felt what a solemn thing it was—how important that saints should have a state in character with their standing. I do ask you solemnly: Have you walked in any practical self-denial during this—*year*—I will say? or are you looking out for every opportunity to gratify yourself? Are you saying: There is something pleasant to look forward to?—Do you "take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake"? You may *put up* with them perhaps; but do you take *pleasure* in them? If you say: Oh! why should I not make the best of both worlds?—I reply: Because you have got the best in the next with the One who suffered the worst here; and we are left here to be the expression of that blessed One

who has set us in the light, and joy, and presence of God Himself.

(J. B. S.)

CHRIST is the expression of what divine perfection is in a man going through the world.

If I look up I am perfect; if I look at myself here I am very imperfect; but still I am not of the world just as Christ is not of the world. What are we of? We are of God. We are of *God* in the midst of a world that is *not* of God; and in which now, what is religious and what is worldly are so mingled together that you cannot tell what is black or white; it is all grey. So the word has to be applied in a thousand ways to things of which the true character must be discerned.

The Spirit applies the living word to every motion of my heart. He comes and says: I delight in you, but I cannot delight in this and that. The Father's word has to be applied to everything in me—things in which will has to be broken; and, because I am going to be in the glory, I purify myself even as He is pure; I have got to keep company with Him. I am not sent into the world but in the measure in which I am able to testify for Christ. It may be but a little testimony that I am able to bear, but still that is all I am sent into it for—all that I am required to go into it for.

(J. N. D.)

FOR CHRIST HERE.

JOHN 15.

I should like to say a word on service. You are here in testimony for Christ, but first you must learn that Christ is for you ; it is then only that you can be for Him.

In looking at these chapters of John, as every careful reader of Scripture knows, we find, in the thirteenth and fourteenth, Christ for us, and this my heart has to learn first. Then the fifteenth chapter is, I am for Christ. It is not anything about life, as people often suppose. In the seventeenth chapter, which is higher still, it is not that I am *for* Christ, but, if I may use such a word, I am *as* Christ.

Thus we get progress in the chapters. There is nothing about joy in chapter fourteen ; there is fulness of joy in chapter fifteen ; and in chapter seventeen it is : " My joy fulfilled in them." The first great point for every soul is to know that Christ is for me ; I cannot take the place of being for Him otherwise.

He gives us here three characteristics of what we are to be : disciple ; friend ; and witness. Each believer ought to be the three. The Lord prepares us for this service by the way in which He deals with us Himself ; and in this there is a double action : washing, and sanctifying.

I first turn back to the thirteenth chapter,

because there the Lord begins to educate the disciples for this new position. He here shows them, that He is about to go away, and that, whilst away, He will take care to remove from them everything that would hinder communion with Himself. Washing removes from us anything that defiles; that is the first thing. Nothing can be more touching to the heart! He says: I am going away; I am leaving you in the defiling place; but I will take such care of you, that I will keep you from all that could come in to distract your heart, and prevent your having fellowship with me. It is the action of the priest outwardly (the action inwardly always goes on); it comes in washing power; He washed them, and wiped them; He entirely removes everything that could hinder intimacy between Him and me.

This is practically brought out in the twenty-first chapter, where, "when they had dined," He says, as it were: Now Peter, I want to have an explanation with you.—Often we judge acts without touching the roots—without reaching the point of departure. Every person, unless he is extremely degraded, is sorry for his faults; but it is a very rare person who is sorry for the thing that commits the faults.

Peter is broken down, and now washing comes in. It is not merely pointing out the sin; that is law; law always rebukes; there is nothing about washing in the law. Washing is removing the thing that defiles, and that is the action of Christ to me. He says: I so love to have you in unclouded intimacy with me, that, while it

ought to be your business to take care that nothing should come in to interfere with it, yet, if it do, it shall be my care, if you are subject to me, to remove it.

Intercession always goes on for everyone; grace follows everyone, for grace flows out unhinderedly; but all are not washed. All sat round the table, and the Lord went round, and washed their feet; and, if anyone were not subject, he did not get it done, anyhow, not for a time. You will find in the case of everyone who is happy with the Lord, that the first action on going to Him is washing. Souls often only get to this point—getting rid of the thing that defiles; but that is not sanctification. Sanctification is that you are keeping the word; not only the word acting on you, but you act according to it. The disciples going to Emmaus give us an example of this. And the Lord says in Revelation: “I have not found thy works *complete*.” It was not that they had not begun; what proves the mettle of any one is whether he can *finish* his work; everyone can commence a thing—there is a novelty about it that is pleasing; but the point is where is the one who can finish them? This is what the Lord is setting forth, and I do not know anything more interesting to my heart.

A soul walking with the Lord will always know why the Lord is interfering with him, for He will be sure to tell him; He will bring the word to bear upon him. The Father chastens me, that I may be a partaker of His holiness; and the Lord Jesus washes me, to the same end.

FOR CHRIST HERE.

A person walking carefully with the Lord is conscious of this sanctification going on. If affliction come upon him, he can say: I know why this is come upon me, because there is another thing going on. The Lord says: I have a controversy with you about that; and the one who knows it, instead of finding it a grievous thing, is glad to get rid of it.

The Lord says now to Peter: "Follow me." The real hindrance to your following Christ definitely is, that there is something that has not been cleared up between your heart and Himself. That is what it was with Peter. After he had been ordained, and sent forth in service for Christ, he goes off the line—he is going quite the wrong way; they all go off on a wrong line of things—millennial, if you will. Now the Lord comes in, and waits for the time when He shall have it out with him; and this is always His way. He does not come down on him at once, and ask for an explanation, but He waits till after they had dined—waits till after dinner, when the heart had been brought into perfect social ease; and then He says to Peter: There is a little question to settle between you and me. Why, we do it ourselves; we do not come down harshly at an unfitting moment to find fault, but we wait until we are sitting round the fire to say, I want a little explanation from you. Of all things I think explanations are the most trying; but, though such times are not pleasant, they are useful; they have to be gone through.

Thus was the Lord freeing Peter of self-

confidence, and I call attention to the manner in which He did it, because I think we are defective in the manner of our service. He says: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." He brings the word to bear. The word comes down, and reaches my soul, so as to detect the deficiency that is there; and I say, nobody knew that deficiency in me but Christ, and He has touched it.

When any ministry comes home to me and touches my conscience, it is not the minister; it is Christ Himself that is speaking. Servants sometimes think they can apply the word, but be assured you never can. The Lord will apply it. He may give you the word, but you can not apply it. He alone knows the secrets of the heart, and He is too loving and too careful about my heart to entrust that office to any other than Himself, though He may make another the channel of it. Therefore we read: "Nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church."

You see the first thing—the ground work of all service—is this gracious way of setting about it. I see a defect in a brother; then I am responsible to remove it. But I may not be able to remove it, though I may have sorrow about it. It is not at all that I do not see it. The child I love best is the one to whose faults I shall be most alive, but at the same time most anxious that no one else shall see them. I desire to see saints that I have a care for, up to the standard which I know to be according to the mind of Christ. As Paul says: "I am jealous over you

with godly jealousy." When I thus see a defect, and am not able to remove it, then all I can do is to fall back on the Lord.

You will find there is a practical cause of failure in attempting to remove a defect from another which one has not removed from oneself. Such a one is powerless to do it, however much he may see the necessity of it. While desirous to do the right thing, he is lacking in skill for it; he is an unskilled surgeon; he has not had practice. The true place of a Christian is to be like the great physician Hahnemann, who, it is said, practised all his remedies first on himself. That is the effective person practically. I know the tender, gentle, nurselike way, in which the Lord has dealt with myself; so the apostle shows how necessary it is that there should be love in our dealing with another. Love takes away everything that could interfere between the soul and Christ; therefore, in Corinthians, he insists on it that the man who deals with others must be a man of charity. The man of charity is the man who has got rid of himself. I have alluded to this because it is the ground work of all service.

Of course the thirteenth chapter is private, and the fifteenth public: you do not wash people's feet in public. But the thirteenth is the groundwork of service: you cannot so much as read your Bible, or even pray, but you must begin with the thirteenth of John; there is no effective service of any kind that it does not begin with removing anything that interferes with communion.

Take Cain as an example; he says: "I am not my brother's keeper." But I *am* my brother's keeper *now*. I often wish I did not see defects, for then I should not be chargeable with them. No doubt the best way to correct defects is to be before that person the living expression of the power of Christ in the very thing in which he fails. You see a vain person; well, walk before him without a bit of vanity. You see a proud person; walk before him in humility; you need not *tell* him that he is proud; let him see what grace can do in you, and thus you will become a voice to him that will be better than any rebuke.

I turn now to the fifteenth chapter, which is public. And the first thing I get in it is: "Abide in me; without me ye can do nothing." You must have to do with the Lord. It is not standing at all; it is state; it must be a thing that is going on; you must have the Lord at the time. Now if you go to visit a sick woman and say to yourself by the way: I will try to say something comforting to that poor woman; I say you have spoiled the whole thing; you are wanting to *do* something, whilst you ought to have wanted to *be* something—to be *Christ*. And what will you leave behind you as the result? The sick woman will say: That was such a nice person; not: I have been edified through the presentation of Christ to my soul.

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." I will give you an illustration which I borrow from the Servant in the Psalm: "My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the

saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." The moment I get anything from God, it is not to go back to Him, but down to man; I am to give it out to refresh others. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." You are to be like a fruit tree in a garden. A fruit tree is to be plucked of its ripe fruit by whoever the owner of the garden chooses—it is there for the use of those who have the privilege of guests in his garden. Are you ready to be plucked by every one He invites to His garden? The figure is that of a garden; you may be a currant tree, or a peach tree; there are various kinds in a garden. When the fruit is ripe it is ready to be plucked; the Owner allows me to go into the garden, and I have the privilege of taking what I want; and what do I take? Why the *ripe* fruit, of course. And who is the sufferer? Why the tree!

Sometimes I find a person who is not ready to be a donor—who is not ready to be plucked. How different to the saints of old, who, "In their deep poverty, abounded to the riches of their liberality." The apostle says: I do not want your gifts, but I am glad of them as "fruit that may abound to your account." It is not that I can *spare* it, but that I am here for the express purpose of being plucked. "Herein is my Father *glorified* that ye bear much fruit. I am here to be a servant; I am here to be plucked, but at His pleasure only; and that is like Himself; I then learn of Him who "for our sakes became poor that we through

his poverty might be rich." He was here to be a servant. There is nothing more unhealthy than the saint who appropriates everything for his own use and comfort. There is nothing more humbling to one's heart. I would say to each one of you: How are you spending your time? The one who spends it on himself only makes himself a spectacle of misery to the eyes of men, and God will make him so too. I said to a person a little while ago: "I have seen you like a stately cedar of Lebanon, full of self consideration." I could have added: "Now you are broken down like a bramble bush." Where is the love you say you have in your heart, when you never do anything to show it?

It is not a question of ability. The apostle says of some, that "beyond their power they were willing." "It is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." Just as it was with the gathering of the manna; the poor feeble old man, or the little tottering child, gathered alike with the strongest man: "He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack." And it must be so. I do not care if a person says he is poor; let him give of his poverty. The poor widow gave all she had for the temple. Have you done as much for the church? She might, as has been said before, have given one of the mites to God, and kept the other for herself; it notes the fact that she had two; but she gave them both—her all—to the Lord. I speak of this because I think the tendency in us is to surround ourselves, and to let others sur-

round us, with comforts. But you have to come to the fact that you are put here as one who is to be plucked—as one who really is a fruit-tree in the garden of Christ upon earth.

And He has these fruit-trees here not for Himself, but for “the saints in whom is all his delight.” I ask you are you practically a fruit-tree here for the Lord, and is your fruit in word and work growing for the benefit of any whom He may send to pluck it? That is what it is to be a “disciple.” If you are, then what you have for yourself is “your joy full.” I never see a person wholly given up to the Lord that he is not as bright as can be; his joy is full. If any one talks of being worn out, I say: You are not serving the Lord, or your joy would be full. Even one who sees the ruin and the crash of all here, has yet his joy full if he is serving truly.

What do you think that man would have said who broke through the Philistines' camp, if I had asked him what he was doing it for? He would have said: All I want is a drink of water for my captain.—What! risk your life for such a thing as that?—Yes, *anything* to please my lord. I do not care what it is!—Let each one of you go home to your different spheres and ask yourselves there, is that the course you are taking? Is that the action of your life? Will I endanger my life? Will I go through anything just to get a drink of water for my Lord?—In the case of David, what characterizes the action is, that, when he had got it, he would not drink it: this offering of a true heart must be consecrated for ever to the Lord.

As I have said, the tendency is, either to let others do it to you, or to surround yourself with comforts. But the question should be not, What do I want? but, What can I do without? It is not only to *want nothing*, but what can I do *without*? That is the point to come to, and it is not monasticism; for, whilst thus needing nothing for self, I am interested about others, and can think of them. The apostle says: "I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state." Look at that servant of the Lord Epaphroditus; what must the state of the saints have been then? when he would not tell the Philippians he was sick, because he knew the sorrow of heart it would give them. What real interest for servants there was in the saints of that time!

I come now to the "*friend*." The friend is one who gives his life for the saints. That is the public expression of love. Everyone here in Quemerford and elsewhere ought to be able to say of me: There is a man who would give his life for the saints. It is not giving property; it is giving one's life; that is the character of this love.

But let me come to detail. I find everybody else out by studying myself, because "As in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Now, in the question of service, do you consider people? or are you merely thinking of yourself? If you go to see a very feeble person, do you stay a very long time? and perhaps pray about something you have on your own heart? I believe you fail there. I sometimes say to

myself when I have been speaking too long: You are not considering others; you must put yourself in their shoes. The greatest lack I know is the lack of consideration and sympathy. And the reason you are thus wanting is, that you have not studied yourself, and seen how God has considered you. Paul says: "We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." Did you ever nurse a child? I suppose most of you have fed one, putting a little sup down its mouth at a time, taking care it was not too hot. It is just thus that Paul speaks of himself; not as a father, only, but as a *nurse* too.

Take a prayer meeting for instance; you pray a long time; then you are not considering others; you are considering yourself. I remember a meeting when a great number of hymns were given out, and, when I spoke of it afterwards, some one said to me: "Why do you object?"—I said: "Because you did not think of me;"—meaning that they were not considering others, or really the Lord who would consider for the assembly.

I dare say all here know that there is what is called a key-note to every room. A professor of sound would tell you in a minute the key-note to which to pitch your voice, so that it would be heard in every part of the room. Now if I get the key-note of a meeting (I know not if I have to day), I have got what will suit every saint there, even the most dormant; and it will wake him up, anyhow for the time, even if he goes to sleep again, like an oyster opening only to shut

up again; still he will get a sense that he has been in a good place. And it would be not a sensational thrill either, but a divine touch that awakened the dormant heart; it is: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." I have thus seen a whole meeting shaken up into vigour and life, though I have known that most of them would in all probability return again to their dull ways.

I am not speaking of gifts now. Gifts are specialities, and all are not gifted; but every one may be a fruit-tree. If you have a gift, you must be in a certain state to be able to exercise it. You may offer me a fine mettled horse, but if you say he is unmanageable, I say, I would rather have a dull pony. The ability is in the former, but the state to enable you to make use of it is lacking; there is no abiding in Christ; there is not charity—he is not tractable.

What characterizes a "*friend*" is, not merely that I am a fruit tree, but that I am here to give my life for the brethren. I believe it is the one thing that will keep a person safe in this world—having but one thought, to live for the saints. You say: But do you not live for the world? No, I live for the saints; and, as to the world, I work for it from the heart of Christ. And that is where I think evangelists sometimes make a mistake: they work *to* the heart of Christ instead of *from* it. The true evangelist is one who finds, as I might say, vacancies in the heart of Christ, and says, I go out to find persons to fill them. He is like a recruiting sergeant going out for recruits to fill the ranks; he is com-

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missioned from the heart of Christ to go forth

the "*witness.*" All this devotion to one another will call out the enmity of the world. It is the most strange thing, but the Lord says, that, if you are the expression of the most devoted love to one another, instead of your calling out the world's admiration, you will call out its enmity; it will *hate* you. Hence we read: "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." There is another action of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is here to comfort us in the absence of Christ, but He is here too to stand for Christ in the presence of the world. He is here in Quemerford. Do you realize that He is here? I was saying somewhere the other day, that a man with a good stick could drive all the saints out of the place; but I defy him to do so, why? Because they have got so much power? Not at all! but because the Holy Ghost was there.

I lament it in my heart, but I have not a doubt that everyone who is giving up the power of the Holy Ghost as to testimony for Christ, is weakening the enjoyment of the Holy Ghost in his own soul. That is why I am against placards, against sensationalism, and I hope I shall be more against them than ever, because it is bringing in the power of man, instead of that of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost does not want human agency. You say: But may I not do this or that?—You may do anything that the Spirit of God tells you to do; but do you think that God cannot bring people in to hear the gospel preached without your placarding it all

over the town? I see the whole world combined against Paul at Philippi, but God came in and put them all aside, and just brought in the jailor where Paul was, in order that he might be saved.

There is an invisible power with us here in this room, in testimony for Christ. You need not be discouraged a bit. There is an invisible power with us; there is the Holy Ghost, and nothing can overcome Him. And the one who does not maintain this fact, does not maintain the testimony of the glorified Christ, for the Holy Ghost was to come from heaven to tell of Him: "He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." He comes in to comfort you in the absence of Christ, and He is with you also as a testimony against the world, and, if you stand with Him now, He says: I will tell you all that concerns that absent One and His glories. Thus, as you get hold of the sixteenth chapter, you will find what it is to get into the seventeenth, and become a living representation of that absent One—of Him here where He is not. But to be this you must take the road to it.

The Lord teaches us the tenderness of His own patient love, as He makes us fruit trees in His garden, to be plucked by those whom He privileges to share that which belongs to Himself. May He lead our hearts to know the reality of it.

(J. B. S.)

DELIVERANCE AND THE EFFECT.

PSALM xxii. GALATIANS i. 15, 16.

The twenty-second Psalm is an account of what the Lord went through for us.

There are two subjects in this Psalm: one; that this blessed One bore all that was against us; the other, that He declared the Father. These two things, when you come to understand them, bring out distinctly the fact that He was the Son of God. So much so, that Paul, after seeing Him, went into the synagogue and preached that *Jesus*—the Man—was the *Son of God*. We have it “Christ” in our translation; but the right word is “Jesus.”

Now mark, for you may not at first see, why the Person who endured all that was against me, and the Person who declared the Father, must be the Son of God—that it proves it. First, there never was a man who knew the nature of my offence against God; and next there never was a man who knew the love in the heart of God to a sinner.

There never was any man but One who knew these two things; and He who knew them must necessarily be equal with God in order to know how He felt as to each. A child does not know how I feel. People misunderstand the feelings of one another simply because they have not the

same order of intellect. You must have a mind equal to that of the person aggrieved, if you would understand how he feels about the grievance.

Tell me, have you ever measured or understood the extent of your offence as it is seen by God? I will put it in the plainest language. How could you go about paying a debt that you did not know the amount of? None ever knew the extent of your offence but one Man; and that Man must have been the Son of God, or He could not have known it. Well, that Man comes to bear it. There were two things known to Him that were never known to any other man, and these two things prove that He was the Son of God: no other man knew the amount of my debt but Himself; and no other man ever knew the heart of God, and understood the love that He bore to me, but He. He alone could declare that love, just as He alone knew the nature of my offence.

As we grow holy we know something about it, but the unholy know nothing about it at all; we have no sense of what a terrible thing sin is in the mind of God, but as we get near Him; none ever knew what sin was in the mind of God as the Son of God did, and He was the One to bear it. But, besides this, as I have said, no one knew the love that was in the Father's heart for the prodigal but Himself, and therefore He comes out Himself to tell us what it is.

This is what this Psalm recounts to us: sins borne, and then the love of the Father declared. The one is when all the enemies are strewn

upon the battle field ; He has encountered every foe, and laid them all prostrate ; and then on that very battle-field, where they are all laid low, comes out this blessed, this unknown, eternal light ; when there is not a foe left that He has not encountered, He brings into the scene the wonderful declaration of the Father's love to the poor wretched ones now rescued by His grace.

Paul speaks of it, as one in whom it was perfectly accomplished, when he says : " It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." But practically souls do not reach this—do not understand this new light, this new day, which in fact was called, and I doubt not significantly, " the first day of the week," because on it the new Man comes in, and, when the new Man comes in, there must be a new day, which is what I want to show you.

The Lord descends from the Mount of transfiguration to die at Jerusalem. The soul never gets perfect deliverance until it sees the Lord put Himself in this place, where He says: " Father, save me from this hour ; but for this cause came I unto this hour."

Now I will show you the foes that He encountered for us. I do not think we bear along in our hearts sufficiently what Christ's path was for us down here. I do not mean merely to be looking at the story of it, or reading theoretically about His sufferings ; I mean the entering into in our hearts what He actually went through for us, so that sin might come before us as " exceeding sinful."

I will go through the Psalm in detail. We

may notice, that generally in a Psalm it is the greatest thing that begins or heads it. And I state according to my judgment, that a Psalm is always the record of what the soul has gone through. When you write the Psalm you recount what you have gone through. So I find I cannot read a Psalm well till I am out of the thing it recounts, because it was written by one who had got out of it. When I am in the depths it is no use to read it; but, when I am out again, then I can bear the recital of what I have been through, and then is my time to read it; I am exercised in the place I am in to see how I reached it.

Paul sees Christ in glory, but for three days afterwards he neither eats nor drinks. He does not want to know that he has been there, but he looks back to see how he got there. He has to learn how Christ went down into judgment; how He bore death for him. It is the answer to what we get in the twelfth of Exodus. It is the lack of this that makes the conversions of the present day so weak in their character.

There are two things: there is the blood on the lintel; that is security I admit; but what is the eating the roast lamb with the bitter herbs? A person says: I believe in the blood. And I say: I do not question it a bit, but you have not got the sense in your soul of how Christ bore the judgment of your sins; you have not a sense of the consequences of sin; and consequently there is no coming out of Egypt. But I am not only delivered from the judgment; I am going out of the place where the judgment was.

Therefore Scripture says: "Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water." People speaking in a familiar way of the Lord Jesus Christ as "dear Jesus," and "the adorable Jesus", and such like, is eating it "raw." I do not touch the question of security, because the slightest faith in Christ brings security; but I say there is no depth in it, because they have not gone inside and eaten the "lamb roast with fire, and with bitter herbs;" they have no sense of what Christ went through when He was made sin for us.

There is so little known of *confession*. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." That is not merely going out and telling people; the meaning of confession is the heart having a sense of what it has found in another so as to be forced to acknowledge it. When Jonathan made a covenant with David that was confession. The woman coming into the Pharisee's house was for confession. She had heard of Him and believed in Him before, but she says: I must go and speak to Him; I must give up all for Him. And she comes in, and stands behind Him weeping, and anoints Him. That was confession; with the mouth owning Him. So did Jonathan. He first made a covenant with David, and then he "stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." That was public. There must be the private and the public action, to show that I am indebted to Him for everything. It is a great lack to souls, their not practically accepting this.

When your soul gets the sense that Christ bore the judgment in the place where you are, what must be the effect of it? Why, that you long to get out of the place.

In this Psalm I count seven distinct things that the Lord encountered for us, and I pray Him to show it out to us, that we may understand it, for it is holy ground that we are on whilst we look at that holy One going down into death. As He went through this world, He walked scatheless in the midst of all that was against Him: enemies might rise mountains high before this, but not a single one could touch Him. But now His hour was come; every barrier was broken down, and the accumulated force of men and devils bore down upon that spotless One! And not that alone: He had to encounter the judgment of God. It is: "Father, save me from this hour!"

Has your soul ever gone in company with Him in this hour? If it has, if but for one moment, you will know something of the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This is the first thing in the Psalm; not that it comes first chronologically, but that it is morally the greatest; it is first in its gravity. No one can understand what sin is but a holy person; who then could estimate it like the holy One of God? And, when He took the sinner's place, He bore the sinner's penalties. There was not a single penalty attached to disobedience which He had not fixed Himself; none knew so well what those penalties were as He, the law-

giver, who had fixed them. And He it was who bore what He Himself had fixed. He takes the sinner's place in judgment, and He says: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He gets the sense in His soul of the distance between the sinner and God, and darkness comes in. He felt it as none other could. Despair has something of this character, because it is the feeling of one who has had the light and has now lost it; and who says, I know what the light is, for I have rejoiced in it; but it is gone, and now I am in despair until I get it again.

This is what He has borne. Have you got a sense of it? He has borne it, and the darkness is gone; the sinner's distance from God is gone in the One who has met it. Therefore the Lord can come forth and say: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." When was this? Was it on the mount?—No.—At the grave of Lazarus?—No. He was the Son of *God* there, not the Son of *man*. Where then was it? It was on the cross! He was not thinking of what it would cost Him, but of what was due to God, cost Him what it might. He says: I know the holiness of God, and I know the penalties of sin, but I will bear it all.

Practically we have to learn this in our own history; but I hope I shall be able to show you, that we have nothing to fear when we look up; but, if we look down, God says: I am going to shake all that is here. That is the twelfth of Hebrews. "Our God is a consuming fire." If you do not shake yourself, as sure as God is in heaven, you will get a shaking some of these

days, and lose your reward too. He says: You are come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, &c. I have thrown it open to you up here; but, if you go down to the earth, you will get to a consuming fire; for I am going to shake terribly the earth.

That is the first thing; and I want your souls practically to understand it. There has been a good deal said about being personally occupied with Christ, but you never will be occupied with the deliverer until you have got deliverance. How could Jonathan be occupied with David the deliverer before he saw the head of Goliath in his hand, and knew that deliverance was wrought? Then David becomes his object.

Christ has removed every single thing out of the way; there is now nothing to bar your access to God. He has removed sin, and the darkness of divine wrath, but there must be more than this. You cannot get into the twenty-third Psalm until you have learnt the Lord in the twenty-second. How can you lie down in green pastures, unless you see first that He has removed everything out of the way which could come in to disturb you there? Praise comes out as I look at the One who is triumphant; the song comes after the victory, when the whole thing is accomplished, as in the fifteenth of Exodus: "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

I would encourage your conscience and heart in this matter. Can you say: I see that the distance between myself and God is gone? That the darkness is over?—Yes.—And do you see the

Person who did it?—Yes.—And you can be occupied with the One who did it all?

Now mark, you must keep another thing before your mind, and that is, that God Himself sent Him to remove the distance which man had brought in between God and himself. Man was responsible to remove the distance, but he could not, so God says: I will prove that there is love in my heart. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God commends His love by the way He *acts* love, not by insisting that love is there. He proves that He loves us; the very thing that was denied in the garden of Eden. You were bound to repair the distance, and you could not do it; so now, says God, I will do it myself; I lay help upon One that is mighty.

This is what He teaches us in the parable of the prodigal son. You get three parables in the fifteenth of Luke, all of them unfolded in the thief on the cross. The point to be established is, that God Himself acts: He sends the One who will perfectly meet His own mind, so that the work is perfectly done. I hear people say Christ has paid all their debts.—Yes, all that you *know*, I say; but what about what you do *not* know? Your conscience is clear, but I know where you will be presently: you will be in misery; you will find that it is not only what you know, but that *sin is working in you*; you will be in the seventh of Romans. You have not got hold in your soul of the fact that God Himself has provided the sacrifice that satisfies

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Himself. It is not only that I know that every one of my debts are paid. The thing that will stand, and that gives the soul real stability, is the fact that God is perfectly satisfied, because He has provided the One who satisfies *Himself*. And what am I to do?—Why, to look at that One who satisfies Him.

I might tell you an incident of a man I met with in a train a short time ago. He was evidently dying, and I spoke to him of Christ. He answered me: "I knew Him before I fell sick, I am thankful to say; but still I am not perfectly happy, for sometimes a cloud comes between." I said: "But God satisfied *Himself* with the sacrifice He provided." "I thank you for that," he said; "I never thought of it before." His face lighted up with joy; he saw it in a moment, and I trust he went away really happy. It gives immense strength to the soul seeing it. As a woman, to whom I had spoken the previous day, said just before her death: "*He is satisfied, and so am I.*"

It is not the mere fact of His paying my debts; but He has so met the mind of God, that He has entitled me to a most inconceivable inheritance. I have searched up and down in nature for an illustration of this, but I cannot find such a thing. The One who discharged the debt did it according to the mind of God. I did not know what I owed Him. One only knew, and He discharged it. • Well then, *rest in this!*

That is the first point; and I have dwelt long upon it, because I do not think people are clear about it. God never imputes sin to me any

more. He has raised Christ from the dead to prove it. He never sees me "in the flesh" any more, though He sees me *acting* in it. But all the question of sin is settled, and it will never come between me and God any more. If I call in question my *acceptance* I am simply dishonoring Him; but the more I am concerned about my *acceptability* the more I honour Him. The heart does not get perfectly clear until it sees this.

Now I turn to the second point. The figure I use is this. The Lord is on the battle-field, and that to encounter not *one* Goliath but *seven*. I see Him meet them here in single combat. They are all coming down upon Him, all the enemies that could gather themselves against Him. I see Him encountering each of them, and, after overcoming each, eventually enter into death Himself "to destroy him that had the power of death, and to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." I find that, unless a person gets clear about the death of Christ, he is sure to be balked by one of these seven things. But I trust that every one in this room is clear as to the question of sin being entirely gone.

Next we find that He is the "reproach of men, and despised of the people." Now tell me, does this ever hinder you? Is that giant laid low?—Christ says: I bear all that, and take it out of the way.—These are the things that bear upon man here. He says: "I am a worm, and no man." He bears that too. He has met God; now he comes down to man. Are

you clear of this? Are you superior to what man is? Are you not afraid of what man can do? Look at Stephen; you will see all that we find here worked out there. He says: I do not fear what man can do to me. He looks up and sees no fear as to God; he looks down and sees no fear as to Satan, no fear as to man; as to himself, no fear of pain; he is superior to it, and shows it by being able to act for others—able to pray for his murderers. People say: I am sure I am going to heaven; but I say: Are you above the power of man here—above all that he can do?

He says: "I am a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head." That is what Christ was; and, if your heart does not get clear of it, you will be balked by it. In Stephen you find a man who has got perfectly clear of all these things. Everything is gone. There is not a particle of distance between him and God; he looks up and sees Him. Is he afraid of Satan? Not a bit! Afraid of the people? Not a bit! Afraid of pain? Not a bit! Not a bit concerned about anything! He is the prince of heroes! If all the heroes in the world were put together they would never make such a hero as Stephen, because he is not only above all these things, but he can act for others in them, and that too for those from whom he was suffering.

Now we come to the next. "Many bulls have compassed me." Who are these? The Jews; I find the Lord surrounded with them. "Strong

bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion." That is what they were. He says: I have met them all and have laid them prostrate; the battle field is strewn with them. And, if you do not see the battle field strewn with them, as Jonathan saw the head of Goliath in David's hand, you will surely be balked by them some day.

Now comes the next enemy, one that balks very many; that is bodily weakness, which is the fourth. Where was there ever weakness like His? "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint." You have read of the Inquisition; you have read of the screw and such like instruments of torture; but where was there ever anything like this? "All my bones are out of joint." I speak not of sickness, but I have here One who was weaker than any other in this world ever was. Do you say: Have I sympathy from the Lord in my sickness and weakness?—I say: Yes, I have. I have the sympathy of One who was weaker than any other ever was. I have the sympathy of One who, whilst thus in weakness, encountered the judgment of God and bore it, and thus entitled me to an inconceivable inheritance besides the debt He discharged.

Do you think people are not balked by bodily weakness? I know nothing that balks like it. And why? It is because the body, instead of being the medium of what is going on within, becomes a positive burden. As the apostle says: "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being

burdened." I ask you is this giant gone for you? Do you think it was not gone for Stephen? Do you think his bones did not loosen as they were battering him to pieces? Of course they did! And did he not feel it? How is this effected? It is that he was triumphant in the power of the blessed One who had laid low every foe that could come against us.

"My strength is dried up like like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." I can not get lower. I find this blessed One where? In the grip of this fearful antagonist. But He says: I will meet all; in single combat will I encounter all. I know what it is to meet the judgment of God, and now I will meet all that the malice of man can bring against me. I am brought down to the very dust.—Thus did He glorify God under the weight of it, and God has glorified Him.

And now He takes up another point. "Dogs have compassed me." That is the Romans. We have spoken of the "bulls," which represent the religious magnates—the Jews; now we get the "dogs"—the Gentiles. The Jews delivered Him over to the Romans. You cannot say that it was thus with Stephen, but with the Lord it was so; therefore I do not connect this part with Stephen.

"The assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." Now, beloved friends,

let me ask you (for it strikes me sometimes how desperately unfeeling the heart of man is), if I were to say: A friend of yours is dead; would not your heart feel it? But then if I were to say: He died for *you*? What then?—Surely I need not dwell on it.

And now we come to the sixth point. "Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth." Here we get Satan. See what a place is the blessed Lord in for me!

And then he says lastly: "Thou has heard me from the horns of the unicorns." That is generally supposed to be the pains of death.

He has gone through all that. And now let me say: *That is my Saviour*; that is the One I belong to—the One who has done everything for me.

You say: I have got *part* of it. I tell you if you have not got all you have none. If you are weak in *any* one of these things you will be weak in *every* one of them. If you find a person who is hindered by bodily weakness, you will find he is hindered in all his enjoyment of God. The body of a thoroughly healthy person is really a help to him; but, when the body is not a help but a hindrance, it is like working against the stream in everything. Does ill health cast a cloud over you? and do you say: It is my weakness? I tell you, if your illness brings a cloud between you and God, you have not got a sense of real acceptance with God—you have never yet got the question of sin settled before Him. It is with you as with the woman of Sarepta:

as soon as sorrow comes upon her she says: "Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance?"

I believe it is an immense point practically for the heart to get hold of. There are the foes. Are they all down, or not? They are all down. Even the pains of death are down; there is not a drop of water to be seen, as you get in the figure of Jordan. And also in the Red Sea: "The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever." "The depths covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone." All these enemies are flooded; and what comes out now?

Next: what Satan told you did not exist, He declares. I have borne the judgment on you for listening to Satan; now I declare the Father's name to you—the love that is in the Father's heart. In the battle He was left alone; He encountered all the foes unassisted; it was a single combat. But now He is heard; and, as He rises from the dead, He brings in a new life, and a new day; He is no longer alone; He says: "Go to my *brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

The point of departure is the point of restoration. The point of departure was distrust of the heart of God. The point of restoration is, Christ says: I will show you the love that is in the heart of God; I know the love that is there.

This is what the heart has to find. It is not only that He has removed all that was against me, but that He acquaints me with the love

which He only knows. So He says: "I have declared unto them thy name, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them." "And (He adds) *I will* declare it."

It is to me most wonderful! I do not think I am able to convey the thought, but it seems to me that, having borne everything, and having come scatheless out of the conflict—this *terrible* conflict—He says: Having borne all this on account of the doubt you cast upon the love of God, my very first service is to acquaint you with the love that is in the Father's heart. I was the only One that ever knew it; but now I have many after my own type to whom to show what that love is.

This is what the prodigal finds; not only is he kissed and robed, but he is in the Father's house, and his own heart continually deepening in the love that has brought him into such a scene.

Well, it is no wonder that He adds the word: "In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee!" I do not believe praise can come out of the heart until then. Praise cannot come till after the victory. First the victory; next the communication of the love; and then: "In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." Wonderful climax!

Now let me turn for a minute to the verse I read in Galatians: "When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me." Now mark, the moment I say *Son*, I intimate the *Father*. Lose the Son and you lose the Father; establish the Son and you establish the *Father*. "When it pleased

God to reveal his Son in me"—that is the point the Apostle was insisting upon—"that I might preach him among the Gentiles."

Just mark how it comes out, though I feel myself unequal to putting it before you. But, to me, the grandeur of the scene is this. Jesus comes in in glory, manifesting Himself to a poor sinner there fallen to the ground, who is powerless, who does not dare to move. What is his safety in such a place as that? Why, that Jesus is there! The entire doctrine comes out. Man gets no place. The same God who brought me into birth in connection with the first Adam now brings me into the new creation—comes in, and reveals His Son in me.

If Saul is there as man, he must die; for it is written: "There shall no man see me and live." Manoah said: "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." And what was the whole lesson in Exodus? Why, that they must not break through to gaze, and so perish. How then is it here?

The Lord Jesus walks into the scene, and Saul says to Him: "Who art thou, Lord?" And the Lord says: "I am Jesus." How I wish I could convey the thought to you. It is just as if He said: I have done with man altogether; there is now no other man but myself. And I can reveal myself to you, as the chief of sinners, just because there is no other man but myself. I ignore every man but myself. I ignore Saul of Tarsus.—Indeed if he had acknowledged him at all, it must have been to bring judgment down upon him.—But he says: I can come forth to

you, the chief of sinners, because I no longer recognize you as a man in the flesh; but as your sins washed away in my blood, and your old man crucified in my cross.

Have you got hold of the fact that He has brought in another Man? And that that Man can come in to the chief of sinners simply because He has cleared all out of the way, and now occupies the ground He has cleared? If you understand it—if you let your heart go out to it at all, you will see that it is the most wonderful thing. It is not that man is *historically* at an end, but that he is *altogether gone*. He is at an end with God. God says: "*You are dead.*" He may see you active in the flesh; but that is not where He has put you, or where He recognizes you.

So Saul goes into the synagogue, and preaches that "Jesus is the Son of God." And he argues upon the same ground in Colossians: "Ye are complete in him." The Son of God comes in ignoring the man that is here altogether, and, at the same time, occupying the ground that He clears. And *must* He not occupy the ground that He clears?—It is most wonderful!

Then I say: That will do; I am quite satisfied with this, and want nothing more.—No, says the apostle, it will not do to stop there. You have got to the point of what you are in Christ, but that is not all. Having brought you to the completeness of what you have in Him, now you must go on to the next thing.

I will explain the principle of it. Suppose a man emigrates with a number of companions.

When he gets to the new country, he burns the ship to make sure that there shall be no returning to the place they came from. This is literally the point in the second of Colossians. The apostle first states "ye are complete in him;" and now he says: You must turn round and burn the ship. You are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ; disposed of judicially on the cross, and now you are "buried with him in baptism." Your status is gone. Yet I am always a man, but according to Christ.

What I want you to get hold of is the fact that I have got another Man, who puts aside the old man altogether. "You are *dead*." But you are *alive* if you say "Touch not, taste not, handle not." I must have the ship burned. The body of the flesh is set aside in Christ, and in baptism I acknowledge that the first man is gone.

See what a place! What a difference to where I was! What man then are you going to live?—I am going to live the Man that is not here, among the men that are. I want to practically regulate my life by the Man that is there. Whenever I am in any difficulty about any single thing I say: What would that Christ do?

"Circumcised with the circumcision of Christ." That is what God did on the cross. And now I am "buried with him in baptism." Baptism has taken everything from me; I have no status; it has not brought me into anything, but it has cut me off from everything; the man is over—gone. And now I have reached another Man, and this Man is the Son of the Father. And I

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have to walk through this scene as that Man who has made my heart acquainted with the love that is in the Father's heart; I am to walk now, not as the man who is gone, but as the Man of God's counsels.

The Lord lead our hearts, beloved friends, to understand what a wonderful victory He has accomplished—all the enemies cleared out of the way. He has come in like the sun shining in his glory upon the battle field where the foes lie prostrate. Like the general who used to talk of "the sun" that rose in its splendour after the night of victory, so has our Sun shone out in His glory; He comes in saying: I have laid all low; I will declare the Father. And *I* say: *I thank you*. You have laid all low that was against me, and now I am taken up with *you*, and not with what you have cleared away.

What man is to be for me now?—The Man Christ Jesus! "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me."

(J. B. S.)

THE whole question, abstractly I mean, of good and evil came out at the cross. All the fulness of evil, on the one hand, in the rejection of Christ; and, on the other, the infinite love of

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God in giving His Son, in divine righteousness withal against sin; and the same love seen in the Son giving Himself. Perfection also in man in the Son's love to the Father, and His perfect obedience. Satan's full power over man was displayed too. Everything was brought to a point in a kind of summing of it all up together. There I find all the perfect love of God, and the perfect evil of man brought out. But that is all over and done: "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin." And then I find the second Man, in virtue of this, gone up to sit on the right hand of God.

As I look up at Christ in glory I find that He so glorified God Himself in this work, that He has put man into His own glory. I get thus my own place in Him; I give up my place as a child of Adam. Christ has been made sin for me, and all my sins are gone. But we are brought out utter sinners in heart and act. Shall I tell you why you commit sins? Because you like them! That is what you are by nature. I have altogether given up all hope, and fled to the cross. I have given up what I am. I have got all He has done.

Where is righteousness then? It is not in man; it is in God. Law and judgment are against me. Yes, but Christ has been made sin. If Christ was made sin on the cross, it is on the cross that righteousness against sin was shown. That is as to *sin* it was; but, when I get Christ at the right hand of God as man, *there* I see *righteousness* manifested and glorified in Him. In that which Christ did I find God

perfectly glorified; as He says in the sixteenth of John: "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." It is part of God's righteousness to put me into glory—the glory of Christ—because Christ has earned me for Himself by giving Himself for me; and has earned the glory for me. He would not have the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, if He had not got me. He is sitting there at the right hand of God in virtue of what He has done for me, and I am in Him; and, if in Him, then I am in the righteousness of God. Sins looked at as my responsibility are gone, and, as the apostle triumphantly reasons: "Who is he that condemneth?" How can you condemn what is in Christ? All that He has done for me, and has shown me the glory and the blessedness of my place, that it is not in Adam but in Christ, consequent on all that the second Man has done for me—made sin for me that I might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

It is because of the full efficacy of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, that the Holy Ghost has been sent down to me. God has wrought me for the self same thing; and, if I say, How can I be sure that I shall be there? my answer is, Because it is the effect of what Christ has done. The day of judgment would have referred to what *I* have done. My place now is the effect of what *Christ* has done. If I am a new creature I am made the righteousness of God in Christ. God has wrought me for that; it was His mind, His thought, His intention, and He has given me the earnest of the Spirit.

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Never rest without the consciousness in your soul that you are, in Christ, this new creation, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of the body.

(J. N. D.)

It is one thing to be patient because I am expecting something, and another because I am expecting nothing. Do you think the Holy Ghost is come only to give me the patience and submission that man ought always to have had? not a bit of it! It is the patience of *Christ* now: everything is transferred to heaven.

(C. E. SH.)

“*If* ye continue in the faith grounded and settled.”—If God looks at me in Christ no question is raised. If I look at myself on the earth I have “*if*” constantly raised. I have assurance for the path because He is faithful; and dependence, because I want His faithfulness. I have divine certainty that I shall be kept, but, at the same time, certainty that I need to be kept. Christ must die before I die. The devil may come and scatter the sheep, but he will never scatter them out of Christ’s hand.

(J. N. D.)

“CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH.”

EPH. v. 22, 23.

Remark, beloved brethren, how the grace of God has associated us with Himself and with Christ, though of course remaining Himself meanwhile in the supremacy of infinite Godhead, in which none can be associated with Him; but He has made us partakers of the divine nature, and given us His Spirit to dwell in us, so that we realize what He is, and become one with Christ through being united to Him.

We find, in the early part of this fifth of Ephesians, that we are called to be “imitators of God, as dear children, and to walk in love.” Love is His nature; and we see this exemplified in a man, if we take Christ as the pattern of it. “Walk in love, as *Christ* also hath loved us.”

Besides this we get another word brought before us, which also expresses God’s nature: that is light; and it is said: “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” And, here too, Christ is given as the perfect expression of what is put before us. “Awake, thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead, and *Christ* shall give thee light.” As a man in the world, He was the expression and pattern of light.

But after this he adds: “Be filled with the

the Spirit,” for, though we are made partakers of this divine nature, which is light, and we are called to love after the pattern of God in Christ, yet after all we are but poor human creatures, powerless in ourselves; and the Spirit is the only power we have for everything.

In God’s mind it is everything for us to have fellowship with Himself. He has put us before Himself in love—has made us His sons and daughters—the objects of His delight; and He should be the object of our delight. So much for the first relationship that we find here. It is with the Father as sons, and in this Christ is the first-born among many brethren.

The second is union with Christ now glorified: “We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” We are livingly united to Him, as members to a head. I cannot get closer to him than being a member of His body, and in the same glory with Himself. This relationship gives us the indissoluble union of Christ and the church. “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ **also** loved the church, and gave himself for it and let the wife see that she reverence her husband.” Though quite true as regards husband and wife, it is a figure of Christ and the church.

But, though we are united to Him, He is ever pre-eminent, and, what even gives its value to this relationship is the necessary pre-eminence in it, as in everything, of Christ. When Moses and Elias were on the Mount with the Lord, they were in the same glory as He was, and talking with Him of what was nearest His

heart, and nearest His Father's heart too ; they were in familiar intercourse with Him. But, even then, the moment Peter talks about making three tabernacles, one for each, thus putting them on an equality, the Father's voice comes in and owns His Son, and Moses and Elias at once disappear. I only use this to illustrate what I mean ; and so it must always be. There must always be the eternal blessedness and pre-eminence of His person, and the nearer we get to Him the more conscious we shall be of this. If I know a man indeed intimately I shall surely get to know his foibles. In Christ, the more I know him, the more I shall only get to know deeper, and divine, excellence. There is no fear of near acquaintance diminishing respect towards Him : the more I feel His love, the more I shall feel that He is supreme in it ; intimacy with His love only shows out its excellence, and produces more adoration and love in me.

God is supreme in love. It is not said in the fifth chapter that we are to be love ; we cannot be free and supreme in it ; we are said to be light, because the new Man partakes in the purity of His nature. And in the love of Christ we find the working of this supreme goodness, and in a man, so that following Him we can walk in it, though we cannot say we are love, as we say we are light. But, in the case of the church, in the fifth chapter, we have a love of special relationship, not simply the goodness and sovereign love of God ; yet the spring and source of all is in the unsought love of Christ, in which He acts in the thought of His own

grace, when there was nothing to draw it out. He has to purchase what He loves, and form it for Himself. He “gave *himself* for it:” and when He gets it He cleanses it *for Himself*.

But there is yet another point of view. He presents it “to himself.” When God had made Eve, He presented her to Adam; but here we get the glory of Christ’s person: being a divine Person He presents the church to Himself, having formed it and perfected it, so as to be suited to Himself. He does all for the church. Let us now see a little of the way in which He does it.

The first thing of all is His own unmotivated love. “He loved the church,” perfectly, divinely, infinitely; we here find the *utterness* of His love. “He gave Himself.” He did not only do something for it: “He gave Himself!” And this is constantly repeated in the word; it is even said, “He gave himself for our sins,” our sins being that which was in the way between us and God. As I look at Christ’s love, I see that it had no motive but in itself, and it gives itself; nothing is held back; He is wholly and altogether mine; He has given Himself, and all is comprised in that. The self-sacrifice of Christ was absolute; all He is, and all He was in His perfection. The whole motive of His nature was engaged in it: “He gave himself.” And this is a wonderful thought, if our hearts could only get hold of it. It is not that He gave His blood, and gave His life, though that is true, and we may speak of it distinctively, for Scripture does; but the point here is the character of

His love; so it says, “He gave himself.” The motive was self-giving.

Mark here how, as regards the process of fitting the church for Christ, loving it and giving Himself for it goes first. It does not say, He cleansed and washed it so that He might have it, and then loved it because it was cleansed and fit to be loved. No. He gives Himself for it, and possesses it with a perfect title; Himself given for it, in the absolute completeness of His whole heart, according to which He has taken it to Himself. He gives Himself for it because He loved it; and now, He says, it must be cleansed and made fit for me. Not, It must be happy—happy it is, no doubt—but not only so; it must be made fit for Himself. I cannot be satisfied if a person I love is not what I like him to be—my children or wife, for example. It is not a feeling of discontent—I do not mean that—but a want of full satisfaction. So Christ sets about making the church what He would like it to be. He cleanses it by “the washing of water by the word.” As He said before: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

As the word comes *from* God, it judges all that is contrary to God, by the revelation of what is *in* God, so that it may make me like what it reveals. “For their sakes,” He says, “I sanctify myself.” As man, He set Himself apart as the perfect expression of what is divine in a man, or man according to God. So it is not that I am what I ought to be, but that I am connected with Christ, who is the expression of

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what I ought to be, and forms me into His likeness. “We all with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” That is the way it cleanses: it purifies our motives, thoughts, and apprehensions, and changes us into the same image from glory to glory. But *He* is the doer: He redeems us, cleanses us, sanctifies us, and presents us.

There is also a thought here which is full of the deepest interest; and that is, that we cannot separate the cleansing from the glory. The cleansing is according to the glory, and, when the body is changed, the state of holiness is according to the glory revealed; see 1 Thess. iii. 13, where we should have said “unblameable in holiness” in our walk; but we read, in the presence “of God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We cannot really get on without looking at Christ in glory. It is said that “He might present it to himself a *glorious* church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it would be holy and without blemish.” That is the cleansing. Practical cleansing is by the power of the revelation of the glory of Christ. But let us always remember that this cleansing is not in order that we may belong to Him, but that it is: “Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he *might* cleanse it.

Another thing that we find as regards the church, and this ought to comfort us in these dark days, and in the darker ones which we see

coming. He goes on to say: “No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.” It is not only that He fits it for Himself—makes it according to His own mind; but the same love that fits it, watches over it in the circumstances of weakness in which it is found, as it passes through the world. Why, he says, a man’s flesh is himself; Christ takes care of Himself in taking care of the church. As he said to Saul: “Why persecutest thou *me*?” You are touching me in persecuting them. Christ does not separate the saints down here from Himself. He is interested in them, cares for them, nourishes and cherishes them as a man does the flesh of his own body. And in this He can never fail. The darkness may be great, and the power of evil strong, and growing stronger (not that God is not working, for He is, and when the enemy comes in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him, and is doing so, and preparing the coming of the Lord), but, no more than a man can hate himself, can Christ fail in doing this—nourishing and cherishing the church.

The Lord has long patience with all this growing evil (we may pray that things may go quicker, that He would bring the end on more rapidly, calling in His own; but, if so, it will bring evil out more rapidly too, and the judgments that are coming on the earth, but yet we may desire it), but all through the faith of the saint can reckon on the care and love of Christ. You cannot put me in any circumstances where

the love of Christ cannot suit me.

Nor even does the working of unbelief hinder. For, when those who are believers cannot use the power that has been brought in against evil, what is to be done? We read, that when they brought one possessed of a devil to the disciples, and they could not cast him out, the Lord says: “How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?” If you cannot use the power I have brought in, what is the use of staying with you? But He adds: “Bring him hither to me.” Even if the faith of the church fail, and one were alone in the trial, individual faith will always find grace in the Lord Jesus Christ for its want. Just as the father of the child cried out with tears: “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.” Christ cannot fail; and we on our side must not be like Elijah, saying: “Lord, they have thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away,” (and mark at the moment he had thrown down their altars and slain their prophets,) and then run away. What we want to say is: Well, Christ never fails, and there cannot be a want in Christ’s church without there being an answer to it in Christ’s heart.

All we want, beloved friends, is to have the eye fixed on Christ, from whom all grace and love flow, and to be sanctified in heart and spirit thereby, while waiting for Him, who has given Himself for us, so that we might be like Him even now, while walking through this world.

(J. N. D.)

COLOSSIANS iii.—In order to be able practically to exhibit risen life down here, we have to see that the life itself is not here, though we have to exhibit it here—that Christ was down in our circumstances till the cross, but that now He has taken us into His, and has gone entirely out of ours—has left them altogether behind Him—bad and good both. He has gone entirely out of them, and we are risen with Him.

This then defines our position as to this life: that it is out of everything here, because Christ is, and not because we are; and that we have to express that life where we are, and not where He is.

Now this risen life we are to practically bring out here in two ways. First, as to our members; second, as to our relationships. We have His death to set aside our members; His life to fulfil our relationships.

How am I to mortify my members?—*By the death of Christ.* It is not *my* death; it is *Christ's* death, which I am to bring in on myself. The death of Christ is my weapon, and my only one. And can this weapon ever be anything but perfect and complete in its action? The only thing is that it be *brought to bear*. The weapon itself cannot be improved. It is there as perfect for the babe that is born to day, as it is for the saint at any age. The weapon cannot be sharper, though you may get sharper in using it. Its action is perfect every time it is used, only you do not use it continuously.

And, as to my relationships, I have His risen life. It is not whether I am a good husband;

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I may not be a good one; but am I seeking to *please Christ*? As a father is it to please *Christ* I seek? How shall I stand with respect to these relationships in a scene where they will have all passed away? If I have sought only to please my wife, there will be nothing of it left; but all wherein as a husband I seek to please Christ will stand for eternity.

As a servant too. How everything depends on the object. I may do the highest service with the lowest object, or I may do the lowest with the highest. A servant sweeping a room, and seeking therein to "serve the Lord Christ," has as high an object in doing it as the apostle Paul had when preaching the most wonderful truths. It is the object that is everything.

But, in thus seeking to walk, we must remember, that it is only as we have divine power for it that we can fulfil these relationships. It is only as I walk in the power of a scene where they are not, that I can please Christ in them here where they are. The Lord grant us to know what it is in divine power to bring in thus His death to mortify our members, and His risen life to fulfil our relationships.

(C. E. SH.)

“STAND THEREFORE.”

EPH. vi. 10.

The contrast between the opening and the close of this epistle is striking. It is to my mind like one of those brilliant suns, which, on a dark lowering day, suddenly pours forth its brightness, and the eye follows the broad beam of glory it casts, until it lights at last on some field, of which it brings out all the colouring in bright relief. Thus to me does the glory of the beginning of Ephesians shine down upon the place of conflict in which the church militant is seen in the last chapter. In grace, not in nature, we see that there is a necessary connection between the light above and the church below.

How very little any of us apprehend what the church is. The generality of Christians merge, in their thoughts of the church, all God's dealings with men; but God has given us, now present, to see that there are different classes of blessing amongst the saved. God displays His attributes in dealing with an earthly people, and His character as preparing a heavenly people for Christ; but many, who have even fresh and happy knowledge of what the church is, look upon her *only* as the Bride of Christ.

Would indeed that we had far deeper entrance into this; never will our souls be right unless there be entrance into it—that the church is the one espoused to Christ; still there is only one chapter in the epistle in which it is spoken of as the Bride; it is one of the happiest thoughts to our hearts that this should be, but we should greatly rob ourselves were we to limit our thoughts to it.

Eve, it is true, was one of Adam's ribs; she was built into a woman, and brought by God to Adam, who found in her that which made her a helpmeet, one in whom he could delight. But we must not see Eve only as under Adam; we must also see her under God—the Elohim of Genesis ii. Here we get her in a three-fold light. She is not only the one fitted to meet Adam's heart, but she is set *with* him as the centre of a threefold circle. First there is the bright blaze of creatorial beauty; then there is the garden in which the Lord God had gathered all that was fitted for him who was to be the centre; and, lastly, there Adam takes his bride—this is the innermost circle.

So will it be with the church. The redemption glory will be over all the universe; but there will be one place more glad than the rest; God will have His Paradise, as Adam had his. The new Jerusalem is the Paradise of God; here are the Bride and the Lamb.

This was the secret hidden in the bosom of God. God displayed his attributes, His glorious power, and wisdom, and goodness in Adam's creation; but these attributes were known be-

fore; not so all that is to be known of God in redemption.

There are two systems. In the first creation, link joins link in unbroken succession till we rise to man; but here we stop. An infinite gap comes in between man and his Creator. The first Adam was the centre of this system. In the second—redemption—this gap is filled up. And God sets as the centre of *this* system—of which the first was a mere type—His own Son, the second Adam, who will take all the perfect glory of it as *man*—Son of man. But here in redemption He goes back into Deity—into the eternity of God; we are “chosen in him before the foundation of the world.” And not only this, but God as the Son: “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself.” There is much more in this than may at first meet the mind; He might call angels sons, or Israel; but the church has sonship as chosen *in the Son*. And then he gives the sweep of the circle which should belong to the Son. He will “gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.” All—all—is to be headed in Christ—all centering round him—all stable as He is stable.

Here then is the church in a new position; not only is she one suited to meet the heart of Christ as His Bride, but her glory will be displayed where He is displayed as the centre on which all hangs before God. The love where-with the church is loved is one thing; the glory she is to have is another.

The first chapter of Ephesians brings out the name of God; the third that of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This name never came out until Israel rejected Christ. In the last three chapters of Revelation there is a display of glory; in John xiii. there is “the Father’s house.” Though enjoyed by the same persons, these are not identically the same. The church is the beloved object of Him who has the key of the Father’s house; she has a certain play of His affections as Son of man, to which she responds; this is the light which shines down now. Adam failed, but God will not give up these “children.” He *must* have them, and He brings them in through redemption, and says: If they belong to my Son, I must have them with me.

Well, this broad beam of celestial glory—this light from heaven—narrows down to the field where is seen the church militant in combat here below. And it is this which is not enough noticed—that this epistle begins with God shining forth on His church, in His glory, placing the children in His house, and bringing them there now into vital union with His Son. There is a bright background for me, which began to glimmer “before the foundation of the world!”

But we are down here in conflict. There are two things: pilgrimage, and conflict. Israel was a captive in Egypt; God pledged Himself to bring him out of it. Little by little this goes on, bringing out our nothingness before Him; He ends by subduing the hostile powers of Egypt; and then, by the passage of the Red Sea, they

are for ever *shut up to God*. They needed but eleven days to get into the land, but they wandered forty years in the wilderness; and, when they did get into the land, they had conflict there, in order to take possession of it.

I believe that many saints do not distinguish between being in the wilderness and having crossed the Jordan. We have been brought out of Egypt, and we know the wilderness, but the wilderness ought not to be, as it is with some saints, the dominant thought. We are in it, say they, and we must go on thinking about it.

Israel certainly were not in Canaan and the wilderness at the same time; but the wilderness and the land do come together with *us*. *Israel* again had to fight their way *in*; but, as to ourselves, God is now teaching us *what Christ is*, and not what *we are*; *where Christ is*, and not where *we are*. We are “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Truly, as to my feet, they are sinking step after step in the thick parched sand of the wilderness; and, when I look above my head, I find I have to wrestle “not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places.” As to all around me, I have done with it. I shall know well my steps are in the wilderness; I shall feel the fiery dart; the sharp flint will not lose its edge, nor the sand its burning. But, am I shut out from communion? No. Heaven is opened to me; and Christ has taken possession for me. He sits above the principalities and powers. Not only

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is there the land over there, where we shall rest ; but God is saying : Lift up your heads *now*, and rejoice, and see if there be not more power in Christ for you to lift you up above all, than there is in the wilderness and Satan to weigh you down.

In all these things we may be more than conquerors through Christ. Satan is allowed to hold his place in the heavenlies, but Christ knows all down here ; He saw all ; He passed through all, up to the right hand of God. Satan is now allowed to hold this place against us, because he is allowed to hold it against Christ ; but directly *He* rises up, Satan will be chased out, like the dried leaves before the whirlwind. Satan holds now the very place where the new Jerusalem will be.

Up above there, is the One with whom I have vital communion, and who is my strength. “One spirit with the Lord.” And this is not having to fight my way in ; neither is it the wilderness. No, it is what we have in this tenth verse ; being strong *in the Lord* ; standing fast. It is holding fast a defensive position ; but it is *up there*.

Before entering into detail there are two things I would notice : the difference that there is between the wilderness, and *trying to get into the land*.

First. What is the best preparation for treading the wilderness ? The cross on the shoulder—the denying self at every step, so as to bring in Christ, and thus having Christ’s thought about everything here.

Second. What is taking possession of the land? —It is not cheering myself with the thoughts of coming glory. No; it is pushing forward now, into what *is in Christ*.

Now there may be the standing fast as here, in what God has given us; or there may be the striving to get possession ourselves. In this latter case there will be an immense stirring of soul—a putting forth of energies—but it is really a false position and effort. I have not got to take possession; Christ has done it for me. It is the very worst thing I can do to put forth my energies in this. If it were a question of actual possession, why Satan will hold the heavenly places till Christ rises up from the throne of God.

Oh! if there be one thing in which I should wish to give a death-blow to the minds of saints—if there be one thing as to which it would be happy if we were all knocked down before God—it is this, as to our non-understanding of what the church *has* in Christ. Speak Lord, and show us the power of the things in which we are planted!—there, where the springs are in God.

Down here suffering is emphatically the position of the church. Even in our blessed Lord, what He did was not like what He suffered. Thus with Paul too; the mind of His Lord was upon the great things he should “suffer” for his name’s sake. Many have little to do; the many have much to suffer. Sufferings we shall, and ought to, have; thick as hailstones they will come down upon us. We are set in

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the position of suffering now for Christ's name, and we are called to stand fast in it, not in the sense of being unbending, but in the sense of that glory being ours which is displayed in Ephesians i.

I laboured lately, long and in vain, to get the idea into a Christian's mind that he had *died*, and was buried in Christ. But it was still with him only “I, I, my feelings,” and so on. Ah, if Christ were disparaged—if His honour were touched we might well be troubled, but we *must* come to an end of this self.

Never can we take this position, much less keep in it, unless we see where Christ has set us. This sixth of Ephesians is not a call to fight our way in, but a call to the Church militant to “stand” in the fixed position Christ has set her in.

In order vividly to give the thought on my mind I refer to another Scripture—the sixth of Revelation. John was caught up into heaven, above all, where the Lamb was. What would be his experience there? Why, whatever turn up from powers of darkness in heavenly places, or whatever there be in judgment on earth, still the Lamb has the full place and title; “He is worthy” come what may; and I am, and will act as, a member of that Lamb. What could be against John if that were his position? There might be the accusations of Satan; the failure of the best thing—the church; there might be the sealed book; but still all was safe to him: he had *Christ*.

If you seek to act here consistently with this

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your real position before God, you will find it a desperate conflict. Do you, I ask, act consistently with it? It is true that, if you do not, yet you will not—you cannot—lose this position; but still ask yourself, has nothing this day, for instance, in you been unworthy of a member of that body of Christ in which the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is to be displayed? If you have forgotten your failures, there are two parties who will secure not the least one of them being forgotten. Satan numbers them all, because he hates you; God numbers them all, because He loves you. Blessed that it is so, for sorrily should we often come into His presence, with soiled garments, were we left to our own recollection; but God marks them, and cleanses us from all things, because He loves His Christ. Looking down on us he says to His Son: Behold—here—there—is a member of thyself!—If we say our Amen to this—if we resolve to walk in the power of it—we shall find conflict. But, if so, our God will be still saying to us: I am weaning thee for myself. Be not cast down. If the springs be not bubbling? still I am weaning thee for myself. If the wilderness be under your feet? well! I am weaning thee for myself. If Satan be still above? I am weaning thee for myself.—No, God will never rest till he has so weaned us, that our hearts are as much filled with Christ as His is.

What are the things that are against you? I ask each present: Is it solitariness?—God says: I can rest in *my* love for you.—God sees me as hidden in Christ, even as Eve was hidden in

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Adam, and He takes all delight in us; God is rejoicing over you. He is thinking how brightly you will shine in the glory.

Whether as to position, armour, or personal detail, in *all* cases the exhortation to us is to “stand” in the position in which Christ has set us.

(G. V. W.)

ANSWER TO G. W., NEW YORK.—“The more heavenly your work, the less man will be able to see it, the less recognizable it will be.” (Food for the Flock, vol. 1, p. 266.) This is not opposed to the passage: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Because, while the works which men can see will not be overlooked, but will be diligently attended to, there will be, as one is heavenly, a class of works which men cannot recognize, and of which our Lord says: “I know thy works.”

Many works of our blessed Lord were misconstrued, and He was accounted a deceiver of the people. And Paul was called a deceiver—though “yet true.” The light too must have reached the soul when any glorifies the Father on account of my works.

J. B. S.

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS.

BEFORE entering upon this subject, let us love to be reminded of the manner of reverence due to the Lord Jesus. It is as we contemplate His greatness, His majesty, and His Godhead that we are quite at home with Him ; for it is only as we have communion—common thoughts—with the Father about the magnitude of His work, and the wonders of His humiliation, that we get a commensurate estimate of our fitness for the glory.

We cannot, therefore, think right thoughts of the scene in the wilderness, where the Lord Jesus, a perfectly dependent man, and Satan confront each other, until after we have had communion with Him in His death. The cross comes before the wilderness for us ; but in both, the power of the enemy has been completely broken. In the Lord's case, He had met him in the wilderness before commencing His public ministry, when He refused all he could offer ; and in the end of His course He had to meet him again in a very special manner in the garden, when he endured all he could bring against Him. Afterwards, on the cross, He broke his power completely by turning the throne of God from a judgment seat against us, into a government seat for us.

Let us contemplate the occasion which led to the wilderness scene ; Matthew iii. and iv. The

voice of God, through the greatest prophet that had yet arisen, compels those of Jerusalem and Judea, &c., to turn their backs on that which had been unfaithful to God, and to go out to John to be "baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." The Lord, seeing this movement, practically says to those upon whom the word of God had thus acted: You are going the right way, and I will go with you. He comes to John to be baptized, and thus identifies Himself with people "confessing their sins," at the same time graciously identifying John with Himself in His work of fulfilling "all righteousness." Observe, He does not identify Himself with their sins, but with their excellency; for the first bit of excellency in a sinner, is the confession of having none.

His bearing sin is exclusively confined to the cross: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree"—not in the garden. Again, when the apostle speaks of the curse, he fixes it to the tree: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." And again, after His wondrous course through such a sinful scene, instead of contracting a single stain, it could be written of Him: "Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." He offered to the righteousness of God a spotless victim, and the righteousness of God dealt with Him according to the deserts of sin. Who can measure it! "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God

in him." So that now, dear fellow believer, the righteousness of God is God's judgment in your favour, according to His estimate of Christ's blood.

But in the scene we are now considering, I repeat, He does not identify Himself with their badness but with their goodness. If you turn to John iii. 20, 21, you will see this principle unfolded. It is written: "He that doeth *truth* cometh to the light." Had it been written, He that doeth *good*, you and I might well despair, for it would have set us on our own efforts to do our best. But, instead of being cast upon our own resources, we have all that is in God's heart for us, when we do truth, for He desires "truth in the inward parts" (Psalm li. 6.), and finds it in one who truthfully confesses, "In me (that is my flesh) dwelleth no good thing."

It is to this circumstance that Psalm xvi. 2, 3, points: "My goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight." Might we not say that His goodness is such, that it takes another direction than a mere vertical one in this scene? At any time the personal excellency of that holy Man qualified Him as much for the glory which He had with the Father before creation, as He was qualified when in it before He had left it. But now His goodness was expressing itself in identifying Himself with those who, through grace, recognized the corruption within as well as the ruin around; a goodness, too, that had the cross in view, which makes them as fit for the glory as He is Himself.

It is on this occasion that the heavens are

opened, and the first revelation of the Trinity is given. There was always the sense of distance when God was revealed in unity. In truth He never had been, nor could be, fully revealed as *One*. But now He has become a man for the purpose of revealing Himself perfectly, and of entering that glory again as the Purger of our sins, so that we might measure our fitness for God's eye, and nearness to the Father's heart, by the Son already there, who once measured our distance from God in His agonies on the cross.

The heavens are opened; the Father's voice expresses His delight in the One who had just been saying of poor sinners confessing their sins, "In whom is all my delight;" and the Holy Spirit verifies the expression, becoming the seal of it in that self-humbled One. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Or, as it is rendered elsewhere, "is my delight."

How wondrous is the sight! Man in his ruins, the perfect Man confessing it, and God coming out in His glories in Trinity and approving of the act of Jesus!

But is it not the same to this day? Wherever there is found a conscience-convicted sinner, or a saint broken-hearted on account of failure, confessing sins, there there is "truth in the inward parts;" and "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever," is still

saying, You are doing the right thing and I must be with you ; to show to the former the efficacy of the blood, once shed, which gives a conscience without a quiver in the presence of God ; and to apply to the latter the basin of water and the towel, with all its deep and blessed meaning, for perfect restoration to communion with the Father, and joy in His presence.

Our blessed Lord is now " led up of the Spirit into the wilderness." And being forty days and forty nights without food, with wild beasts, He afterwards hungered.

This affords Satan an occasion to exercise his deceit and his ability in practising it, by which man innocent and man fallen had before been taken in.

We have been considering man fallen, confessing it, and thus doing truth. But Satan and his emissaries do the exact opposite. Instead of confessing badness, they assume goodness, as Scripture says : " Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness." He thus presents himself to the Lord with these last three temptations, which are recorded for us.

Now the first word he utters, discovers to any in communion with God, that he starts with a lie ; and then he calls upon the Lord to prove the truth, by a miracle, to one who had neither heart nor conscience. I ask you if the infidelity of our day, if the unbelieving heart of man, is not well tutored in similar practices ? And I ask also, if there is not a danger of saints becoming infected with that which is abroad ?

I was recently hearing of a society formed for the purpose of defending the Bible; and it brought to my mind an old legend about a court fool, who suggested to the king, when going to battle at the head of his army, that it would be prudent for his majesty to take him in order to protect them when fighting against their enemies. Such people forget it is the *word* which defends God's saints; and when we retreat under His care, and recognize its ability to protect us, then others take knowledge of us that we keep company with the Lord Jesus, and that we are handled by His word instead of pretending to handle it.

I know nothing which gives the word of God a more important place than the reply of the Lord to the enemy's suggestion, "Command." The Lord says, as it were: I have no command to act. How fully He rested in the Father's acquaintance with His need, so that nothing but the word could set His will in motion! Thus confronted by Satan, and occupying the ground to which the saints had been driven, as a hitherto defeated people, instead of using His Godhead power, which would have been neither example nor encouragement for us, He retires as a dependent obedient man into the sufficiency of the word for protection. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

He had no word to act, and therefore waited, a hungry Man, to be fed by His Father, retreating, as it were, into the book of Deuteronomy to occupy the defeated ground of the people of God,

and prove the sufficiency of the word to keep a saint, even there, if dependent "invulnerable, and therefore invincible."

The enemy is defeated; and he would at all times be equally defeated by us, were we equally dependent.

Alas! that we should ever have recourse to resources of our own; for it is then that he triumphs, no matter what the efforts may be, whether intentions, resolutions, sincerity, or devotedness; he will always overcome a saint on any, or all of these grounds merely; but he never has been, nor ever will be, able to grapple with obedience to the word of God.

In Satan's next attack, he quotes a promise from Scripture applicable to the Lord Himself, and suggests that He should act in faith on this promise. What subtlety, what refinement of deceit! Is it not Scripture? and is it not applicable to, and written expressly for the Messiah? Is it not a sure promise? All quite true: but all the promises had been forfeited by a failing people, with whom the Lord had identified Himself. Lo-ammi had been pronounced on their then estate, and He refuses the promises incapable of being applied to *it*. He replies therefore again from Deuteronomy, the book which recorded their broken responsibilities, and their consequent forfeiture of every thing: "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Thou shalt not put God to the proof. He, who knew His Father well, needed not to try if He would be as good as His word. If you had a servant whom you suspected of

want of faithfulness, you might be disposed to test him; but to test a trustworthy man would be to suspect him.

How wonderful to see the Lord retire into the word for self-defence from this well put thrust! He gives, "It is written," as His authority not to put God to the proof; and thus He finds perfect liberty in obedience to the word, which He uses for His own protection against the foe. What an example for us!

"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." And again the Lord falls back upon the same book which records how God's people forsook Him, provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, and "sacrificed unto devils and not to God." He answers from this book: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." He proves its sufficiency for an obedient dependent man, and thus uses it for liberty to act according to the dictates of His own heart, and deliverance from other than divine authority.

How wonderful to contemplate Him, who never was less than "God over all, blessed for evermore," condescending thus to act, and refusing to make use of His divine power as God, or His rights as man! This is what gives Him to us as an example, with like resources, to meet, not a hitherto triumphant but a defeated foe, whose power has been

broken. What encouragement!

Well, we have seen heaven opened; we have seen Satan foiled; and now angels come and minister to a Man, to Him who is their Creator. Does it not send a thrill of delight through you, that you are a man, not an angel? Will that little tiny heart of yours—you who once excelled in wickedness—serve Him less than “His angels that excel in strength”? No, but the more; for those unjealous beings never had, nor ever will have, capacity like yours to appreciate such love as His. They never caused Him a pang; but you and I cost Him the bitter agony of the cross. Does it not make one ashamed of oneself? yet not ashamed of being a man, because it is written of a man in Christ—which every believer is—“Of such an one will I glory.”

One word more, ere leaving this last temptation. As Son of God born into this world, as Messiah and King of Israel, He was entitled to all that Satan had shewn Him, although the enemy had it in his possession by usurpation, and through the faithlessness of man. Nevertheless it was all the Lord's; but He refused to take it under any of those titles. Had He done so, you and I were not His fellow-heirs. By the judgment of God, Satan had acquired power over all men, except the perfect Servant, who might have gone out free. But the Servant plainly says: “I love my master”—He had voluntarily taken the place of servant; “I love my wife”—“The bride the Lamb's wife;” “I love my children”—“Behold I and the children whom God has given me;” “I will not go out

free." And so, instead of taking His own rightful dominion, He takes the place of the suffering Son of man, according to Psalm viii., steadily purposing to go on to the cross, where He breaks the whole power which the enemy had acquired over us; and thus all power reverts to Him who has freed us by *Himself* bearing the judgment of God, which gave death its terror, and Satan his power over man.

Having thus wrought this work, which gives us identity of terms with Himself as to acceptance; and having already entered by the same title which is made ours, He leaves us here, between the cross and the glories, to be witnesses of *His* victories, and of a power not possessed by us, but exercised by Him for us, even as we would have it. But He leaves us here not at our own charges: and He would have us know that we are not only qualified for heaven, but for earth also. Shall I startle you if I say, that to be qualified for this world is an advance upon being qualified for heaven?

Paul puts it in Colossians: "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour according to his working which worketh in me mightily." He laboured that the saints might have the full sense, and the enjoyment in their own souls, of what they were as to standing in Christ before God; that their sensible state might be in harmony with what the word calls "accepted in the beloved;" that their state and their standing might be twin sisters, and on terms of the very closest intimacy.

A "beloved physician" once expressed it when

prescribing for a patient, as follows : “Remember, in order to have a man in Christ, it was necessary that Christ should be broken ; but in order to have Christ seen in a man, the vessel must be broken.”

As a man in Christ you are qualified for heaven ; every believer is that. But in order to be qualified for earth, Christ should be seen in the vessel ; and this is done by bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. The dying, or the putting to death, of the Lord Jesus, applied to the flesh, keeps it under ; when the cross is thus applied to every fibre of the old Adam nature, *will* has no place, and the life of Christ works from you ; then others see Him in you. You never see Him in yourself, else you might be pleased with yourself, and that would never do. But for this there must be active power, power of the Holy Ghost of course, acting in a dependent vessel.

The difference of the way in which the “Son of man” was sealed—“Him hath God the Father sealed”—and a saint is sealed, will help us to understand this ; for it is thus that the Lord qualifies us for this world, and sends us into it as He was sent into it.

But let me first remark that the Holy Ghost is far more tender and full of love than many give Him credit for. For instance, He never seals people in sin ; that would be to sanction it ; nor does He seal people in doubts and fears ; that would be to sanction them. Your seal, faith in the blood, and God’s seal, the personal in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost, are not identical. Let Scrip-

ture speak as to both. John iii. 33. "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." Thus, in receiving His testimony, you are setting your seal to the truth of the testimony, to the work. You deliver as your act and deed—according to lawyers' language—that God was true to His own heart in giving His beloved Son to die a wretched death for such as we. Did you never see a person unable to write, signing for his name? One who can write, having done all that is necessary, holds the pen, and the person unable to write just touches the top of the pen whilst his mark is being affixed to the document.

Now you are the person unable to write; but you just touch the pen, so to speak, which God holds; and He affixes your mark to the document. That is setting your seal to the truth of the testimony to the work.

Then in Ephesians 1. 13, 14. "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." Thus the Holy Ghost becomes the witness in you to the value of that work, the truth of the testimony to which you have already accredited. He does not become your title to the glory; there is no need of that. Indeed, it would be saying something else was needed for title besides the bloodshedding of Jesus. On the contrary, His blessed work is to enable you to read your title in it clearly, and exclusively. He comes as the witness of God's estimate to its

value, and takes up His dwelling in your body, which thus becomes "the temple of the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. vi. 19. So that you are not only made a partaker of the divine nature, with new tastes and new desires, but the Holy Ghost, who is no less God than the Father or the Son, dwells in your body, working in that nature, giving you power to accomplish those new desires, as well as to delight in conscious relationship. "Because ye are sons"—not to make you sons—"God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father"—now a *conscious* son.

Scripture marks the distinction between the actings of a divine Person, and the dwelling of a divine Person. In the case of the Son of God, He always acted in Old Testament times; but He is never said to have taken up His dwelling in people then. When He took the "prepared body," that was altogether another thing. So also, in reference to the Holy Ghost: His actings were in conjunction with the Son at all times; but He is never said to dwell in any one until "that holy thing" was found by Him a suited habitation. And He is never said to dwell in people until Jesus is glorified. "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."—(John vii. 39.) His quickening sinners is one thing; His coming Himself to dwell in those who are quickened is quite another thing. The sons of Aaron had to be sprinkled with blood before the holy oil, type of the Holy Ghost, could be applied to them.

Now let us turn to the type which throws

much light on this subject, and gives us beautiful figures of Christ and the church, with regard to the way of the Holy Ghost coming to dwell in each case.

In the ordination of the priesthood, Leviticus viii. and Exodus xxix., Aaron alone is anointed without blood; honors and dignities are heaped upon him; the holy anointing oil, figure of the energy of the Holy Ghost, becomes the witness to his claims and excellencies. What answers to this, in the New Testament, is, Jesus alone anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, (Acts x. 38) seal to His own personal purity, His righteousness, and His Sonship.

But when Aaron is anointed in connection with his sons, blood has to be put upon him first, then upon his sons; and afterwards the oil is put on the blood which had been previously sprinkled upon them. What answers to this, in the New Testament, is, Christ receiving the Holy Ghost a second time, but now for us, after the blood had been shed which makes such poor things suited vessels for the Spirit of God to find a dwelling place for Himself in. We get the Scripture for this in 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."

There is another distinction noticed in Scripture which exalts the Lord before our delighted hearts, without putting us at an inch of distance from His.

The Holy Ghost came upon Him in the form

of a dove. The dove sent forth by Noah, to see if the waters were abated, finds no rest for the sole of her foot, the waters of judgment being still there. Scripture also uses the dove to signify that which is "harmless," "undefiled," and clean for offering to God, as also to express a capacity for "mourning" or sorrow.

Such was the form the Spirit of God was pleased to assume, as, descending and lighting upon Jesus, He finds perfect complacency in the "holy," "harmless," and "undefiled" One, upon whom no judgment could have come, except as He voluntarily gave Himself to bear what was due to others; and who had capacity for sorrow occasioned by sufferings which no mere creature could have endured.

But in regard to us, the Holy Ghost came in the form of tongues of fire, figures of the word and of judgment.

The same word, which had pronounced judgment on the sinner, now says, "Clean every whit"—clean not by modifying or qualifying the original sentence of God against sin, but through a work which gives Him the place of "Justifier." The Holy Ghost has come as the seal and verifier of this, and thus gives liberty, and produces power in us, to put to death the members of the flesh, on the ground of the old man in us having been crucified when Christ was crucified. The word is: "Ye are dead." How? By the judgment having been executed, and having for ever judicially extinguished the first man for the Christian. But you never have been, nor ever can be, a participator with God and Christ in

doing it. The thing has been done between God and Christ; not between God, Christ, and you. Hence there is no union in death; such a thought is monstrous; and it savours something of, "Why can I not follow thee now?"

When you are converted and set in liberty—"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"—you wake up to the fact, that everything judicial which happened to Christ, happened to you when it happened to Him; because now, ever since Christ is your life—not before—His judgment, His death, and His burial are as much behind you as they are behind Him.

Baptism is the symbol of this; only it has two aspects, according to Scripture; the Red Sea aspect, as an initiatory rite; and the Jordan aspect, which fully unfolds all that of which baptism is but a figure.

We have thus a suited vessel formed by God's special grace for His Spirit to find a dwelling place in, in this world, so that whilst Christ is still refused a place in it, He might have avenues kept open in the hearts of His beloved people for His love to flow through. When the world got rid of Him they thought a triumph had been gained; but He had said: "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father." Surely it was a wonderful thing for Him to come into this world at all; but when once in it, He could do no less than express what He was. But now that He has submitted to be rejected, is it not a greater thing for Him to pick up those who were the slaves of sin and Satan, and make such the suited vessels for the Holy Ghost to inhabit,

that He might give them to delight in the same resources, and to exercise the same kind of dependence and obedience, which were fully displayed when Jesus met the enemy in his crafty subtleties, and his unbroken power?

It is thus that we are sent into this world, as Christ was sent into it, to walk as He walked, and meet Satan with the same weapons, "sanctified to the obedience"—no less than His—"and to the sprinkling of the blood," which never loses its value, and makes us quite clear before God.

I have heard people say, this is too high truth for them. What they mean is, that difficulties suit them better than impossibilities; for in the one there is no room for other power than that of the Spirit of God, whereas in the other there is a lingering desire to give flesh something to do; and this makes self of some importance. Whenever you hear people plead difficulties as an excuse, be assured, there is always a thought of their own resources or their own worthiness in reserve. Substitute the word "impossibilities" for "difficulties," and then you are thrown on invisible power; for if you ~~are~~ thinking of *your* difficulties you will be but as a grasshopper before *them*; but impossibilities for *you* are only grasshoppers before *God*. This is what constituted the difference between the ten spies on the one hand, and Caleb and Joshua on the other.

"Greater works than these shall ye do." It is wonderful the way in which the Lord wins our hearts, causes us to delight in exercising dependence upon Himself, and then gives us credit for doing the greater works which He Himself ac-

completes, as He handles empty vessels thus fitted for His use. Again, is it not now a greater work if He should use a poor thing like you to be "light in the Lord," and to "walk in love," than to have been light and love Himself in the midst of darkness and hatred? Why, He never could have been less; and He could not make you more.

Where do people see the moral impress of God now? Not in the fruits, flowers, valleys, mountains, rivers, or oceans, neither in astronomy nor geology. In all these they see but the skill of His hand stained with the trail of the serpent; and even if the serpent's poison were not there, the throbbings of His heart were unknown. Neither was it always seen in tongues, nor in the exercise of miraculous power. Where then, I ask, is the love of God seen? I gaze at it in a living Christ, the purger of our sins, "set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." I read it in a written Christ in print in my own hand. And I am cheered by it in a reflected Christ, as a dependent saint, who lies close to the bosom of Jesus, shows to others "what great things the Lord has done for him," and how He has had compassion on him.

But who is sufficient for these things? Let us glory in our weakness, give up talking of difficulties, and count upon Him to bring about impossibilities for mere creatures to accomplish; never forgetting that it is only as odious self is turned away from in calm disgust, we can be trusted by the Father to exhibit the meekness and lowliness of His precious Christ, so that He

may still be seen in us by a world that would reject Him a second time if it had opportunity.

Heaven was opened upon Him, as we were seeing; but then it was that heaven might be occupied with God on earth. Let me tell you that heaven is now opened in a double way: not only for you to gaze at Him where the Father's heart has seated Him, but that the heavenly intelligencies might see in His beloved people the "greater things" now in accomplishment. "In order that now to the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies, might be made known through the assembly the all-various wisdom of God."

Let us never accept a standard that would suit the morality of the first man. God never gave a standard which the first man could reach. Adam in innocency had to reach nothing, but to enjoy what God had done and given him. You and I have to reach Christ in the glory, and never to cease reaching until then; and, in the interval, to find God our sufficiency in a place where the flesh, the world, and the devil are sworn friends. But He says: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome."

"Be careful for nothing." "*For nothing*" is God's word. Therefore as you put all your cares in God's hand, He will put *His* peace into your heart. This gives relief from aught that could perturb. What next? You are free to be occupied with the "whatsoever things are true" and "lovely,"—free to gratify your new tastes—thus fulfilling His word "that your joy may be full."

Now remember, that which the Holy Ghost

gives He never takes back; but you must put what He gives into practice in order to get more. What next? "The God of peace shall be with you." Hence the apostle says: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." *Will*, which never abdicates, being broken, is kept in abeyance; and "giving thanks always for all things," is not only the language of the word, but of faith also; because God just suits a crippled, clinging pilgrim, and a crippled, clinging pilgrim just suits God.

"In the desert God will teach thee,
 What the God that thou hast found,
 Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,
 All His grace shall there abound.
 When to Canaan's long-loved dwelling
 Love divine thy foot shall bring,
 There with shouts of triumph swelling,
 Zion's songs in rest to sing;
 There no stranger God shall meet thee,
 Stranger thou in courts above,
 He who to His rest shall greet thee,
 Greet's thee with a well known love."

H. H. M.

There is something inexpressibly sweet in that promise, "I will confess his name before my Father." Christ will call *you* by name then. Displayed in all that glory, He the One on whom every eye is turned, and you, perhaps for the first time in your being, lost to all sense of your own individuality, and wakened to think of it by hearing the Lord name you by name to His Father as one who walked with Him down here; as one who held up a little bit of light in an evil day, though perhaps frightened at the effect of it when you did it. (G. v. W.)

RECONCILIATION.

COLOSSIANS I.

In a certain aspect, the epistle to the Colossians does not take us up so far as the Ephesians does. The latter takes up very distinctly the purpose and counsels of God and the new creation. Hence we get the contrast of it with man in the old in a very remarkable way.

In Ephesians we read that God has made us "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," and the Holy Ghost as the seal of our state; whilst in Colossians we are "risen with Christ," and that life and its place are largely developed, but yet we are upon earth ourselves, and are to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Hence, in Ephesians, man is not looked at as a responsible person, to see what can be got out of him, and his responsibility met in grace as in the Romans; it begins with him as dead in sins. It is an entirely new thing. We are *created* in Christ Jesus. Even as to Christ Himself, it begins with him as dead—as a Man that is raised from the dead—and with man as "dead in trespasses and sins." It is not that man is a living sinner, as we have it in Romans, where the whole question of responsibility is looked at; but the man is dead in trespasses and sins, Christ has

come down into the death that he is in, Christ is quickened out of it, and we are quickened together with Him, and raised up together, and seated together in heavenly places. Now Colossians does not go so far as this.

In the epistle to the Romans man is always looked upon as living in the world; he is alive in his sins; and it takes him up in his responsibility, and brings fully home to Jew and Gentile their state. It does not speak of man being dead in sins, but he has to die because of being alive in sins. And when he is a Christian, he is still a living man in this world, Christ his life, and justified, and in Christ, but alive here though dead to sin, and to present his body a living sacrifice.

In Colossians you get man dead to sin through the cross of Christ, and then, though in this world, risen with Christ, as in Ephesians (which you do not get in Romans), but not as there carried on to sit in heavenly places. Here man is a risen man—not physically so, of course; his hope is laid up for him in heaven; he is not sitting there, but walking this world as a risen man—risen in Christ; thus, being alive, he is connected with Christ; he is “quickened together with him,” and therefore it is “having forgiven you all trespasses.” Christ has come down to where we were lying dead in our sins, has borne and put them away by his death, and then we were quickened and raised up along with Him, all sins forgiven, and, when we were raised up with Him, we came clean out of the whole thing in which we were.

Still in Colossians we get far more of what Christ is in us, than of what we are in Christ. It is "Christ in you," not you in Christ; it is Christ in us down here. And this is what makes this epistle exceedingly precious; you get in it the fullest development of life here, in the Christian in his tried condition on the earth. It is: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." And then it is: "When Christ, who is our life shall appear, than shall ye also appear with him, in glory." He first puts the man as risen with Christ, and then his heart and affections all go up after Him to where He is at the right hand of God. There is no mention of the Holy Ghost in Colossians. It is the fullest bringing out of the life of a person in Christ still walking in this world.

In the first chapter we get the condition and standing of the Christian, and the bearing of this on his walk. How blessedly he puts the Christian in his place through grace!

In the first place I read the fourteenth verse: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." I take that as the very starting point—the forgiveness of sins. We get this blessed truth—this *first* truth, if you please—of grace, and joy, and peace; complete forgiveness through Christ. He has come down to us and redeemed us out of the condition we were in.

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I am sure, the more we go on from day to day, the more important we see it is to get hold of this, though it be an elementary truth, now that there is so much seeking for an unfinished forgiveness. When I am brought into God's presence, that which I have upon my conscience is the sins I have committed; of course I cannot have those I have not. And therefore when persons are brought to the knowledge of saving forgiveness, the sins they have a sense of forgiveness of are those that they have committed. But when it comes to those they have not, then comes the question: What about the future? And then arise in men's minds various ways of getting rid of them, from the gross form of absolution to the more subtle form of the Eucharist.

If you take a person who is upon Calvin's ground, he tells you to look back to your baptism; while the ordinary evangelical teaches you to look to a perpetual sprinkling again with the blood of Christ, a thing unknown to Scripture, and you will find he is never settled. But it is settled, and so completely that, if all my sins are not now set aside to all eternity, they never can be. Christ must otherwise take the cross and have the sins laid upon Him now, which is impossible, for He is in glory. "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." That word "for ever" there means not only eternally, but uninterruptedly; there is permanency in it before God; no discontinuance. It is not the word that speaks of eternity, though of course it is that too; but it is permanently perfect before God. As Christ is always

("for ever" here is the same word) sitting at the right hand of God, our conscience is for ever perfect; it is used Heb: x. to show He has nothing more to do.

In these days it is really important to get clear on the point of our sins being put away—I mean as to justification before God, and to see that I am before God *always* upon that ground, because Christ has borne all my sins. That is the first thing I get here—the first elementary thing, though not the first thing named. It is an eternal redemption; it is never discontinued or interrupted, for God can never overlook that which has so perfectly glorified Himself.

Then I get another point which the apostle here speaks of. The whole state of things in heaven and in earth—they will all be reconciled—all things made new. And then he adds: "And you, who were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now *hath* he reconciled." The creation has got ruined, corrupted, defiled by sin, though of course it could not be guilty as active in it; and it will all be reconciled. But he begins now with those who *were* active in this ruin—who were "enemies in their minds." I am reconciled to God; brought back to Him in a divine righteousness that has been worked out for me; there is not a question between me and God. Here is infinite divine love. We are brought to God—reconciled to God; and it is a great point to be consciously before God, to enjoy His love, knowing that He has nothing against us, and so our hearts in

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entire confidence, able to think of Him and His favour, not of ourselves.

I am made the righteousness of God in Him, if I look at righteousness. There is not a single thing left; nothing but God to be enjoyed. There cannot be any unpleasant feeling between two people if they are thoroughly reconciled; so I am at home with God; all His gracious feelings are towards me, and I know it, and my heart is brought back to Him, and, when He looks at me, I can say He looks at His own righteousness—at His Son, who is mine; I am loved as He loves Him. My heart believes it, and I come back to Him; I am reconciled to God.

This epistle especially insists on life—the divine nature which is born of God, and is capable of delighting in Him, and of understanding this righteousness. Having this life I know, through the gift of Christ, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, the divine favour resting upon me; and I can rest there, and that is a great thing. It is not merely that I am forgiven—that my sins are all blotted out, but that God has wrought—even for His own glory—wrought a work in which He Himself is perfectly glorified. By Him I believe in God. And what do I believe? Why that He has brought me, associated with Christ, into His own presence; sin is gone; and I am made the righteousness of God in Him. I get the very secret and spring of God's nature; I get to the very source of what He is in Himself, and am able to enjoy it. I have not a word to say for myself; I was totally lost, and now I am

totally saved, according to, not what man ought to be, but according to what God is. If it were according to what man ought to be there would be no salvation needed; but that is not it.

What put it into God's heart to give His Son? Why nothing, of course! It was out of His own heart. And is not God righteous in the way He has saved us? Yes, I am "made the righteousness of God in him;" He has "made peace through the blood of his cross," and thus reconciled us to Himself. This reconciliation is that in which God has perfectly glorified Himself, and it is to *Himself* that I am reconciled. The only part that we had in what has saved us was our sins. Imperfect in every sense, how was I reconciled? As redeemed, and quickened, and brought back to God according to that work that He has wrought. And I am not come *half way* to God: "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." "I bare you on eagle's wings and brought you unto myself." He has brought me to Himself consistently with Himself.

Thus has the love of God to us been shown out in this reconciliation, Christ giving Himself for it; and it is a blessed thing for us that we are reconciled to God, according to what He is; and God is glorified in it. "If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." A wonderful thing it is! The enmity of the human heart against God showed itself to the uttermost at the cross where that work was wrought out, and, in

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virtue of it God has put Christ into glory at His own right hand, and God Himself is glorified. It is like the prodigal, most blessedly true, that, when you get the young man back to his home, you do not hear a word about him; it is all the joy of the Father; it is the Father does everything; it is the display of what God is; and my heart is in consonance with Him.

Thus I get reconciled to God. Things here are not reconciled yet—our poor bodies not too, as we know. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” It is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and never any labour on our part, because who did it? We? Not a bit of it! It is God Himself!

Then I get another thing, which gives clearness and distinctness to this. “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Here I get this blessed truth, that, though I am here in this poor body, compassed about with infirmity, and sin dwelling in me, so that, if I am not walking in the presence of God, the flesh comes up, yet I get this: “Who hath made us meet.” It is not there is no progress, there ought to be, and there is, because the Lord will make us make progress by chastening if we will not in any other way. At any rate progress is insisted on continuously: “He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.” But you never find it mixed up with being *meet*. Progress is mixed up with experience, and divine government; meetness with Christ’s work and

our being with Him. There is the constant government of God with respect to our walk ; He looks for progress in it ; but here, where it is a question of reconciling us to Himself there is no progress. There is no progress in the value of Christ's blood shedding ; there is no progress in the life that I have got—that is not in its nature—though there ought to be in the development of it. There must be daily progress in our walk ; but, as to our meetness, it is the work of God ; it is : “ What hath *God* wrought ? ” The poor thief on the cross goes straight to Paradise, made in one moment a fit companion for Jesus throughout eternity.

The world will not have this ; many Christians will not have it, because they want their own righteousness. It is not here holiness—which you cannot insist on too much—but it is a question of *righteousness*. We are “ accepted in the beloved ; ” there is no fault there, and no progress ; and it injures holiness bringing it in here, because it confounds righteousness with holiness. When you talk of holiness, which is intimately connected with walk, there ought to be progress ; but that is not righteousness. Holiness is abhorrence of evil. There is no holiness really developed in us, though a holy nature be there, till we understand we are the righteousness of God, because till then I cannot help mixing it up with my acceptance. Till then the question with me is, what the effect of sin will be as regards my acceptance before God. But when I am settled as to my acceptance, and in the light as God is in the light, then it comes to be a detestation of

sin for its own sake; not the evil act so much as sin, the root itself. And that is holiness.

I get then another truth, and that is, that I am delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. That may come in before the other if you will. I have changed my whole place. Darkness is the absence of the knowledge of God. The light shone in the darkness, "and the darkness comprehended it not." "If we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another." "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." People are *in* light or *in* darkness. It does not say *according* to light, or *according* to darkness. God is light, and if I am walking in darkness I do not know Him at all. Christ said: "This is your hour, and the power of *darkness*." Dreadful word for man! He is a slave of Satan. He does not say they are reprobate criminals, but that they are *without God*, and in darkness, though they may be amiable natures or unamiable.

In Christ, of course, the light was perfect. He went through this world with the consciousness that all the people He met with, of course except the converted ones, were without God.

In all there is a consciousness—a sense—that man is a responsible being. Though he may try every kind of effort to get right with God, yet, if he has been committing sins, he knows he has been committing sins. There is conscience in everybody, but people confound the rule for conscience with the conscience itself. Man feels this

is right, and that is wrong. Now Satan totally hides *God* from the conscience. I do not believe he can destroy the conscience, but he hides Him from it. Christ says: "I am the light of the world," and then He opens the man's eyes and he sees. All the rest were under the power of darkness. There it was all openly so. The world is utterly without God; there is not one common thought between God and their souls.

Well, we are "delivered from the power of darkness," but is that all? No; we are "translated into the kingdom of his dear Son." That is where we are brought to. Truth could not come by itself. As truth came in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, there could not but love come too. He does not say "translated into the *light*," though that is true; but translated into the *kingdom* of his dear Son." The power of darkness is the rule of Satan over this world; and by vanity, money, knowledge even—by all that is going—he blinds the eyes of men and maintains his power over them; he uses all these various things to keep man without God. Just like Cain, he embellishes his city, and sets it all up and makes everything as pleasant as he can without God. And we are delivered from all that, and brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

It is the *kingdom*—the place where Christ has the rule. It is the effect of redemption. The power of love has come in and has delivered us, and has brought us into the kingdom that He has set up. In the cross the full power of Satan was destroyed. There Satan brought everything

to bear: the apostles ran away, and he had everybody else against the Son of God. That was Satan's hour and the power of darkness. He carried the world with him against the Son of God. So it is: "He will convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment because the prince of this world is judged." He came against the Son of God as the prince of this world, now he is cast out. The cross was the full enmity of man against God, under Satan's power; but he has been met; his power has been cast out—it is all destroyed. If we go and listen to him in the flesh he can ensnare us; but he has no power; if we only *resist* the devil, he will flee from us; it is not said we shall overcome. As to this, the cross was the very thing that God allowed, so that in it his power might be destroyed. At the cross Satan governed the whole world; there the exercise of his power came to a crisis; he pushes them all on to crucify the Son of God; and then all his power is destroyed. So now it is: "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations"—not sins, of course; we have only to resist the devil in them, and he will flee from us. We are delivered from the power of darkness, and passed over to the place where Christ is, and spoken of as only here; not only into light out of darkness, but associated in the kingdom with the only begotten object of His special love—the kingdom of God's dear Son—brought into that. We have got this place into which grace has brought us; we are "made

meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

But then we have it all in these poor earthen vessels, though "risen with Christ." And therefore we are to "seek those things which are above." It is: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth, for ye are dead"—dead to the law, dead to sin, quickened together with Christ, and, "when Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." The risen Christ at God's right hand our life, and yet we are not taken out of this world.

And then I get: "Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." I get three "worthy's" in the epistles. "Worthy of God who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory," in Thessalonians. "Worthy of the vocation," in Ephesians; practically the same thing, the Holy Ghost having us for His habitation, the habitation of God through the Spirit, the present thing. And here: "Worthy of the Lord." My path through this world is to be worthy of Him. My life should be the expression of Christ; my life, ways, everything, should be the expression of everything that Christ expressed.

"Fruitful unto every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Here I get growth. I get no growth in reconciliation; there is no growth in the value of Christ's blood; but the moment I get here, there is "increasing." "Increasing in the knowledge of God." I know God, and I say, That is not fit for God. I purify myself. It does not say he is as pure as Christ,

but that he is to "purify himself as he is pure." As I get my eye purified I see better; I get my "senses exercised to discern good and evil," and the more I get on, the more I see what I am getting on to.

Here I would say a word, as I find it current in certain circles that perfection is attainable here, that there is no perfection for the Christian except Christ in glory. If I am a risen man I take Him on earth as a pattern for my steps, but not what I am to attain to. Christ down here is unattainable, because Christ had no sin, and I have sin. There is no perfection down here—you never find any maintaining that there is, who do not lower it to Adam condition. I seek to walk as Christ walked, not after the flesh at all, but the point I am aiming at and looking to is Christ in glory. It is "when he shall appear" that I shall be like Him, and until then I try to be as like Him here as ever I can be. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling"—the calling above—"of God in Christ Jesus." I have no calling down here; that is "the calling above"—the whole thing that God has set before us.

People say, God cannot give you a rule you cannot attain to. But I say, God never gives you a rule to which you *can* attain—*never!* First there was the law. Could man attain to that as in the flesh where it was given to him? It was not subject to the law of God nor can be. And now there is Christ in glory. Can I attain to

that? Never here! But I press on to it; it is before me, and I never attain it till I get to Him. This object that I am aiming at governs me where I am; "I live by the faith of the Son of God;" and, if you are not living by Him *glorified*, you have not got Him at all. If you look for perfection down here you have lost your object; it is a complete blunder in the very nature of the thing. Christ in glory is the object to which our minds ought to be always looking on. We are predestinated "to be conformed to the image of his Son," and, if you are looking at anything else you are not looking at that.

And now mark, as regards the path down here, we are "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power." Well, that is a wonderful thing to say! And what is the fruit of it? It sounds a poor thing: "patience!"—But I say, you try and see if there be not a working of will in you that does not like to be thwarted. That is not patience! "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." See if you do not want divine power for patience. "If when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." This is the first thing: "Strengthened with all might unto all patience." And what next? "Long-suffering." As we get it in Ephesians: "I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering." And then I get "joyfulness." The moment I get the will broken—my will bowing to God's will—

bearing with patience everything I come across—then joy is unhindered.

Thus we have got the place in which we are set, and then the behaviour with which we are to walk in it. What the apostle looks for is that we should be “filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” But do we not often find ignorance of His will? Where we do there is always our own will working. He looks for a spiritual conformity to Christ’s mind to so mark our mind, and walk, and ways, that our life should wear the expression of the life of Christ. It is not merely avoiding positive sins; it is far more than that. The question is: What will please Christ? I do not say a thing is wrong—not merely wrong; but, what will *please Christ*? The question, beloved friends, really is, is Christ in our hearts enough to make us seek only *one* thing upon this earth until we get to Him where He is? If our hearts are set on Christ our one desire will be to “walk worthy of the Lord,” and then the world will not know us.

Thus we see, that, not only are our sins gone—put away through the precious blood of Christ, but that we are brought into this new place in Christ: “delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son;” and that, being thus brought there, we have now to walk in it “worthy of the Lord.” Just as I would send a child out into the world, and say to him, Now walk worthy of your father and your family. But how could he do it if he did not know his father?

RECONCILIATION.

He wants us to be "holy and unblamable and unproveable in his sight." That is what He would have us—what is pleasing to Himself. The earnest seeking to walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing; forgiven, justified, reconciled to God, fit for the inheritance of the saints in light, fit for the kingdom of God's dear Son, and sent now to walk down here in the consciousness of our place up there.

The Lord only give His saints to have a deeper truer sense in this way of the place into which He has brought them in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they may know what it is to be brought to God according to the acceptance that is in Christ Jesus.

(J. N. D.)

It is only as we know grace, that we can receive and exercise power, and a defective apprehension of the one must stand in the way of my knowing and having the other. Christ came, in His grace, and took everything out of the way that prevented our getting hold of power, and now the one thing we require, for the actually being in the place of possessing it, is to get hold of His grace. If I do not see that because of His grace I get power, there is effort on my part to arrive there, and a spurious power is the result which is either surrendered or gives me a disastrous ending. David assayed Saul's armour

but gave it up : Saul retained it, and came to his end on Gilboa. It might have appeared to have been only deficiency on man's part as to power, that he could not follow Christ to *death*, and that He, by His death, made up what was wanting. I see Christ breathing on them and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," which was the conferring a new power, and not making up a deficiency. The apostle in the twelfth of Corinthians assayed an armour which seemed only deficient, but, as soon as he learned the sufficiency of the grace, he got the power, and then he gloried, not in his deficiencies, but in his weaknesses.

The power we have now received is the Holy Ghost, and nothing could be more grievous to that Spirit than to deny His presence and power. One great result of His presence is that the flesh has become intolerable to me. It is in me, but it has become intolerable to me, because it is so to the Spirit of God who dwells in me. What I **m**aintain now is that I have the Spirit of God **w**ith a new life ; while until now I have maintained the flesh. I not only had it, but maintained it. I still have it, though, of course, reckoned dead, but I refuse to maintain it. What I maintain now is, that I have a new life with the Spirit of God ; it is not merely that I say I have it, but I *maintain* it.

I cannot maintain both, and the more I maintain the one, the more intolerable the other becomes. I walk in it, I seek to cultivate what is of the Spirit ; and, as I do so, I find that I am in an element so entirely new, that I cannot

tolerate the old; I refuse and deny it in every possible way.

It is a conflict, but one in which the foes are quite unequal; the flesh lusts, but it can get no further. It is not now merely a question of its incompetency, but, of the Spirit's power. Having the Spirit, I have done with the flesh; its competency is not trusted in, and its incompetency is no hindrance. I do not say I have not got the flesh, but I say all the odds are against it. It has been put out of court, and I have to keep it out. Its very presence is now suffering to me, and the more so in proportion as I understand how the Spirit is grieved by it.

Is the fact that I have the Spirit to be less real to me than that I have the flesh? If I once had to say I could not act except in the flesh, should I be less able now to act otherwise than in the Spirit? I cannot quietly admit that I am only a double man, and that I am improved only in this way, that before I had only the flesh, but that now I have the Spirit as well.

All truth is on the Spirit's side, and all power. There is not a particle for the flesh; it is gone judicially by Christ's death; the world, where it found everything to suit it, is gone by the same death; the deeds of the body are mortified through the Spirit—there is a thorn to keep it in its place—there is the succour of Christ against it. In fact all is for the good, nothing for the bad. I have to set all this against the one simple fact of its presence, and I have to choose

FRAGMENTS.

between recognising it, or bowing to the truth, and presence of the Spirit of God.

If it were a question of two powers in the field with even something on both sides; but when I find all the victory is on one side, what can I say as to any chance for the other, but simply that it is a malicious power. That I really am a new creature, Christ having gone into the field and overcome everything, and that I really can breathe an atmosphere, and enjoy a scene where everything only marks a conflict that has taken place, and has never to be repeated; with plenty to watch against, and be helped against, but nothing to maintain but that I am in Christ.

C. E. SH.

The cross leaves nothing on earth alive; everything is dead here. One man alone is alive. And His cross has made an end of all in me; I start with a new history, a new name, a new nature, a new life altogether. (W. W.)

LAODICEA.

Rev. iii. 14-22.

Without question the state of the assembly at Laodicea was worse than that of any other of these seven churches. It is the only one to which the Lord says: "I will spue thee out of my mouth." But the very darkness of the moral state of Laodicea becomes, as it were, a background to set forth the gentle tenderness of the Lord Jesus; its darkness and weakness give occasion to Him to show the extent of His faithfulness and tender love.

There is peculiar force in his titles as He presents Himself to this church. "The Amen"—the verily—and "the faithful and true witness." There is a double bearing in the title under which Christ is here set forth. If it apply to a bad state, each title is a most awful word; for, as surely as the judgment is pronounced by Him—the "verily"—so surely will it be executed. But, on the other hand, He—the "yea and Amen"—will have a true testimony, and very comforting is this His name to those willing to hear.

Among Christians here present I suppose there is not one who has not felt inclined to take this word out of the Lord's mouth, and to say of himself: I am "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Directly the Spirit

of God gives us a sense of the failure of all that is around us, and we find ourselves in connection with it, so soon is there a humbling of ourselves, confusion of face, and the casting of ourselves on His mercy.

Did the Lord ever say to any poor soul coming thus to Him : If you can show any service done to me—if you can show me a life well spent?—No ! On the contrary, if you were to say : “ I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” it is then the Lord would come and cut you down. Do not speak for yourself ; let Christ speak for you. I will not give myself a character. When Job would maintain a character for himself, God showed him He could pull it all down ; but when he was in dust and ashes before God, abhorring himself, then God could stand up for His servant. Can I say : I will put in a good claim for the glory ? No ; I will let *Christ* speak for me ; none other would speak so well. How does He speak of His disciples ?—“ Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.” And this of Peter, who had said : “ Spare thyself.” I would rather have Christ as my special pleader before God, than say anything for myself ; He will give me a character when I could not give one for myself.

What exquisite love comes out in the conduct of Christ ! “ Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” It was a church which had clean forgotten him. He knew their hearts were not so familiar with Him as to be at ease in His presence. They were like Lot with his heart cram-

med full of the evil of the world. He wants to come in and make a clean riddance of everything; He wants to come in and be there *alone*; He wants to come in and so *dwell* there, that there shall be no one there but Christ. He looks at you to see if you are carrying about the lumber of the world; He looks to see how much you have of Himself in your heart. He had to counsel them to buy clothing. Hearts are uncommonly naked in God's presence, unless Christ be their covering.

What patient graciousness there is in the ways of the Lord Jesus, whether in the conversion of a sinner, or in His dealings with the poor way-worn saint. When a poor Christian gets down into the world, Christ may let him go into captivity until the last—the eleventh—hour; but He says even then: I *must* be in your heart, and you in mine; we must yet sup together. I stand and knock. You do not hear; your hearing is very bad. I want to come in; it is just supper-time—the last hour before you go to rest.—The door has been long fast shut against Him, but still, as if it were His own home, He *will* sit to sup *there*.

Men would say: Oh, the joy given at this hour cannot be genuine, after such a life of ups and downs!—But they forget what God is. He says: How simple you have been to be going on all this time without me; here I am at the end of it.

I do not see why I am not to admire Christ here. I admire a friend who watches me, and comes in to help me in difficulty. And here

is Christ knocking at my divided heart till the last hour, saying: Open! Open! I must come in!—I *must* admire Him. There is something beautiful in His conduct. His patience, His pertinacity, is to be admired. His determination to come in to the heart which would shut him out, and sup there. I cannot see him so without loving Him.

Now turn to the promise. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.” If you read the addresses to the seven churches you will see that, when the moral state is good, the promise is high up; but, when the moral state is bad, the promise is low. Thus to Ephesus is given “the paradise of God.” A man out of communion does not know anything of the paradise of God; but talk to a man of the world of a “throne,” and he will understand that at once. Thus the promise here is palpably addressed to sense. But everything which brings with it conformity to Christ is sweet; we do love anything that makes us a little like Him, because we love Him. Thus he says here: I am not going to give you a promise I have not proved myself. I have been in conflict, and I am now seated on a throne. You shall have the same. I conquered; a throne was prepared for me. You are in conflict; a throne shall be prepared for you. What a heart of love He has! He says: Thou poor Laodicean, listening to my word, see the place I have prepared for thee. True, you are in conflict now, but what will be the end? A throne prepared for me, and you shall sit on it.

You who have "an ear to hear," think of His joy to welcome you—to see you on His throne! And He would not tell how all the labour was His—the sitting down ours! He looks into your heart, and well He knows the sorrows of the wilderness; it is His love which has brought you there; He knows all the perils of it. But His victory is ours. He puts life into you, and He is responsible for bringing it forth in that day. He says: "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." He begins, and He ends.

This conflict is an uncommonly happy thing. Talk not to the saint, who knows anything of what Christ's conflict here was, of the dread of conflict. Set your sorrows against *Christ's*; set your conflict against *Christ's*. He had none to solace; He was forsaken of God at the last hour.—It is a conflict for us, and no mistake; but, if I know conflict, if I know weakness, if I know powerlessness, I fight under *Him*. If I have nothing to say for myself, He is more than conquerer for me.

The thought of being rejected by the world is a relief. Are you saying: Foolish one that I have been! I have tried to be happy in the world, but I cannot; the world will not know me?—Happier ground to take that of saying: I love Him. He was murdered here, so I cannot sit down here. *He* could not find a rest here, so *I* cannot.—I believe you might thus write upon every sorrow and trial you go through: Christ is here.—Christ overcame all that was against

Him. What joy and alacrity knowing this gives us! Thou, Lord, leadest us on in triumph! We have need of watchfulness. We must watch against—must keep apart from—the world; but He is there in grace for every time of need, and I wish to be in this world where my blessed Lord was. And, meanwhile, what can give bounding of heart, and brightness of face?—Getting to Christ in heaven, and finding He has there a heart overflowing with affections for me.

I do not doubt there is a certain connection between the name of the church and its state when addressed. Laodicea means “judgments of the people.” Now the scriptural view of the church is an absolute monarchy—no mind or authority save *one*. Any liberty of the flesh is not of God; but often the doctrine of the guidance of the Spirit is taken much as though it were “the voice of the people, the voice of God.”

When the Spirit of God takes up any truth, it always does so in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ, so that living affections are brought into exercise. The way the enemy often catches us is by getting us to look at truth as a mine in which we may go and dig for ourselves apart from the person of Christ.

The titles of the Lord in this Scripture are very solemn. He is “the faithful and true witness”—the witness not only in heaven, but more especially in the world. He has made clear the whole mind of God. If he see the oil oozing out of the bowl, and the wick going out, has he nothing to say? If He find in Laodicea what is

contrary to Himself He must come in in censure. Perhaps many can hardly understand in the present day such words as: "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." I do not think the force of it can be felt unless the difference be seen between God's dealing with a soul to bring it to Christ, and His dealing with it afterwards in moral judgment to break up the flesh, and to perfect the inner man so that the believer may be able to stand without anything to cover over at the judgment seat of Christ.

There is such a thing as the importance of being a witness for Christ. You are left down here for that purpose—to give a certain witness. At a trial a witness must not be a *bad* subject of course, but he is not called because he is a *good* one, but that he may do a certain work. There is no thought more solemn in connection with our standing as saved souls waiting for the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ than this: that He can say of any one of us: "I will spue thee out my mouth." Not as eternal rejection, but as saying: I will not allow you to stand any longer in the rank of those who are giving present testimony for me. He does it often. I could mention name after name in connection with the reformations, whether of Luther's or Whitfield's day. Look too at what has passed within the last forty years; persons having certain truths given them for the day, running well up to a certain point, and having then stumbled and fallen. The extinguisher is put upon their testimony, and it is never allowed to take its place again.

The world, the flesh, or Satan, has been yielded to, and where are they now? Many of them to be found in the church of Rome; and Christ saying: Cover up that testimony; take away that light; it is a false one.

What is in your heart? Let God leave you to yourself for half an hour, and the most dreadful evil, the most awful sins recorded in Scripture will come out. All that Christ said to Philadelphia was: "Hold that fast which thou hast," and they had but "a little strength." And, if I were ten thousand times weaker than Philadelphia, is it in the heart of Him who was crucified through weakness to say to me: Go—you are too weak?—If we be but as water spilt on the ground yet *He* will never despise us. He says: If you want strength, there is strength in the word; if you want consolation, there is consolation in me.

At Laodicea they were lifting up the head, well pleased with themselves. It is thus that flesh acts. Has not God before now gone very nigh to set aside the testimony of many of us, because He saw that feeling, "I am rich and increased with goods?" Christ cannot be any party to self-complacency. If these Laodiceans had counted over their riches, He had counted over His too. Could they think of themselves as a vessel carrying about the character of the Lord Jesus? He wanted them to have that pilgrim weanedness from the world which He had shown down here. The soul that has that could not be occupied with the world. You ought to be a vessel freshly filled from the Lord Jesus Christ—filled with

ointment—His own character—the character of the one Man who has passed over the earth perfectly full of divine treasures. The soul should exercise itself as to being occupied with Christ and Him alone.

“I stand at the door and knock,” can only be addressed to this church. They were not witnesses for Him. He tries to rouse them—tries to wake them up. He says: Seek me for gold, for white raiment, for singleness of eye. I am the one who is seeking to get into association with you. Though in such a sad state it may yet end, not in my spueing you out of my mouth, but in your opening to me. I will give you everything to make you witnesses, and I will come and sup with you.

If any of us were to ask ourselves before the Lord whether we have been holding the position of witnesses as we ought, how could we say that we have? and that they in heaven *ought* to point down to us and say we are the reflection of the Christ up there? What is our only answer? The longing, yearning heart, which says He *must* have a brighter testimony at the end than at the beginning, if possible.

(G. V. W.)

The story from beginning to end is “Look and live.” As a sinner I looked to Him and lived; and now, as a saint, I still look on; and every look brings back to me the light, and character, and beauty, and impress, of the blessed One I look at.

(W. W.)

A LETTER.

I think the brethren are entering into a new phase of existence which increases danger to them, and brings greater, or, at any rate more manifest, responsibility. It does not arise merely from that justification or excessive praise like ——'s, which good taste would let drop, though flattery be dangerous to any heart, but from the now generally spread feeling, whatever effect it produces, for it is very diverse, that brethren have something which other Christians have not got.

This is often refuted, hated, opposed, may be often a matter of curiosity, sometimes (and may it be increased) of true inquiry; but it is felt. The world feels it, would use it to shew the inconsistency of public profession. In many cases they would be sought and courted from their knowledge of Scripture; their books read, to have the truth without acting on it. Others, who still cling to the professing church with partial apprehensions of truth and much error, make their boast that it can be had without leaving the systems around us, nay, sometimes openly arguing continuance in them; but it is felt that they have what others have not. I believe they have. But what is important is, not the brethren, but the truth they have. I could state it definitely, and have, ere now, done it, but it is not my object here. God could set them aside, and spread His truth by others: would, I believe,

though full of gracious patience, if they be not faithful; their place is to remain in obscurity and devotedness, not to think of brethren (it is always wrong to think of ourselves) but souls in Christ's name and love, and of His glory and truth, only not to press brethrenism with it, but to deal with each soul according to its need for Christ's sake.

But if attention be drawn, and it is, to the truth they profess through grace, their responsibility is greatly increased. If more general and personal devotedness be not found in them, they would be a stumbling block against the truth. Unworldliness, nonconformity to the world, self-denial, abnegation in love to others is what is called for, for "love is the end of the charge—out of a pure heart." Let them walk in love in the truth, humble, lowly, unworldly, and all for Christ; as little, and content to be little, as when they began, and God will bless them. If not their candlestick may go (and oh what sorrow and confusion of face it would be after such grace!) as that of others has done. Let there be no mixing with the church-world—what are they if they do? but shew grace towards it, that early beacon light to win the precious from the vile, and they will be as God's mouth.

I repeat, let them in no wise mix with the mixture of church and world. The meaning of their existence is a testimony against that, with that earnest gospel energy to souls, that Christ may have His own; but the fullest testimony of God's free love, for God would have and delight in that, or it would be as though faithfulness

chilled that; doing the work of evangelists, making full proof of their ministry, humble, lowly, and devoted, and simple because devoted in heart, separated to Christ.

As regards all the activity outside them, it is one of the signs of the time, and they should rejoice in it. If Christ were preached of contention they should, save when they have given occasion to it by failure in themselves which is possible; but it does not give *their* testimony at all. God is sovereign, and can work in love when and how He pleases, and we should rejoice in it; but there is no separation from evil, but the contrary in general. It is, as to this, just the mixture which God is bringing out of. For a year or two, at the beginning, I preached everywhere they let me, and others have done it, but it was, after all, another thing; though the trumpet gave an uncertain sound, it resulted in bringing out some, if the gospel only were fully preached. Now the question is fully raised, and the testimony has to be clear, yet the fullest preaching of the gospel, and of the assurance of salvation.

I do not believe attacks on anything to be our path, but to be superior and for the truth in grace. Peter never attacked the chief priests, but went on his own way. It is a descent from the high ground of the truth we have of the Christian position. That and a full gospel used in grace should distinguish us; the testimony against evil should be in our walk and ways. Be assured when real it is fully felt. Occasions may arise when truth is in question, but self-defence is

every way to be avoided. The Lord will answer for us if we do His will.

Union is sought now by indifference to truth, in this country (America) avowedly so, as exchanging pulpits with infidels, and indeed openly everywhere—I say *avowedly*.

Patiently waiting where, in present darkness, it is only ignorance or error, is most necessary; but truth and holiness, love in the truth, and for the truth's sake, characterise Christ's revelation of Himself and His influence in the last days. God has no need of *us*, but He has need of a people who walk in the truth in love and holiness. I find in the Old Testament: "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord;" and I find the same spirit in Jude, who speaks of the mixture which would bring on judgment: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." The gospel we may and must rejoice in, but it only makes the testimony of brethren—outside the camp—more necessary than ever; but it must be real. May they indeed be waiting for the Lord, and as men that wait for the Lord; His love is not wanting; may we, in earnest love to Him, be waiting for Him because we do so love Him, and be found watching.

I thought of writing to you, dear brother, **not** having heard for a long while, and my thoughts flowed on, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Now I cannot doubt the

work, at least the testimony, is going on. The way it is telling, though only as a sowing time, and what I hear and know of Europe, has partly led me to this train of thought, for it presses just now on my mind. May the beloved brethren be found of Him in peace and watching; devotedness maintained and increased; their whole body, soul, and spirit be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have just published another tract on Perfectionism in Boston. Error from Germany is largely mixed up with active religious minds here. I have written on it, but I do not know what I shall do with it, but the subject calls for watchfulness. The brethren are getting on happily here and with blessing, and I hope roused up and cheered with some nice persons added in Boston—there has been blessing outside too. If the brethren fall in with the current Christianity inside the camp, they would be just another sect with certain truths.

J. N. D.

Bring the perplexities of life, the impossibilities of man—when He handles them what are they?
(G. V. W.)

FRAGMENTS.

The hope of righteousness is not the hope of getting righteousness, but the hope of glory which belongs to righteousness. God says: You are my children; I have brought you to myself, and you are going to hear about the glory of Christ, and are joint heirs with Him in it. When I think of the apostles to whom God revealed such things as these, I think how, with such power of God in them, they could go safely. But thus laden with Christ, they could go safely and steadily through the world; they were fully ballasted with Christ.

Have Christ in yourself. Christ everything to us enlarges the Christ *in us*, and then we can go steadily along. If I have a full Christ in myself, then I can look safely out. If I have Christ as the centre of glory in my heart, I can look out and see the glory all around. (J. N. D.)

Little as I am, I have a place in the heart of the Lord; and His mind is, that I should walk in circumstances here as one who has a place in His heart. (G. V. W.)

“Light is pleasant to the eye;” and what I find is that the smallest trace of that which is pleasant—the mere remnant of beauty—engages it. But this trace—this shred of the beautiful—has a very strange effect on us: it awakens us to an existence here—to a *set* of hopes *here*. We are like birds aroused at night from their nests by the blazing flambeau. Alas for the birds who see not the captor’s hand holding the dazzling, attractive, but deadly torch! They are delighted with the light, and rush into it; but it is a mere net for their destruction.

How readily we are attracted by any flash that crosses our path! But the way to be proof against these delusions is to walk in the light. “In thy light we shall see light.” In these flashes we do not see, but we are seen by our enemies. We are dazzled, but not enlightened. It is a deception—an *ignis fatuus* which bewitches.

We know little of ourselves if we do not see that we are in danger to be a prey to these flashes. How often has the heart, like a bird, returned to its roost, prepared to remain and rest through a livelong stormy night. The wind howled, the rain pattered, but on its roost the lonely bird quietly and fearlessly braved all, until, when the darkness was deepest, and there was a lull in the storm, the enemy came with his torch. The bird is attracted—seized. And the one who could have quietly sat out the force of the storm which shook the earth, sinks into the hand bearing a false light.

J. B. S.

THE HOME AND THE RACE.

HEB. x. 19—23; and xii. 1—4.

THIS Scripture sets before us our right of entrance into the holiest of all. You hear people say: I wish I were in heaven. Now it is not right for you to say so if heaven is not yours by right: the first thing to establish is whether you have a right to heaven.

The people of Israel never ought to have left the land; but wherever Israel went, even if it were to Assyria, they were God's people still. And thus we find in Hebrews, wherever we are, we are still God's people—His people now after a new manner. We ought not to wander, but, even if we do, we are still God's people.

In the tenth chapter we are worshippers; "once purged" we have "no more conscience of sins." Oh, but, says some one, I do still sin!—But I read, your sins and iniquities I will remember no more. He has called us brethren. He is not ashamed to do so; and of what order is that?—It is a new creation. There is no sin there. "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not."

Well, I am constituted a worshipper; and a worshipper once purged has no more conscience of sins; he has "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." The argument of the chapter is this, that we have not to try to

get to heaven, for the One who came down from heaven is there, and He is the measure of my nearness to God. You may say, I often *act* in the flesh. Then you must repent, but God never *sees* you in the flesh; if you go back to that old ground there is nothing but judgment for you, unless you judge yourself. If you were near God as a believer, you would find there was not a thing between you and Him; the man who talks of clouds has never been near God. We are God's people quite in a new way; "He is not ashamed to call us brethren." Could the brethren of Christ be chargeable in the presence of God?

This chapter unfolds to us Christ coming down here to do the will of God; He came to measure our distance from God, to bear our sins and our iniquities; and now we have boldness to enter into the holiest by His blood—"by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." It is not only by the blood of Jesus; every person who is saved, is saved by the blood of Jesus Christ; but you cannot say that to every one of these saved souls the veil is rent. Mark, he does not say *and* by a new and living way; that would imply that there were two doors. It is "through the veil, that is to say, his flesh," and that is the real difficulty with souls; there is no difficulty as to the blood; but to understand this you must get off carnal ground on to spiritual; "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."

"Boldness to enter into the holiest." It is the

happiest place; it is the home of the heart in the brightness of God's presence. There is no place that I have such a right to—that I am so fully entitled to—as that place. My Father likes me to be there. Paul does not tell you what the *nature* of the place is, as to your enjoyment of it, but he just tells you of the *place*. We do not get here so much as we find in the parable of the prodigal son. I go in where I have a right to go, and there I find Christ to be, not only the One who has come down to find me in my sins, but I find Him as the One who has gone up; and thus He, who has measured my distance from God, is the One who is the measure of my nearness to Him; and I enter into that place by the One who sustains me there.

Now I find that the gospel is preached in three different ways. Some preach, very sincerely, Christ as bearing the judgment of sin; and very true this is, otherwise how could you face God? Many a person has only got this, and is therefore never pleased but in hearing a gospel sermon; it is not that he has not got forgiveness of his sins, but he is not quite sure of it, and wants to look at it again and again, like a person reading over a balanced account. The second way of preaching the gospel is, I admit, a very full gospel, but it is defective. It is, that God so loved the world as to send His Son to bring us to heaven. Now there is just one word here that makes it defective, and that is *heaven*. If you substitute "God" for "heaven" then you have a perfect gospel. But, as it stands, it has only

brought you to a place instead of to God. True the judgment was upon us, Christ has come in and borne it, and gone up and opened heaven to us—all this is true; but you have not got it all unless you bring in the word *God*: “Christ has entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of *God* for us.”

To show you how connected this is with the gospel, I turn to the 15th of Luke. You have here the Lord announcing what the Father's delight is in receiving the prodigal. We have here three parables, and we find the answer to all in the case of the thief on the cross. There the Lord was the shepherd going out after the lost sheep; the Holy Ghost, figured by the woman who sought the silver piece, was there opening the heart of the thief; and the Father, as we see in the rending of the veil, comes out to embrace him. And then see how the Father says, “Bring hither the fatted calf.” It is not a great way off that the prodigal is now; he is in the house; and this is not hereafter; it is *now*.

Are you studying to answer to the heart of God—to own God's love to you? I can never be fully happy unless I am where He likes me to be, and He likes me to be in His house. True, we read in another parable, Luke x., that He brings me to “an inn,” and it is there my *feet* are; but where is my *heart*? A man may be at work all day in an office, but is not his heart in his *home*? Besides this how can you feast until you get into the Father's house? It is there that the fatted calf is. And you get no growth until you are in there. You must be “planted in the

house of the Lord " before you can " flourish in the courts of our God." You may have no doubt that you are a child, but you will never learn the manners of a child unless you are in the place of a child. I say to any poor sinner who is only converted to night: You have not satisfied your Father's heart until you are in His house. Are you not to meet the desire of the Father's heart about you? Then you must begin there; you must be *planted* there; you have " boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." You do not even properly know justification unless you are there, because the mercy seat was in the holiest. If you look at the order in which Moses was to build the tabernacle, you will find that the ark was the first thing that was to be made; but man never reached it. How great the importance of our practically drawing near into the holiest!

Now what are the effects that are produced in one by being there—in the presence of God? you will find four in the 73rd Psalm—four marks by which you may know when you are in the sanctuary.

The first effect that we find in this Psalm is that God becomes the prominent object of the heart. " How are they brought into destruction as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image."—God in His greatness is before the soul; and it is always in a simple way that we find this out. In Philippians we come to Him making all our requests known, and what

is the effect of it? That you get rid of the cares on your mind? No, but that you get *Himself*. The care is gone away certainly, but I have got *God*. I had the weight of the care; now I have the colour of God. I come out with God upon me, and not the cares; I have got God's way of looking at things, and not my own; and so I come out from His presence a different man to what I went in, because I have got the peace of God. So here, the Person who entirely engages my mind is God Himself; He comes prominently before me. That is the first mark.

The second is: "Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee."—You have got the sense of your own nothingness—that you are lower than a man—a very beast. As Job says, "I know thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself." It is a painful thing, but a necessary thing to get a true sense of one's nothingness.

The third is: "Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand." That is one of the most wonderful and blessed things connected with the presence of God, that I am never so sure as when I am in it that I am an object to Him. "I am *continually* with thee!" Though I am nothing at all, yet I never before was so confident that I am an object to Him. And where would you ever get that sense but in His presence? And, if man could

see this before heaven was thrown open, "how much more you and I! "*Thou hast holden me.*"

But now the fourth effect, which is always the result of the third, is that *He* becomes an object to *me*. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." It is practically what the Lord taught His disciples when He brought them into a scene where there was nothing but Himself—where there was "no bread." Have you got Him thus? are you satisfied to have nothing but Jesus? Did you ever see one about to die delighted with Jesus? There is "no bread" then—nothing there to sustain the flesh, nothing but Him.

Scripture never contemplates a believer as being in a lower class than that of knowing the Father: "I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father." This knowledge affects you every hour of the day; you show it in every little thing here and there. What did God send His Son for, but that you might find your enjoyment in His presence? And, if you have never gone unto the Father's house, never taken the child's place, how can you grow?

The Lord lead our hearts to understand it. I see people trying to act here for the Lord who have not got a home, but how can you be a pilgrim and a stranger here if you have not got a home in heaven? I am a pilgrim here because I am going home; I am a stranger here because I am not at home. I say to every evangelist: You have not done your work until you have

landed a soul in the Father's house—until you have placed him in the home: it is there he is formed according to the scene in which he is set. Saints think that God will educate them at a distance from His presence; He never does that I know of. I do not believe a soul ever gets any line of instruction but in the presence of God. Daniel is afraid of the glory of the Lord. The Lord says: "Stand upon thy standing." But, you say, how am I to get into heaven?—Well, all I insist upon is that unless you know your place in the Father's house—unless you know your home—you have not answered to the heart of God; you really say, Christ has accomplished it all; He has given me the place; but I have never gone into it!—Then you have never yet been able to praise Him; and it is "Whoso offereth *praise glorifieth me.*"

But there is always a tendency in us to go back. So the twelfth chapter looks at the danger of the saints falling back from what their calling was.

In this epistle it is first the worshipper, as we have seen, and then the racer. I soar into my true place when I am a worshipper; and, in one sense, worshipping is the easy thing of the two; it is easier than racing, for in the race there is need of patience—of *holding out*, which is what patience means.

The race is not service, but a man is not a true servant who is not a racer. There is always a certain weakness about his service. The whole of the church of God is like an army that is demoralized. It is no use a man saying, I will return to my *duty*; he must return to his *standard*

if he want to be of any use ; it is his standard that marks him as belonging to the royal army. That is the testimony for us. The apostle writes to Timothy : “ Be not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord.” The race is the testimony. The testimony is to maintain the position in which we have been placed—to maintain our standing. It was for the sake of the testimony that Christ “endured the cross, despising the shame;” it was not to *save us*, though of course it did ; but the point here is that he went to the cross to maintain what was due to *God* upon the earth. And so in the tenth chapter we read : “ Ye endured a great fight of afflictions ;” that is not service ; “ partly, whilst ye were made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions ; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used ;” no service in all that. But they were set for heaven, and as Jews they were refusing all that Jews had by right on earth, “ knowing that they had a better and an enduring substance.” They had set out on a race, so it is not only, “ *boldness*,” now, but “ Ye have need of *patience*.” I can go home with boldness, but I have to run the race with patience. It is an immense thing to the heart to know that there is now not a single thing between me and the brightness of God’s presence. I can always go home ; that is an easy thing ; there is no place for me like home even if I fail ; I shall get no quarter ; I shall be rebuked ; but if you have failed in the race, go home ; it is the only place for the heart to recover in—the only place in which to get fresh strength for action. “ You

have need of patience ;” that is, that you may get to heaven. I have “boldness to enter” there now ; that is where my heart is. Why ? Because Christ is there, the delight of my heart. I never get a landing place anywhere but in the Father’s house ; God has set my heart nowhere but in His own presence. So I enter there with boldness, and I run on here with patience ; and, you can well afford to be patient, for “yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” “Now the just shall live by faith.”

This cloud of witnesses had a certain thing to maintain for God here upon the earth, and now you have to do the same, and you are not to give up that race ; you have “need of patience” in it. You are going to heaven because Christ is in heaven. When I am doing this I am a racer. A worshipper is one who delights in the presence of God, because he is there in divine acceptance ; but a racer comes from his home to run. The worshipper is in the holiest of all where

God is. It is not when I *have* run the race that I come to be a worshipper. What I want to make evident to the soul is that you are to be a racer as well as a worshipper. You will not have the heart to be a racer unless you are a worshipper, for where have you got anything to sustain you down here ?

In the eighty-fourth Psalm you get a twofold blessedness. There is, “*Blessed* are they that *dwell in thy house,*” before you get “*Blessed* is the man whose strength is in thee ; in whose heart are the ways of those who passing through

the valley of weeping make it a well." You have the home before you set out on the race. The one who dwells in the house "will be still *praising* thee," He will be *always* doing it. And after that comes the other blessedness, for it is another thing altogether; it is a race through a vale of tears; but, even there, whilst passing through such a scene as that, you come as a servant; you come to serve others in it. But, whilst serving, your characteristic mark is that you are racing; you are not at home in the place in which you serve.

The great point in the recovery of truth in this present day is, that you are to bear testimony to Him who is not here; and thus, whilst serving others, I am not serving in an earthly way, but in a heavenly way. "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." Of course I have compassion on the poor, and seek to serve them, but it is not as a reformer that I do it, but as one who has heavenly principles and heavenly tastes, as one who is a pilgrim and a stranger here because this is not my home, and so I am bearing out the character and manners of my home here where it is not.

I turn now to a Scripture or two to give you practical illustrations of the race of which I have been speaking. First we will look at the third chapter of Philippians.

Here we find three things. In the eighth verse we read: "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have

suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Here I get my *object*. The apostle tells me in these words what his own practical walk in the wilderness was: he had but one object—*Christ*.

If I talk to a painter who is studying a work of art, I find that he is imbibing the beauties he is studying; and just so I study Christ, but with this very great difference that, as I study Him, I am formed like Him; as I study the beauty of Christ I am growing like Him; nothing can be more captivating to the heart, than this growing like the Person whom I love; and, as I grow like Him, I get more enlarged power and taste to appreciate Him; I so admire Him, that I give up the old man altogether. There are two pictures hanging on that wall; one, the most beautiful painting that you can possibly imagine; the other has some lovely tints in it. Surely I shall surrender the latter, when I can have the former. Now that is just what the apostle is doing here; he is not merely giving up man's evil things, but it is the good ones that there are in nature, even these he will not have, that he may get Christ in a deeper fuller way. I give up all the beauty of the old picture, in order that I may have the enjoyment of the far greater beauties of the new. The beauties in Christ are of a lasting nature; the beauties of nature will not stand. Nature gives way under pressure, not so Christ: the Lord would have loved His mother no matter how she might have behaved to Him; her badness would only have brought out His goodness. And it is not only the *deformities*

of the old picture that I have to give up: the Lord saw the young man and "loved him"; and I often think how beautiful are the touches of nature that I see. But it is not permanent. So the apostle says, I can give up what is gain to me "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

We get the second thing in the thirteenth verse. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Here I get my *mark*. I am pressing towards the mark "for the calling of God on high," as it is literally. Now that is the *race*. I am now a racer. I have not only an object while here, but I have a mark towards which I am racing. I am going to Jesus where Jesus is. When did Paul see his object? When he was converted; he saw Jesus in the glory; and so he could say, I am going to that point; I am giving up everything to get there; I must run on till I get to where Jesus is.

And how am I to get there if I do not know where He is? And how am I to know Him without seeing Him where He is? And how am I to see Him so that I may make Him my object? —Well, *look at Him!* Look at nothing else, and you will soon see Him. In Canticles the bride cannot find her Lord, and what does she do? Why she says: I will pourtray Him; so she describes Him. And then what does she do? She goes down to the garden of spices, and there she finds

Him. Scripture gives you the features of Christ—gives you His portrait; and, if you only get hold of that portrait, your heart burns within you. It was just so with the disciples going to Emmaus; the Lord presented Himself to them in the Scriptures; He, by divine skill, portrayed Himself to their souls, and afterwards He was *known* to them in the breaking of bread.

Are you, like the bride in Canticles, studying Christ? Are you searching for Him? People think they can acquire all this without any trouble, but I tell you plainly it is not so; the Lord knows His own worth too well ever to disclose Himself to any who do not value Him. No, He does not make little of His own love. Did you ever yet give up a single thing for Christ? If there are people who have never given up anything for Him, how then can I suppose that He is their object? and how can they expect Him to make Himself known to them?

The two great things which mark Christianity are the Person, and the place—what the apostle is insisting on in Hebrews is the *place*; and the place is the most difficult thing to get souls to accept, because people will have earth and not heaven. But you *must* get the place first; for how can I find any person unless I know the place he is in? If I were in the place I should soon find the person; so in Hebrews it is the place that is insisted on. Of course you find Christ as your *Saviour* first.

Well, what is the effect of my getting there? It is that I give up things here. And mark, it

is "*things*" now. And it is not only giving them up, but it is forgetting them. When a person is remembering the things he has given up, he is going back to them in spirit; as it says in the eleventh of Hebrews: "If they had been mindful of"—that is if they had remembered—"that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned."

Now where are you racing to? I believe there is a moment in which the soul knows that it has got the mark.

The third thing we get in the twentieth verse. "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Here I get my *hope*. Now I saw the doctrine of this verse for years before I could shape my life to it. It was not until I saw that I was a stranger here, a heavenly citizen, and therefore not answerable for the state of things here. I am not a citizen of this world; I belong to heaven, and I am looking for the Lord to come and change the whole state of things here, and when He comes I am to be "fashioned like unto his glorious body."

These three things, the *object*, the *mark*, and the *hope* are what characterize the saint walking through this world, and, if they mark his path, he can turn round on the world and say, I have got "the mind of Christ;" and "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."

Now to be clear as to what the race is. It is going to the place where Christ is; and that is the place for my heart. It is only as my heart

is there now—only as I have got hold of what is above—that I can really walk here according to the testimony.

The first Scripture I turn to is the fourteenth of John. There the Lord is going away, but He says: "Let not your heart be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." He brings forward the *place*. The way He comforts us is that He is gone away to prepare a *place* for us. I hear people say He is preparing it for us. That is incorrect. His going there was what prepared it, and it is ours now, though of course we are not actually in it as to our bodies. Isaiah says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." There are folding doors into that bright scene, and they are closed. But Paul says, I have seen through them; they are thrown open now; there is a place for me inside them, and it is there my heart is, because it is there that Christ is. I know nothing that so takes the delight of the place here out of my heart as knowing the place that I have there.

People say, We shall get heaven when we die. It is not so. We have *got* heaven now; we shall *go* there when we die. It is a given thing; it is not a thing to get. Heaven is a place, and it is mine now. Glory is a condition; it will be mine then. Glory is the display of God according to His attributes. Saying that I do not get heaven till I die is what *does* all the mischief. If I do

not get *heaven* till I die, then I must have *earth* till I die; and that is just where many a Christian is, and what gives the character to his walk; Satan wants by this to throw you out of the testimony.

Christ has been rejected; they put Him to death. God now turns that to your account; He calls Him to heaven, and unites His people to Him there. "I go to prepare a place for you." And "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am—*where I am*—there ye may be also." Thus I have a Head in heaven; and the Holy Ghost is on earth, forming the body and binding it to that Head in heaven. And this is all defeated if I say I shall get heaven when I die. God has revealed these things unto us by His Spirit. The apostle shows us how much more Christians have got than ever Isaiah had any conception of. "He hath *revealed* them unto us." And yet many, in spite of all He says, have no idea of what is inside the folding doors. Though I have not got inside yet, yet I am looking in by the Spirit of God, and, as I look, I run; I am a racer; "I press towards the mark;" I am going to the place where Christ is, and where I have a place.

You get this practically illustrated in the seventh of Acts. "Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Here the way into heaven is inaugurated; the doors are opened, and that is where Stephen is running to. You may say, but that was only a vision! No; it

was more than a vision: it was the truth as to heaven inaugurated. Every truth in the word is inaugurated with great ceremonial; all the beauties of it are to be traced in it the very first time it is spoken of; you get its characteristic elements at the introduction of it, just as a baby is a man, only undeveloped. Ask me, for instance, about the truth of the church, and I go back for it to the sixteenth of Matthew. Ask me about Babylon, and I go back to the eleventh of Genesis. Ask me about salvation, and I take you to the thief on the cross.

Thus here, in the seventh of Acts, I see a new line is opened to me, and the Holy Ghost leads me up it to see Christ.

In Elijah's time God sees he has grown weary, and God says to him, I must take you up; there is nothing else for it. So then, when Elisha asks, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me," Elijah says, "If thou see me *when I am taken from thee*, it shall be so unto thee." The whole point was in his seeing him *taken up*. That word "taken up" is repeated four times in the first chapter of Acts. The Lord Himself has been taken up to heaven, and this proves that all is over here now, and that you must look to heaven for everything. That saint will not get on who, when he draws up his blind in the morning, cannot say: There is not one thing in this wide world for me to-day; I draw all my supplies from heaven. As surely as Israel got manna from above so surely do I get all my supplies from heaven.

So Stephen looks up "steadfastly into heaven."

It was no use his looking down to earth, though he was a Jew. He looked up, and he saw Jesus at the right hand of God. The Holy Ghost led his eye up there.

If a person say to me, I have the Holy Ghost in me; I say, Well, where does He lead you to? Is it to earth? Never! My heart is carried by the Holy Ghost into a new region, and I rest there. The Holy Ghost never turns the eye to earth. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." It is a remarkable word that; because it is not simply "affection," but it is "Set your *mind* on things above." People say, How am I to be where Christ is? "Set your mind on things above," and you will soon enough be there.

We have each of us got a home and a work. I am at home when I am in the land; I am at work when I am down here on earth. I am eating the old corn of the land when I am at home; I have the manna when I am at my work. The manna is Christ on earth, "the bread of God come down from heaven;" "the old corn of the land," is Christ in heaven. When you go home you relax; you are at your ease; you are at home. I have got bright clothes—beautiful clothes; but they are only fit for home. I could not appear in them at my work; I have to cover them all up with armour. And what is this armour?—It is *character*. The devil will soon trip me up if I have not this.

Stephen says, "I see the Son of man." That is his testimony. Our testimony at this present time is to a *Person*. It is just the same thing

in the ninth chapter, where He says to Saul: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?" Before this the testimony had been to a thing, but now it is to a Person. When you talk of the race, it is that you are running on to a Person. But, if you do not go to the place, how can you maintain the character of the Person who is in that place?

Christians, thousands of them, fall short of the testimony. I do not find it generally among Christians at all; I do not find it in theological books. Christians who are even very sincere have fallen back altogether to the testimony of a previous day. Our testimony is to represent on earth the Man who is not on earth, but who is gone into heaven. The apostle had set them in heaven; he had shown them that Jesus was in heaven; and now he says, If you give up going to heaven you will lose your race. I would just say here, that there never was a heresy but it took its rise in the overstraining of some singular truth, giving it an undue prominence, and thus destroying it;—that is what a heresy is. So I say a *truth* is not the testimony; a *Person* is the testimony; and, if you insist on a truth unduly, and persevere in it, you will become a heretic.

All that were in Asia turned away from Paul. Why? Because he wanted them to turn away from the man here, and they would not. They would not give up things here; so they gave up Paul, and followed Peter. Only Paul was sent to bring out that the Man whom he had seen in glory was now the only one to be represented

on earth. If I want to learn how to be a servant I must learn it from Christ. Paul says, *There is now no man for God on earth but Jesus.* Whatever I would be I must learn the grace, and manner, and ways of Christ; it must be Jesus only, that "Christ may be magnified in my body."

Now mark; The Lord says: "I am Jesus." I understand this myself, but I am not sure that I can give to you my thought as to it. Suppose the Lord were to walk into this room, and were to say: I do not see any of the old man in any one of you; I see nothing but myself. What a wonderful deliverance this would be for many a saint! He sees nothing—He acknowledges nothing in the saints but Himself. Paul was to go forth and maintain that this wonderful Man in heaven, whom they had refused, is the only Man now on the earth; he goes forth, as we read farther on, and preaches that "Jesus is the Son of God." That is the testimony: this Man in heaven whose body is on the earth. All has passed away except this blessed One. And Paul has to learn in his own soul the wonderful manner in which God can place him in the light of His own glory; without one single charge against him, without one single spot upon him. The Holy Ghost comes in and seals it to his soul, as he says in Galatians: "When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me;" so that God can say, I now see nothing there but my Son.

What a relief to my heart! If Jesus walks in He says: I see nothing but myself. And as to

me, I can say: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." But what about the life that you live?—It is "by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me;" it is Jesus only. Therefore it is, "Be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner." I may well not be "ashamed" of that which can set me, a sinner, in His own bright presence without a single thing to hinder.

I turn now to the twelfth of Hebrews just to notice two points. First: What the strength is that is to carry you in the race. It is faith. The moment a man is influenced by what he sees it is not faith; it may be *prudence*, but it is not *faith*. In the twenty seventh of Acts three great arguments were brought to bear on Paul, but they had no effect on him; nothing diverted him from faith. The owner of the ship said, "The haven was not commodious to winter in." There was self interest. The passengers "advised to depart thence, if by any means they might attain to Phenice there to winter." There was prudence. And then "the south wind blew softly." There was providence. But Paul said: I am not to be swayed by any one of them; I am to be guided by faith. And what is faith? Faith is simply reckoning on the word of God. All three were against him, but he was not to be moved by any one of them. The wind veered right round to the east, and of what value then were the words of either the owner of the ship or of the passengers? and of what use was it the south wind having blown softly before they sailed? You

are to be guided by nothing but faith ; prudence will not do ; faith is lost when prudence guides.

When things seem most hopeless, then is the time that faith is tested. Faith will bring us into suffering. The greatest One suffered here, and why do not we suffer more ? It is because we are not able for it. There will be a "trying of your faith." And remember "*trying*" is not *trial*. "*Trial*" is pressing a horse over a five-barred gate when he cannot go over three. "*Trying*" is riding him over three when he can go over five. He will like it ; it only exhilarates him.

Now a word as to running foul. Many a person is not rightly in the race course ; but to run fair you must run between the posts. Now there are two posts on the race course. One is : "Lay aside every weight ;" the other is : "The sin which doth so easily beset." There is the outside and the inside ; the weights outside, and the besetments inside. A man running says : This cloak is too heavy for me, I will take it off. It is a weight that hinders him as he runs. A weight is anything outside that prevents you from being a heavenly man. It may be reading the newspaper—it may be anything ; there are more weights than one ; and, if you begin taking off weights, it is wonderful how many you will find to take off. People say : Oh, it is only a little thing !—Well take it off even if it be only a *little* thing. It is well said : "Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves."

The other post is "The sin which doth so easily beset." It is not any particular sin ; it is the whole body of sin. And that is inside. It

is the working of the flesh ; and faith is the only power to throw it aside. So it says " Ye have not yet resisted unto blood *striving against sin.*" I am going right against the current ; I am refusing the thing here. And so the consequence is people will not have me ; " All they which are in Asia be turned away from me." What a lamentable thing that all should turn against him ; that there, where he had done all his work, all that he could count on is one solitary family.

The Lord lead our hearts to see what a real place of honour and distinction we have. He has called us to bear the mark of the heavenly Man—to represent the One who is not here ; and it is a positive delight to the heart to do it. I am not here to represent the man who is here ; neither am I to set up or do anything for him. I am to maintain the Man who is not here, and I am not ashamed of the testimony. He is the One who maintained it for God, cost Him what it might ; and, as I run with patience this race that is set before me, I do it " looking unto Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

(J. B. S.)

It is a question of holding the *Head*—not of holding the *body*. As we hold the Head we, so to say, forget the members ; and then every member, the most ill formed and the most uncomely, looks beautiful in the light that comes from above.

(W. W.)

FORGIVENESS AND SALVATION.

PEOPLE do not really believe that they are lost; they believe that they have *sins*; but that does not touch the question of being *lost*. Your sins make you guilty, but your state by nature is that you are lost. It is quite another thing to seeing that I have sins, the consciousness that I am lost now. In my natural condition, they go together, but they are distinct; guilt looks forward to judgment; lost is my present state. If I get clear hold of that, then I get Christ dealing with it, and the consciousness that I am saved now. But people neither know that they are lost, nor that they are saved. But, in the Christian, God has brought in a new thing—he is a new creation; and thus my place is either in the first man or in the second. And, to get hold of what this new creation is, is of immense moment in this day.

All the ordinances and religion that are going on in the world are for man in the flesh. Do you think we shall have such things in heaven? The first man, though the flesh be in us, is done with for faith; God takes me entirely out of my condition by nature—though my poor body is here yet of course—has separated me entirely from the world, though still in it. “Now once in the end of the world,” we read, “hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

Do you believe that the world *has* morally come to an end? God's dealings with the first man were then thoroughly, perfectly closed. Man may get up an imitation of the Jewish ritual, but it is all over. The religiousness that is going on around us all hangs upon this question: Am I alive in this world, looked at in my relationship with God, or not? I am *not!*—Where does the believer get his life from? From heaven. Christ could say: "The Son of man which is in heaven." We, as united to Him, live of the life which is in Him who is on high. Will you occupy yourself in the improvement of the first Adam? Will you get good out of him? You never will. God has tried, but He could get nothing. The flesh that is in me has had Christ presented to it, and has rejected Him. It does so still. It cannot crucify Him now, but it rejects Him just as much. Lawless, if left to itself, it is *not subject to the law of God when under it*, neither indeed can be, and, if Christ be presented to it, prefers everything in the world to Him.

Whenever God set up anything good, the first thing man did was to spoil it. Take the history in order as it comes. What is the first thing? Man himself—in the garden. And what did he do?—Then after the flood; you would say if ever anything could have mended man's manners, surely that would. But no, it is all ruined; the first thing Noah does is to get drunk. Abram is called out of it by grace. But the law is then given. The first thing Israel did was to make the golden calf. The priesthood was set up; but Nadar and Abihu offered strange fire on the

very first day. The son of David is established; but Solomon loved many strange women, and the kingdom is ruined. Nebuchadnezzar, set up as the head of gold, sets up an idol. And the church is in ruins. "All," we read in the apostle's time, "seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Who says that? The apostle; while he was yet alive that was the state of things. "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God." Have you not got that nature? Speaking of us as men, have we not got that nature, which is—what? *Enmity against God!* And are you going to educate it? to cultivate it? *Cultivate enmity against God?*

This is what I mean when I say that men do not know that they are *lost*. When Christ came into the world and went about doing good because God was with Him, men did not like Him. Why? *Because* God was manifested in Him!—It is natural that infidels should try to get what good they can out of the old tree; but I am speaking of Christians. It is the first question with the soul, and must be, if I want to get glory—this truth that I am lost already; you will never get hold of what it is to be saved already until you see that.

It was just at this point, when Pharisaic flesh made its most of religion, that Christ came into the world. He came in and found a magnificent temple; and that is what people want now. If I go into a church I take my hat off. I do not mean *I*, of course, when I say this, because I would not go into one, but that is what people do. And they take it off to what? There was

a time when God had such a thing—a temple—priests—everything, to try what man in the flesh could do. And now man will go back to it, and says: Oh, you must have music, temple, vestments, to influence people. Influence what? Their flesh! But I am “not in the flesh.”

“Once in the end of the world.” There ended man’s history morally. They said, “This is the heir; come, let us kill him;” and there was an end of the *world* as to the judgment of God, not executed indeed, but pronounced. But then there was the beginning of *God*, and where was that? In the *grave* of Christ, as come in the flesh—the cross, if you please, but it was death—in the grave. He accomplished the work in perfectness of love to God and perfect obedience in a man—One who was God, of course, but as man dying on the cross, closing all association with man in the flesh, fully tested by grace as well as law, and God set the Man who had done it at His own right hand. The first man’s wickedness was proved in the death of Christ, and the second Man was taken out of the world; it is convicted of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, in rejecting Him; of righteousness in that He is gone to the Father, and the world sees Him no more as so come in grace, and the prince of this world proved to be Satan; but there is *the Man in heaven*; and Christianity is founded upon that. The end is made of the first man in death, and a totally new place is taken in the second Man, in which man innocent had no more place than man guilty, and till I know that I shall not know what salvation is.

Forgiveness applies to what I have done as the first man. I may sin now, surely, as a Christian, but, if I do, that is the first man—the flesh.—Salvation is connected with my condition as a child of Adam. When I speak of sins, I do not say I am *saved*; I say I am *forgiven*. People think that their guilt, as children of Adam, is cleared away, and so it is; but that is only forgiveness; it does not in itself take me out of the position that I am in. But God has judged man; the prince of this world is cast out; and I am now in Christ at the right hand of God. “If any man be in Christ it is a new creation.” Of course, as to my body, I have not got into the new scene yet, but am left here to have my senses exercised to discern good and evil, and to walk by faith and not by sight. He is not talking of the sight of things down here, but he means you have not yet got a sight of heavenly things. But I can go through the things down here, they do not affect me. I have to live down here—perfectly true; but that has nothing to do with the moral question of the object that leads us: “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.” And then what does he say? Why, I am groaning in this tabernacle meanwhile, desiring to be clothed upon with my house which is from heaven, for He that hath wrought me for the self-same thing is God. *God* has wrought *me*. It is not only a prepared place there, but he has wrought me for it—for that place where is the glory of Christ. The world may come and tempt me, but it is the things that are inside the veil that are mine,

and I belong to that scene; and that is what is *salvation*.

A man in the seventh of Romans is a renewed man, but he has not salvation; he is a renewed man under the law. The law was God's rule for a child of Adam. Well, but what are *you*?—I am a child of *God*. The law deals with a man in the flesh; I am “not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.” I get salvation when I get into a place where I am not in the flesh at all. “I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” The law is a very useful thing to kill me. The law says: Death and the curse are your portion. I say: Yes; but I died on the cross when the curse was born. If a guilty man fall into the law's hands and die there, what can it do with him? Give him up to be buried!

So a Christian is not in the flesh before God; my place—my standing—is not there at all. You say: Where is it then?—Why it is *in Christ*. I find that “when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly;” and what we learn in Romans vii. is, not guilt, but that we have no power to get out of the condition in which we are. Christ has come and taken me out of the condition in which I was, and put me into His own; by the power which God “wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,” He has “quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ.” Well, if I am sitting in

heavenly places in Christ, am I saved, or am I not?

What salvation has done is not the merely forgiving me my sins; forgiveness, cleansing, justifying, applies to my responsible and guilty condition in the first Adam; but salvation applies to my state in the second Man. It is a new creation. What would you do if you wanted to make something of a crab tree? Not nurture, and prune, and dig about, and dung it. That God has done with his fig tree. If you know anything about it, you will cut it down and graft it. Until you find out that the old man is utterly bad, and that there is no mending it, you will not give it up. If you cultivate the old crab tree you will have fair flowers but only bigger crabs.

God has gone through the moral history of man's probation up to the cross, and a little supplementary trial too, if you like, through Christ's intercession on it for Israel, and He has come to the end of it. I get the whole thing. God's grace in seeking man in the condition he was in, giving His Son to die for him, and then Christ rising into a totally new place as man, what man as Adam was not at all, and has brought me there in Him—of course I am not physically there—and then gives me His Spirit that I may walk in the place He has set me in. In the death of Christ the whole thing on man's part has closed, and then God begins with His own work. A Man, the Lord of glory, goes down, takes this dreadful cup, goes on the cross into death for us, into the judgment, into the curse alone with God, settles that question with God,

and has so settled it for God's glory that God has set a Man at His own right hand in glory. All the thoughts and the counsels of God came out consequently on that.

One passage we may refer to on this is 2 Tim. i. 9. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is *now* made manifest." I am not saved according to my responsibility; "our works;" saving and calling does not come to me upon this ground. I am saved by the cross. Well, I say, and what part had you in the cross? —If you are saved by the cross the only part you had in it was your sins; your enmity too, if you like, in putting Him there. But I find in the cross a death which on the one hand clears away my sins, and on the other hand brings me salvation. The whole of it is God's work. All alone between Him and God was that work; the darkness was the outward testimony that He was alone with God; His divine power not saving Him from the cup, but enabling Him to drink it. And then He goes to His Father, and the world sees Him, in grace, never any more, till He comes to it in judgment.

"It is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ." And again in the beginning of Titus: "Eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began, but hath in due times manifested." For this purpose of God, to bring us into the second Man, the ground was not laid until the cross.

But when He came it was not only this ; He had also in His person the promises for Israel ; recollect this. And it is well we should recollect, that there is no promise to the flesh. It was said, in passing sentence on the serpent, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head ; it was not said to Adam. Was Adam the seed of the woman ? He was the only man who was not. The promise was to the seed of the woman—to Christ. God had had purposes of grace before the world existed, but He began His dealings with Adam—the responsible man—and tried him. And, having proved what *he* was, then I get *God's* work ; *God wrought*. If I get what man wrought it was sin and condemnation. But God has raised His Son from the dead, and my place with God being in Christ after His death—after the power of Satan being broken—after my sins being put away, judged in Him—I am a new creation, I am in the second Man, I am not in the flesh. You will never know what salvation is until you know that you are *in Christ* ; then “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Sin in the flesh is condemned, not forgiven, but condemned where Christ was a sacrifice for sin, and, where the condemnation was, death was ; so that there is no condemnation for me now, but I am dead to sin.

I will not say any more, but I am anxious

this should dwell upon your minds; it is of great moment now. We have come back to the Father, kissed, robed, the ring on our finger, and the fatted calf killed. We have come back. But was it the fruit of what the prodigal did? He was perishing; if he stay where he is he will perish. But he sets out on his way to God. And what is the effect of that? The effect that is on the minds of many: it is—"Make me one of thy hired servants." But his reasoning thus only proved he had not yet met Him. And after all what does his experience bring him to? To the Father *in his rags*! I may say I am running too slow, perhaps stumble in the way, though seeking to go right; but I am always in my *rags* till I come to my Father. It is *the Father* who says, "Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry." It is He who had the best robe brought forth; till then the prodigal son was not fit to enter into the house, though he had been going right, and his father's love shown to him.

Of course then we must bring forth good fruit. If I have got the life of Christ in me, I must bring it out in everything: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." I say, Are you doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus? If not, you have in that case given Him up for some foolish thing or other. "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living (alive) in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" I am dead to flesh—to sin: "The body is dead, because of sin; but the spirit is

life, because of righteousness." I am crucified to the world, and dead to the law by the body of Christ. The fact then is this, that I do not belong to the world any more than a dead and buried man does—of course I mean in the moral sense of it. If I take my privileges, I say I am seated in heavenly places. If I take my position in the world, I have nothing to do but to go through it as He did.

The Lord give us clearly to see what salvation is : that it is the taking me out of the first Adam and putting me into the second Man. "He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places *in Christ Jesus.*"

(J. N. D.)

There is a short cut into the very depths of the heart of God—that is, Submission.

(H. H. M.)

What I want is for God to put *self out*; and that is not joy. Is the nipping of evil joy?—or of its shoots? God crippled Jacob, but it was not pleasure to him. And He has got to nip—to crush—the root. A horrid thing this self! It will grow out of the least fibre.

(G. V. W.)

COMMENTS ON "THE OLD MAN," "THE NEW MAN," "I."

I entirely acquiesce in the general purpose of H. C. G. B.*

The I of individuality needs no proof; it is in the consciousness of everybody. I cannot use the word without declaring it. So that I have not accepted the famous dictum of Des Cartes: "I think, therefore I am." The moment I say "I," all is said and proved, and better known than if attempted to be proved. The thought of excusing oneself because it is the old man who acts is utterly false and evil. I am responsible, and ought through the power of Christ who has set me free, to have kept the old man, or the flesh, if we are so to speak, down. Not merely reckoning it dead, but bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body.

But it seems to me this paper is defective in not adequately recognising the existence of flesh—of what lusts against the Spirit.

I do not think there is any difficulty in scriptural statements, where difficulties have not been made by those who wished to obscure the truth. When I say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me," the soul taught of God knows that the I which does not live—is not owned—is the old Adam I. And when it says, "Not I, but sin that dwelleth

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in me," it gets the comfort of knowing, though not yet delivered, that the new life is a distinct thing, and that I can judge the working of sin in me as a distinct thing. To the heart that walks experimentally, and is taught of God, all this is light, not obscurity. It is only so when false teachers seek to puzzle the soul.

"As in Adam he has died" is an unhappy phrase, though I understand it, because in Scripture it is used in the exactly opposite sense, and all have died in Adam. By man came death, but that was by, not to, sin, which is what the writer means here.

Next I *do* attribute all evil found within to the old man. Negatives are always dangerous things. "As though" qualifies it, I admit, but very inadequately, because the evil is in and from the old man, or at least the flesh. The object of the sentence is right, but the form regrettable.

So again: "Strictly speaking, the old man has no present existence."—Now what is the meaning of this? Has the flesh no present existence? and am I not to distinguish it? I admit my responsibility fully to keep the flesh down, and I am to blame if I do not. But, though the old man may be used to signify my Adam existence without Christ, yet it is so used here as that the distinct existence of what lusts against the Spirit is ignored.

We are told: "If he find sin there, he must not plead for it in excuse that it is his old man (So far very well, only I should have out "for it," and say "in excuse"—meaning plead for himself in excuse, not for it.) But must honestly

confess that it is himself." I admit his fault, his responsibility fully. Through the Spirit he should have mortified the deeds of the body, and been full of Christ in the new man. But to say that is himself, with the rejection of its being the old man, destroys, it seems to me, the force of the apostle's words: "Not I, but sin that dwelleth in me."

I admit the personal I. I admit the responsibility, and no excuse because the sin is there, but there is an ignoring the flesh, the two things contrary the one to the other, because Scripture teaches, which it does, that the old man is put off. We are told the old man is of the past. In one passage the fact is admitted that the flesh lusts against the Spirit, but then how is what people really and experimentally mean by the old man, a part which has no present existence?

If the paper adequately recognised the fact that the flesh is a present thing, I should not object at all to saying that the old man is a past thing. But this is not the case. I have put it off and put on the new. I am not in the flesh. And this is important, very important, to make clear. But the old man being habitually used for the flesh, even if incorrectly, and this being said to have no present existence, while the flesh is practically ignored, I fear that defectiveness as to this latter point may mislead, as well as the error the paper justly combats. J. N. D.

I am thankful to have been allowed to see these comments on the paper, "the old man, &c." As the best test of the value of a paper is the impression it makes on the mind of a reader, I willingly accept the criticism of one so well competent to judge, that it "is defective in not *adequately* recognising the existence of the flesh—of what lusts against the spirit." I am not sure, however, if the whole tenor of the paper be taken into account, that it can be said, that in it "the flesh is practically ignored."

In writing with one thought and expression of Scripture before the mind, it is probable that another has not been brought into sufficient prominence. But the paper deals with the term "old man," and not with the term "flesh," and though closely connected, I do not think they are in all cases, convertible terms. The object was to combat the misuse of the term "old man." It did not profess to deal with the right doctrine as to the flesh, though I see now it might probably have been more directly alluded to. In the case of the believer the existence of the latter is as clearly taught in Scripture, as the non-existence of the former, so far as terms go; and although I may know what a Christian means who loses his temper, and says it is the "old man," yet the expression is wrong. If he said it was "flesh," he would be more correct.

However, I accept the criticism, and am thankful if, through it, the existence of the flesh, as

that also which is to be disallowed and judged, be brought more prominently before the minds of any. No one knows it experimentally better than myself.

There are one or two points in the paper, on which these comments touch, in which there is slight misunderstanding of the meaning of the writer through his faulty expression; but these may be left, trusting to the Lord's goodness that no soul will be much the worse for its perusal. It was written at the repeated request of a most simple-hearted and suffering saint, and was, perhaps, rather prematurely printed.

H. C. G. B.

THE CHRISTIAN IN RELATION TO GOD'S LAW.

THE relation of the Christian to the law of God is a question that is ever being raised, and there ought then to be no weariness in replying to it. It is a question which must be, and ought to be, raised in the hearts and consciences of all who are brought into contact with the word of God, and it is one which must remain unanswered until the gospel, by the same word, is preached unto them; then, indeed, they ought to be satisfied. And, as all Christendom has been brought under the influence of the word, though comparatively few souls come under the power of a pure gospel, it is not to be wondered at if, for the most part, their relation to the law remains unanswered in the minds of professing Christians.

In endeavouring to show from Scripture the relation of the Christian to the law, we will begin with a few alternative questions.

What is a Christian? Is he a natural man or a spiritual man? a man in the flesh, or a man in the Spirit? a man in Adam, or a man in Christ? a man in his sins, or a man justified from sin? a child of wrath, or a child of God? a servant under law, or a son under grace? a man alive in his sins and in the world, or a believer dead with Christ and to the world? a man alive under law and under condemnation, or dead to the law by

the body of Christ, and, in Christ Jesus, under no condemnation? We might multiply these questions indefinitely, but with only the same result—that Scripture teaches the second alternative to be true in every case of the Christian, whilst the first applies to man in his natural state apart from Christ. In fact, we may say that a true Christian is first a Christian, and then a man; and this is both true and safe. For, whilst a Christian is not unmanned by his Christianity, his Christianity will be terribly unchristianised by the assertion of his manhood, whether in its natural or social aspects.

It is vain to expect a soul to understand its relation to the law until it rightly apprehends its relationship to God. This also applies to man's relation to sin and to the world. Nothing can be seen or measured aright except God be known in grace, and relationship be established. Then, indeed, the soul can say, "With thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." We will therefore, from Scripture, note especially two aspects of the Christian's standing with God, bearing in mind that all Scripture is given by divine inspiration.

First.—A Christian, then (we speak of those who are altogether, and not almost, Christians), is a believer in, and confessor of, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is thus himself a child, or son, of God; for "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," Jno. i. 12. He has received the Spirit of adoption, for God has sent forth the Spirit of

His Son into his heart, by which Spirit he calls God "Father," Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 5, 6; that is, he calls God Father by the same Spirit by which the Lord Jesus called God His Father. This Fatherhood of God, and sonship of the believer, is special to Christianity ("children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," Gal. iii. 26), and not general to man. It is not a mere term, nor a figure of speech, to convey a sense of kindness and interest on the part of God. It is a spiritual fact, founded on the new birth, of which every true believer has been the subject, as "born of God," 1 John v. 1, and "born again," or anew, John iii. 3. So it is written: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation;" 2 Cor. v. 17; and again: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John iii. 1.

Second.—A Christian is joined to Christ by one Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Consequent on Christ's resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God, the Holy Ghost has come down, John xvi. 7, and indwells every believer, 1 Cor. vi. 19, and baptizes all believers into one body, 1 Cor. xii. 13, of which body Christ is the Head, Eph. i. 22; Col. i. 18. These again are facts, not mere figures to describe an influence or unity of feeling and object; but an indwelling power, and a real and essential unity, formed by the Holy Ghost. This again is special to Christianity, and not true of man as a race, or of any nation, or other religious profession whatever.

There are many other aspects of the Christian's standing, through the death and resurrec-

tion of the Lord Jesus, which we do not touch on here, but the results of the above truths are numerous, and their importance is incalculable. As born of God the Christian is "no more a servant but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God, through Christ," Gal. iv. 7. As a new creature, part of God's new creation, he is not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world, John xvii. 14. His citizenship is in heaven, from whence also he looks for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Phil. iii. 20.

We repeat that these are facts, not figures representing a mental and moral change, or outward reformation. The Christian, according to God's word, is all that we have spoken, and more, or he is no Christian at all. We do not say that he always knows these things; on the contrary, we believe that the large majority of believers are ignorant of the full grace of God in which they stand; hence the legal character of their religious profession, the uncertainty and want of confidence towards God which marks their spiritual state, and the worldliness which, alas! too often is exhibited in their lives. Whilst they trust in the death and blood of Christ for salvation, they have never themselves, by faith, followed him into the grave as "buried with him by baptism into death," nor have they learned that they are "risen with him by the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead," Col. ii. 12. So soon as the Christian learns these things, which form the very foundation of the Christian faith and state—so soon as he sees his place as dead with Christ, as

risen and glorified in Him, as having thus died to sin, and to the world, and living unto God—so soon also will he see his relation to the law.

The Roman epistle, which in chapters i. and ii. gives the history of man in nature and under law; in chapter iii., God's way of justifying the sinner; in chapter iv., the nature and principle of the righteousness which is by faith; in chapter v., the fruits of faith, in justification, peace, access into grace, rejoicing in hope, glorying in tribulation, patience, experience of God, hope which maketh not ashamed, because of the love of God shed abroad in the heart, and joy even in God Himself; as also the contrast between Adam and his sin, and Christ and His work which meets it; in chapter vi., God's way of deliverance from the present power, and dominion of sin by identification with Christ in death; this same epistle, in chapter vii., teaches also man's relation to the law so long as he lives in the flesh and in the world, and the only way of escape from its condemnation by the same way of identification with Christ in death.

Let us dwell for a few moments on the seventh chapter of Romans, and endeavour to gather from it the Lord's mind concerning His believing people—Christians—under the present dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

Speaking to those "who know the law," the apostle reminds them that the law has dominion over a man so long as he lives, illustrating this by the relation of the wife to her husband, under whose dominion she is, so long as he lives. Death alone can sever the bond; and, if the husband

die, the woman sins not in marrying another man. There can only be subjection to one husband at a time; so a man, under law, is bound by the rule of law, and death only can deliver him from it.

The apostle then passes on to show that by faith in the death of Christ, and identification with Him who suffered in the flesh for us—whose body was given for us—by identification with Christ in death, and counting Christ's death in place of his own death, the believer becomes dead to the law. The figure here changes, and the wife dies, and not the husband (for the law never dies, it is, as truly as the gospel, the word of the Lord which endureth for ever); by faith, then, the believer dies—dies out of the dominion, and beyond the reach of the first husband (the law), in order to be married to another (Christ) in a new state and in another sphere of being, where law does not reach, and to which law does not apply, even to Him "who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God;" and "against such there is no law," Gal. v. 23.

The apostle then shows that, whilst living as a man under law, so far from bringing forth fruit unto God, the movements of sin, provoked and defined by the law, brought forth only fruit unto death. That is, an honest and true heart, longing to live to God, found nothing but sin and failure continually developed through the very holiness and inflexibility of the law: for the more stringent the rule, the more is man's failure under it manifested. But now, through

the knowledge of Christ, who was delivered for his offences and raised again for his justification, and through his interest in and identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, this honest and exercised soul finds deliverance from the law, and from its intolerable exactions. Being dead to that (see margin) under which it was once held, the now delivered soul can serve God in the newness of the Spirit—that is under the new husband's rule, as led of the Spirit of God—and not in the oldness of the letter—that is by the literal commandment, which hitherto was the limit of his knowledge of the mind and will of God.

Thus knowing deliverance, the apostle turns back to describe the exercises of heart and conscience through which man passes while thus under the dominion of, and conviction by, the law of God. He justifies the law, showing that it was not sinful, but that it brought to light sin in man, which without it was latent and unjudged (verse 7). He lived once without law, as a man in the world and in the flesh, in darkness truly; but when the commandment of God came, in its heart-searching and spiritual power, sin revived and he died, condemned by the law. "Thus the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good," but its very excellence proved the sinfulness of sin. With a heart exercised towards God yet he could not do what he desired; and the greater his effort, the greater only the sense of failure. In despair at last he exclaims: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and finds in

Christ, outside himself, the only reply which could satisfy his heart: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The apostle then in chapter viii. continues the argument from the point at which he paused at the sixth verse of the last chapter: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. For (as we learned in chapter vi.) the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh (as we learned in chapter vii.), God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

If our reader has now followed the argument of the apostle through these passages, and has, apart from preconceived opinion, really apprehended the meaning of his plain language, he must have learned:—

First.—That man, whether unbeliever or believer, cannot be under two rules at once. He is either under law or under grace. He cannot be under grace for salvation, and under law for conduct and practice, any more than a woman who has been married to a second husband, could be permitted to remain under the authority of the rule and precept of the first.

Second.—That death, and death only, whether in fact or by faith, can break the link which exists between man as a sinner in the old creation, and the law which is the rule given by

God for man in that state. Thus "He that is *dead* is justified from sin," Rom. vi. 7. And again: "Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ," Rom. vii. 4.

Third.—That by the death of Christ, and faith in it, he, reckoning himself to be dead with Christ, passes out of his standing in the old creation, and, by Christ's resurrection, becomes part of the new creation of God, Eph. ii. 5; Jas. i. 18; whose rule is that of the Spirit, and not of the law, Rom. vii. 6; Gal. vi. 15, 16.

Fourth.—That thus led of the Spirit, he has power to walk even as Christ walked, as a son of God in the world, holding forth the word of life; and that the righteousness of the law—namely, that righteousness which the law required—is fulfilled, and more than fulfilled, in those who thus walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

It is indeed a misapprehension of the scope and character of law, to put back under it a believer who has been saved by grace. "The law," says the apostle, speaking concerning Israel, "was our schoolmaster unto," or until (not "to bring us to") "Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster," Gal. iii. 24, 25. The law was their tutor for the period preceding the coming of Christ. "The man that *doeth* these things shall live in them," was then the order. But when Christ, the object of faith, came, the office of the law was void, and faith took the place of carnal obedience: it was no longer "do and live," but

“believe and be saved,” “believe and have eternal life.” “The just shall live by his faith.” “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Gal. iii. 11; 1 John. v. 4.

This is still morally true of individuals; they are under law until they learn Christ, and thus obtain deliverance. The fourth chapter of Galatians develops this fully. While the heir is a child, he is as yet under tutors and governors; in fact, he is at school, and whilst there he is under the laws of the school. But when a boy leaves school for his father's house, he does not, if a dutiful son, break out into lawlessness, nor is he less really acting within that which was good in the laws of his school than when he was there. But he is now a son in the Father's house; love and not law is his motive. If he were obedient under law, his obedience will shine out the more, inasmuch as the field for its display under grace is so much the larger. Having been saved by grace, he has that which is all-sufficient for his instruction; for we read, “The grace of God, which bringeth salvation unto all men, hath appeared, *teaching* us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world,” &c. (Titus ii. 11-14). Be sure that if *grace* will not teach a Christian, a child of God, how to act and walk before God, the law will never do so. Such an one is taught to walk in love, but the “law worketh wrath.”

Again, the law cannot, and does not, give life or righteousness. “If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily right-

eousness should have been ~~by~~ the law," Gal. iii. 21. The law promised long life *on the earth*, Deut. iv. 40, &c. It never promised eternal life or heaven. It was a rule for men on the earth, and if it had been kept, they would have enjoyed the earth. It is true that *faith* in the Old Testament saints "desired a better country, that is an heavenly," but we are expressly told that this was by *faith* as distinct from law. "They died *in faith*," Heb. xi. 13. Their expectation was from God by *faith*," verses 10, 14, 16, and not from the reward of their own works under law.

In thus teaching that the law not only is not the Christian's rule of life, but that he is delivered both from its curse and condemnation, and from its service in the letter, it must be remembered that the authority of the law is not lowered or set aside. The law has, and will always have, its place in the dealings of God with man. "We know," says Paul to Timothy, "that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully: knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, &c." 1 Tim. i. 8, 9. It convicts of, and rebukes, sin. It measures sin; and if a man ask, "What shall I do?" he gets his answer from the law. But the true Christian is not a sinner, but a saint; his proper state is holiness, and his ways are holy. God's Spirit is given to him, to form him after the image of Christ, and to lead him in Christ's footsteps, and bring him into Christ's glory. If he

walk in the Spirit, he walks as Christ walked, and he does all the will of God, in which he desires to be perfect and complete; and this includes most surely the righteousness required by His law. But he does that will of God, not because the law says "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," but because it is his joy and blessing to live not to himself, but to Christ, who died for him, and rose again. He walks in love, even as Christ has loved, and given Himself for us, Eph. v. 2. He loves God who has first loved him; and, having passed from death unto life, he loves the brethren for whom he ought to lay down his life, 1 John iii. 14-16; iv. 19. In fact, his standard is Christ, his rule that path and those ways in which the Spirit of God leads him.

Truly, if a man sin, the law is there to speak to and judge him. If a Christian transgresses the law, it will define, and condemn his sin. But if asked what is the Christian's rule of life, we do not suppose a rule for "lawless and disobedient" Christians, but what is God's rule for His saints, His redeemed, justified and spiritual people in this present dispensation of the Spirit; and of such we say unhesitatingly, the Scripture teaches that the law is not their rule of life, but that they are to walk in the Spirit; to walk as Christ walked; to walk as belonging to the new creation of God; and the word of God adds, "*as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and upon the Israel of God.*"

H. C. G. B.

A WORD ON CHRISTIANITY.

GENESIS xxxii. 24-32.

THERE are three things, beloved friends, that I have before my mind to say a little upon to you now. One of these is: What does grace make us? what is Christianity? It is very elementary, you may say; but I feel it very important in these days to go back to elementary things to see if we are what we know we are—to find out whether we are in our practice up to our intelligence. It is a sad state of things when the intelligence gets beyond the heart. Those whose hearts are beyond their intelligence are the ones God instructs; and, in every case in Scripture, the ones the Lord uses are those whose hearts are beyond their intelligence. Therefore, though without doubt intelligence is a good thing, yet it is the heart God looks at.

The three things I wish to speak a little on are: First—What Christianity is; Second—What we are coming to—what is the consummation of things; and Third—What is the Lord's thought about us at this present moment. What grace has made us, is the first thing.

If I look at the Lord's walk on earth, everything He did was to consummate the will of God; and He did it. And now what is He thinking of? Not my standing, or state before

* This address and the two following are consecutive.

God, for that has been accomplished by His work in the cross. It is my state here He is thinking of. You may say, But we have to learn our standing first; and I answer, Yes: of course you cannot be in a state in keeping with your standing, without knowing what that standing is; so before we come to this point I will ask you to go over with me a little what Christianity really is.

To put it in the plainest way. When Christ was here upon earth, it was heaven that He was thinking of; now that He is in heaven, it is earth He is thinking of. There are two parts in Christianity—two experiences; and you get them both in the parable of the prodigal son. The first is, that I am cleared of everything that stood between me and God by the blood of Christ. There is no such thing as God imputing sin to you any more. I admit there is often weakness in the heart as to this, but the fact is God does not impute sin any more. But, says one, I know I do sin.—I know you do and will, but you must not lose sight of the fact that *God* says: “Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more.” This is the first experience in Christianity. I know that in the heart of God there is no remembrance of my sins.

Then when you *do* sin, what do you do? I go into the light, and the light finds it all out. I remember its being pointed out to me once in a show-room, that silver, when placed in a full blaze of light, any tarnish there might have been on it was no longer visible; so, when the soul is brought into the light, all the tarnish upon it is

judged, and put away. And this is repentance. Repentance is my putting the flesh that did the crime into the same place in which God put it, that the body of sin might be destroyed, and He has never taken it from thence. *I* take it away, alas! and repentance is when I go and put it back again there where He put it. The effect of the light is to make me do this. But when a man goes on moping (I must use plain words), talks of how he falls into this and that failure, why he does not get into the light at all. Such a one spoils the prayer-meetings and the worship-meetings, and all because he will not go into the light. The light would say, I cannot have this tarnish. The light makes manifest the evil, and, having discovered it, it frees me from it. It brings me, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the ashes of the red heifer—the water of purification.

I say to a person, Have you really got into the presence of God about this failure?—He says to me, I am afraid to.—And I do not wonder at it; I really do not object to the reluctance, for I know how many souls have not got quite clear as to this experience. But there is not a single thing in the heart of God against me. God says, I do not remember them, and therefore “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” What language that is! Has God cleansed me? Where then is the tarnish? But, you say, I have done them.—Yes, He says; and if you come near me, I will take care that you shall

get rid of them. "Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" . . . I do not go on to the rest yet, because it leads to the second experience I spoke of.

I want you just to get down to the lowest point, and I say, Have you really learned the efficacy of that blood in the sight of God? Have you learned that He says, "When I see the blood I will pass over you"? I go to a Pagan and I say, What do you bow under that wheel for?—To appease the Almighty.—All right, I say; but the question is, *Can* you appease Him? You cannot. I do not object to the word "appease." I think that conscience must have got into a very low state that does not know that God needs appeasing. And, when he acknowledges it, then I preach to him Jesus; I tell him that God has sent His Son—that God is love; that when the sinner could not meet God in righteousness, then God said I will meet the difficulty myself. And what is the effect of this upon my soul? I see that God has done it; that He has set aside that which caused the distance between Him and me, and has removed it according to the sense that He Himself had of it; and, if *He* does it, I say, He must be perfectly satisfied. A soul that has once got hold of it can never lose the fact that God has thus come forth according to His own sense of what was wanted, and given His Son to pay the ransom—the only One who could pay it;

the One "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."

I do not know what was needed to satisfy God; not a sinner or a saint upon earth ever knew what God required. None ever knew but that one Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He answered to it. These two things prove Him to be the Son of God: First—That He knew the measure of my iniquity; Second—That He knew the love of God. How could *you* measure God's thoughts of your offence? My answer to an infidel was: "What value would you set upon your dog's opinion of you? How, then, could you form the slightest conception of God? You cannot even measure the great animals of His creation." God brings before Job animate and inanimate creation, just to prove this to him.

But God is love, and He says: I do not like the distance; you cannot remove it; you cannot even understand it; you cannot measure it; but I will send the One who can, and He will remove it.

Now a great deal of what is called evangelicalism does not go any farther than this. Indeed, it would be thought a great way to go, to say that you could go into the presence of God, and find all cleared away, and not a stain of sin remaining. But it is only the first experience of which I have been speaking.

I now come to the second, where there is a great deal of practical exercise for the soul. I will turn to two chapters in the Old Testament, to give you an illustration of it. The first is the twelfth of Exodus. There are literally two ex-

periences here, though they do not exactly come up to what I mean. The seventh verse is the one of which I have spoken. "They shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it." You have got such a sense of the blood between God and yourself, that you can look up with perfect security. I have got a Saviour there. Instead of my fearing to go into the Father's house, I find there is rejoicing about me up there. I am an object of wonderment. I am cleared of everything.

But in the eighth verse I get another experience altogether. "They shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it." Here it is the soul inside feeding upon Christ who has borne the judgment of God. If Christ has borne the judgment of sin, are you feeding upon Him as the One who has borne it? You get the warning here: "Eat not of it raw." If you speak of Him in a merely natural, familiar way, as if He were a man in the flesh, you are eating it raw. I sometimes hear people say, "Sweet Jesus," "dear Jesus," and the like, and feel it is almost profanity.

Here is a soul with a sense of being perfectly clear before God, and what now goes on in it? Your whole bearing shows it out; your loins are girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; you are eating the Lord's pass-over; you are leaving Egypt.

I turn next to 1 Kings xvii.—Here we find the first experience in the fifteenth verse. "She and

her house did eat many days," or as the margin has it, "a full year:" a year takes in the whole circle of your life—every season. The prophet comes to the widow, and finds her in the most desolate way: "I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and behold I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die." Just like the world: they want to make the best of things, and enjoy themselves while they can. But the prophet comes in, and the whole scene is changed. He is to her very much what the Lord was to His disciples when on earth with them. And many a saint has not got beyond this: Christ is a shelter for me, and takes care of me. Souls look for their barrel of meal not to waste, and their cruse of oil not to fail. But is that the whole of Christianity? Is it that Christ comes and dwells with me 365 days—stays with me through every season, and cares for me? I make bold to say it is not. Is it shelter only? No! There is another experience altogether, and that is what I am coming to, and you are mutilating Christianity if you confine it to the first. It is the effort of Satan to divide it thus, and "what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." God says: I have saved you by my own Son, and now another thing must come in; you are to live by the One who has saved you; my purpose is that you are to be conformed to His image.

The true character of grace is this. God says: I gave you my law, but you were never

able to keep it. You were tenants, but you were never able to pay your rent ; so now I send my Son to say to you : It is useless my looking to you any more for the rent ; He will pay all you owe me, and for the future, instead of having you as my tenants, I make you my children.—Many a man I have seen who does not know what to do with his farm. That is just the seventh of Romans : he never has paid, and never can. But now, says God, I am going to make a model farm of it ; and you all know what that is : it is a farm that is carried on at the owner's expense.

It is a great comfort, that whilst we add to what we have learned, in doing so we never lose what we have previously been taught by God. Here in the seventeenth of Kings she does not lose what she has already got. We do not lose Christ as a shelter because we know Him as something more. He is shelter to us ; that is the character of His grace ; and, believe me, the heart is not happy that does not know Him, like Zaccheus, as a guest in his home. But am I to stop there ? Do you think you will lose the first verse of the twenty-third Psalm if you go on to the second ? “The first verse is a grand verse,” said a poor saint to me once, and I could not get her past it. And truly it is a grand verse—the Lord for my shepherd, my shelter ; but it is not all ; in the second verse, I “*lie down*”—I am satisfied. I could not get her on to that. But the first verse is not enough for the saint ; God alone knows what is enough for us. I trust I am speaking to many to whom it has

been brought about; He must bring that home to us which He has done for us in Christ.

So now the widow's son dies. And then it is she says: "Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance?" After these 365 days of unbroken care, after all this wonderful exhibition of divine love, this is what she says. And so you find it. Souls that have a sense of the perfect care of the Lord for them, when death comes near them are thoroughly disturbed and upset. They have never learned it. You say, Why speak of death?—Because it is the judgment of God for sin. I see the Lord Jesus Christ can raise the dead, but to save me He had to go into death Himself. That same blessed One who raised Lazarus in one chapter, had to go into death Himself in the next chapter; and then it is the Son of *man* is glorified, though the Son of *God* was in the eleventh chapter. Be sure of this, that you must face death. People have got hold of truth poetically. They talk of having got hold of Christ in glory. I say, if you have, you will have to learn death here. God must bring it home to you. The moment Paul sets us with Christ in glory, he says, Now it is death down here to the flesh. Glory never put an end to flesh; it is *death* that does. So her son dies; and then it is she says: "Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance?"

And what does the prophet do? He does exactly what the Lord did: he goes down into death to the child. "He carried him up into a loft where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed." "Except a corn of wheat fall into the

ground and die, it abideth alone." He went into death to bring us out of it. And thus another thing comes out. There is life, but there was life before; now it is life *out of death*.

Let me turn for a moment to the twentieth of John. Mark the disciples here. They did not know the Lord in this wonderful way; they had not learned death. When I come to the death of Christ it is "a new and living way." It is not every saint that goes in by the new and living way; the Old Testament saints did not, for the veil was not rent then. I want you to see what this experience of the disciples was. They had had the shelter and comfort of Christ; and you may say, I know the blood was shed for me; but I want you to know what the apostle means when he says: "I am crucified with Christ," and not only that, but "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." This is another thing. I am not only cleared by this blessed One, but I have to live His life. I hope you never have a shadow of a doubt as to being cleared; God has taken all out of the way, and now He can come in and dwell with you.

The disciples understood who He was; they had received Him; they knew His shelter and His love; but He is risen from the dead, and what now? Look at the nineteenth verse: "He saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side." The soul says, How am I to get this peace?—By having to do in spirit with the risen One. I believe it is impossible for you

to be in *contact* with the risen Christ, and not know the results of His resurrection. Righteousness comes in by resurrection. He comes into the midst of His disciples, says, "Peace be unto you," and shows them His hands and His side. All is cleared away. God's Spirit alone can conduct the soul into such a scene as this. I see that One above all the ruin, in the pure light of the holiness of God's presence; I stand with Him upon that level, and I breathe a new atmosphere altogether. So we read: "He *breathed* on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." It was not clearing them from all that was against them, for they were cleared; it was not conversion, for they were converted; but they are on entirely new ground, and they are to taste the fact that they are not only cleared, but that they have the life of this blessed One who has cleared them. I have got life, which is the burden of John's gospel; not only a life that triumphs in death, but "the gift of God," "the well of water springing up unto everlasting life."

To complete this, see how the apostle works it out in Galatians. In that epistle I find the defect of the Christianity of the present day. The apostle is not dwelling on the first experience of the gospel after the first chapter, where he says: "Christ gave himself for our sins;" but he is taking up the fact that they have lost the second. This comes out plainly in the last verse of the epistle, when he winds up by saying: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the

world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Now, that is a very strong statement. It is not the experience of putting away your sins, but of putting away yourself and the world. If the world be crucified to you in the cross of Christ, and you to the world?—well then, what is left? Nothing but the new creation. I have nothing but Christ.

I am united to Christ in glory, and there is no ground I delight more in pressing; but, the moment I take the place of being connected with Christ there, I cannot dissociate myself from where He is on earth. It is what we find in Hebrews: earth is done with for the saint now; if I am "inside the veil" I am "outside the camp." I find that in many minds "outside the camp" means only "outside of system." But that is not at all as I find it in Scripture. Outside the camp is the spot you ought to occupy here: it is where Christ died. Christ having gone to that spot for you, it is the spot you ought to occupy here for Him. And you cannot do this unless you first understand that here you are to live Christ. As the apostle says: "I am crucified with Christ," self is gone; "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." What a place I am in! and he was labouring for the Galatians that they might know this. "The life I now live:" I am actually living, breathing, enjoying the very life, tasting the very joys, knowing the very relationship, and am in the wonderful position of being on earth in the very place of that blessed One who has delivered me. I have life out of death—His

death. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts." We are now placed on earth as that blessed One who has placed me in His acceptance in heaven.

But to turn back to Jacob. Jacob, like some of us, after many years of wandering has been brought back to the true ground. But true ground is not power. Christ is power. "There wrestled a man with him." It was not Jacob wrestling with God for blessing, but God wrestling with Jacob to set self aside in him. As soon as God touched the hollow of his thigh, Jacob says, Now bless me. Jacob is come to nothing; he is crippled; so God can come in and bless him. The moment I am nothing, that moment I am a reliant person. When I am nothing I turn to God; I am crippled; God must do everything for me. Job prayed for his friends when he lost everything, and immediately God blessed him. As soon as Jacob feels that he is nothing, God comes in. The moment he dropped himself he became a dependent man. He says: I am a crippled man; I have nothing; God must do everything for me. Now, says God, you have come to the right place; you have done the right thing; I will bless you and change your name. You must no more have the disgraceful name of Jacob; you shall be called Israel. He begins a new day; it was at "the breaking of the day."

And has he no exercises after this?—Yes. In the thirty-fifth chapter he gets the name confirmed when he went to Bethel. I never get the value of Christ's name but in God's presence.

He had one great exercise between these two periods, and I believe this to be especially our snare; it is Shalem. He settled down, lost the pilgrim character, without reaching the house of God—Bethel—the place of worship. And I can do this, as he did, after getting the sense that I am a crucified man, and that Christ is everything.

God has to make this true in us, and He brings it about in different ways. You say, But can I not get it without having to go through all that Jacob did? I think you can. Paul did in those three days in which he was blind, and neither ate nor drank; and he felt it was a good thing to have gone through it, and to have got clear about it. If you really enter into what Christ bore for you from the hand of God, you need not go through this severe breaking in your own individual experience. But God must somehow bring you to the moment when you say: I cannot stand flesh. There is a moment historically when the soul says, I am good for nothing. That is what Jacob does. If you were real at the Lord's Supper you would learn it there; you would there learn to shrink from the old man; His death would teach you. There are two ordinances of Christianity that express death, and people relieve their consciences by thus expressing it. One is baptism, which avows that I am cut off from man; the other is the Lord's Supper, which avows that I have reached Christ in His death. I have watched souls, and seen a moment come when He brings in one thing and another to make that soul taste

death, and then it gets hold of Christ. He was saved before, but he had never really got hold of Christ.

And that is what God is doing: He is working out in me that which He has accomplished for me. If I am rightly at the Lord's table I shall feel a shrinking to have to do again with that man for whom Christ died. Abraham learned it in the feast that he made for Isaac; he sent Ishmael away then. Are we Abrahams? I fear most of us are Jacobs. God has to break us down by circumstances—sickness, perhaps—it may be even on a death-bed. Saints go on and on, resisting the workings of God's grace, but God will have it out in the end. He says, *You must give in.* And then the most active man in the company comes out a cripple—insignificant in the eyes of men, but great in the eyes of God.

The Lord lead our hearts to know what Christianity is.

(J. B. S.)

What measures sin is the greatness—the magnitude—of the Being against whom it is levelled.

(H. H. M.)

THE TWO CITIES.

JUDGES vii. 1-18.

I HAVE read this Scripture not so much to interpret it, as to give a clue to the path the Lord would have us follow in this day; and, in order to see what this path is, you must be instructed from the word as to two great things now going on. These two are the New Jerusalem and Babylon—two great structures now in course of formation; and we are helping on one or the other—contributing to one or the other in each one of our actions. Every one on earth is aiding and abetting either Babylon or the New Jerusalem. This is a momentous thing for us. There is the divine path, and the Lord can lead us along it, though the keenest eye—the vulture's eye, as it is said—cannot see it. I have read this Scripture simply as a waymark to point out the road, but the subject I wish to bring before you is these two great cities.

We must go back to the beginning of things to see how these two gather force as they go along. God never deserts His plan—His thought about a thing; but the evil gathers strength as it goes on. Gen. xi. gives us Babylon at its beginning. Here we look at the city, which we soon drop; but it is principles that form cities; and, Babylon once set up, we can trace without difficulty the principles that it represents right on to the end.

“Nimrod began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel.” This is the first allusion to it; and I would call your attention to the state of things in the midst of which Babylon sprang up. It was not before the flood; it arose when God had set man in new favour on the earth—everything mitigated as to the curse upon it, and man himself placed there in new terms; God had smelled the sweet savour of the offering of Noah, and had brought in blessing in a new form. But, instead of man using these favours for God, he used them to make himself independent of God. Men combined together to reach a point where they should be independent of God. This being the principle of the organisation of the city, I shall drop the name Babylon, and call it *independence*.

This will touch us all very closely—that the favours of God here upon earth, instead of turning our hearts to God, only tend to make us independent of Him. Prosperity makes a man independent of God; when money accumulates he has an opportunity of gratifying self, and, unless he be able to deny himself in the midst of plenty, it will prove a snare to him. This is the principle that Babylon was formed upon. Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord; that is, he pursued the object that attracted his heart—his *game*, if you like—he pursues it to *death*. A saint may be like Noah; he drinks of

the wine and exposes his weakness; but that is not what a hunter is: a hunter is girt up to his work; he does not lose his senses in the least; he is all on the alert; it is the most exhilarating pursuit—human energy reaching to its goal. That is what the beginning of this Babel is.

I seek to make it simple to any here, for in the smallest hamlet you are not exempt from this danger. Where it looks least likely to crop up there it comes, for the heart so easily rests in mercies and forgets the Giver of the mercies.

In Gen. xi. this independence comes to a head. "They said, Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Here it takes its form, independency being the principle on which it is formed. God confounded it for a time, but it is very plain to any who have read Scripture, that Babylon will yet come forth and be destroyed. "In one hour is thy judgment come. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." It is well for us to know this—what the consummation of Babylon will be—because it is what men will come to.

Besides Babylon, however, there is another

city coming, of which I cannot say much, for there is but little told us about it; but this I can say, that it is what Christ Himself has formed, and that in it there is every beauty that He Himself can bestow on it—it is the display of all His divine beauty as a man to the earth. In the one there is every natural attraction *without* God; in the other every heavenly attraction *with* God. And you are contributing to one or the other, for you must belong to one of the two.

We see next, in Gen. xii. that God calls out Abraham to be a witness against all this. Thus I get independence in Babylon, and now dependence in Abraham. His history is a history of dependence. It is not that there is not failure and trial; there is; but throughout he is a dependent man. First and foremost he starts by being a very peculiar man; he has to break with country, and kindred, and father's house. What a thing dependence is! what it calls us to! who would have thought it would have called us to such a path as that—to give up not what was wrong, but actually things that are *right*! "Country, kindred, and father's house." But it is often the things that are right that interfere with our walking with God. The man who is to be the leader in this wonderful line of dependence—the character of this man is: I break with country, kindred, and father's house.

It is not that he does not encounter difficulties by the way; he does; "there was a famine in the land," and every one knows that

“hunger will break through a stone wall;” but he recovers himself; and, when he does get back to the land, the true character of dependence comes out. He says to Lot: I do not choose; I am a dependent man; I make no choice; I have nothing to seek or to choose. Of course as he was the elder—his uncle—the one who had brought him with him—he had the right to the choice in every way; but he says: I do not choose; I leave you to take what you like.

This is an important point in the history of dependence. Failure is continually coming in because saints do not know how to refuse. When Satan attacks a saint he comes first in an attractive form; he comes with devices. The invitation is, “Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant;” and would not you like something? Say a day in the country?—Satan knows you, and, what is more strange your own family knows you very well too. They put before you something that they know will tempt you; and, if they do not succeed in making you yield, they will censure you. It is always so; Satan first invites and then opposes. If the first shot carry you away, Satan will not use a second; he economises his forces. Here, in Judges, the water carried them away at once; that was enough; they could not stand favours; there was no need for any other attack upon them.

You say, But surely may I not accept an opportunity that offers? I say, I must refuse offers, I must refuse opportunities, and then I

can suffer for God. I want you to get hold of the great principles of dependence, and you will see them very clearly in Abraham. Look at every servant of God and you will see this brought out more or less in him. Even our blessed Lord Satan tried first with seductions; he offered Him everything in the wilderness to tempt Him; and then, in the garden of Gethsemane, he brought everything down on Him; He first refused and then endured. Did you ever refuse anything for Christ? If you never do, you will never suffer for Christ. If you accept, you will suffer for yourself. That is what Lot did, and he was carried away captive. And who then comes to his rescue? Abraham let Lot have the choice, and so, when he was taken captive, it was Abraham suffered for him. If we suffer for Christ, we shall suffer for others; and the greatest earthly distinction that ever was given to any one is that of suffering for Christ. This is our place. If you cannot refuse, you will not be put in a place to suffer for Christ. How could a deserter be called out for a forlorn hope?

I want you to understand what dependence is; but the Lord alone can conduct your soul into it. I say I am not looking for anything; "I have nothing to seek or to choose." Well, then, do I *get* nothing? Why I have "manifold more in this present time!" As soon as Lot was separated from Abraham, the Lord said to him, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the

land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever;" and then he goes to Hebron, the resting place. People are all for relegating rewards to the future, but I get them *now*. Afterwards Abraham had to suffer for Lot, who got into difficulty. Here the servant character comes out; he had to risk all he had for Lot. The moment I become a servant, I risk my comforts. There is not an insurance office in the world would have given anything for Abraham when he went out in service after Lot. He went out with his life in his hand, risking all to serve the very man who took the choice before him. It is the one who chooses that gets into trouble; but the one who is dependent, who suffers for him, has the sufferings of Christ abounding in him, and his consolation abounding by Christ; and this the present gain.

I will take David for a moment, as another instance of the difference there is between a person walking in the simplicity of denying himself, and that same person when yielding to what is naturally attractive. David yields to Joab, and brings Absalom back to Jerusalem, thus listening to the voice of nature pleading for his son; and Absalom actually drives him out of Jerusalem. But when he might have killed Saul, he would not, because he was dependent upon God. If you choose, you lose. If you do not choose, you gain, and you gain in God's way. I never saw a person get into a scrape yet but because he would have his choice; he was not observing that grand line of faith—

dependence—that God has set, fulfilled only by His own beloved Son.

I next come to Josh. vii. It is very difficult to carry ordinary students of the word rapidly through a long subject like this; but I can just give you waymarks tracing out the progress of dependence and independence. I am sure that whilst we all talk of dependence, we often have but very little understanding of the characteristics of it.

I do not then go into the history of the children of Israel, who eventually went down into Egypt; but I see here God, after having brought them out of the wilderness, leading them into the land. Now there are two ways of being in the land. One is the heavenly stranger, Abraham; not a foot of the land has he in possession. But Joshua comes in in quite another way; he goes in to take possession as a warrior—to take possession in *power*. We are here on the earth in both these attitudes: heavenly strangers like Abraham, and men of war like Joshua.

As soon as they get into the land, the reproach of Egypt is rolled off them, and then we get the most surprising instance of dependence. The walls of Jericho fell down! No one did anything! It was patient dependence going round the city seven days. But the men were armed all the time; armour for Satan, and prayer for God. The efficacy of prayer is to get armour for Satan. You must have a good character; nothing stands with Satan but character; all the truth in the world will not carry any weight

with him; it must be "the breastplate of righteousness," etc.

Here dependence has gained an immense victory—a wonderful day! And immediately in walks independence in one man. Achan sees among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment and a wedge of gold, and hides them under his tent; and no sooner is the greatest victory in the land gained than they are on the way to Babylon. You see this by looking at Hosea ii., where they are brought back by the valley of Achor for a door of hope. Achan was the very first man who traced the way to Babylon, and God brings them back through sorrow. He says, I will bring them back by the very valley where he was stoned. And this prophecy was written before ever they went into captivity. These dealings of God are very remarkable, and enough to make us tremble. If you allow the leaven to work, if you do not judge it in its commencement, you will reap the misery of it eventually, for it will surely yield its crop. It may be a very small thing that walks in. Achan says: Have I not got this opportunity? See what an offer! And you yield, and then see what you come to. The children of Israel never recovered dependence; in all their history they never had again such a thing as Jericho. So long as you maintain dependence, Babylon is not heard of. When the star of Israel is in the ascendant, Babylon is nowhere; but the moment the star of Israel descends that moment the star of Babylon ascends.

We do not hear of Babylon again until the

ten tribes go into captivity. And the next time after that is when Hezekiah receives the courtesy of the ambassadors of the king of Babylon. One would have thought there was not much harm in this; but God says, You have committed yourself, and all you possess shall go into Babylon. And, as we know, they were all eventually carried away to Babylon. Then they lost their power; the power of God, the right of kings, was in the hands of Israel, and that power lapsed; it passed into the hands of the Gentiles. I pray your attention to this, for it is of the greatest importance. God says to Nebuchadnezzar: "Thou art this head of gold; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory." And the power never returned to Israel. The captives returned to their land; but earthly power was never given back to them. God says to them by Haggai, My word and my Spirit remain among you, but not power. So much so, that when it became a question of crucifying the Lord they say: "By our law he ought to die; but it is not lawful for us to put any man to death." They could only deliver Him over to Rome, the fourth power. Israel was a people that were to be dependent upon God, and, so long as they were, He was their power. When they were carried into Babylon it was the kingly power that went down—it was not a question of the priestly; but the kingly they lost.

One redeeming point, however, is, that there never was a place where there was such a bright

expression of dependence upon God as in the midst of that very city of Babylon ; and this by men who refuse the king's wine, and so they are not afraid of the king's fire. They refused the king's meat ; they would not eat anything but pulse, and yet in the end of the days they were fairer and fatter than all those who did eat the portion of the king's meat. They could refuse ; and I thank God, if I have it in my soul to refuse, I am sure to be able to bear. Satan will come down upon me in a hundred ways, but I say, I am not afraid of you ; I have been able to refuse you, so I know I shall be able to endure. You cannot beat me ; for the grace that enabled me to refuse, is the grace that will enable me to endure. The king called on these men of God to bow down to the image, and what is their answer ? " O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace ; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." They said, We will stand the fire : and what did it do ? Merely let them loose. Here was dependence. Let me be in the very midst of Babylon—of its attractions or its fire—by simple dependence I may astonish them all and win the day.

But these three men also brought out another great principle which marks the servant of God ; he has a *base* and a *door* ; a base behind—the ground on which he stands ; and a door before

him—in presenting the truth to others. The greatest proof of a faithful man is that he knows what he is about. Others may not see it, but I see it myself. He says: “I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew what they were about. They said: We are not a bit afraid of you; there is an open door set before us by God Himself. Thus they gave the greatest expression of dependence in the midst of the city of independence.

I am sure we are losing if we do not know what things are going on to. One set of things around us is going on to a city that suits man—Babylon; the other to a city that suits Christ—the New Jerusalem. Which are you going to? It is a great question. We get the picture of the future Bride; how she will be adorned for her husband; and this is put before us when everything has failed in the church. The nuptial garments are brought out before the wedding day, in order that we may try them on. The bridal costume is shown us in order that we may acquire the characteristics of the Bride. We are presented in Rev. xxi. with all the beautiful features in which the Lord will have us stand before Him on the wedding day.

One passage more in the Old Testament before I go to the New. In the fifth of Zechariah it says: “And they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be

established, and set there upon her own base." Now this lawlessness is "between earth and heaven"; the weight of lead has been cast upon it; it is not allowed to come out in all its evil. But it is going to be set up on its own "base" in the land of Shinar. It is really going back to the place where we found it in the eleventh of Genesis, and there all the first principles will again come out. That is thorough independence.

And now to turn to the New Testament. In Matt. xvi. I find a Man who was thoroughly dependent upon God—a Man whom no one understood. First led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil and there overcome him through dependence. And then, through a dependent life, His service, His public life, culminated on the Mount of Transfiguration, whence He descends to die. This is the One we have to do with. In this chapter He is coming to the close of His ministry, and, on speaking to them of Himself, Peter makes the confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" when He tells them that on this rock He will build His church. That church is the New Jerusalem, and nothing prior to that is. If you ask: Why does not the New Jerusalem take in the Old Testament saints? I answer: Because it is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," and every builder knows that the first thing that is laid in a building is the foundation; I cannot have anything prior to that.

The city that the Lord is about to build will be a brilliant display of every divine beauty

here upon the earth, where man and the church have made such total shipwreck. The heavenly city is a most compensating thing. I belong now to a people who have completely failed to set forth Christ on the earth. Where is the church? People often say there is none! But though the church has so entirely failed as the candlestick, yet is it necessary that it should fail as the Bride? Not at all! Though there never be a recovery of what is lost, the faithful are brightened up to what is coming.

We are the Bride. I get her moral features in Rev. xxi. The Bride is formed by the Bridegroom; He makes her suitable to Himself; she is His helpmeet. "For Adam there was not found an helpmeet for him;" and that is what Christ is seeking for Himself—a helpmeet; as it is beautifully brought out in the German translation, "one over against you." He is seeking something that answers to Himself. We are that which will not entrance man's eye, but which will suit His eye. We have lost too much the sense of how His heart takes pleasure in the beauty He has formed in us Himself. I turn round to those who say there is no church, and say: Are you the Bride then? If people are answering to Christ as that, they will be on true church ground. He says: You have failed to man but you must not fail to me; I form a thing that my eye can rest upon; and to be this you must be occupied with me. We would be the most holy separate people on earth if we were truly the Bride. We should get light as to what suits Him so as to stand morally in all the capabilities

of the church, though it be not the church or the candlestick either restored or revived.

So the Lord says: "Upon this rock I will build my church." And in this same chapter this very man to whom it was revealed lets out that which will try to come in and spoil all this. He rebukes the Lord about the cross—says to Him, "Be it far from thee, Lord." The cross here is not looked at as setting aside sins, but as setting aside *man*, and Peter refuses this. The very man who was at one moment telling who Christ was, is the next refusing His cross; he cannot see it; and the Lord says to him, You are Satan. I cannot think of anything more sad than that this same man should take up natural feelings to such an extent that the Lord should be able to say this to him—that the one who got the greatest revelation should be the one to seek to neutralise it, however unwittingly.

I must maintain the two things: the Rock and the cross. Do you accept the Rock? I am sure you do; we all accept it; and the cross too, as that which delivers us from our sins; but do you accept it as that which sets man aside? Do you say, Yes, I do? Let us look a moment at the fourteenth of Luke, to see whether you do or not. A man here says to the Lord, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." He meant the millennium. But we will have a great day before the millennium comes, says the Lord; we will have a great entertainment, because of poor sinners received now by the Father.

Now what hinders any coming to it? There

are two things that do, and we find them in Judges. One is earthly mercies, and the other the ties of nature—mercies given from God's hand, and ties formed by Himself. Nothing wrong at all—no harm in them! Are not earthly mercies beautiful? And may not man receive from God oxen, and ground, and marry a wife? To be sure he may. But yet these things tend to hinder from seeking the great supper. Are you proof against *right* things? It is not wrong things; it is the right thing that will do the mischief. The apostle could say: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." I give up all that is bright and beautiful in the first man, for the surpassing excellence and beauty of the second. I can supersede man if I have got Christ. I have to exercise my soul every day so to keep the beauties of that blessed One before me, that I may be proof against all the beauties that are around me here. It is impossible to be proof against either attraction or affliction if you have not Christ to compensate you for the one and comfort you in the other. He eclipses everything for me. I have not got to *steel* my heart, but I have to guard it against all the beauty that is around me. I do not go to Christ in sorrow only; every one does that; I go to Him for beauty. "If a man hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Hate my father and mother! I never heard of such a thing! The question is, Will you have the cross? "Whosoever doth

not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." You are taken off natural ground. If you say, I attend to my unconverted father because he is an old man, and so on, I say, All very well. But if he say, I would sooner be without your company, then he has set me free, and I leave him mournfully. You must have Christ first; if you have not you will never go forward; you will neither be a tower nor an army—a tower to resist the enemy, and an army to attack him. And why not? Because you have not got the grace in you. Gideon's ten thousand began, but they could not stand it; they turned back; they had not got it in them.

There is one more passage I must refer to to bring this to the final issue; that is the latter part of Rev. iii. I would gladly trace it all through the New Testament, but it would be too much exercise for patience. I may, however, say in passing, that the grand point of the apostle in the epistles is to *keep out the man*. It is the *man* I am afraid of, and that is the reason I say to you, Get rid of the man. And why? Because Satan cannot turn anything against God except man. He does not turn an elephant against God. But, as to man, he says, I have turned your own image against you. But God says, I will deprive you of the man; I will have the cross on him. In Romans we see man without any restraint, and see what a state he has got to, and then how faith in God justifies him. Then in Corinthians it is the worldly man. In Galatians it is the

legal man: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." In Colossians it is the religious man, and thus rationalism and ritualism crop up. And in Hebrews it is the earthly man. But if you get rid of the man you clear the ground.

And now in Revelation I get the closing scene. There is one link, perhaps, that I have a little lost sight of; and that is, that with this new city Christ brought in a new power—an invisible power. The power of Babylon was visible, and it is still in existence, but it has nothing at all to do with this new structure. Would to God I could get the saints to see this; they would then refuse to use a particle of the power of that beast which is soon to carry the church—as soon as it has been spued out of Christ's mouth. When I hear of saints licensing rooms, putting up notices and so on, I can only say they are stepping outside to the power that would carry them; you are coquetting with the beast, and he will end with carrying the harlot—the spued-out church. If you give up witnessing to the place the Holy Ghost has here in bearing testimony to Christ, you are losing power in your own soul. A man might say, I will shut out the sun from one side of my property; but if he do he will injure the whole of it. One office of the Holy Ghost here on earth is to comfort me in the absence of Christ; the other is to stand for Christ as a witness to the world; and if you say, I understand the one, but not so well the other, then I say, you are losing the other too.

In Rev. iii. it says He is "the beginning of

the creation of God." What comes in to delude the saints is present advantages; and they end by being so drawn away by them that it comes to Christ Himself being outside. He stands at the door and knocks. The final state of things in the church is that of having need of nothing; it is independence again. This is the church, not the body; it is the vessel; it will be spued out of Christ's mouth; and then the beast says, I will carry you. Christ takes the body to heaven with Himself. Then the Holy Ghost is gone, and the vessel left behind becomes the harlot, and the beast carries it.

Now what is Babylon working for? I turn to Rev. xviii. to show you. Babylon is this great structure where everything is pleasing to the natural eye. People are cultivating ease and comfort in this world, and what is the effect of it all? Is it suffering for Christ? I say, I am not to be taken up with it. I may enjoy a beautiful day, but I seek not to be carried away by it. God says, I will bring you to the water to test you, and the one that is proof to earthly mercies is the one who will go on with Christ, and be kept from the delusions that are so ensnaring to man, and so pleasing to his heart—from all those things which culminate in Babylon. She says: "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." She has all that is beautiful in nature, but nothing of Christ. It is not that I would deprive a feeble person of any comfort, but this I do say, When you go into your house just think whether it is a question of *ease* that is before your mind, or

whether it is that you are here to suffer for Christ? How much is your heart set upon Him? Look at poor Anna—an old woman of eighty-four. I wish we were more like her. She departed not from the temple, though it was ruined. It is not a question of ability and intelligence, but it is whether I have a heart for Christ. Why should He not come into this room and be greeted by many Simeons and Annas here? Simeons who know what Christ is to them, and Annas who are here for Him.

Surely it is a word for each of us. In everything, I remark, the world is getting richer. It is all there, and can I not accept what is offered? Yes, you can; but, if you go on your knees to it, you lose your true path for Christ here. Which am I helping on to-day? Is it this heavenly Jerusalem, the illustration of all divine beauty which is coming down to make up for all the failure of the church in this world where we have been such poor wretched things? Or am I going on with that whose "plagues shall come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her?" Is it a happy thing to be in any wise supporting that which is rival to Christ? As I look at the little urchin in the streets I say, That is one part of this vast machine that is working up to either one or the other. The grand consummation for the world is Babylon; the grand consummation for the church is the New Jerusalem.

Some may perhaps say, How do you get to

Babylon? When the church is cast out of Christ's mouth it is not the body; the body has been taken up to heaven; but the church—the vessel of testimony—has no longer any vitality, and the beast takes it up; he takes the place from which the Holy Ghost has retired. You find this in Rev. xvii. And then “upon her forehead is the name written: Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” Do you ask, What induces the beast to take up the church? I answer, What is the character of Laodicea? It is that which fits her for it. Laodicea is trying to get men embellished by Christianity—getting up that terrible thing called self-culture. People talk wonderfully about it, but what is it? A man may be all right outside, and yet have the most terrible rage boiling up within. Some twenty years ago, they got the leader of Romanism in England to lecture on self-culture at the opening of an Institute. It is nothing but a form of Christianity without power. A person converted now-a-days is generally drawn into anything for man's benefit; young men's associations and everything utilitarian. I admit such a man is agreeable to his neighbours through all this, but he is *nothing* better in the sight of God.

Babylon is a “mystery;” that is, a thing that is not yet unfolded. So when it first comes out it does not take openly the character of independence that it assumes in the end. But soon it will come out in its true colours; and the beast will carry her until he hates her, and makes her desolate, and burns her with fire.

There shall not be a bit of Christianity left ; but man shall be satisfied in his own acquisitions.

Well, what about the three hundred ? The ten thousand are tested, but they never hear the order of battle. And what is that ? It is, *As ye see me do so shall ye do.* If you want to get on now you must keep your eye on Christ. I cannot give you any directions ; I can only give you the order of battle. "As I do so shall ye do." The Lord lead us to be very distinctly for Christ, and open our eyes to see whether we are helping on that which man has got his heart set upon, or that which Christ's heart is upon.

(J. B. S.)

"Make the tree good and his fruit good." I cannot do that ; the only thing is to kill it. And indeed I cannot do that either. But God has done it, and I can therefore say, I am dead, and my life is hid with Christ in God.

(J. N. D.)

What is service ? It is having part in Christ's ministry of love.

(J. N. D.)

ADDING.

2 PETER i.

It is a great point for our hearts, and an immense cheer and help, to get hold of what the thought of Christ is about us at this moment.

There are different ways of carrying out this thought. You get in the fifth of Ephesians, that "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it"; but then comes another thing: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." I do not know whether our hearts enter sufficiently into the fact of what He is thus occupied with now—of what He is securing for us now. It is not glory He is now securing; He *has* secured that. All His service on earth consummated in this, that I am placed before the Father's eye as He Himself is—"accepted in the Beloved." Therefore sanctification cannot come in properly until I know that "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it."

It is important to make the foundation sure with souls. To clear the ground, I will first say a few words upon the fact that we are given "all things that pertain to life and godliness." Christ has cleared away everything that was against us in the sight of God, so that now "there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ

Jesus." The adding of the latter part of that verse in our version shows the ignorance of souls generally about this. As a rule, people know that Christ's blood has washed away their sins, but what they are slow to learn is, that God has crucified on the cross the thing that did the sins. There are the two things that I have alluded to already: one, the *blood* of Christ—"without shedding of blood there is no remission"; the other, the *death* of Christ—"in that he died he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God"; "death hath no more dominion over him."

I sometimes think, that while some of the evangelists are very clear in showing that the blood of Christ has atoned for sins, they are not so clear in showing that the thing that did the sins is crucified. You may act in the flesh, but you are not in it. God put both my sins and the flesh that did them on the cross of Christ. If I act in the flesh, I must, when I go to God, put it where God put it; and that is repentance. I am not merely sorry for the sin, but I abhor that which did it; and "godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of." People are generally sorry for the wrong things they have done, and try to conceal them, and this is just what I often find with saints—that they are sorry for what they have done; but that is not the question. Are you sorry for the thing that is in you? Do you repudiate that which did the sins?

God sees me acting in the flesh, but He never sees me in it. I am as dead in the sight of God

this moment as if I were in my grave; otherwise it would be *my* death that would free my soul and not *Christ's*. This has led to a great deal of confusion in minds. To me there is nothing plainer in Scripture than the doctrine of purgatory; but man puts purgatory in the wrong place. God does punish a man for sin after he is dead on the cross, but that does not mean after his body is in the grave. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; *therefore* will I punish you for your iniquities." God does deal with souls for their sins. If you judge yourself—and it is not an easy matter—you will have to put your flesh where God puts it, and out of which place He never sees the old man. There is no repentance without this. The moment I believe in Christ I find that God has cleared away all my sins in the death of Christ, and not only my sins but my old man; the nature that did the sins is ended in His sight. Do I act in the flesh? I quite admit it; but, if I do, I am reviving what God has put to death; I have done two wrong things: I have done what was wrong; and I have revived that which God put an end to in the cross of Christ. I am speaking now of the place where the soul would find itself as to what Christ has done for it before God—clear of sins and sin too. The work has been finished according to God. He meets the mind of God; we could not meet it. In speaking of the woman of Samaria He says: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish *his* work." And then again: "I have glorified thee on the

earth; I have finished the work which *thou* gavest me to do." He was sent of the Father to clear everything away, and He has done it.

And now I come to another point. There was not a single thing that He did from Calvary onwards that He did not do for me—I mean for the believer. There was not a thing that He did for Himself, and in all He glorified the Father. He did not die for Himself; He died for me, He rose for me; of course He did not need to rise for Himself; He got the resurrection for believers. He went in to discharge the debt for me; and He not only discharged it so as to let me go free, but discharged it in such a way as to win glory for me as well.

I think the resurrection of Christ is a great deal more than the receipt for my debt; that is the word that is familiarly used for it; but that is only its aspect towards *you*. The question is, What is the resurrection to *God*? Our side of it is quite true. If you pay into a bank a sum due there, in whose name do you get the receipt? Of course, in the name of the person who owed the debt. So we read: "To whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." He has cleared all for the believer. But He discharged the debt in such a way—He glorified God so under the judgment of sin, that God's satisfaction must be expressed. I say the resurrection of Christ is a great deal more than the receipt for the debt; He is raised from the dead by the *glory* of the Father; so Peter says here, He "has called us by *glory* and virtue," for glory

is the expression of the divine satisfaction in that man who, having descended from the Mount where He culminated as the perfectly righteous One upon earth, glorified God under the weight of the judgment due to my sins, and God has glorified Him. So I have got my Saviour in glory, and that is the "gospel of the glory." I look at the glory as the expression of the divine satisfaction in that One who paid my debt. If I may use such an illustration, it is as if the bank were so satisfied at the wonderful way in which the debt is discharged, that it not only gives the receipt, but it illuminates, and keeps up a perpetual illumination to display for ever the sense of its satisfaction at the mode and manner in which the debt was discharged.

Immense time is lost as to growth, if you have not learned that God has dealt with Christ about the thing that did the sin. I do not deny that flesh is there still, and that is the very thing that I have to come to sanctification about; but I say that I stand perfectly clear as to it before God, and that, when I do sin, the very place of all others that I can go to is God himself. When I get to Him the light makes manifest. I feel it there, I put the sin where God put it, and I never get liberty till then. As Paul says to the Galatians: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." When did he say that? When Ishmael had been put out. He is talking of sins in Romans, but in Galatians of that which did the sins.

So I start you with the fact that you are clear

in the sight of God. The moment you stand in His presence there is nothing at all against you there, neither the thing that is done, nor the thing that did it. "We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." "Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." I trust that everyone of you accepts that, and the more you insist upon it, the more you glorify God. I say you cannot improve your acceptance, you cannot alter it, and you cannot lose it; three things surely that ought to establish the heart in perfect comfort. I believe in the One who knew what was the hindrance to the love in the heart of God, who knew what hindered it from travelling out to reach the prodigal, and who says, I take it away so perfectly that that love can flow out in all its mighty volume to the greatest wretch on earth—can take hold of him and lead him up to the glory. That is the first point: "To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." These are the ones whom the apostle is addressing, and if this be not known, there is no use in talking about sanctification.

Now I come to the second point: Christ's present thought about us. If "He loved the church and gave himself for it," it is "that he might sanctify it." His present thought about each of us is *sanctification*. If I say, What is Christ thinking about me to-day? the answer is, He is thinking about sanctifying me. Well, what is that? I think it is most important to know. Sanctification does not add

one bit to my acceptance, but it does to my acceptability. Acceptance is what Christ has gained for me; acceptability is what the Spirit of God is working out in me. The more simply I admit my acceptance, the more I glorify Christ; and the more anxious I am about my acceptability, the more I honour His grace. There are the two things—grace and responsibility.

I turn to the seventeenth of John, first, to see what sanctification is in its character, before I look at its practical bearing on ourselves. Here the Lord is expressing His desires to the Father, and there are two ways in which He speaks of the sanctification being produced. One is, "Sanctify them through thy truth." The truth here is the revelation of the Father. The other sanctification is quite a different thing. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." That is, I have left the place altogether, that they may in heart follow me. Now if you understand these two verses, you will see the effect they will produce on you. One is what you *have* here; the other is what you have *not* here; and this is not difficult to understand.

First, it is "Sanctify them through thy truth." I will explain how that is done. I am of the Father now, and not of the world. I am in this new relationship—in a new dependence. Supposing a man knocks me down in the street; if I call a policeman, then I am calling the world. But suppose I say, God is my Father; He will undertake for me, and I will leave it all with Him; then I am sanctified by

the truth. I do not turn to the world because I have the Father, and I know what the Father's love is; that is what sanctifies me. And you will find you have lost your place as a sanctified man the moment you turn to the world for help, or are of it. It is curious how people are tried about this. I have lost the world, but I have got the Father. And this is what Christ had; therefore, He begins by telling them, "I have overcome the world;" and thus I have the Father's love down here, His love to the Son; "the love wherewith thou hast loved me" is my portion.

Some may say, I wonder, if God is your Father, He does not interfere more on your behalf. But I answer, I know His love, and the more I know it, the less I need demonstrations of it. Christ had little or no demonstration of that love, but he never lost the sense that He was ever the object of it; and it imparts the greatest dignity to be in His path—to be nobody to man, but to be an object to God. And often in the very place where we have been made little of in the eyes of men, there God makes us remarkable. At Philippi, where Paul and Silas were made so little of before men, they are made much of as God's men, not as the world's men. God says, I will have you acknowledge that man; he is a man of God. "There is a God that judges in the earth." God thus comes in to maintain the cause of His people, though not always at the time.

It is an immense thing for the heart to get hold of—"Sanctify them through thy truth"—

the knowledge that I am of the Father. But can you walk through the world and say, I do not appeal to it? It is just the difference between a man in the wilderness and a man in Egypt. In Egypt I turn to the world, but in the wilderness I have not got anybody but God. If I am of the world, of course I can claim its protection. And yesterday I might be in it—a man in Egypt, but to-day I am in the wilderness—in the same town, in the same business, in the same house. What is the difference? Why, to-day, in the wilderness, I have none but God; and it is this knowledge of the Father that sanctifies me; it has the most wonderful separating power; through it I escape “the corruption that is in the world through lust.” I am not dependent on the world for any one thing here, for I have a Father outside and apart from it all.

The second thing is, that my heart is gone out of the place altogether. Christ says: *I go out of the place altogether, and the consequence is they will all come after me.* How could I stay in a world where He is not? How could I be attached to a place whence He has gone? “When the bridegroom is taken away from them, then shall they fast in those days.” It is a wonderful weaning from all things here, knowing that He is gone. If I am looked at as here, I am separated from anything I might in nature want here—I am separated from the action of the world in every sense—because I know the Father. And then, on the other hand, I am taken out of this scene altogether, because

He is gone away. And this is enough for every heart surely.

Now I come to the third part, which will occupy us more elaborately. What is this sanctification to produce in us? "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." The measure of my sanctification—of my separation from things here—is His. I am speaking of the mode by which it is accomplished. First, He has accomplished redemption; the thing that is to be accomplished now is sanctification. And what is Satan doing now? He is pressing it in the wrong way; he is setting up a fictitious thing, because saints have not taken the right ground about it. But let us defeat him by maintaining the right thing. Never contend with the wrong thing, but press the right. No person ever knows evil but by knowing good; you judge evil by the amount of good you know. Man lost good by doing evil, and now I must know good to be able to discover evil. The person best able to tell me what is wrong is the one who knows best what is right. I must get the divine idea of what is right. The spiritual man judges all things; he can distinguish between things where there is the least apparent difference.

Christ, having accomplished everything for us as to redemption, then, is now thinking of us as to our sanctification. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly," is His thought for us. I think we are not enough occupied with sanctification. I can measure my sanctification, because the measure and the principle are one;

even that I have got the Father and not the world ; and I have to be as separate from the world down here in which I remain, as Christ is up there where he is gone.

You are very far from it, one may say. Truly it is so ; but I cannot accept anything lower.

Many are seeking sanctification in order to win thus a better standing before God. That I cannot accept. I can neither alter, improve, nor lose my standing. It is not that my heart does not condemn me ; but the moment I go into God's presence, I know He has nothing against me. Peter, if he had known what was coming, would not at all have liked the thought of that interview with the Lord. Peter was made sad apart ; he was grieving because he had done wrong. But when he is probed to the root, it is Christ only which is before him.

I come now to the practical effect of what we have been speaking of. I am sorry to say, that, instead of seeing more sanctification, I see less. The character of the world in itself is seductive ; and besides this, Satan is very adroit in the way in which he manages to bring the world home to each one, as it is most ensnaring to him. He knows very well what your tastes and likings are. You may have great tastes and capacities for enjoying certain things, and you had better watch those tastes and capacities, for they are the avenues to your heart, and Satan knows them as well as you do, and a great deal better too. Consequently, the thing a man is most distinguished for in nature, is the thing he must be most guarded about. God will make it evident

to you that He can do entirely without that for which you are most distinguished. God will clear all away that is only nature in you; He will get rid of everything that is contrary to Himself. God grant you may understand this. If you do not judge yourself, He will judge you.

You are perfectly without spot, as to standing, by the work of Christ, and there your ground or state before God is. There is another thing now to be accomplished, and that is, your state down here; for the Spirit always brings us to our standing or state above, in order to produce practical state here. Show me a single passage in Scripture where standing is brought out without a state being consequent on it. In the epistle to the Ephesians, where we get the highest standing, we get in the third chapter that most touching prayer, the servant in the attitude of the greatest earnestness appealing to God to produce state here in keeping with it.

Now I turn to the chapter I have read, and here I find practice. We accept these two points—one, accomplished, the other in the course of accomplishment. There are two things that mark the saint, and these two are put together in Scripture. One is, he believes with his heart; the other, he confesses with his mouth. One is inside, the other outside. If I take Jonathan as an example of this; he sees that Goliath is gone, and he is no longer occupied with Goliath and his fear of him, but with David, and owning him as his deliverer. I see at once if a soul is devoted to Christ; many an earnest person is not devoted because

he has not got clear of Goliath—he has still fears. But the moment he sees the dead man's head in the hand of the living man, his fears are gone, and he is taken up with David. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” It is the same thing in the seventh of Luke. The woman there at first stood behind him weeping. Afterwards, with her as with Jonathan, comes the public confession; he stripped himself to make much of David. This was confession. And what I want now to dwell upon is the *perpetuity* of confession.

I believe no soul is safe that does not keep up perpetual confession; safe for heaven he may be, but not for earth. It is “If ye do these things ye shall never fall.” Three things come out in practice. First: You increase in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Second: You never fall. Third: An entrance is ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

How many pass out of this scene like a full-freighted vessel, having abundant entrance into His kingdom and glory? Every soul that does not, I say, he has not been confessing. Do you think Jonathan would have fallen on the mountains of Gilboa if he had gone on with perpetual confession—if he had kept on owning David? if he had not gone back to the sword? Are you all perpetuating the confession you made at your first start?

And it is not merely perpetuating, it is *adding*. I am to seek to add to what I have. It is the lack of the present day that there is little or no confession. Often with the children of saints, and indeed with others too, there is not even any *beginning* to confess. It is not that their hearts are not touched, but they will not confess; and are they then safe from the world? Not they! Indeed, I cannot speak of anyone as being safe from the world; this is the work that is now going on—saving us from it. But what does save from it? It is “working out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Is that to get to heaven? No! It is that I may be saved now from the order of things in which I am down here. I would not talk to a person of sanctification who was not clear as to his perfect acceptance with God. I am left here to represent Christ as we see in the seventeenth of John. There is nothing in that chapter about works; it is all sanctification, and you left in the scene here.

At the close of the Lord’s ministry, in Luke, there is the cleansing of the ten lepers, of whom He says: “Were there not ten cleansed; but where are the nine?” All were cleansed; but there was only one able to overleap all the trammels of system—only one able to clear every barrier, and come right upon the simple ground of confessing His name and leaving the world. Thus the end of the ministry of the Lord, as often, foreshadows the end of the ministry of the church. Many saved, but

little confession ; very few give any testimony to His name.

You are kept as a saved person from the circumstances here by the very maintenance of what you are. Just as travellers do in a strange country ; they light a fire to keep away the wild beasts : so you are to keep up such a glow of divine power about you that you will keep the wild beasts off. It is the simple confession of Christ. It may expose you, truly, to greater dangers—to more of the shafts of the enemy ; but what if it do ? If I have got a greater enemy, I have greater forces to meet him with, and a difficulty is nothing when I have power to meet it. I do not mind any difficulty, I am standing here for Christ ; I am maintaining what He is, and I am increasing in it.

Thus Peter sets it before us. “ Beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue.” It is “ *all diligence.*” I have to deal with myself about this. People do not like to be asked, Are you more out of the world this year than you were last ? Have you added anything since last year ? You have if you have been exercised. Not that I mean that you know what it is that you have added, but you have certainly been going on. Or have you added little bits of the world since this day twelve months ? I knew a man once amongst us most exemplary in devotedness until his father died, and he gained wealth and position. If your circumstances—your position in life—were to change through inheritance or gift, would it alter your course as a saint ? How many have I seen

drawn aside! how many times have I been carried away myself by offers of one kind or another. God may recover the saint, and often does, for He carries out the purpose of the heart, even though the feet have gone in another direction.

I put it to you plainly: Are you adding little bits of the world? or are you adding that which carries you out of the world? Are you giving all diligence to add? Are you *watching* to add, in the vitality of the new life? I am made a partaker of the divine nature, and I am to work it out, and what do I get? I get "grace and peace multiplied unto me through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." I am increasing in the knowledge of God. The bad thing is gone; I must not touch it. If you do you will have to repent; and if you do not repent, you will suffer for it, and dearly too. I could give you histories of the closing scenes of saints that would make you shudder; all because they would not walk with God; they would add the world; they would not add the ways of Christ; and they went out of the world a spectacle of misery. That was not abundant entrance! And all because they refused to add.

I know how difficult it is. One has to watch. I know what it is in a family: one wants to bring in a little thing here; another one there; "only a little picture, or a ribbon, or a book; there cannot be any harm in it." No, but you are not *adding*, and you are losing if you are not adding.

What are gymnastics? Learning to use your

muscles. What is growth? "Solid food belongs to them that are of full growth, to those who by reason of *use* have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Are your senses exercised to discern good and evil? To do this you must get the good first; you must begin above. It is because you do not know what is good that you are unskilful in the word of righteousness. I see it coming out in all sorts of ways. People say, We must have a larger house, and new furniture, and so on. I say, That is adding the wrong way; you are going against what the Spirit of God is set on. God wants to bring out in you a deeper knowledge of His blessed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who walked about down here, and was so peculiar that He was not understood even by His friends. It was not a question of love, but they did not understand Him. He says, "I was an alien to my mother's children."

It goes on: "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance." Temperance means separation; renunciation of things here. Are you temperate?—really more separate from all things here than you were?

And then: "To temperance patience." Patience must come next; for most surely if you refuse you will have to endure. But when you have got patience it is all easy work afterwards, for patience is the greatest Christian virtue. Can I bear up, no matter what is the state of things? In 2 Cor. 6 the first mark of the minister is "much patience." And again we

read: "Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power"—what for?—"unto *all patience.*" There is nothing that so proves a man qualified for eminence in the church of God as patience. Some men you cannot say a word to without their being offended. Such a man is not under control; he is like an unbroken horse. "You have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." The way God prepares any servant for service is by trying his patience. I must be like the ivy; put a stone upon it, it will grow round it. I will not give up; I will hold out; as Job says, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." I am not going to give in a bit. That is patience, and it follows temperance. I refuse the offers when I am temperate, and then I get the pressure, and can bear up against it.

From this I get on to godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. I have reached the practical ground of all Christian fruits. "He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." One who does not add will lose all the comfort of what he has.

Adding brings out the vitality of grace. This is taught in a wonderful way in that passage in Zec. xi.: "Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock. His arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened." Now this is remarkable in the human system. If I were to tie up my arm for three weeks, and at the end of that time remove the bandage, I

could no longer use it. That which ceases to be used ceases to be useful. Whilst if instead of this you have been using your arm regularly according to your strength, it will get stronger and stronger. The idol shepherd did not use his arm to feed the flock, and so it is dried up. And this is exactly what you find in people. They have not been adding, so they lose all the brightness they have.

You will never get out of the sense of being besieged so long as you are here. It is marvellous the different forces that Satan contrives to bring against you at the same time, like a host of locusts eating up every green thing; one time, politics; another, something else. But I stand against all this; I belong to Christ; He is the treasure and delight of my heart, and I want to increase in the knowledge of Him. Otherwise you will become blind, and *you* will forget that you were purged from your old sins; it does not say *God* forgets. I am sure I have known people who for years have been like animals that hibernate; they have not moved one bit—not made the least progress; and at last they have waked up and started off again exactly where they were years before. They have lost the time for ever.

Life is a wonderful thing, but health is still more wonderful. Health is sanctification; and it is the health of the saints I want—the happy unimpeded activity of every organ working in harmony for the good of the whole system. That is health.

“If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I am getting to understand that blessed One better. You ask, Are you making progress?—I say, I cannot answer for that, but I know I am watching the enemy, and I am giving all diligence to add. I am conscious that I am increasing in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And next, “If ye do these things ye shall never fall.” God lets saints fall so that they may find out what they are and what they are trusting to, as He did Peter. But if they make their calling and election sure, He says they “shall never fall.”

I need not say more. The heart meanwhile can rejoice that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh; the Daystar is at hand. He will then “present us to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” When Eve was presented to Adam there was not one single thing to be done to her; she was all ready; she had not a thing to give up. He should be able to walk into this room and have us all for Himself. We know that when we go to glory we shall drop off everything that is unsuited to Him, thank God. But let me tell you, the person who is fit to ask Christ to come, is the one who can say, “I have a desire to depart and be with Christ.” That is the person who is both ready to be left here, and ready to welcome the Lord when He comes—the one who can say:

ADDING.

“This world is a wilderness wide!
I have nothing to seek or to choose;
I’ve no thought in the waste to abide;
I’ve nought to regret nor to lose.”

The Lord lead our hearts to understand the perfection in which Christ has placed us before the Father, that we are made the delight and the joy of His heart, and that now the joy of His heart is to sanctify us; and as we understand what this sanctification is, it is for us to give all diligence to add. And the effect of this adding—“increasing in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We are here to-day to add—to increase; so that whether He come, or whether He call us to go to Him, we may be like a full-freighted vessel coming in to shore, “an entrance ministered unto us abundantly” into His everlasting kingdom.

(J. B. S.)

Supposing that everything in us were judged, we should be all one; it could not be otherwise. And this is not attainment: a family is not disunited because there are old men, young men, and little children in it.

(J. N. D.)

THE NEW CREATION.

2 CORINTHIANS V. 13-21.

It is blessed to see in this chapter how the thought of *God* comes out in the New Creation. In this aspect man is gone as to his sins and responsibility—dead in them. The judgment of the first Adam is complete. The old thing is entirely gone. It is a new creation now, and, in this new creation, I find God instead of man. Even Christ Himself, as known after the flesh, is known no more. True, He was, when down here, the hope and expectation of faith as coming into the world. But the apostle only knows Him now as having died for all and glorified, all under death, whether Jew or Gentile, and Christ no more known after the flesh—that is as come after the hopes of man in it—but Head of a new creation, where all things are of God, and in which we have been made in Him the righteousness of God. God has manifested Himself in the second Man, and wrought atonement in His death, and now we are the righteousness of God in Him.

In the first creation we see man and his responsibility. In the new creation all things are of God, and man is reconciled by Jesus Christ unto Himself. We want to have the power of this in our souls to live as belonging to the new creation, as reconciled by God to Himself, all that belonged to the old creation for ever gone to faith—"old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

We see how the apostle walked in the power

of this in verse 13: "Whether," he says, "we be beside ourselves, it is to God." That is, if he were beyond the influences that belonged to him as a man, it was not an excitement that belongs to these influences; it was because he was absorbed in God. It is what is called ecstasy. When his spirit was free to rise above present service in what he was in Christ, he was lost in God, carried out beyond himself. If he were sober, if he had to weigh difficulties—come down into the sober estimate of what was before him—it was God in love working in him. His thought was entirely for others in that love. This was his daily life; as to himself transported with God; and, when he did think about things down here, all his thoughts were for others.

It was the love of Christ that constrained him, and he looked upon all around in connection with the death of Christ. It was no longer a living Messiah in the flesh with promises for Israel. All this was over. Christ had died, and he judged that Christ would not have gone into death, if men had not been there. The whole history of Adam's race is closed in death. If they had not all been dead, Christ would not have been found in death; why have gone down there if others were not lying there? And, therefore, those who from amongst these lived, were now to live not to themselves, but to Christ, who died for them and rose again.

Thus, if he met an unconverted man, he would not think of him as an old acquaintance, and know him as such. He would look upon him as one that was dead, and needed to be saved by the death of Christ. Or if the person

were a Christian, it would be just the same. He would not know him after the flesh according to an old acquaintance with him; he would look upon him as one alive with Christ, and his one thought would be that Christ might be glorified in him. Even Christ himself was not to be known any more in connection with this creation. He had died to it, and if any man is in Christ, he is of the new creation, where old things are passed away, and all things are become new, and all things are of God. Man is looked upon as dead, and God brings in a new creation.

We have the same aspect of truth, when in the nineteenth verse he speaks of Christ's coming in the flesh. It is not looked upon as fulfilling promises to Israel, but God revealing Himself in grace to the world. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." This was the aspect of Christ's first coming, in which the apostle thought of Him. We know He came to His own, and was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers. All this is blessedly true; but here we have God in man come here, and the apostle sees neither Jew nor Gentile. If God were in Christ, He acts towards the *world*. To what portion of it can you confine Him, if it be a question of God displaying Himself in grace in the world? For the same reason, when he speaks of the love of Christ, he judges all to be dead, and sees neither Jew nor Gentile, but a new creation, in which God counts every man that is in Christ.

We know that that is God as to the glory of His divine Person, but the apostle is speaking here historically; and therefore when he looks upon the Lord Jesus living in the world, he sees God in Him acting in overtures of grace to the world. God *was* in Christ; that is the great fact, that God has been here as the reconciler, and man would not be reconciled. Does the apostle say that God is reconciling us? No, but that God "*has* reconciled us by Jesus Christ unto himself, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." We are made the righteousness of God in Christ, and now we go out with the word of reconciliation to the world. Specially, no doubt, the apostles, but in their measure true of all. Man would not have God when He came, and therefore He had to make Christ sin, to **work** atonement for us, and now He is at God's right hand, in whom we become the righteousness of God.

The apostle does not say to the Corinthians, Be ye reconciled, for they *were* reconciled; but Christ being in heaven, having gone there through death in working out atonement for us, and His presence there being necessary to complete all in glory, He must have ambassadors to carry out His word of reconciliation here; so the apostle says, when he preaches—that is the gospel to sinners—"We pray in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God." That is what he had to say to men as Christ's ambassador.

How far are we living thus? Living in the power of God's new creation, judging the whole thing belonging to the first creation as gone to faith, and entering into the blessedness of our

place in Christ in the power of an ungrieved Spirit? Exercised for others, that the life of Christ may have power in their walk and ways; judging evil practically in our own path through the world, but yet having our souls so full of our blessedness in Christ, of what it is to be reconciled to God, that directly opportunity arises our hearts burst forth in praises to God, and ever go forth after others still dead in their sins.

That this may be so practically, we must bring the death of Christ to judge everything in ourselves and in our ways. As the apostle says: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." 2 Cor. iv. 10. If we do not daily and hourly bring everything under the sentence of Christ's death, and judge everything by it, the Spirit will be grieved in us, and, instead of filling us with the joy of our portion in Christ, He will cause the light of Christ to awaken us to the judgment of ourselves and of our ways.

May the Lord give us to walk in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, bringing everything into subjection to Christ, that we may know what the apostle goes on to say, "Death worketh in us, but life in you." In thus bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, Paul found death to self, and the result was life to the Corinthians. Paul held the power of Christ's death on the natural man, so that when he ministered among the Corinthians there was no Paul at all, but only Christ. It was life to them because death was working in Paul. *

May the Lord give us thus to live. And may He grant us, especially in a day like this, to judge of men as Paul did, so that whatever the boast of human nature may be, we may see that all are dead, because Christ died for all in grace—for the highest act of grace and love is the proof of it—and that the only living ones are they that live to Him, who died for them and rose again, while in our own souls we enter into His new creation. We may have to go down to babes, and feed them with milk, and not with strong meat; but may we ourselves live in the light of this new creation, where all things are of God.

We must pass through exercise, and be tried and tested to learn what is in our hearts, and to have our senses exercised to discern good and evil. This is all needful and profitable, but then there is our distinct place in Christ, as part of the new creation, where, instead of having the first man responsible to God, we have God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself in grace, and making Christ sin for us to bring us into this new creation, where all things are of God, and where man is before God in divine righteousness, and, as to his enjoyment, finding himself lost in God.

It is God, and not man. It is what God is to man, and the blessedness of man being with God. God, we know, revealed in Christ; but nevertheless God revealed, and man made the righteousness of God, a part of God's new creation.

(J. N. D.)