

# 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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## ALLIANCES AND CONFEDERATIONS.

Few things can be more important, or distressing in a certain sense, than the widely accepted proposal of the world's reformation by means of the mental and moral cultivation of mankind, as opposed to God's redemption by the blood of His Son.

It is nothing short of this (as an object) which is being attempted through existing institutions, whether established by voluntary efforts, as formerly, or as now, by legislative enactments, and governmental patronage, for they alike contemplate man as a member of this creation.

In addition to these establishments may be discovered, upon a higher level, the religious organizations, and co-operative societies of the day, which embrace other objects, it is true, but still recognize man as a citizen of the world.

Even Christian associations, so called, which rise upon this graduated scale and leave their own mark, stop entirely short of "a new creature in Christ," and "I, crucified to the world." By all such combinations of state-policy and social enterprise, it is hoped and confidently stated by the world's leaders, that the political and natural rights of men will soon be recognized;

and that the suffrage may be universally extended, when its populations have been fitted by these educational schemes for its exercise, and all be then led forward, in one encouraging effort of getting good and doing good to the world, where they are.

As a fair consequence, the governments of Europe and the States, may, in their turn, as well expect by some gigantic effort to rise up out of their iron and clay formations and develop themselves in brass or silver, and, by thus working backward, endeavour to reach "the head of gold."

The melancholy interest which one naturally feels about these movements and expectations is deepened, because they are seen to be unscriptural and futile when judged in the light of the word of God. On this account it is that feelings of another kind lay hold on those who remember they were once upon this treadmill for themselves; and thus, the one great absorbing desire *now* is, the deliverance of such as are still hard at work in the Egyptian house of bondage.

Another fact weighs heavily upon the spirit of the emancipated ones, namely, that these combined efforts, in all their gigantic forces, are proof of alienation of mind from God, and to the way by which He invites and beseeches men to be reconciled unto Himself, by the death of

His Son. There is a fellowship which God has thus formed with believers in Christ, and into which in grace He calls; but this is not our present subject.

A confederacy of continental nations, in this our own century, sought to reach a "Holy alliance" for themselves (many will remember it) as a ground of universal peace, and this was vauntingly declared to have been formed, but no sooner celebrated by the nations comprised in that alliance, then unholily violated. It has long since passed away from its expected longevity, into the pages of disappointed history. This failure gave place to a further and last attempt to reach a commonwealth of peace and prosperity by "the balance of power" amongst "the ten toes" of Daniel's prophetic image; but this was a rope of sand, and, following upon "The holy alliance," only threw each of the great powers into warlike attitude for aggression or self-defence. Nothing else could follow these last abortive efforts to form an international brotherhood but the existing armaments, with their iron-clads and turret-ships, in a proud defiance of one nation against another, in connection with all the innumerable rifles and *chassepôts* of the ever-training armies which they embrace, in view of a coming and extended war.

But to proceed. It is not intended in this

paper to say anything more upon true Christian fellowship, "which is with the Father and the Son, in the light where God dwells," as it is not its object. The fact has been already stated; we have now to examine its counterfeits.

Enough has been said of associations, unions, and mutual alliance societies, in their multiplications and varieties, to prove that fellowship in itself is the common want of the world.

An instructed Christian, judging by the light of God's word, must sooner or later admit that the need and call for these formations among men is but the honest, though accidental, avowal of "the fall," by which mankind has shut itself up to its own inventions, and in wilfulness and wickedness broken loose from God. These are but their own sorry productions, alas, and the fruit of their poor resources, when left to themselves like Cain, who went out from the presence of God, to take his place as "a fugitive and vagabond in the earth." He had reduced himself to himself, and to make terms of agreement with his neighbour, if haply he could, where the old dragon and Satan held his power and seat: I only refer so far back as this to show, that the primary and common drift, or, to speak morally, the *fact* of the fall and of original sin, was likewise a falling away from God; and threw man upon his fellow in guilt for sympathy, and in a common confession of

departure, if not too far sunk, or else, in sinful confederation, to war against the righteous judgment of God which he could not escape.

But leaving this original ground, and its demands and supplies, we may look into other varieties of modern times, and the forms and fashions, religious or otherwise, with which we are unavoidably familiar.

Still God acted on behalf of men ; He had not forsaken the world, and, by the introduction of Judaism as a grand system of legislation and of external worship, established with them on the earth, He founded a theocracy which was intended as the centre of outward peace and prosperity for Israel and the surrounding nations. This enabled the Jehovah of that favoured people to lead them into the land of Canaan, and dwell with them according to His promises. The patterns and forms which He gave out in grace (when the true knowledge of God was lost by mankind at large) and by which He opened a way between Himself and Israel for conditional blessing, had been finished and set up in the tabernacle of Moses, and again, with further developments and aids, in the temple and throne of Solomon.

It is very needful and precious to us to bear in mind the facts we are now tracing—that God would neither leave Himself without witness, as to communion and intercourse with His people

on earth, nor suffer mankind unrebuked to perish in their alienation of mind and confederacy of will against Him by the formation of their own fellowships as they attempted at Babel. Nevertheless, it is sad to remember, that whatever God in love gave for the true knowledge of Himself in communion with patriarchs or the nation, must most surely turn against them governmentally if not used for His glory in their midst, and become a new measure for their correction in righteous judgment.

Nor is this all; for Satan, the enemy of God and man, catches up anything and everything which has once had the sanction of divine authority; but has been forfeited and spoiled by transgression and abuse. Nothing will suit Satan so well as that which no longer suits God. Whatever is thus thrown away, as unholy and unfit for "the sanctuary of God," becomes the choicest material for the devil's mint and coinage; else, how could he get the whole world at last to worship the beast and his image, and to say, "Who is like unto the beast?" These corruptions of what once came from God, and their forfeiture on the part of those to whose hands they were committed, added to the awful fact that Satan delights to turn them into capital and make these forfeits his new material of currency, bring us on to the consideration of the

ecclesiastical and religious fellowships in our own day.

These take their character necessarily from Christianity, and likewise from Christ and the church, mingled it is true with the previous forms and ritualism of Judaistic observances. Let us bear in mind that the devil has lastly corrupted Christianity too, and added *this* to the ill-gotten stores, with which he is trading largely throughout Christendom and the world. As regards Christianity and the professing church likewise (this last, and which should have been the highest, witness of truth on the earth), the Son of man has said, when walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, "I will spue thee out of my mouth;" and so the Apocalypse reveals "the woman as sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast." The thing which Christ rejects is, in Satan's hands, become the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth. The heavens, so to speak, have thus emptied on the earth all they had to give in the way of recovering grace, if the hands were competent to retain, or appreciate and use, the means; but alas, all that was bestowed on the ground of man's responsibility to God has dropped out and been forfeited, only to put increasing power into the grasp of Satan. The huge confederacy he has in this way formed against God and Christ, and the alliance he has thus made be-

tween mankind and himself, and their fellowships and agreements one with another, is "the mystery of iniquity" in the Revelation, by which the failure of all inward and public testimony closes in judgment upon the world.

Historically and prophetically we may thus look at the origin of these human fellowships and their final character and form, under the energetic and guiding enmity of Satan, "the god of this world, and the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

When this system of confederated greatness and pride has reached its height, then it is that God refuses and judges it, "for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."

Inside, however, and in a measure distinct from the world's fellowships, are those ecclesiastical and religious ones, which are accepted mainly by consciences exercised upon "the good and evil," but not knowing, or refusing, the Christ of God, and Him who has called His people "unto the fellowship of His Son."

It is obvious that all external and governmental systems, constituted by regal authority and conducted by parliamentary legislation, would not meet the uneasiness of such consciences upon another and the far deeper

question of sin and holiness in the presence of God, much less settle it. Nor was the best thing at Rome which Christendom presented, or its Eastern and Western churches more satisfactory on account of their contradictory creeds and dogmas. The dissatisfaction therefore which arose from a semi-political system, such as Popery on the one hand, with its indulgences and penances, and the uncertainty which national churches produced on the other, reduced the keeping of one's conscience (where there was any) to one's self, and what became individual, or else left an opening as to means and appliances for any thing and every change which in time might appear more promising.

Two great systems, however, sprang out of this general dissatisfaction, and have become established—one is the Conventual, and the other the Sacramental system—and both offer, in their respective ways, to restore man to this broken fellowship with God. Merely social and political unions and their nationalities were declined, on the weighty discovery that *God* was in question, rather than man and his neighbour.

The Conventual system embraced a religious life within walls to meet this emergency, and separated its votaries from the world by being enclosed out of its sight. The Sacramental system connected itself with a contemplative life, fastings and prayers, hours spent in church, on high

days and festivals, but not the confessional and oratory, as with the Conventual.

In either, the *body* must be all but ignored by fasting or penance, when required to bring it under, that the soul might be kept free from all worldly thought, or affection and desire. Under these restrictions and impositions upon the body, it is supposed the soul would rise into such a state of ecstasy, and perhaps beatitude, as to reach the full manifestation of Christian perfection.

Besides these Conventual and Sacramental systems of to-day, there is yet the Evangelistic movement, and the adoption of the Mosaic law, as "a rule of life," by which the body and its members are sought to be controlled and brought into subjection, in order to possess a fellowship of uncertain character, indeed not beyond the seventh of Romans as to experience, and forced to accept "O wretched man that I am!" as the proper state and condition of this so-called Christian. There are off-shoots of this Evangelistic system which claim from its advocates a self-surrender to God, and a putting the will on His side, accompanied by such a consecration of all the powers and faculties of nature, and the body, as would lead to a "higher Christian life" &c., instead of a *present* union with Christ in life, and maintained in us by the indwelling Spirit.

It is remarkable, that in all these ecclesiastica

and evangelistic movements the human body seems to be viewed and dealt with as the one thing in the way, and the main hindrance to the recovery of a lost fellowship with God; and on this account Conventualism, with its severer measures of penance and privation, or Sacramentalism, with its ritualistic observances, offers to carry the *soul* beyond the contaminations of the body.

The Monastic system, with its Continental pilgrimages and new order of "the Sacred Heart" might have been added to these; but these so-called pilgrimages are become properly speaking "excursions by railways" and connected with hotel accommodations and refreshments, under which the body escapes the impositions and privations formerly practised for its mortification. It is merely passed through the genuflexions and continuous adorations due to the Virgin, alternated by the counting of beads, and the daily lessons and hourly duties of "sisters of mercy," by which it is sought to bring the body back to its original virtues in "holy communion."

Still it is the human body, and a fallen nature, that occupies each and all of these systems, however they may vary in the choice of means for its subjugation, or its voluntary surrender to God, or its fuller consecration to His service.

One of the last of these pilgrimages was to Parai-le-Monial, and "the Sacred Heart,"

and this (as may be remembered) was arranged for from London, through France, with a well-known excursionist company by return tickets, under the sanction of Rome, and the blessing of the Pope.

In the great outside confederations of the world, and the alliances between man and man, led on by the wiles of the devil, it is quite otherwise, for the body is at a high premium. As might be supposed, man and all his physical energies are taxed to the utmost, in order to their development and display, for Satan knows "that his time is short."

Fire and water, which in an earlier age were viewed chiefly as destructive elements, have now become allied, and by their generative power, are the necessary and hourly appliances for transit and gain. The millions who are thus whirled along in express trains over the globe, still needed a rapidity better suited for the transmission of their overtaxed thoughts and words, and these are flashed along the wires to the world's end, upon poles which support them in the air, or else by sub-marine cables across the channels and the seas. Man has become a cosmopolite, and is a wonder to himself by his inventions and appliances. Or else a fancied, but necessary, brotherhood in misfortune has sprung up, by which he becomes co-operative and international in his largest

ideas and undertakings—but without God, and without Christ!

And now, what is the result of all these and other fellowships in the church and in the world? Rationalistic, and infidel theories, in opposition to the word of God, abound, and are the palpable but plain answer, as given by philosophers and men of science, who rule the day, and are themselves ruled by “the spirit of the age.” Indifferentism and immorality would number up the rest of the outsiders—such as take things as they come, till their “soul is required” of them, or the impending judgment overtakes them, when “the Lord is revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance,” &c.

In conclusion, it is obvious that all these systems, religious or otherwise, have still got man in hand as a moral being, and are seeking how to educate him in his generation, so as to develop what is good, or else by confession, and penance, or sacraments and prayers, to curb and overcome what is bad; for it is the devil’s interest to keep up this deceit. It is only at the cross that such matters can be made plain for those who are simple enough to see the end of the first man in the death of Christ. As regards men and the world, the cross witnesses to the rupture of the last tie. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,” but the rejection and crucifixion of the Son of His love

was the open refusal either to accept His mediation or to suffer His presence in their midst on *such* a footing. What fellowship can there be with God, in the face of that cross, which is the standing proof of the outburst of the world's enmity against Him and His love, when they nailed Jesus thereon? "And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas." So Pilate "released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to *their will*."

The words of our Lord may fitly close this bird's-eye view of existing alliances and ripening confederations: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if *another* shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." Barabbas instead of Jesus; the dragon instead of God; the antichrist instead of Christ; the false prophet instead of the true one; the beast instead of the Lamb slain; are become the authorities and names by which the devil is suffered to wind up this world's history, and by which he fatally plunges those who are "led captive by him at his will" into the last scenes of the apocalyptic judgments of God. The earth clears itself, by such means, of those who have corrupted it, whether by Satanic or human energies; yet only that hell may open its mouth to receive them. The earth thus cleanses itself

from its pollutions by destroying them that destroyed it, "and the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

What an unspeakable comfort for our souls, and what a mercy, that we can turn away from the consideration of such fellowships as these, and their issues (and invite others to do so), to speak of another which God has formed for all who are Christ's, and into which He leads us by the Holy Ghost.

J. E. B.

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Christians are continually asking what they may do, and what they may not do ; but if you and I get the sense of what it is to be one with that Christ at God's right hand it is perfectly simple. I am just to walk down here as Christ walked. Oh ! but the world would hinder me. No ; the power of Christ has cleared everything away ; to faith every single difficulty has gone in the resurrection of Christ. Our hearts too easily accept difficulties, and suit themselves to a low standard of walk ; but He shows me that I am one with Him, and that the thoughts and desires of the Head are to give character to me, His member, down here.

(J. B.)

## ON RULE.\*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Forgive me if I suggest a word on your article “On Rule.”

I agree that, as a rule, gatherings get on where there is one who cares for souls. I have long noticed it; and, while in a small gathering, care one for another may be easy and simple, I have always held it to be a bad sign if time and increase of numbers did not develope the care of souls in persons whom love led to devote themselves more or less to it.

It may be in one aspect mutual or general, as Heb. xii. 12-15; or more direct and positive, as 1 Thess. v. 12-14, where, indeed, we have both. Heb. xiii. 17. (v. 7, they are deceased.) In none of these cases are they viewed as official. It is, moreover, the contrary to official in 1 Cor. xvi. 15. They are *προϊστάμενοι, ἡγούμενοι*, a word used of Judas and Silas.

In 1 Cor. they have “addicted themselves,” as indeed we have no trace of elders at Corinth; the Lord, doubtless, allowing it that we might have the internal state, and care, and duty, of an assembly in Scripture itself. These care-takers were not, as you truly say, the gift of teachers. This case is distinguished 1 Tim. v. 17. But it

\* Vol. iii. p. 266.

was desirable, not that they should be teachers as a gift (pastor and teacher are united under one head in Eph. iv.), but that they should be *διδασκτικός*, able to carry the word with them in their episcopal ministrations, and use it—shepherd and feed, not merely superintend; though they might usefully do the latter alone according to 1 Tim. v. 17.

These have been the passages which have guided students of Scripture as to that by which God meets the need of saints when public order and official authority are lost to the church, with general warnings in Old and New Testament as to the care of the beloved sheep of Christ. Still the promise remains, that where two or three are gathered together to Christ's name, He is there in the midst of them.

But I would draw your attention to one of these passages, and this is my object in these lines—a leading one on the point. The household of Stephanas had “addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints”—*διακονίαν*. In the heart of him who so labours, when rightly done and efficient, it is done in the spirit of service not of rule. Love works; they addict themselves; as Paul, free from all, became the servant of all for Christ's sake. There is a gift of rule, but love delights to serve. In this verse, which is a specially guiding one, *διακονία* (service) is that to which they addict themselves. He who thus

addicts himself in love, will assuredly find himself blessed in it, though patience may be exercised, and must have its perfect work.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

J. N. D.

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“Lust” is the stretching forth the hand to take something for *self*. If God say, Take, it is no lust to take. But, if the very crown prepared by God for you were there, and you took it unbidden by Him, it would be lust. God has sheltered us in Christ; “walk in the spirit,” then, “and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Lust is the very essence of the world. “Lo, I come to do *thy* will,” was Christ’s way. Wherever there is a “Thus saith the Lord,” though it be even going to the stake, you will find a joy, a calmness, which you will never find in stolen waters taken for yourself. A path utterly unblameable may be pursued, and yet God may say, *I* did not put you there; and this comes in to interfere with the sustainment of quiet peace in the heart. Is it with me, “Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?” “Lo I come to do *thy* will?” recognizing obedience to God as the one great thing.

[G. V. W.]

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# THE RISE, PROGRESS, AND FAILURE OF THE HEAVENLY MAN.

READINGS ON THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

## CHAPTER I.

BEFORE entering on the study of the book of Joshua, it is of importance that we should see that it was the purpose of God, even in the land of Egypt, before a step was taken, to bring the children of Israel into the land of Canaan. If we turn to the third of Exodus, we read: "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land *unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.*"

Now that mission Moses did not accomplish, and here we see Joshua has to complete it. He is the saviour; he accomplishes the work which, Moses being dead, now takes a new turn. Salvation comes out. It is not uncommon in Scripture thus to find the mission of one servant accomplished by another. In this way Elisha

fulfils Elijah's, and Paul, Stephen's. Thus Joshua comes in to accomplish that of Moses.

It is part of God's thought about me that I should have heaven. It is not a thing that I shall become entitled to at some future time; I *am now*. Joshua only really leads me into possession of that which is mine already. It is true I *have* to possess; but before possession I must have *title*. So in the first few verses we find God encouraging Joshua as to his title to the land; it is "the land which I do give to them," and "that have I given unto you." However, title is not enough to insure possession.

Canaan is properly, if I may use such an expression, an *earthly* heaven. The children of Israel were going on to it through the wilderness. As for us we are now in the Canaan of which theirs was the type, and which we get in Ephesians, where we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ;" and we are going on to the true Canaan. We have now the figures of the true; we are in the antitype of Canaan; of course heaven is not the antitype of it. It is God's kingdom on the earth. The moment I take God's ground on earth I am on heavenly ground. This is just what makes the difference between the wilderness and Canaan—that I am standing for *God* now; I am taking possession, so to speak, for God. This is Ephe-

sians. In Hebrews the saints are going on through the wilderness, to Canaan; and they wanted to go back and to make earth the religious place. It is to extricate them from that snare that Hebrews was written. You easily get the difference between Hebrews and Colossians if you put them together. In Colossians they are trying to make *man* religious; whilst in Hebrews they are trying to make earth a religious *place*. The moment you take your place in the race you are a heavenly man. The possession of Canaan to the Jew was, that he had, as his own, "the land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year;" a land in which was everything that satisfied man naturally. So now, that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," I am filled with all that satisfies the spiritual man just as they had everything that satisfied the natural man; and I do not believe *any* one is satisfied who is not on God's ground. A man may be cared for in the wilderness, but that is not being satisfied.

As to what is sometimes said of our being in the three places—Egypt, the wilderness, and the land—at the same time, I do not believe it. I do not think we are in Egypt at all. I think Egypt *becomes* the wilderness to me as soon as

I am converted; my surroundings, my home, my business, are the same that they were, but they have assumed a different aspect to me from that which they presented when I was unconverted: it is the wilderness to me now, because I do not look to the world as I used for everything, now I look to God for everything; the world yields me nothing, it is the wilderness and nothing more; but when I come to Canaan my heart is delighted.

“Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you.” It is to encourage us to go in to possess. I am entitled to it before I enter upon it at all, just as I have the key of my house in my hand before I go into it. People so often say they wish they could go into the land, and all the time they never have the sense of their title to do so. I should have the unalterable conviction that it is *mine*.

“From the wilderness even to the great river, the river Euphrates.” It has been remarked that the possession was greater than their enjoyment of it. Their boundary, given by God, was the Euphrates; whereas, as to appropriation of it, they went but very little beyond the Jordan. The limit of their possession was far wider. Solomon did go out to it: “He reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines.”

Verses 5-8.—We must go in obedience. You

find a person fail in his enjoyment of God, fail in his enjoyment of the possession; and why? Because, though he may have light and a sense of his title, he is not in moral power. There must be obedience, observing to do "according to all" that is commanded. When a person gets at all into the flesh he gets under the law; a man never gets into the flesh that the law does not hit him. He has revived the thing that the law deals with. It is well in this present day to insist that a man might keep the law up to his own conscience, and yet be a Christian of very low standing. You cannot make the law the standard for your Christianity. The new school that has carried so many with it is just this, that you are to attain to a legal righteousness according to your own conscience. But there is no such thing as arriving at perfection down here. Thus in the consecration of the priests, the second ram is not presented *whole* down here; it is divided into four parts, unlike the one that went up whole to God. So I get at parts of it, and say I am not able to carry out the whole; but I know there *is* a whole thing up there which *is* to be carried out here.

Verses 9-15.—I find the Lord very jealous here. If he have given me a possession, it is the delight of God that I should possess it. *Do you possess it?*

It is not only that I possess it for my own

delight, but that I, as His child, enter into that which He delights to give me. The portion of the two and a half tribes were part of the territory, but they were not inside Jordan. They stayed there for the advantage of their families, but still they had to fight; no person can get any part of the territory without fighting; but these, though they fought, did not enjoy the land in their surroundings. Some people are allowed to take a lower standard; they are carried away by present advantages; but it has always been so—there have always been the two classes in the history of faith: one who would go the whole way and one who would not; as Lot and Abram, and Joshua and Caleb and the children of Israel. I do not deny the saintship of the former of these, but I deny that they are walking by faith. It is a bad thing to be content with anything less than God gives you; but even this they cannot get without fighting. The tendency always is to lose God's place for us, through beginning to think of ourselves. These two and a half tribes were too hasty, they looked for possession before the battle was fought, just as people now look for enjoyment when they have had no conflict to gain it; but this enjoyment never has the same character.

It is a fine moment in a soul when it comes to the point, "I am going to set myself for that which my Father has given me." I do not know anything more sad than a person going on quite

satisfied never to get it. Our Father would have us in a scene where we can fully enjoy Himself. Many a one is hindered by not being strictly obedient; you must *die* and then walk in. That is Jordan. The old commentators were right when they said there was no way into heaven but by death; the only question for us is, Is there any other way of dying besides going into the grave? God is most gracious in teaching us death, by first leading us into death and afterwards restoring to life. It was so with Mary of Bethany: she could say to Lazarus, Well I have proved that I can live without you; the Lord has shown me that I can have such joy in Himself, that I can do without you; and now, after it all, I have got you back again.

As to crossing Jordan, the first thing is, have you courage? Can you say as some one did to me once, "I have set myself straight for Jordan?"

Ver. 16-18.—The people were all right at any rate. And now in the next chapter we have the sending out of the spies.

## CHAPTER II.

VERSES 1-21.—It is a very interesting fact that there is a Gentile in heaven. This is what the apostle leads us up to in the epistle to the Hebrews; as soon as he gets to Rahab, he goes no farther; he can only add, "What more shall

I say?" God's grace has brought the wretched outcast into the kingdom, and, he says, I can say no more. It was in keeping with the apostle of the Gentiles to write thus. The grace of God comes in for a Rahab now, as it did for a Cornelius in another day.

Verses 23, 24.—One feels how dependent one is. Think how often the Lord gives us spies to encourage us! This is how ministry comes in. How often a soul is helped by the faithful ministry of another, who has gone in and seen for himself. The first twelve spies, very different to these, were of man's seeking and of man's appointment, and so, instead of helping the children of Israel, they only promoted their unbelief and distrust of God. He allowed it, as He often does, when people will not have simple faith in His word; but when people look for evidence to support their faith, they will only meet with what will discourage it.

Thus Jericho is about to be destroyed by divine power, and the people are not to take *anything* out of it; they were to take nothing but Rahab's family—those who were sheltered by the scarlet line.

### CHAPTER III.

VERSES 1-17.—The old idea of this chapter, as we have already noticed, is true, that no one can enter Canaan but through death—that no one

can be in heaven but through the grave ; but the question is, Is there any other way in which we can die ? Whilst it remains true that no one can get in but through death, is there any way by which we can *morally die* ? This is, I believe, the teaching of the third of Joshua, or as we get it worded in Colossians, "*Dead with Christ.*"

The great thing then is, how are we to die ? Or rather what is the experience of those who have died with Christ ?

Often people think that something has to be settled by their own death, but if so, it is clear that Christ's death has not been sufficient. His death has set me perfectly free. Whilst saints think that their own death has something to do with it, they never can get the sense that they are as dead in God's sight now as ever they will be. Death will not put me one bit more satisfactorily in the sight of God than I am now. In the Red Sea, everything is cleared away between me and God, but to see this accomplished in myself is an immense relief ; and this is Jordan ; the first is Christ's death ; the second mine—my entering into His. So the old commentators were literally correct. I must *lose*. Man is morally dead, and I say, I have done with man—with the weak thing ; it is gone. Thus, a person on a death-bed is perfectly happy ; he is going to a new scene, and he has so entered into it, that he is morally superior to everything in this one ;

as to circumstances, he is in death ; but, as to life, he has already resurrection life.

Literally, the Red Sea is the death of your enemies, and the Jordan the death of yourself. In the former, the Egyptian—all that is hostile—is gone. But, when the people come to Jordan, they cannot go up to possess the land ; there is the water to be passed through. Thus, says God, you must drop that weak thing, and, if you do, you will be found in divine power.

We cannot get righteousness apart from resurrection. That is the Red Sea.

However, it is the greatest comfort to the believer to be able to say, Well, I have *got* them all, whatever my experience may be ; for there is only one death of Christ, whatever the different aspects in which it may be presented to us. There are these three aspects of that one death, the lamb slain in Egypt, the Red Sea, and the Jordan ; but if, you have His death, you have them all as to fact ; as to experience, we have it parcelled out, so to say, into three, as we often find in the Old Testament.

To enter into death, then, without entering into the grave, can only be effected by my contemplating Christ in His death. I am to see the ark of the covenant go down into Jordan. And what do I see in this death ? I see two things : I see Christ, the One who was everything that was lovely in this world, gone in death ; but I

also see that in death He was the One who was everything that was pleasing to God. So I have seen the end of everything that is beautiful on earth, and also of that which is perfectly well-pleasing to God. Let any one lose in death one much loved, and see what an effect it will have on him; the nearer the dead was to you, the more you enter into that death.

Christ's death is not merely the end of man; but when you see that in it everything that was lovely on earth, in the eye of God, is gone, why it is the end of *everything* humanly. At the same time it is everything that is lovely to God; it is the ark of the covenant going down into the waters. And, as you see it, you are made sensible that death is gone for you, and that you are occupied with the One who has met the eye of God in that scene where you were lost. I see Him there. I might find out that I am set in perfect righteousness in the presence of God, and yet discover that I am not dead, as in the Red Sea; but in Jordan it is more what you have to travel through yourself in order to find yourself in Canaan. And, having done it, I find that the weak thing is gone—the thing that Satan could lay hold of. A monk tries to do this himself; he tries to die—tries to be happy, by getting rid of everything that is most annoying to him in the flesh; but do what you will, after all your efforts you will find you are still uncommonly alive.

In the Lord's supper, I contemplate His death when He is alive. I am in association with Him as the living One, so I can contemplate Him as the dead One. I have fellowship with the blood of Christ—I have fellowship with the death of Christ. The Corinthians were allowing their flesh to run riot in every way, so he says to them: You have not contemplated the death of Christ at all.

Think what the death of Christ was to the disciples! The Lord "*gave thanks.*" He was entitled to everything as man, and He says, As I break the bread I can give thanks. And now we can echo His thanks and say, I, too, have nothing here.

I do not think that souls get the sense of this—this contemplation of Christ's death showing them, on the one hand, that everything beautiful is gone; a sense of death upon every thing, as when a dear friend is gone. And, on the other hand, even in this sense, we are *rescued* from everything; so that not only are hopes gone, but fears are gone too. I ask you, Have you any prospects? You answer, No, I have none. Well then, have you any fears? Oh, I have fears enough! Then you are not quite dead yet.

However, everything is satisfactory on the side of God, though my experience of it may be small; and the thing that is before me is not death, but the One who has accomplished all for

me. I know all is clear; that He has entered into the whole thing, and that there is no water. In the Red Sea the waters rose to their highest: "They were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left;" so the old commentators say they went through in single file; each one felt the water on either side of him. But at the Jordan it was five miles broad, from the city Adam right down to the Dead Sea "the waters failed and were cut off," and the old writers say they all went across abreast. So in actual death of the body, Stephen could say, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," and, in the power of that glory, rise above all the circumstances in which he was found. And a step still farther we get in Paul, who says, I am *longing* to depart; to be with Christ is "far better." I am in the joy of the One who has met all that was against me, and He opens out to me all the riches of light and glory.

Hence, it can be said to Joshua, "This day will I begin to *magnify* thee in the sight of all Israel." There is no place where you get such a sense of the greatness of what Christ is to you as in your death; you get Christ's victory in the Red Sea, all your enemies dead on the sea shore; but in Jordan, in my own death, I get Christ magnified to my soul. I have to do with the accomplishment in the one; in the other, with

the One who accomplished it. In the latter, it is occupation with Christ personally, and souls are not occupied with Christ personally until they have got to deal with Him in their own death. First, I have, in the Red Sea, to learn the death of judgment, like Jonah in the whale's belly; but then when he came up again he had to learn Jordan—that *everything* is dead: the gourd goes. Paul learned it in Jerusalem. Every one has to learn it some way; generally the way God connects you with death is by touching something very dear to you. Just as with Abraham, it was Isaac that had to be offered, and he must say, It is all gone. So with Jacob, Joseph goes. It is not simply looking at it as a monk or nun might do, but it is standing amidst the death of all here entirely to the satisfaction of God. And this makes heavenly life much more absolute.

I do not think any person really enjoying God's presence thinks at that moment of anything that suits himself humanly. When you are in His presence you have sufficient. It is not that you *lose* things, but that you do not think anything necessary to be *added to Christ*. Now in the body, of course, we know there are certain things that are necessary to us, and it is said, "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things;" but when I cross the Jordan I do not *think* of any of these things. So the Lord says

to His disciples, "Lacked ye anything?" Do you know when those words were said first? from whom they were quoted by Him? They were said by Solomon in all his glory; so that, when the Lord had nothing, He had as much as Solomon had when he had everything. And this lack of nothing in His presence makes you all the more dependent on Him when you come out. It is not that God will take things away from you. You may say in the fulness of your heart, I do not want anything; but He says, I know you better than you know yourself. I might, for instance, in a moment of devotedness say, I should like to go to China to serve the Lord. And He says, You are fit to go to the north of Scotland; you may go *there*. So He sends me there, and answers thus my prayer to be allowed to serve Him.

If I do not know what God's power can do in my weakest point, how can I be assured of what He will do against my enemies? My weakest point is *death*, and I can say, From my weakest point He "raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Just look at the way in which it is put in the Ephesians; it may be a help to us; chap. i. 18-20. There is where the power works. It comes down to the weakest point; "He raised him from the dead." In chapter iii. 20, we find this same power is that which works *in us*. And lastly, in ch. vi. 10,

the very words of the first chapter are repeated in connection with our working it *out*. I know the power that worked to raise me. And what now? I have it *in* me. And what now? I am to use it against the enemy.

I do not find any bitterness of death in this chapter. I do not think any one is sorry for dying here. There is no bereavement in this; it is a death entered into without bereavement: I would call it painless death. It is a positive real thing; you are carried into a new sphere where weakness gives place to death. In the Red Sea they were all afraid; there it was, "Stand still" in tremor and fear; but here it is, Come up and see it is all done.

I doubt not the Lord's supper is the place for us to learn it in, there where for us there is not a single cloud nor a single bitterness, and where the One who wrought for me becomes more intensely known to my heart. According as there is death there is power. Canaan is a place of more conflict and of more power than the wilderness; but difficulties are nothing where there is power to meet them. And there is ever joy connected with service. It is always interesting to me that I do not find joy connected with John xiv; there it is the service of Christ for me, and it gives me "peace;" but, in chapter xv. my service for Christ gives me "joy."

There are a great many marks that show when

you are in Canaan. The first great mark, but we have not come to it yet, is that you are circumcised. There is a scene in which I am now set that is not an earthly scene, one in which God delights to have me ; and the way into that place is through death, and no other way. Death comes in and helps me. The same death that shuts me out from everything here, confines me exclusively to all there. One thing is very plain, that man is over : I am connected with a heavenly scene, and nothing can sustain me in that scene but the Holy Ghost. You will find that if the heavenly standing begins to decline in a soul, the Holy Ghost's power will also decline in it. Nothing proves this to me more than the way in which people now take up dispensational truth ; it used to bring those who held it out of the world, but now any one may hold it and yet stay mixed up with the religiousness of it.

There were then, we see, twelve stones to be taken up out of the midst of Jordan and placed in the land. As you know what Christ is to you in your death, you can judge of what His power can do for you in other ways. If His power could raise me up to Himself in heaven from *thence*—if it did *that*—I say it can do *anything*. He has turned what was most against me into *my* greatest blessing.

And then there are the twelve left in the

Jordan. My soul, as I look at them, enters into what His sorrow was when all the waves and the billows went over the One who was entirely well-pleasing to God. Supposing you saw every beautiful thing on earth dead, what sort of feeling would it give you? When you see all that is beautiful thus gone in Christ, you say, Well now I have nothing whatever to hold me here. Those twelve I have to carry me into the remembrance of the One who accomplished all for me; they lie there in the depth for a memorial to my heart.

We were seeing yesterday that we have to keep the law to get into Canaan. You never can get in if you do not keep it. It is the ground on which you get in. And how can you keep it without being a dead man? So "the righteousness of the law" must be "fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit," God having "condemned sin in the flesh." This righteousness could not come out in the flesh. "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." So I die in this way; I die according to the eighth of Romans. I die here in contemplating Christ's death. I do not know anything more melancholy than contemplating one's own death, but here I see the One who has gone into it for me,

who has raised me out of it by His own power, and I get the sense of that power in myself. I like to stand on the banks of Jordan and contemplate Him thus: and that is the Lord's supper.

No one ever became heavenly by merely *wishing* to be heavenly.

#### CHAPTER IV.

VERSES 1-3.—As we have seen already there are twelve stones left in the bed of the river, and twelve placed where they lodged that night—their first lodging place in the land. The number takes up the number of the tribes of Israel. There was a difference between the twelve in Jordan and the twelve in the first place of halting, the first place of rest. I think the twelve on the bank were more the memorial of the accomplishment of the thing; they were *in* the land; whilst the twelve in the bed of the river are where you contemplate—where you go back to revive to your heart—the spot where Christ was for you. You recall to yourself that you are over it. If I carry it out in the Lord's supper it is not simply memorial, it is fellowship.

Cor. x. and xi., give us an illustration of it. You have to get into association with His death; you have to stand on the bank and say, He was

there for me. You stand and look at it now from the other side, from the heavenly side. Nothing, perhaps, fills the soul with a deeper sense of what Christ is, than my contemplating Him where He was for my sake. In Revelation they cast their crowns before Him and say, We ascribe it all to the Lamb slain.

What God had promised to Moses in Exod. iii. was not accomplished till now; but now they can speak of the fact; the twelve stones are in the land. I have got into fellowship now as I look at Him where He was—as I contemplate all that He wrought for me in that place. A person who eats the Lord's supper only looking for the means of grace in it, has never got to this. In Exod. xii., though feeding on the Lamb, they are not across; neither is it remembrance. With all due respect, I do not believe that any in the Establishment get farther than this; they remember how God has freed them from the judgment, and that is in Egypt; you only get the sprinkled blood there, and you do not get that anywhere else. As to brethren, they, as a whole, are very much in the wilderness; they just remember the Lord's death in connection with *victory*. But when we get to the twelve stones in Jordan we commemorate the consummation of the work, and we then eat the old corn of the land.

Morally, with the saint, the first day across

the Red Sea ought to be your first day in Canaan.

It is a wonderful moment for the soul when it gets to these twelve stones. Everything collective is individual, because you must enjoy things individually. This, of course, belongs to our standing; there is no mistaking the sense of it. But people so often allow the standing—say you must *accept* it; but as to fact you never really get possession of the standing without *enjoying* it. A person perhaps might not be able to speak very distinctly of what he was enjoying in the land, but I tell you what he *will* know; he will know in coming back to this scene, that it is a wonderful contrast to what he knows in that. Like Moses who “wist not,” but all the time “his face shone.”

Verses 6, 7.—“A *memorial*” you see. And it is very interesting to mark that it is where they lodge. Your first stand upon the ground is the memorial. In Corinthians the Lord makes it the centre for everything. It is only one loaf with us, twelve stones with them, because it is *unity* with us. They were one nation one people; but we are the body of Christ “members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,” nourished and cherished by Him. So every command is now “If ye *love* me,” and this does not make a command one bit less binding. Where there is much affection subsisting between any two, there the command is inoperative.

I feel that when the sufferings of Christ are brought prominently forward, souls lose the weight of what the Lord's supper is. It is not His sufferings; it is not what He went through; it is not what the atonement was; it is that He is *dead*. This would not be *without* His sufferings; but the great thing before our mind would be, that He had gone down to the very lowest place on earth. If you have not already got redemption through His sufferings, you have no right to look at Him there; but, having redemption through His work, you are contemplating that which He was, in order that you may see the depth and the fulness of His love, and in order that you may be too in the very place that He was in. If you are only occupied with Him in order to get deliverance for yourself, you are not looking at Him from the heavenly side at all.

I do not think any of us have an idea of what it was for the One who was entitled to everything on the earth—to every bright and beautiful thing that God had here—to say, I give it all up for you. As I look upon Him *dead* I say, I am shut out here from everything . . . *human*, if you like. Every believer knows something about the blood, but very few know anything about the “new and living way.” This is not simply Christ's sacrifice, the shedding of His blood, but it is the “new and living way through

the veil, that is to say, His *flesh*." It means that you have left everything connected with man in the flesh outside. It is not Adam dead; every one admits that Adam is dead, but do you admit that *Christ* is dead? Every one says, I admit that He died for my sins; but I do not mean that; I mean the fact that He Himself is *dead*. I am not occupied with the sacrifice, I am not occupied with the benefits that God has conferred upon me when I am at the Lord's table; but I am *in* the benefits, I am in light and glory, and, knowing Him in light and glory, I look at him where He was when He was gaining it all for me.

The wonderful thing is that He gave up everything for me. I do not mean that you can lose sight of the fact that He suffered; but what is before our mind is the *love* that brought Him *there*. I do not mean that you will lose sight of His atoning sufferings; but this I do say, that, if you are occupied with them alone, you will soon bring the table to that low state which eventually brought it down to the Mass. And it is not that; it is not that I am seeking to remember something which will quiet my soul. I hold that a person is not really at the Lord's table until he can *remember* the Lord. It is possible to look at Him to relieve the soul without remembering Him. The believer, surely, has everything in the death of Christ, but he can-

not *enjoy* the Lord's supper unless he be on Canaan ground.

You ask, Then would you not admit a person until he is on Canaan ground? Not at all. Every soul that has got hold of Christ has all the benefits of His death, and I can receive all such; but I say, that when a soul recurs only to the sufferings of Christ, he is more occupied with His sacrificial work than with the love that brought Him into it. And more: I find a person can be occupied with the sacrificial sufferings of Christ, and still go on with the world; but if he once sees that Christ is *dead*, he cannot possibly go on with it. I defy you to do it. Nothing ever weakens your hold on this world like seeing that Christ died to every beautiful thing in it. When you see *Him* dead, is it not an easy thing for you to say:—

“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.”

This is the practical experience that ought to flow from the Lord's supper.

I think it is quite possible to speak of the sufferings of Christ and not to lose sight of His death; but the point is not to limit them to the sacrificial sufferings; you must carry them beyond the twelfth of Exodus.

## CHAPTER V.

VERSES 1-7.—Properly this is the first day in the land.

Verses 8, 9.—Here we get the reproach of Egypt rolled away. Circumcision takes place in the land. A man can now drop himself in every form; as we get it in Colossians: "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth;" and this you cannot do until you are upon heavenly ground.

What a wonderful thing it is for a soul to be able to say, I have no will of my own! This is circumcision—the wonderful sense of having no will here.

Gilgal is properly speaking the robing-room. Here you are putting on your clothes. You have crossed the Jordan, you have got to the memorial, and now you are getting on your clothes. You are a circumcised person, which means that you are keeping the knife to your flesh. It is the heavenly man getting himself into condition for battle.

As I was saying, the Holy Spirit never leaves you altogether; but, if you allow the flesh to take an undue place, you will find, when you get into a difficulty, that He will say, I will not help you now; you must find out your helplessness. "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." The Spirit must be attended

to and respected. The moral character of the saint must be kept up; whatever God claimed of man must be rendered; the law must be kept. I am subject to the government of Christ, though He has been rejected in this world; I am in millennial favour though not in millennial circumstances. He is not in office yet, so to speak, but I give Him His rights; I acknowledge Him as Lord over my house and over God's house, though I am afraid of the word "Lord" too much, because He is not Lord over the church. But suppose He were on the throne now, would you and I go on differently in our houses and in our business? I think the saints often feel about Him as a child does during its father's absence; it says, "He is not here so I will just do as I like"; whereas, the fact is, Christ is just as near to me, and is to rule me just as really, as if He were on His throne. The great snare of the church has been anticipating the millennium before it has come; but in one way we ought to see to it that Christ rules now in our houses just as much as He would do were He here in millennial power, otherwise we have joined the rebels. I might walk up to a man in the street, and say to him with truth, You are a rebel because you have never bowed to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the King. And you cannot have a king without a kingdom. The only thing Christ possesses thoroughly are the

bodies of the saints; "all flesh" is given unto Him, but He takes possession through His saints. The two spheres therefore where He rules are your houses and God's house.

The first thing, then, is circumcision; and it is an immense thing. Before a man takes the ground of testimony, he must come out in a moral condition suitable to it. Hebron tells us the same story. The great moral connected with Hebron is, that where there is a grave there is a throne.

Verses 10, 11.—Now we have the passover; and, the day after the passover was eaten, the manna ceased. You are brought into the land, and set up in divine strength in it, both in one day. It marks our peculiar position.

Verses 12-15.—It is very interesting to see how the Lord presents Himself in a particular aspect to His servant, in order to make that servant up to the work which He commits to him. This is very much to my mind what a gift is now. He presents Himself to His servants in the aspect which will sustain them in the particular line of service He has marked out for them, so that they can reckon upon Him to support them. Moses could always fall back upon the blessing "of him that dwells in the bush," no matter what the failure of the people. The manifestation of the Lord to His servant determines very much the character of His gift. For instance,

Jeremiah sees an almond rod—that is power; and a seething pot—that is judgment on Jerusalem; and these two things were the character of his work. The Lord gives the soul that particular communication from Himself that gives the needed knowledge of Himself. To Paul the word was “a witness of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear to thee.” No doubt he increased in gift. It is very interesting to see that the Lord will give you a particular support in that line of things to which He has called you. He says, This is what I have called you to, and I will give you an apprehension of myself that you can always derive from and fall back upon in your service. Joshua could always say, I have the One with the drawn sword; so he could only go on to victory. He may have learned to hold out His spear at Ai from this very thing.

This, then, is the rise of the heavenly man; you have him now ready for warfare—ready for testimony. People give up the testimony, though they do not want to give up the position; and so we shall find it in Joshua. The people give up pushing forward, and leave the very ones in the land who, Joshua warns them, would vex them.

At first Joshua does not know who this man with the drawn sword is; he asks, “Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?” And then the Lord

introduces him into a scene entirely outside of man, so he is to take off his shoes; he is in a place where flesh cannot get a footing. The Lord always wishes to get us near to Himself, and, to do that, flesh must be set aside.

## CHAPTER VI.

HERE we get two things brought out into distinctness: the world and the power that overcomes it. It is a great matter to get distinctness. Joshua says, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" There is nothing between; there can be no mistake about it. There is nothing visible for us. It is a great thing to start upon heavenly ground with the knowledge that there is nothing visible for you. The visible is *against* you; the invisible is *for* you. "We see him that is invisible." So it is "*faith that overcometh the world.*"

I think Jericho is the system of the world; a city is properly a centralization. When Eve looked away from God she took the world. What she took was good in itself; it was the taking it apart from God that made it bad. The world in itself is not bad—not what we call the *kosmos*. But it says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world;" it necessarily becomes attractive to a man, and, though in itself not bad, yet, if you let yourself be occupied by it,

you lose the power that is to keep you through it; you make the visible thing the thing that you rely on. Any one with practical experience at all, knows what a difficult thing it is to get rid of the visible—to go on as if it were not there, knowing all the time that it is. The one who only is able to overcome it, is “he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.” I have to do with the Person who has overcome it, and with the dignity of that Person: He is “the Son of God.” Any believer knows that He is the Son of man—the Christ; but how much do you know Him as the Son of God? If you believe that God sent some one into the world to deliver you from the consequences of your sin, then you are a converted man. I think a very little thing saves a soul—the smallest sight of Christ; it is the happiness of God to do it, as we read, “the gospel of the happy God;” but it takes a very great thing to make a soul walk like Christ.

Now the mode of contending with the world is very important. What is the mode of warfare? It is a well-known thing that everyone looks to the general for the order of battle. The order with Nelson was, Do not wait for any particular thing, but hit the enemy whenever you can. Now the order we find here is most interesting; you are not to attack the enemy, but he cannot touch you. This brings us to the practical value of keeping the law. You must be a right-

eous man or you will not be able to stand the enemy ; that is the armour. You cannot enter the land but by keeping the law, and, to overcome in the warfare, you must be free from the aspersions of Satan. There may be plenty of reproach, but that will not hinder so long as there is righteousness and so on.

“Ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war.” It is an honourable position to be a man of war ; it is a great thing to be one. Our fighting ships are called men of war.

And they were to go round about the city once a day for six days. What is that, now ? I suppose it means that it is to be a continued thing ; there is to be put no limit to it. You are to go on the whole time ; it is the six days of work, and we work until the day of rest comes. Then do we never get the advantage of the world until the end ? We do ; but we do not get the full victory until the end ; we have victory all the time, but the wall does not fall down until the end. We start with the knowledge that we are not to put our armour off till then. “Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.” Your purpose is to go on the whole time ; and the great principle is that the enemy cannot touch you ; you are invulnerable, and if you are invulnerable you are invincible. A man can move about among his worldly friends, or, worse still, relatives, and

say, You cannot touch me, I am encased in armour. But a child in a worldly family, if it go in for playing croquet and so on, it is lost. Then would you never enter into any amusement? Yes; I would play chess with a child that was sick, for instance; but I would not play with my equal, for that would be for my own amusement. It is remarkable, however great may be the reproach, that in times of pressure the pious one in a family is always the one who will be turned to by the others. As we are told of John Newton in his unconverted days, there was a pious coxwain on board, and, a storm coming on, there was no safe place in all the ship for John to sit in but alongside the pious coxwain.

The heavenly man is himself personally weak; he has no strength to show. The natural desire in us is to wish to show our ability, but we can only take the place of helplessness; and that is the place of power. We must always carry with us the remembrance that we are across Jordan—that we are dead men, and therefore perfectly helpless in a human point of view. It was what you would call a very ridiculous thing—this marching round Jericho; there they were, all these armed men, and seven priests bearing seven trumpets of ram's horns: the armour was character, and the trumpets dependence. There they went—armed men, priests, and trumpets—and I do not see any power that you have. No, you

do not ; you may not *see* it, but you will *feel* it some day.

I think God often lets us get into such a place as this, that we may just feel our dependence before He brings in His power. Just as in the shipwreck in Paul's day ; all looked very hopeless at first, but every one was saved in the end, though it was on broken pieces of the ship. If man has rejected Christ, and has been the instrument of His rejection, God, if he ever use him again, must do so where nothing can come out of man. It must be walking on the water, now, where man is nothing. Man, except as a vessel, is entirely set aside by God ; even Paul was not able to use his natural abilities ; he first tried by prayer to have the thorn removed, but he ends by accepting it, as he says " that the power of Christ may rest upon me ;" and therefore his letters were better than his speaking, taking them as merely human works.

What is the force of the tenth verse ? I always connect it with a saying of dear Mr. Bellett's, That the time was not come yet for us to sing aloud—to shout ; you cannot call upon every one to praise the Lord ; it is not the day of victory—it is not the universal hymn yet : " The words of wise men are heard in quiet." It is very remarkable, in every department, the quietness with which a man issues his orders if he is sure of power. The not shouting here is, I think,

that you are not to anticipate—not even in a certain way, to speak of your expectations—not to tell the world what will be done some day.

I have two characteristics: I am an armed man defying the world, and I am praying to God because I have no strength. If I look at Satan I am not a bit afraid; I can stand in armour against Satan. But with God I am only dependent; the armour is not a bit of use Godward. People often turn it just the other way round, and think that, if they are behaving well, they will get what they want out of God; and they meanwhile pray against Satan. In that way I object to people saying, Let us pray about a thing, unless they act according to their light at the same time. People just pray to ease their consciences; they are often like Balaam: they know what they ought to do, but they do not like it, and so they pray to relieve their consciences for their negligence. The great thing in prayer is, not so much that I am *going* to God about anything, as that I have learnt from Him how to act. The day is come when our mouths should be opened with all boldness. That verse in Ephesians is a very remarkable one; chapter vi. 19. The apostle is in prison at the time; and his desire is “that utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth boldly.” It does not appear that he ever got the desired opportunity himself; so that the answer to that prayer *we*

ought to be. Philippians would be the answer to it: "Many waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear."

It is remarkable that one of these seven days must have been the Sabbath. If they began to go round on the first day of the week, this seventh day would be it.

Verses 17-19.—It was all belonging to God, but yet they were not to touch it. It is a very bright opening to their story in the land, showing us with distinctness the power of God. And yet at this very moment Achan comes in and lays hold of two things which corrupt the whole of society—money and dress.

As to what Jericho is in itself, I think it is, "The world will hate you." It is the world as against Christ. It is not merely that you can take it or leave it as you like; it is *antagonistic*. They were encroaching on it, and this it would not stand. In Revelation you get "The synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not;" they are the very ones who interfere and hinder. There is no place to which Paul goes where the Jews are not his opponents. I question whether a person comes in conflict with this if he be not on heavenly ground. Many a saint is in conflict with his own temper, evil tastes, and so on, and has never got to standing against the world for *Christ*. It is the world against *Christ* that Jericho is. If a man be turned out

of his employment for Christ, shunned because he is standing faithfully for Him, I say that is Jericho.

And I have seen most remarkable instances of the walls falling down just as they did here. I remember a father who said to his daughter, "You must not go to any meetings except the morning meeting, and you may not visit any one." I said, on being asked as to this, "Do just what you are told." And in a very short time afterwards, he said, "Why do you not go to see some of your friends, or ask some of them here?" The walls fell down. I say, Never give up your conscience, but submit to the limitation of your liberty. *God* has to do with my conscience, though *man* may have to do with my liberty as a human being. But where saints fail is in asserting their rights, and then they become refractory. It is grievous when the ordinance of God and Christ's service clash. This is what Satan is always aiming at—seeking "to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." The principles that God lays down in Scripture are the ones we are to act upon. We all have different difficulties—a different world to meet—but it is everything to walk with God in obedience to Him. A wife who goes to the Establishment now and then with her husband to conciliate him, has lost all

power. But, if she be thoroughly faithful to her light, she will yet see the walls fall down.

Verse 23.—All her house! What a wonderful thing! How God delights to include all that our hearts are set upon in the blessing! The wonderful bountifulness of God! He loves to do everything in a magnificent way; there is no smallness in His acts.

Verses 24-27.—Who do you think was the youngest son? My impression is that it is Antichrist. Jericho, this world-city, was begun in Adam, the eldest son; and it will be ended in Antichrist, the last man. “Now is the prince of this world judged.”

## CHAPTER VII.

WHAT a most remarkable victory was this conquest of Jericho! It was distinctly the hand of God; there were no visible means. And now at a small place, Israel flees before the enemy, which discomfits them utterly. This is a very singular change, and a very sudden one, and has to be accounted for. You get in the first verse an intimation of what is the matter, though the people did not know it. But, as we have noticed already, as soon as they began to act they found their power was gone.

Certainly the Lord would never desert His people. His command to them was to take pos-

session; and in the conquest of Jericho He had given them a most singular instance of His presence with them: He had shown them how He, without any human means, could cause the enemy to be overcome; and now, in the case of a very small city, the contrary occurs.

The reason of it all is, that one man—not the majority of the army, but *one man*—“took of the accursed thing,” and implicated the whole army in his act; and God would not go up with the people in consequence.

It is the history of Christendom. The order to the church was to overcome the world—to bring the Rahabs out of it; but for many a century the church has not been able to overcome it. It is not that there have not been true and faithful men in it; but there is no single denomination that stands forth as a light in the world, as a witness in the midst of it. The church has lost its candlestick for many a long day. The people of God now are not able to take a heavenly standing. Where is the church that has kept it? God may go on in grace with His people, but He will show them where the defect has come in. One man took; it was a sample of the leaven that was at work, and the whole of Israel was implicated.

The word “accursed,” which we find in the preceding chapter and here, is the same as “devoted;” it means that it is *all* the Lord’s; you are not to touch it.

There cannot be walk in faith and power unless there be self-judgment. The overcomers of the Church decay in Rev. ii. and iii., are those who overcome that which has brought in that decay.

Well, this is how the thing occurred historically; but now you cannot turn out the Achans; all you can do is to purge yourself. "If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." When first I awake to the state of things in which I am, I am miserable because of that state, and my only way of action is to purge myself from it. But when I have done this I cannot, as people often fancy they can, relieve myself from the pressure of the condition in which the church is; I cannot escape from it. As a great man once said in a fine house, "I am looking for a quiet corner of the house in which I can pray;" so all we can do is to get up into the attic by ourselves: we cannot get out of the house.

In this chapter, Joshua is tremendously discouraged by the fact that the people flee before their enemies; he falls to the earth upon his face before the ark. But God says, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?" You must *find out the evil*. The abominable rationalism of the day is that God is *love* and not *holiness*; and I say this is dreadful.

But, you say, who is the person who can get clear of everything? I answer, No one can; but it is a great thing that I do not *tolerate* it. Non-toleration is our principle. The flesh is in me. Yes, but do you tolerate it? No. Then that is a great step. And next the church question: Do you tolerate church evil? No; I do not tolerate it. If you allow evil you have a bad conscience. So I say, I come to this principle in my church association, that I do not tolerate evil. God is maintaining us, not simply as a saved people, but as a heavenly people; and if He be not maintaining us there is something wrong. "The Lord *shall* deliver me from every evil work."

The question is, What is God's purpose for His people? When a man goes to war he knows what he has to reckon on. I reckon on the power of God to support me against all odds down here, unless I am coquetting with evil; and then He says, I cannot support you, because you are connected with this. He *cares* for His people wherever they are: He blessed Isaac a hundred-fold when he was in the land of the Philistines. It is no evidence of His presence that He cares for His children; but it *is* that He keeps you from evil.

Here the evil affected the children of Israel only circumstantially. It did not soil the conscience individually, but it affected them in their

propriatorship and nationally. Any godly one amongst them would not feel hindered if he were looking to God for his own comfort and blessing that day. But now, because of the unity of the Spirit, I believe a saint may be under a depression through going on right in his own heart and ways, because of what is allowed by others. I believe you may be in this condition when there is nothing traceable to yourself; for just as Israel was represented by the twelve loaves, are we by the one. Each one is not bound to find out the evil, but each one is responsible to wait on God to discover it. I do not think it is happy work to go seeking out evil. I think you may feel that something is wrong, and judge yourself, and wait on God to show it, None of the disciples knew that Judas was a traitor; but the Lord shows John in answer to prayer: "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it."

I do not think undiscovered evil prevents His coming into the midst of His people when they are gathered together in His name; He loves to come amongst them; but this I will say, though I do not wish to offend any one, that He will not come there where there is a *rule*—a predetermined course. If there be a rule He cannot come in; for if He did He would have either to abrogate it or be less than it. If many saints were gathered with a rule He could not come in. If they were

ignorant, and were willing to be shown the truth, of course they would soon be taught; but people often call wilfulness ignorance. It is possible to have a great deal of personal enjoyment of the Lord, and yet not at all know what it is to enjoy His presence. I do not believe any soul, the most excellent, the most godly, in a man-made system, knows Christ as He reveals Himself in the midst of His people—knows what is His presence in its true sense. It is not that you and I as individuals, enjoy the Lord's presence; it is that we are gathered round His person; *all* of us having the same title to be there, *all* of us children of the one Father, from the least to the greatest. I take Scripture as it speaks: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst."

He comes into the midst of His saints gathered; and it is as the One risen from the dead, and leading them into all the moral elevation of His own position. And they have the sense of His presence with them. But to thus know Him you cannot be mixed up with what is wrong—with ecclesiastical rules; His eyes would then be "as a flame of fire."

His presence in the midst of His people is not at all the same thing as manifestation of Himself to an individual soul. It is a Person taking His place in the midst; not a Person coming in grace to a lonely one. A person may stay away from

the table and say they are very happy in their own room, and they *may* be very happy, but they have not got at all the same thing as they would have if in the midst of those gathered to His name.

People who are *not* gathered to His name are not responsible for the ground, for they are not on it; but they are responsible to find it. "His *name*" means that when you are thus gathered, all is as He would have it. People say, If you do this you will have all sorts of confusion; but facts are against this.

What shows the church's power, is its being able to maintain its position as a heavenly people on the earth. I defy any person to say that the church has done this. On the contrary, it has mixed itself up with the world. Can any one show me anything on earth like 1 Cor. xii.? At the best we are only trying to creep out of the ruins. I am sure God helps the saints to do this, but they must, as He says to Joshua, get rid of the evil; there must be a clear riddance of it. Some one remarked that Hosea is the second book of Joshua; and it is very remarkable that the valley where Achan was stoned should be made the "door of hope" for the people to return to the land by.

We see thus that God cannot go on with evil. it is not the fact, as people so often say, that simple prayer settles everything. The object of

prayer is to learn the mind and get the help of God; and God can have nothing to do with you until you have got rid of evil. Hearing this forty years ago, delivered me from systems: "God will not hear you till you are clear of evil." I did not know what to do or where to go, but I saw that God's great principle is, first get clear of evil: "Cease to do evil."

Another thing that is a great comfort in all this is, that when I set my mind to discover the evil, God will show it to me. They were to judge themselves—to separate themselves from everything that they knew to be evil. And then we see that, when God's finger is laid upon Achan, he confesses. He will be the first to confess when God has touched him. But the finger of God was laid upon Achan *before* he confessed; if he had come forward before this and had told of himself, it would have been an evidence of repentance; but now it was too late. Thus a great many things that are brought out, if they had been confessed before, might never have been known by the assembly at all. Whether a matter should be made known or not depends on the pastor. Deliberation belongs to the pastors; and adjudication to the assembly.

## CHAPTER VIII.

VERSES 1, 2.—Here we get God's power acting, but not signalling the people. This is where the Irvingites went wrong; they expected to be signalled. I do not expect the same amount of manifestation now as in the early days of the church, though I believe the Holy Ghost is just as powerful in this room as ever He was, but He does not manifest His power in the same way that He did then.

I believe we get a great deal of instruction from Ai. When Joshua stretched out his spear it was not a preconcerted signal; it was really God's word to him: "Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai, for I will give it into thy hand." The city was apparently taken by ambush, by cleverness, by military stratagem, but, as to fact, it was God gave it into their hand.

Wherein we have failed God does not ever signalise us. The same power was still with them, but not the same manifestation. It is not in reference to service; it is in reference to position. If it were in reference to service, it would be a great argument for the use of means. You never saw a self-confident man yet that he did not come down. Peter would never have gone into the high priest's house if he had not under-estimated his foe. The armour and the trumpet is our

true place ; it is heavenly position. I do not believe Ephesians is for service as such ; it is holding our ground.

I think it is more Ai that is going on now ; there is very little of Jericho. There is not magnificence or display now, though the same divine power ; and there is a great deal more means used—more toil—perhaps waiting on God in prayer to get this standing, whereas before, souls were in it without any effort. Now you never see a man get on to heavenly ground that there is not more or less of self-sacrificing toil ; everyone sees the struggle going on. There is now nothing of the singular way in which God planted them in the land at first.

It is a wonderful thing to study the ways of God with His people. In the worst days Paul says to his pupil : Be of good courage ; “ God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” Do not be discouraged ; it may not be so easy to get possession as it was at first, but press on, and you will certainly get it. Joshua *did* give them the land ; and though it is no effort to get title, it is always labour to possess ; practically, you have to *take* possession.

Well, it is a very comforting thing to think that the Lord is our God, and, in the midst of all the weakness, to see what he would do for us if we, with cheerfulness and courage go on.

Verses 25-29.—When Ai is at last taken by another signal victory, God teaches us a fresh lesson, and that is, that He uses His power to make us a heavenly people, and that on *earth*—not in heaven. There is really no promise given to us of heaven when we die, though of course we shall be in heaven then. It is a great thing for the soul to get hold of the fact that God ministers His power in the present day to set us as heavenly men on the earth. Christ being rejected was the condemnation of the world, but it has turned to richest blessing for the saints; for God has given us heaven instead of earth in consequence of it, and ministers His power, enabling us in the face of all that is here, to be heavenly men.

The higher thing would be to turn to Jericho and say, I do not want the earthly things; but in Ai we see that we are allowed to have some of the spoil. It is not as it was in the early chapters of the Acts, where no one said “that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common,” and where any who had “lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices, and laid them down at the apostles’ feet.” By-and-bye we find this was not the case; it was, “every man *according to his ability* determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea.” And still later on the apostle charges “them that are rich in this world.”

It is not now a question of giving all up, but of consecration to the Lord. Still, a man might imperil everything here for the sake of the testimony; like Abram who went out by night with all his servants to rescue "his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people." No doubt Jericho is the brighter light, but with no less doubt is there just as much of divine power in the subjugation of Ai as of Jericho.

It has been remarked that the way in which Joshua treated the king—not allowing his dead body to stay hanging all night—showed that he acknowledged the land to be already the Lord's. "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, that thy land be not defiled." We are to treat even our enemies in a heavenly way. Though Joshua had not possession of it, yet he treats the land as his and as Jehovah's.

Verses 30, 31.—Then he establishes the law in it: it was to be read upon two mountains, Ebal and Gerizim—the mountain of curse, and the mountain of blessing. It is an old and very interesting remark, that where the curse was, there was an altar; where the blessing was there was none; just as in Exodus xx., you get all the terrors of the law, and then the altar to meet them. They never reached to the blessings.

Verses 32–35.—They were all brought unto the

one standing. It was a wonderful sight! There they were, the whole company, the congregation of Israel, and the little ones, and the strangers, brought together to hear this recital—to hear what God was, and claimed respecting them on this new ground. All were thus formally introduced on to it.

## CHAPTER IX.

Now we come to a very different kind of thing—man failing. And man always fails first in the direction of self-confidence. The thirteenth of John gives us a parallel to this. That chapter is really a history of the church, it shows us all the grace of Christ, and the cause of all the disorder and distraction in the church ever since. If you want an epitome, an internal history of the church, I give you John xiii. In taking heavenly ground the odds are against us—ourselves, and everything; and if God be not for us we shall surely fail. There was self-confidence where Satan was, and so they were not able to meet him.

It is a very remarkable thing in connection with morals, that you cannot predicate what will be the result of a certain evil; I mean the offspring cannot be foreknown from the parent. For instance, take the Corinthians. They did not judge the evil that was within, and the conse-

quence was, they went themselves to be judged by those that were without. This comes out plainly if you look at chapters v. and vi., in connection with each other; before quite disposing of the subject in the fifth, he turns to tell them of their failure in going to law before the unbelievers, and then ends with "Flee fornication." Just in this way Bethesda people say there is no connection between their course now and that which happened years before in Plymouth. We are often deceived by the fruit, and do not see the root that it springs from.

So the people are deceived by the Gibeonites. In their case self-confidence was the fruit of unpurged sin in the assembly. It is another thing quite that now deceives them; it is wiles: "The men took of the victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord."

I think that the Gibeonites give us in figure the world getting into the church, and making terms with it. It is the old story—Balaam's proposition: you cannot kill God's people, but you can entertain them, make up with them, intermarry with them, and thus morally overcome them.

They were not near them; they were a great way off; they could not do them any harm from there. Just as people say now: We are very far removed from laxity. But if the devil be at the end of the chain it does not signify how long it is.

He was there with these men of Gibeon just to prevent the people extirpating them. It is a figure of course; you cannot now destroy men; but you must be superior to them.

It was the elders who were at fault: "the princes of the congregation." The point of mischief was making a *league* with them whether they were far off or near. If they were far off, let them stay there; why should they make a league at all in that case? But the league being made, when Saul thought to break it, he got into trouble. "After vows" you cannot "make inquiry." If a man marries an unconverted woman it is too late to make inquiries after. The thing was not to make the league; if they were far off so much the better; but they were *near* whilst they pretended to be a great way off. That was their wile.

Verse 27.—"Joshua made them hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord." They afterwards got the name of Nethinims. The two things that remained with Israel were the Nethinims and the porters. The church has in a way been served by the adoption of Christianity by the world; it renders a kind of external service to us.

Still it is remarkable how the heavenly position is thwarted on every side. The object of Satan is to thwart it. The moment all were

introduced—the very mothers with their babes in their arms—that moment the hallowed circle is broken into by their making this league with the Gibeonites. Yet the world itself does not like their league with God's people; they turn upon them, and thus Gibeon becomes a trap for its destruction. I believe Gibeon represents false ones—hypocrites, if you like. The great thing in the beginning of Acts was that “no man durst join himself to them;” they were afraid of them. In another light Gibeon represents the flesh that does not like the heavenly exaction. The leaders—“princes”—are those who addict themselves to the care of the assembly, and who, if evil comes in, are, in a certain sense chargeable: “They watch for your souls, as they that must give account.”

The point is to be extremely careful of any mixture that is not of God. It does not matter how far off you may be from a thing; the question is, is it of *God*? Immediately after all had taken their place come these strangers from very far off, and want wilily to take that place too. The people ought to have said: You are not one of this company that stood round about Mount Ebal, and we cannot have anything to do with you. They had distinctly taken possession of the land for God; nothing was to withstand them; they were to be exclusively the people of God upon earth, they had just avowed it down

to the smallest of their details, their children and their strangers; and they ought to have said: No; we are God's people, and we must stand separate.

*Possession* is the grand point here. In the book of Deuteronomy we find that *dwelling*, not possession, is the time for worship. When they brought the basket of first fruits they were dwelling; it was no more conflict. The idea was, that you took the first ripe thing that you saw, put it into your basket, and went up to Jerusalem saying, "I am come unto the country which the Lord swore unto our fathers for to give us."

## CHAPTER X.

VERSES 1-3.—It is remarkable now that the king of Jerusalem is awakened—the central place. It is not now the nations waiting for the people to subdue them, but it is opposition; they provoke them to battle.

Verse 4.—See how the people are connected with Gibeon now.

Verses 6-8.—It is interesting to mark the purpose of God, and to see how He delights to succour. Of course this must not be read as a book of war, but as a moral thing; it is possession of *heaven*. I have failed now, but this failure is turned to blessing. God says, Do not

be afraid ; I will give it all into your hand. For the possession of heaven we must have a heavenly man. And a heavenly man is a man sustained by God, supported by heavenly streams, heavenly things ; even the manna came down from heaven : “ Man did eat angel’s food ; ” a man who is superior to all the varieties of things down here. “ The Son of man *who is in heaven* ; ” He never lost His heavenly character though He was on earth.

Verses 13, 14.—You see God was determined to destroy them : the day is not to close until possession is obtained. What a wonderful thing ! Gibeon was a trap for the rest of the inhabitants now. And it was from Jerusalem the opposition emanated ; it was from the head. It was one great effort of the enemy in connection with Gibeon.

It is a grand day when you are a perfectly heavenly man ! God says, I will not let the sun go down until it happens. It is the greatest day in one’s life when one is put in divine power superior to everything here. People say, I do not set up for being heavenly, making this an excuse for not being so. But I say, you *are* heavenly ; it is what you are called to. The character of the heavenly man is that he is superior to every man who is not for God ; he is to treat them all as dead ; and if he be dead himself no one can hurt him.

The thing is, Are you *set* for being a heavenly man? It is a great difference as to whether you are trying to get *out* of the world or trying to get *on* in it. That is the question to decide. It makes a wonderful difference to a man which he is doing. Associations grow upon you; you often cannot tell why you do a thing. People generally give two excuses for themselves in worldliness; one is that they are used to certain things; the other, that they can afford them.

I think it is a very good thing for a person to be honest, and to say: I take the ground of a heavenly man. I may have exposed myself to the sneers of people for making a profession I so little maintain, but still I do make this profession, and I do seek to maintain it. "Hold fast the profession of your hope without wavering." It is your calling. You cannot go back from it, and try to evade the responsibility of it by refusing to accept it. Lot might say he was not a pilgrim nor a stranger; but he came out on that ground, and in the end he was reduced to it, and miserably too. I am sure that in the long run the one who is set upon heaven gets on the best here; and even if I were in prison, I should have the Lord with me.

## CHAPTER XI.

THEY had to return to Gilgal, as we see in the last chapter; how else could they *start* from it? They always had to return to the place where they had rolled off the reproach of Egypt. When you return to Gilgal you return to all that the cross accomplished. People often return to the cross to get rid of their sins; but the right way is to return to the cross to get rid of yourself. There are these three things: First, I am cleared from everything that God had against me. Second, I am united in glory to the One who has cleared me. Third, I return to the cross to get rid of everything in me that hinders the practical shining out of the life of the One to whom I am united. The first you never can do. The second is only done once by the Spirit. The third you are doing every day—it is circumcision; going about always with the knife in your hand.

Now it is possible for a person to aim at the third, and never to have got the second; then he would be legal; and it is possible for a person to have the second and never go on to the third, and then he would be worldly—the sad state in which the Corinthians were. And so Paul shows them the cross that they may there get rid of themselves. Often a saint, after a very happy meeting or private time, will have a fall just

because he is trusting to himself and not to Christ; he has not gone back to Gilgal.

Verses 1-5.—This is the last great battle; it is a desperate struggle, and you must bear in mind that the army has been successful until this; but no amount of success without complete subjugation will ever silence the foe, or cause him to abandon his position. There had been victories enough to make them all quail—to make them all surrender; but now they make one violent effort from all sides, north, south, east, and west. The enemy in the wilderness—Amalek—was a direct enemy to yourself; but in the land the effort of the enemy is to prevent your getting possession of it. *There* he is determined not to let you pass; *here* he will prevent your being a heavenly man in the land that you have reached. *There* he will not let you travel, will not let you *get* to the land; so you meet him at the beginning of the journey—at Rephidim. It is sad to see how often saints are stopped at their beginning. Amalek is more than the *flesh*, for God says He will “utterly put out the remembrance of it from under heaven;” it is the terrible spirit that acts against God. When you get out into the wilderness you find that nothing helps you; there is no bread, no water, and up comes the enemy to dispute your passage. That is the wilderness for you.

Any one who reads this history in Exodus

reads his own. All the difficulties he will have to encounter, and also the divine way in which to meet them. Indeed the Old Testament is very like what is now called a surveying ship, which is a ship that goes about to mark out the true path for vessels, and to point out where the rocks and shoals are; to mark how a quicksand lies here and another there. In my knowledge of brethren nothing has hindered progress more than people thinking that they have done enough—thinking they have made a very good sweep of the world, stripped off so much, made such renunciation at the start that there is nothing more left to be done; instead of which there is no change of circumstances that does not bring a new battle with it. Everyone knows that what does not seem worldly this year may next. You must wait until things come before you say there is nothing to give up.

Verses 6-8.—All so many battles to oppose your being a heavenly man. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life," is more the Amalek battle. The thing here is that God *does* give possession, and He will support you in taking it. It is not that there will not be opposition, but that you will surmount it all.

Verses 10-13.—Why did Joshua burn Hazor? Because it was the seat of power—the leader. This is very different to what was done by Christians when they made Rome their chief city;

they took pagan eminence and sought thereby eminence for Christianity. They ought to have said, We cannot allow any connection with earthly eminence; we must destroy it.

Verses 15-20.—A natural man reading this says it is a terrible thing to be killing people off in this way—taking possession of a land and driving the inhabitants out of it; he does not see that it is God setting aside earthly people who had rebelled against Him, and using Israel as His sword to do it. It was governmental judgment.

Verses 21-23.—Well, possession was an established thing. I think there is a moment in the history of a soul when it knows that it *has* possession. But, if you think that there are no more enemies to be overcome, you are mistaken, for there are. It is something like what we get in Peter: “After ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” It is a great thing to get a soul *settled*. But at the same time it will not do to rest on your oars, and think there is nothing more to be done. However, there was no more fighting; this is the end of it; the neck of the enemy was broken; there was no more avowed opposition; “the land *rested from war*.” There must be two antagonistic parties to have a war. Israel were owned to be the masters of the land, though they had not carried out their rights to the proper limits.

## CHAPTER XII.

THERE were thirty-one kings conquered by Joshua on this side of Jordan (without counting those whom "Moses, the servant of the Lord and the children of Israel did smite"); those who understand numbers may perhaps make something of that.

## CHAPTER XIII.

FROM this chapter out a new thing comes before us. Having traced the rise and progress of the heavenly man, we now come to the story of his failures, with, however, a bright witness to the contrary in the fourteenth chapter.

The five lords of the Philistines, who gave the people immense trouble afterwards, are the first mentioned as amongst the nations still unsubdued. But a very important principle comes out in connection with them. The Lord says to Joshua: "Divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance." Conquered or not conquered they are to divide it. It needs the fourteenth of John to explain it: "I go to prepare a place for you." It is not a question of whether you have entered into it, or whether you enjoy it; there is the place, the heavenly portion for you, and you *ought* to enjoy it. John never puts you in heaven as Paul does; but he wants

you to get a certain comfort from the fact that you have a place there.

There is a warning in Deut. xi., as to being careless in the possession of the land; and I notice in people who are careless as to their heavenly calling, that they are worse off than if they had never left Egypt; there they had the water of the river; in the land they have nothing; the rain is stayed from them, and the earth yields not its fruit. A Christian is sometimes less happy than a worldly man; he is not worse off as to the future, but he is as to the present, for he has neither the world nor the Lord, and this simply because he is not faithful.

God allowed the Philistines to remain, but still you will find that decline came in through their being there. It is an old remark that people are often more careful as to their walk when they are just coming out of Egypt than they are when they are established. This is very specious. A person may be very happy in what he possesses, and yet all the time be allowing something, which he ought to destroy, to remain and be tributary to him. I say you are losing ground if you do; you would have subdued this thing once, but now you do not because it is tributary to you.

We find the tribe of Levi here without any inheritance; they were in the land, enjoying all the fruits of it, though not owning it themselves.

And this is very much the place that we shall hold in the millennium: we shall have the enjoyment of all the holy things of God, but we shall not be on the earth.

It is an immense thing for the soul to get hold of the simple fact that God delights in our having possession. God *commands* us to go in and possess; and there is an enjoyment connected with it—an enjoyment that eye has not seen nor ear heard.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

THE two and a half tribes get heaven; they suffer for heaven; but they never enjoy heaven. They are within the inheritance—the Euphrates—but they have not crossed the Jordan. All the fighting men had to suffer, but these never knew what it was to take a direct heavenly position.

But now we get in Caleb the character of the man, and the privileges and advantages of the man who walks in simple faith towards God. There is such a thing as general blessing and particular blessing. For instance, in John xx., “peace” is a general blessing; but He teaches Mary Magdalene individually; He says to her, “Go to my brethren and say unto them;” she has got this before they have it. The faithful one always gets the advantage; there is no such

thing as any one losing in this world for Christ; he loses temporarily, but on the whole he does not, because "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith;" there is manifold more even in this present time.

So here Caleb. He was faithful all through; he was sent to spy out the land, and the very spot that discouraged the other spies was the one that fell to his share. He gives us a picture of the privileged position of one who does not decline. God always gives us a sample in His word of what a man can be.

I look upon Hebron as a contrast to Gilgal. You start to fight from Gilgal; but Hebron is the place of rest. It is the place of rest, the place of rendezvous, and the place of the throne. Abraham was the heavenly man, travelling a pilgrim and a stranger through the earth, and there he finds a grave; it is there Sarah dies and is buried. For the heavenly man on earth there is only a grave.

But what is very remarkable is that Hebron also was the city that frightened all Israel and prevented their going up to possess the promised land. And it was "built seven years before Zoan in Egypt;" it was a very old city. Looked at in connection with Satan it is the place of fear—of "wicked spirits in heavenly places," as Ephesians tells us. And this gives us a wonderful moral lesson: the place of the greatest

difficulty becomes the place of the greatest victory; the place that was the stronghold of the enemy becomes the place the most distinguished by the power of Christ: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" I die at Hebron as a natural man; it is the only way I can get rid of the enemy; and there where the grave was, is for the saints the rendezvous after battle; there faith triumphs. Where I die there I get the victory.

And not only this, but, if I overcome there, I shall also reign there. Hebron is, lastly, the throne; David was crowned there.

Thus we get these two things in Hebron: there is the heavenly man walking on earth by faith, and to him there is a burying place here; I am a man on earth with heavenly hopes going on to heaven. But I am also a king and a priest, and I know what a wonderful thing it is to be superior to everything here that opposes my possession of that place that is given me in heaven. Every saint ought to be both an Abraham and a Caleb. Stephen is both: he finds a burying place here, and he goes to glory; in him also it comes out that the hope of Israel is over—that Sarah is buried.

But in connection with the law of the battle there is a point that we may do well to notice. You will find it in Num. xxxi. The blessing at first sight appears to be general, but there is

really a difference between those who took an active part in the battle and those who did not, though it says that those who stayed at home and those who went to war were to share and share alike. If they went to war and brought back as spoil a thousand head of cattle, they divided with those who remained at home, five hundred to each. But has the man who went to war then no advantage? Yes, he has. He gives only one out of his five hundred, and that, too, direct to the Lord; it is the priest's portion. But the others had to give one out of every fifty, and that to the Levites.

I believe this explains what abounds in the church now; people holding truth which they have never fought for themselves. "The sixpence you make, wears like steel." It is a very solemn thing if the truth you have gained has not brought you nearer to God. I do not object to Levitical service, but I say, Do we know anything of priestly? What you have won in battle brings you into communion with God in a way that non-fighters never know. No person is able to maintain the truth who is not a living example of it; you cannot put any one higher than you are yourself. And I think it is a very low condition of things when people will suffer for service and not for truth. I ought to feel that I have Satan to do with, and that I mean to get this place which our Father's counsel has for me.

I see fourthings leading me on to the highest point: first, the Father's counsel; second, the Son has accomplished it for me; third, the Holy Ghost is working it in me; and fourth, the servant's duty is to lead me to it. So we are all set for the top; and I believe Satan is determinately set against any one who is determined to reach it; he will bring all his forces to bear upon that one. It is the place where you are assailed most, but it is the path of power. Whenever Satan sees a person going on well, he always lays a snare for him, and a snare is a thing that it is easy to get into, and difficult to get out of. When you have been going on well is just the time for him; as we have been seeing, it was after the victory of Jericho came the defeat. If you set yourself for possession, I doubt not you will get plenty of trouble; but I would sooner have power on my side and plenty of enemies, than I would have no enemies and no power.

So Caleb, this faithful man, if you ask what advantage he got over the rest, I answer, he got the great stronghold Hebron. We might think that one who did not go through so much was quite as well off; but he was not. The point is to see what a much better thing it is to follow the Lord fully.

There is a very beautiful thing in 1 Sam. xxx., in connection with this, as to whether we are set

for it. Here David's men were quite ready to go with him; they set out to go, but David would not hear of it: "they were so faint that they could not follow." And when they returned with the spoil he made all "part alike." His men were worn out, they were faint; it was not a matter of indifference with them as to whether they went with him or not. And thus it is a very comforting passage to us, for some may not be able to proceed, still they have purpose of heart, and this will not be forgotten.

## CHAPTER XV.

HERE we get another mention of Caleb. I have always thought that he could not carry it out fully himself, and so his brother's son helped to carry it out. The idea is that they cleared their property—that they were a family of faith.

Caleb, as a spy, was a servant of God. God, I believe, opens out to His servants what He is going to do, so that they may lead His people into it. The other spies behaved exceedingly badly; they inspired the people with their own fears. I have often admired the way in which Joshua sank back into the ranks of the people, to come out again when his day came. He and Caleb, instead of getting all that which they had faith to take possession of, had to go wandering through the wilderness for forty years. Caleb

is one who stands out as a type of what the church ought to be; he says, "I am as strong this day as in the day that Moses sent me." Faith never grows old.

Verse 63.—Here we get Jerusalem with the Jebusites in it, and "Judah could not drive them out." It was David who "took the stronghold of Zion: the same is the city of David." It is remarkable that David at the close of his history recalls the mighty men that he had during his rejection, not during his royalty.

And the Lord looking down through all these years—it is not so much the church as the servants that are before Him; when the church failed it was the servants who commenced it; it is the evil servant who says in his heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming." And when the cry came and ministry revived, there was a revival of the saints. I do not exonerate the congregation, but to a certain point I excuse them. In the epistles to the churches it is "the angel" that is addressed; and this angel is not simply one person, a particular gift, as is often thought. The church itself is looked upon as the angel; it might fail in being a true representative before the Lord; but if there were but one faithful person, like Gaius, it would be responded to by him. It is remarkable that with Gaius comes an exclusiveness that never was before: there is the exclusive name of "friends"—those who were really friendly;

it is not the generic name of "brethren;" some were evidently hostile; Diotrephes was. But the apostle supposes "an ear to hear;" and this makes everything more definite at the close.

Well, I think Caleb's history is a very encouraging one. He says, "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land," and I am sure we can say, He *does* delight in us, and He *has* brought us in. I feel that, having such things, we owe an immense responsibility towards the rest of the saints in Dublin. A Caleb has immense responsibility towards others: "Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." It is not seeking to proselytize, but to deliver. "Of some have compassion, making a difference," you must deal gently with them; others it can only be "with fear." And when we look at David's mighty men we see they did not war so much for the good of David as for the good of his country; it was a patriotic thing. It was a public act—not a sectarian one, if I am to speak plainly.

## CHAPTER XVI.

WE find now that some of the tribes have full possession, but not all of them; still, there is some failure in each of them, as we find in the last verse of chapter xv. There is a point where each fails; the lot of their inheritance

they have in possession, but there are still enemies. So in the last verse of this chapter.

## CHAPTER XVII.

HERE we find the same as to the half tribe of Manasseh; it is the lesson that we never do attain to full possession. I do not mean that there is lack of faithfulness, but still it is a fact. We have always something to attain to. It is impossible to suppose that you can reach perfection here; the actual possession is in measure. It is a never ceasing warfare; it is not because a person has got firm on the ground that there is a point where there is nothing to conquer. You must be always attaining.

In another place it says God allowed the nations to continue in the land, lest the wild beasts should increase upon them; and it is a wonderful thing how the world protects the people of God from evil and violence in that way. A wicked man will not defraud a Christian, because men in general would not stand it; so the fear of men in general secures you your rights.

But you never can say that you have done everything, that all is cleared away. So it is a great mischief to a saint when he thinks that he has made such a good stand, that there is nothing more left to do; as for instance, a man giving up the army, and thinking it so great a

thing, that nothing more is needed. As a writer once said : " It is the most unfortunate thing for most men to do a great action, because they then think they never need do another."

When Peter left the ship to walk on the water, the Lord might have said to him, Do not think you will never have to do this again ; for the fact was, the ship *did* tempt him again. There may be a trial before you—a renunciation that you have never had before. Or it may be some favour ; as God said to Gideon, " Bring them down to the water ;" a mercy often tries people more than a trial.

The enemies are people who encroach on your property, and at the same time infect you with their society.

Verse 13.—Here we get it again. Here is where the mistake is : " They put the Canaanites to tribute, but did not utterly drive them out." A person may say, I *cannot* drive them all out. But the question is, Do you *set* yourself to do so ? When they put them under tribute, they ceased to drive them out. It is almost better for a man not to be a heavenly man at all, than to say he is, and not maintain it. He is like a bird with a wounded wing ; he cannot walk, and he cannot fly ; he is neither fit for land nor sky. Nothing can stand but the heavenly man. The Lord walked through this earth as a heavenly man ; through here in human nature, and having

perfect sympathy with human weakness apart from sin, He was ever "the Son of man who is in heaven." It was not that He adopted man's feelings and gave them a gilding; it was divine feelings exhibited in a man.

Believers agree in saying they are new *creatures*; but that is not true; a butterfly is a new creature; but we are a new *creation*. It is not one creature altered into another creature of the same creation, but it is a new creation altogether. This is the argument of Cor. xv. It is not a question of what we shall be, but the apostle is showing, by the present state of things, that there are now different kinds of flesh, and that then there will be the heavenly man as well as the earthly one.

And I am now to carry out this new creation in the old one. If I say the old creation is a barrier to my carrying out the new, then I am impugning my Creator. The eye is all right in itself; it is the will that works it that makes the mischief; so I carry about in my body, "the dying of the Lord Jesus," that I may be getting rid of everything that hinders my being a true exponent of the life of Jesus upon earth. He is the head of the new creation. The Old Testament is the history of the old man under trial, and that is always failure: the New Testament is the second man, and that is always success. Everything is brought out again in

Christ that had failed in Adam : the first man was tried in every conceivable way ; innocence, conscience, law—every way ; and then Christ comes in.

Verses 16-18.—This gives us fresh conquests. You can get an accession—an increase—to what you already possess. Thus, a person may get in advance beyond his brethren in heavenly things, because of his faithfulness. An interesting thought in connection with this, is the way in which the Lord gave Mary Magdalene Ephesian truth which He does not propound to the assembly. He gave the message to her ; He considered her to be in a fit state to receive it, and *state* is what is required. You will find that every servant of God is put through a state of things which will fit him to give out to others the trust that God reveals to him. God puts each where He will be able best to expound the truth He has given him. Paul in prison is in the fit place to declare heavenly truth ; and John in Patmos is in the fit place to see what God thought of the earth. If you were to transpose them, you would not have either in the fit place to carry out his ministry. John was an exile on earth, having nothing, and so the Lord shows him all the condition of things that will be on the earth. Paul was in prison for the mystery, and God shows him what heaven is and the glory of it. You see this continually in the

Old Testament prophets. The Lord brings His servant into a state of things which will make him not a mere automaton, like a pump bringing up water, but where what He teaches in word may be learned practically.

Well you are "a great people;" the greatness is there; but if you are great, you must prove your greatness; you may have a double and a larger portion of the heavenly position, but you will have to fight for it.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

VERSE 1.—There is the possibility of getting such a sense of possession that it gives a person rest for the time, so that they can turn to God. They "set up the tabernacle." I think, without pressing the thing too much, that we now get into the true place of worshipping God.

Verses 4-6.—What is the meaning of these three men out of each tribe? The seven tribes do not get their turn yet. I think it answers to the ministry. You see service is never over. A man never can say he has done serving the church—edifying the body of Christ—no one can ever say he has done enough. I suppose the number three shows that there is a sure testimony. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

Very often difficulties in the word of God prove

the occasions for the unfolding of the greatest light. I think people ought not to be in a hurry to find out the meaning of a thing; it is well to raise questions for yourself; to say, What does this mean?

## CHAPTER XIX.

VERSES 49-51.—This is very interesting. It reminds us of “his inheritance in the saints.” I have a very happy feeling about this division of the land. I think my place is assigned to me in heaven, though I have not got it yet. No one else will get it; it is appointed for me; each lot falls to the right man; no other can take it; you will have your own, whether you are in possession now or not. First two and a half tribes are put in possession as an earnest: and thus we are sealed, we have “the earnest of the spirit,” and so we worship God: the tabernacle is set up; and then the rest of the land is to be explored and divided, and each person to get his lot.

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE Levites are men not so much occupied with the enjoyment of Canaan as with leading the people of God into Canaan. They have not possession of the land, but they have dwelling places in it. It is another thing the whole army

fighting to take possession, and this one tribe set apart to keep the people's hearts in connection with God. Real service is always to bring the soul to God. If I am in the enjoyment of God myself, I want to bring souls into the same enjoyment; if the Scriptures are unfolded to me, I want to bring other souls into the understanding of them; therefore the Levites and the priests were all connected with the sanctuary, that they might bring the people into the nearness to God in which they were themselves. We come from Christ now as really appointed and gifted to draw souls near to Him. That is true service.

Verse 13.—It is very interesting to see that Hebron becomes one of the cities of the Levites, as well as a city of refuge. Caleb gives it up to them, and especially to the children of Aaron the priest. The cities were marked out; they were appointed to them; they were dwellers in the land rather than taking it as their inheritance: "They which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar." It is interesting to see this one tribe wholly given to the service of God, dwelling in cities scattered all over the country, making the service of God their object. As the people were more devoted to God the Levites were better looked after; and, as the people began to decline, we find the Levites were neglected in proportion. I never saw a person yet who made little of ministry in the word, that he was in a good

state. Of course one may not be edified, but the thing is to seek it. In ministry, saints often come together to be acted upon instead of coming to help. No one is ever really disappointed who comes in the spirit of "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;" out of the stones He can make bread, and He can turn a very little thing into immense profit to a soul. But I find saints come together expecting to be acted upon; it is a very different thing if I come expecting to hear something *I* am to act on.

## CHAPTER XXII.

VERSES 10-20.—We now get the two and a half tribes building an altar. What is this? Did they build it to escape going to Shiloh?

It is the failure of the epistle to the Hebrews; there they tried to make an earthly worship on a heavenly ground; they did not mean to give up the tabernacle. Here the people had not got into the true position. In Hebrews they did not understand that they were to take a heavenly position before God on earth.

We find in this altar the principle which is the root of all idolatry: it was "a great altar to see to." When Aaron made the calf he never thought of giving up God; all he wanted was something visible—something to appeal to the eye. The thing was to get a representation.

Now there was to be no representation of God but Christ, and not that until Christ came. Here it was the altar—not an idol. And this is the character of all the systems that have been set up on earth. The excuse given is that they are needed to meet the weakness of man; something “to see to.” It is seeking to bring God to man’s ground, instead of man to God’s. But God has come down to the lowest point of humiliation in order to exalt man to the highest point of the creature. The greatness of the grace is in the humiliation to which He descended, and so it is called “the *riches* of his grace.” But getting a something “to see to,” is losing the place of divine power. The whole thing is really a conflict between the visible and the invisible: “the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal;” it is the invisible God that we have to do with.

It was subtle. They did not mean to do it; but they wanted something to connect itself with their natural senses. But I am never either to take from or to add to God’s word. One of the most specious reasons for system given by the Rationalists is, that you must have a church to suit the temperament of the people—a church to suit ignorant people, and another to suit the learned. That is just the rationalism of man. I do not want an altar “to see to;” if I do I am going counter to God’s altar. “We have an altar

whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle," so that we are outside the Jewish polity. Unbelief and independence go together.

If you say, the Lord *suffered* it, I admit it; He suffers many a thing that He does not commend. He let the people have a king when they desired one. Even in one's own life we have seen how God, as it were, says, If you *will* have it so, then *try* it. I have the strongest feeling about asking God to give me merely temporal things.

Verses 21-34.—We see they entirely repudiated the notion that it was an altar for worship; but there was true zeal for the Lord on the part of the other tribes; they were afraid of what it might come to.

We are to get great principles from this book. If we just look over what has come out, we find that we have possession of the land, a limited position in it, given to us by lot; we have the cities of refuge; we have the Levites in their cities; and then we get the failure that comes up—the altar. The people decide against it, but still there it stands. *Ed* is placed there, though it has been met with a storm of holy zeal for God, with the resolve that there should not be another altar—that nothing should be super-added.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Now we come to what will lead to the loss, the forfeiture, of the heavenly standing. We have seen that it is the purpose of God to have us in that standing, and that to that end there is no measure to the power that He will give us; He would have us in the enjoyment of it. We have seen the failure, through want of purpose of heart, of the two and a half tribes; but now that the land has rest from war, and that the possession of the other tribes is a settled thing, the servant of God sets forth to the people how they would forfeit all this great possession—how it would come to pass by their leaving the inhabitants of the land in their midst, and their being corrupted by them. This would lead to their departure from God, and then they would quickly lose everything; forfeiture would come. A person may be dispensationally right, and yet be “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” as the Lord says to Laodicea. As Moses had said to them in Deut. xxviii.: “Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things.” A person is sometimes far more careful to *reach* a point

than to *maintain* it. This is just what Israel was. It is evident if you do not enjoy what you possess, that you are not entering into the value of what you have. So the apostle says, "*Rejoice in the Lord.*" It is not possible that the Lord should allow a person to be brought into a high position and yet leave him there when he is incompetent to maintain it. People often think position is everything, but position always requires condition. It is right, certainly, to stand up for position; but, I repeat it, the moral gain from position is condition.

False worship becomes the snare of the land. Deuteronomy gives us the difference that there is between the wilderness and Canaan, and between Egypt and Canaan. The eighth chapter gives us the wilderness and Canaan; the eleventh, Egypt and Canaan. When you come to the wilderness trials, it is not false worship that is your danger, but in Canaan this is the snare. In the wilderness it is more your own private trials and the like—you are pining for something that you have not got. But now that the people are dwelling in cities that they never built, and possessing vineyards that they never planted, false worship becomes their danger. Joshua, the leader, sets before them what would cause their failure—departure from the Lord their God; he is, like Peter in his second epistle, as the shepherd of the flock looking at what will cause it: the tendency is failure.

The snare is association with the people who belong to the land. That is *man*. It is always man that is the thing to be afraid of. You cannot read the Psalms without seeing that man is the oppressor. Balaam's advice holds good to this day: try and get them to be social; try and get them to mix with you. It is the old principle, that, by thus acting, the very best thing becomes the very worst. I have heard it maintained that the epistle to the Ephesians could not have been written to that church, because they were warned of such gross evils. But that is exactly the case; it is the man that goes highest that is the one who falls lowest; one high up, if he *do* fall, it must be a *great* fall. So the church of Ephesus when it fails takes the lead in failure.

There is nothing more seductive than man. Solomon was drawn away by marrying strange wives. Nothing shows such a lack of spirituality in a saint as his getting on in worldly company; and by this I do not mean grossly bad people, but people with whom he cannot have communion. It is then the Nazarite loses his hair. The moment you fall to the level of a person, you have lost your power with him; you have lost your hair, which is the sign, I may say, of your singularity. But how about business? you ask. Well, business is like a horse in a mill: it is no pleasure to the horse, but it is his work, and he

gets it done and over as soon as he can. People who keep worldly company always show it in their ways ; it is curious to see how even staying one week in a worldly house often makes one trim oneself up in one's dress to suit them. A man rubbing up against a whitewashed wall gets the colour of it. And what does not appear at all worldly in worldly company, looks very much so when you are out of it. The burden of every epistle is, keep clear of the world. But, say some, I shall not get into their *religious* ways, if I mix with them ; I shall have nothing to do with their false gods. You cannot be sure of that ; if you get into the world you will get into its lusts, and it says, "covetousness, which is *idolatry*"—covetousness, the wish to obtain anything which God has not given you. Your great power against the enemy is fasting and prayer : fasting, refusing to minister to the man ; while prayer keeps you dependent on God ; you must take the place of separation from them. But, you say, this will be a very strait-laced life. And so it would, were it not that I have a better thing. Canaan is larger than the world, and it is larger than the wilderness. In the wilderness there are no cities to dwell in, no vineyards to enjoy the fruit of ; and in Egypt I have to water with my foot—nothing without toil ; whilst in Canaan I have the rain from heaven. It is a miserable thing when a Christian thinks every one in the

world is better off than himself. Canaan is a type of the heaven we are now in, and of the spiritual blessings that we now enjoy in Christ; there are enemies there, and it is not the Father's house, but we have enjoyment there, and the tabernacle is set up there. It is the enemies there that are our danger; Jude tells us of men who have "crept in unawares" who are "spots in your feasts," "wandering stars;" it is the people who have crept in who have done the mischief; "cursed children," as Peter calls them. Each has his peculiar difficulty to overcome, each will meet with enemies; as John says, the snare of "babes" is *men*; the snare of "young men" is the world. The "fathers" have no snare; I do not mean they do not have trials, difficulties, and so on, but they have found rest of heart in Christ—"him that is from the beginning."

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

VERSES 1-15.—Joshua reminds the people two or three times in this address that they were idolators at first, and that therefore there is a natural tendency in them to go back to idolatry;

It must have been a very interesting moment when Joshua confronted the tribes in this way at Shechem, and when he forecast their future to them as Jacob did, and Moses. What a sad thing for the servant of God, after long service,

to thus have true forecastings as to the failure that would come after his departure. Here, after a long and blessed campaign, putting the people in possession of the land, he sees that failure is imminent; and certainly nothing can be more pitiable than their history after this: carried away into Babylon they "perish from off the good land which the Lord gave them."

There is enough to keep us humble in looking back to what we have been. We see the mighty hand of God; He has brought us into this wealthy place, and it enhances His grace to look back and see the state of wretchedness which he has brought us out of. As the apostle puts it: "Such were some of you." You could not remember that you had been poor unless you were now rich; it is the very fact of being set in this wondrous position that enables you to go back in thought to your former one. When in worship, being set high, we can look back to the low; it is not necessary to begin low, though often a meeting does begin in a low tone and rise to a high one, like Habakkuk, who begins his prayer upon variable notes and ends on stringed instruments. But this is not Deut. xxvi.; there worship begins; and it is not well to drop low to see how you can rise.

Verse 14.—This is our responsibility.

Verse 19.—Joshua is fully aware of the state of things, just as Moses was; he had no expectation from the people. They were too confident; as

the Scripture says: "A fool rageth and is confident." They said just what they did to Moses, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." But Joshua did not believe in them.

Verses 26,27.—He says, I have no confidence in you, but in this stone I have. It has heard all the words that I have spoken, and it will retain them. I believe this stone is Christ. So here Joshua falls back upon the stone, and writes all the words on it, and says to the people, I hear your declaration, and I have no confidence in it; but I will tell you in what I *have* confidence: in this stone, the Rock of Israel; "I have confidence in you, through the Lord."

Verse 32.—Joseph's bones being brought was the proof that they expected resurrection in the land. The idea was, that he was to rise where he was buried. And so, morally, I say we rise where we are buried.

The close of the book is very like the close of the day: it does come to a close, but it is with the hope for every one that we are coming to the morning—that eternal morning when Christ Himself will be the perfect witness. But you cannot let the book flow through your mind without its bringing very distinctly before you the wonderful working of God, the desire of His heart to set you upon heavenly ground, and the terrible character of opposition that you are subject to from your fellow-man and Satan upon the earth.

(J.B.S.)

## DEUTERONOMY.

I HAVE thought that as the book of Joshua finds its antitype in the application of the truth to us in the epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians, where we are introduced by the death and resurrection of Christ into present heavenly association with Him, Deuteronomy might be found to stand in somewhat the same relation to the epistle to the Philippians, as bringing out the practical condition that flows from our hearts entering by faith upon this heavenly ground, and that alone consists with the abiding enjoyment of it. We are hence not without needed warning as to the dangers that beset the path of the heavenly man on earth.

One point may at least suggest the comparison. It is this: that as the epistle is of all others *the* epistle of joy, so this same blessed feature largely characterizes the book of Deuteronomy. Here first in the Pentateuch it is found to have any place. Anyone can verify this for himself, but I am not aware of any passage that speaks of *joy* outside the scenes contemplated in this book (Lev. xxiii. 40; Num. x. 9, 10) save one Exod. xviii. 9); whereas there are found in it

seven occasions on which God enjoins joy on the people whom He would in this blessed way gather round Himself. First, *generally*, in chap. xii., when "come to the rest and to the inheritance which Jehovah your God giveth you," which is assumed in all the cases, two things were to give character to the joy of the people. In the place which Jehovah would choose to put His name, "thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes, &c., and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your household." And secondly, verse 12, "Ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God."

Then follow five *special* occasions for the joy that is given to be thus generally characteristic of their relationship with Jehovah in the land of their possession.

When the tithe of all the increase of the field, the firstlings of the herd and flock, were presented before Him—chap. xiv. 22-27. On the occasion of the Feast of Weeks, chap. xvi. 9-12; and the Feast of Tabernacles, verses 13-15. When the basket of firstfruits was presented, chap. xxvi. And, lastly, when on entering the land they were immediately to set up the altar which was to bear the inscription of the law, ever to remind them of obedience as the essential condition of their practical enjoyment of their possession—chap. xxvii. 1-11.

It will be observed that chaps. i.-xi. rehearse

the solemn lessons of the wilderness journey in view of the people's entering the land. From chap. xii., which looks at them in possession, God unfolds for the first time His blessed thought, to have them in this holy liberty of *joy* before Him, as characteristic of their relationship with Him. There is the same essential condition of the joy in each of the cases. The people are assumed to be in possession—able to say, "We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt . . . and he brought us out from thence that he might *bring us in* to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers;" chap. vi. 23. See this very strongly marked in chap. xxvi. 1-14, when the basket of first-fruits is presented: "And it shall be when thou art *come in* unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and *possessest* it, and *dwestest* therein, that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket . . . and thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God; and thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee."

Joy then flows from *possession*. Deliverance, essential as it is to joy and leading into it, does not in itself suffice for joy. In the wilderness Israel was a delivered people, who, at the opening of their path through it, could sing of all that

was against them being gone for ever—"sunk as lead in the mighty waters." But joy is not found in the books of the wilderness. The one exception makes this the more striking, for Exod. xviii. carries us on in picture to the final result of the ways of God in grace towards the people; it is a millennial scene; and here, in beautiful fitness, the *Gentile* Jethro it is who "*rejoiced* for all the goodness Jehovah had done to Israel."

Rom. v. 1-11 may seem at first sight to check the application of the principle to us, but it will be found, I think, to confirm it. For it is not deliverance that makes the joy here, though it assumes, as joy ever must, that we are delivered; for how can we be happy with God if we are not? But we rejoice "in hope of the *glory* of God," and, if in the tribulations of the way that leads there, we have the love that puts us into them shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given us; and thus we are brought to joy in God Himself "through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the reconciliation." Chap. viii. is our deliverance, and is needed for the joy of chap. v., where this deeper character of experience flows from what *God* is being more fully brought out. "For Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us *to God*."

That, if really with God, our hearts will be

powerfully affected by a deliverance wrought for us at such infinite cost I need not say ; but the difference of experience connected with deliverance is marked in the book before us, and will be observed by comparing the first great gathering of the Jewish year—that of the Passover—with the two others already referred to, as chap. xvi. brings them together.

These last only had their place when the people were in possession of the land, and answer for us respectively to Pentecost, and (as far as the Feast of Tabernacles has as yet any antitype) to the indwelling of the Holy Ghost as now come from Jesus glorified to put the power of the glory into our hearts before the day for the manifestation of it. Both were to be scenes of joy ; the Feast of Weeks, characterized by a free-will offering unto the Lord according to the measure of appreciation of the blessing, “and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God ;” the Feast of Tabernacles, by the fulness of the blessing itself, harvest and vintage over, “thou shalt rejoice in thy feast ;” because of the Lord’s blessing in all their increase and in all the works of their hands, “therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.”

But in the feast that accompanied the Passover, which brings out specially our deliverance, and the ground of it in the infinite sorrow and death of the Son of God, it is not joy that becomes us, but “the unleavened bread, even the

bread of affliction," in the solemn judgment of ourselves: "Thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt, and thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose; and thou shalt turn in the morning and go unto thy tent."

In full keeping with what has been before us will be found the place that joy has in the epistle to the Philippians. Deliverance is not the subject. Neither sins, nor the flesh of sin, come into view to be delivered from. If religious flesh be looked at for a moment, it is only as an utterly valueless thing, long since cast aside. The full delivered place of the man in Christ is assumed, and the epistle presents the experience that flows from it, the Holy Ghost expressing it in power in the apostle. It is Christ as life in us on earth, the practical answer to our place as united to Him in heaven. "Our conversation (and all else that the word implies) is in heaven," while we are walking on the earth. It is possession, heavenly possession thus far, that brings us to the spring of joy. Not the heaven of the future, with its rest and glory come and our responsible path over; but there is the sense of present association with Christ, who is there, and thus the power of heaven as a present revealed scene possessing and forming the heart of the Christian. It is

Christ, as the opened eye of faith is upon Him in glory, known as the power and joy of going on day by day for Him here, till we reach Him actually there.

Can it be wondered at, then, that, if this be the experience of the Christian, joy should be so largely developed in the epistle that has this experience for its main subject? Nor is it merely joy as *enjoined* upon us, if there be still room for earnest exhortation to it (Phil. iii. 1, iv. 4), but as now *produced* and flowing out in worship by the Spirit of God (Phil. iii. 3), so as to become characteristic of the Christian.

But here the book of Deuteronomy supplies a warning. The principle of it is this: that, while deliverance will not in itself suffice for joy, but that there must be the conscious possession by faith of our heavenly place in Christ, yet this can never be safely dissociated from the deliverance that was needed to bring us into it. Possession without the sense of this, such are our poor hearts, only tends to ruin; and the richer the possession the greater the danger. There must be maintained in the soul the sense of how, and from what depths, we have been delivered. The light of the place we have been brought into is shed back on what we have been brought out of, and thus enhances for us the preciousness of the grace that has done it, while there is deepened the knowledge of ourselves that humbles and keeps us lowly before God.

It will be found in chap. viii. 10-16: "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God in not keeping his commandments . . . . lest, when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein . . . . then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage, . . . . who led thee through this great and terrible wilderness . . . . that he might humble thee and prove thee." Nor was the remembrance of their deliverance therefore to be found wanting on the principal occasions of their gladness. See chap. xxvi. ; and so it is also ordered in the Feast of Weeks: "thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt," chap. xvi. 12; and most markedly of all in the Feast of Tabernacles. During this feast, that was the fullest expression of their having come into their counselled place and blessing, they were to dwell in booths seven days, "that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt."

But the warning was unheeded by Israel. Resting in possession, they forgot their deliverance, their hearts were lifted up, and they came under the hand of God in judgment. A subsequent page of their history, in a time of revival for a remnant restored to the land, reveals that from Joshua to Nehemiah they had not *dwelt in*

*booths* in the feast of the seventh month ; Neh. viii. 14-17.

And are *we* more safe if we disregard the tears of the apostle, who weeps over the walk of those within the circle of Christian profession who are enemies of the *cross* of Christ (Phil. iii. 18) ? Not the glory of Christ is our safety against the flesh or the world, but the *cross* that gives us God's estimate and judgment of both. What savoured things that be of men in Peter did not rise up to resent the *glory*, but the *cross* of Christ ; Matt. xvi. 16-24. Its solemn sentence upon self and everything here is the only true answer to the knowledge of Christ in heavenly glory.

There was another essential condition of Israel's enjoyment of their possession, it was obedience ; see chap. vi., and indeed everywhere in Deuteronomy. Similarly does Philippians urge it upon us who have been brought by faith to know our union with Christ on high. Obedience (when the apostle was yet with Christians, but much more in his absence) was the path in which to work out our own salvation now from the whole power of the enemy, "For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure ;" chap. ii. 12, 13.

But this is not all ; we have seen that Christian life according to the epistle is simply *Christ* : "To me to live is Christ." The path of this life is consequently the producing again in us by the

Spirit's power of what Christ was here; see chap. ii. 15, 16. It is thus He gave us His own path, with obedience as the necessary condition of its joy, in John xv. 9-11. So it is fully here, chap. ii. 5: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." And then He is presented to us in the path of His humiliation: "Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Now it is the book of Deuteronomy that furnished Him, in the place He had taken in grace as man, with the suited and perfect word of God for man, by simply keeping which He baffles the whole power of the enemy; compare Matt. iv. 1-11 with Deut. viii. 3, and vi. 13-16. And the word that thus found perfect and blessed expression in Him is now given to form and direct the life we have in Him, in the same path of his obedience: "Man shall not *live* by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." How different was such obedience in the principle of it to that of the law. The law supposed a will antagonistic to God in forbidding it. Christ had none such to be forbidden; He *lived* by the word out of the mouth of God; it not merely guided His path, but was the *spring* and *origin* of all that found place in His inmost heart and life. And we are sanctified to *the obedience of Christ*.

Another principle abidingly true for the saint, whatever the dispensation, is not without illus-

tration in Deuteronomy and Philippians. It is this, that we can never walk according to the level of our position while we have only this position to sustain us. We must have an *object above* our path to enable us to walk in it. Thus it was that Abraham "sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles"—"for he looked for a city which hath foundations;" Heb. xi. 9, 10. So with Israel in the land, if any under the law walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, it was only as their eye was outside their position upon the Messiah. He is presented to their expectation in Deut. xviii. Our epistle gives the principle its full expression as to the Christian. If the path that belongs to our position is to "walk as he walked," the only power to form and keep us in it is to have our hearts above upon Christ in glory as our one object; Phil. iii. 8-16.

One more word of solemn import and warning for us will be found in Deuteronomy. It is the only other mention of joy in the book; I refer to chap. xxviii. 47, 48: "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things, therefore thou shalt serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in the want of all things." Failing in joy, there is practical loss of the possession. Is there not danger for

us? Not all who are Christ's may have come to know heaven as the present revealed scene, where Christ has given us our home, interests, objects, and joys, now therefore to form and give its character to our Christian walk in the world. But what about those who have in any measure? May not heavenly things lose their power over our hearts? Are we not conscious of the tendency of everything around us to drag us down to the level of the world in which we walk? What need of diligent watchful keeping of the heart against the first enfeebling of joy! For this indicates that decline has begun, and the descent is easy and rapid when once the heart begins to go. Two things, then, mark the state: heaven, lost in present power, is put off to the future; and the Christian, become worldly, instead of knowing the fellowship of His sufferings is accredited by the world.

May the excellency of the knowledge of a glorified Christ keep us! May His presence in glory so attract our hearts there, that we may practically "possess" and "dwell in" the bright scene He opens to us! Then will our life on earth be bright, for it will be but the reflex of His—a life of heavenly joy, whatever the circumstances of the path. He Himself shines before us as the end of it, the one glorious object to be reached, giving earnestness in pressing on through everything here, to be perfectly like Him, and with Him.

J. A. T.

## SANCTIFICATION.

JOHN xvii. 17-19.

THAT of which I desire to speak to you is the distinctive place into which God has called His people in the present day, whether in relation to Himself, in relation to Satan, or in relation to the world in either or both of its aspects, whether worldly or religious; and also the cost at which this place has been acquired for the believer; and, in doing so, I would speak on some truths that connect themselves with this.

There are two things that God has done with equal distinctness: He has defined the relationship in which each believer stands towards Himself, *God*, namely, that of a child to a father; and He has marked out the path in which He would have His children walk. As to the relationship, God Himself it is who has defined it, marked it out, and established it. There is not a believer who is not entitled to take up that word, "*children of God* by faith in Christ Jesus." This the Spirit of God proclaims without a question.

In fact, there is now no such thing as an open question in the matter of either condemnation

or salvation ; God has made an end of all such. If the side of condemnation be taken up, God proclaims man to be a guilty, ruined, lost sinner ; no man could deliver his fellow, for all were alike, not only ungodly, but without strength. On the side of condemnation, therefore, there is no open question : the unbeliever is condemned—condemned already.

But we find that, when such was the state of things—such the case of man—the Son of God Himself became a man—came down into this world, where God had been dishonoured by sin ; came with the purpose in His heart of glorifying God with regard to this very question of 'sin and saving poor sinners, and that by offering an atonement to God. In His life here below He perfectly glorified God, but in and by death alone could atonement be accomplished, could God be fully glorified as to sin. To death, the death of the cross, the Lord Jesus went in His grace. There He offered Himself as an atoning sacrifice to God, shedding His blood. There He bore the sins of every soul, that, through grace, believes on Him. But in so doing He died.

Then, during the time that the Lord Jesus was in the tomb, there might have appeared to be an open question, namely, will God accept or will He not accept that which has been presented to Him by Christ? He cannot accept the work and still retain that on account of

which the work has been presented to Him. But God on the third day raised from the dead the Lord Jesus, the One who had presented atonement to Him, the One "who was delivered for our offences," thereby signifying His perfect acceptance, and satisfaction, and glory in the work which Christ had accomplished in death. Thus God has closed every question; for faith and for God not one remains open. The unbeliever is condemned already, but God has been glorified by His Son, and the believer is saved. God be praised, the question is closed for ever; and the believer has everlasting life, shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death into life, and is set in the relationship of child to God, revealed as Father—a definite relationship which God Himself has established. There is no such thing as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ out of relationship; He may be out of communion; but "ye are all the *children of God* by faith in Christ Jesus."

As regards the second thing, namely, the path in which God would have His children walk, God has marked it out with a distinctness and clearness quite equal to that with which He has defined their relationship: He would have them *sanctified*. The question then arises, what is sanctification?—We will first see what it is not.

Sanctification is sometimes thought to mean

an improving or making holy of the old nature, but it is clear from Scripture that such is not a correct thought, that it cannot mean the amelioration or making holy of an old nature. One word in John xii. will settle this question: "Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world," etc. Here the term is applied to the Lord Jesus, and such application entirely precludes the thought of amelioration or making holy. Again, what we have read in chap. xvii.: "For their sakes I sanctify myself." Impossible that the thought of mending a fallen nature could be introduced there. Therefore, sanctification is not a reforming, an amelioration, or a making holy of a fallen nature. God never reforms that: He has got another way of dealing with it, and that is *condemning* it.

What then is sanctification?—It is the setting apart of the soul to God. It is thus Scripture presents it to us.

There are two aspects of sanctification: one is, that it is a complete thing, done once and for ever; in this aspect it is absolute. The other is, that it is a continuous, a practical thing, which goes on from day to day. In this aspect it is progressive, or practical. Let us look at each for a moment.

Sanctification in its absolute character is the setting apart for God of a soul from the very

first motion of life therein. It is the hewing of the stone out of the quarry of nature and the world for God. Man is by nature dead in trespasses and sin, following his own lusts, but no life Godward. The Holy Ghost comes and breaks out from that quarry a stone—a soul—about which God has purposes of grace; He communicates to that soul a life which has its own tastes, desires, and objects, and by this communication of a divine life He sets it apart for God. This is absolute sanctification. It can be done once only, and that for ever; once the stone is hewn out of the quarry, it is hewn out of it for ever. Neither Satan's malice nor man's badness can thwart God in the purposes of His love. He deals with that dead mass, and, by the action of His Spirit, separates souls therefrom, and sets them apart to Himself. This being done once, is done for ever; and the recognition of this by the soul acts as a great lever power with it; for you may notice that, all through Scripture, the Spirit does not present to souls the practical in order that they may attain to the absolute, but He does present the absolute in order to produce the practical: that is, He does not say to a believer, you ought to do so and so, in order to be so and so, but He presents to the believer what he is (the absolute) in order to produce a practice consistent therewith (the practical). If I am conscious that God

has come in by His mighty power and set me apart from all here to Himself, the effect on me will surely be that I shall walk apart; my walk will be according to that which God has revealed as His will, and will be consistent with the life that He has given me, and the separation to Himself in which He has set me.

The stone, then, has been hewn out of the quarry by the Spirit of God, and that is absolute sanctification. But there are a great many angles and corners about it; and so the Spirit begins to dress it, and He works on till it is like the polished stones of the temple. And this goes on continually. Most know how many things there were about them when first brought to God that were not consistent with the character of Him to whom they had been brought, and how little by little God graciously led them on, knocking off an angle here, getting rid of a roughness there. This is *practical* sanctification. If you mix up these two aspects of sanctification, you never know where you are; you must hold them both fast: the absolute, that is done once for ever, and the practical, which is never ended as long as we are here below, but which goes on day by day.

Another thing which does much harm to souls is mixing together sanctification and justification. Sanctification is a work done *in* the believer, and is connected with the condition of

his soul and the Spirit's work in it ; but justification is a work done *for* his soul, and is connected with its place or position—its standing before God, and the work of Christ *for* it. Thus sanctification has to do with *moral condition* ; while justification has to do with *judicial standing*. The not discerning the difference between these things—the work that goes on in the soul, and the work that has been done for the soul—is often the cause of lack of peace. The work done in the soul is absolutely necessary, but it is the work done *for* the soul that is the basis of its salvation.

We will now look at two or three passages of Scripture as to sanctification, taking it in its absolute character first.

1 Cor. vi. 11. Here we read : “ *Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*” And it is even more forcible than we have it in the text, for literally it is “ *ye have been washed, ye have been sanctified,*” etc. Nothing can be more definite.

2 Thess. ii. 13. “ *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*” Here we again find this absolute sanctification spoken of ; it is the most absolute statement.

Heb. x. 10. In the same absolute way : “ *By the which will we are sanctified, through the*

offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." This does not mean once for everybody, but that He is never going to suffer again. He has offered Himself once, and has not to do it again.

Then again, in 1 Pet. i. 2, the same truth is set forth. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Peter was writing to those who as to nationality were Jews, but who had embraced Christianity, and he was leading them into the fuller knowledge of what they had embraced. They had known what it was to be a nation elected by Jehovah, but never what it was to be "elect according to the foreknowledge of God *the Father*." They had been set apart to the obedience of the law, but now to the obedience of Christ. They had had to do with the blood of bulls and of goats, which was ineffectual to purge the conscience, but now with the precious blood of the Lamb without blemish and without spot, by which the conscience is for ever purged.

The mode of address in Paul's epistles demonstrates the truth of sanctification in its absolute aspect. He always addresses those to whom he writes as saints—sanctified ones, those set apart of God. To two assemblies only is this omitted—to the Galatians and to the

Thessalonians. The reason for this may be that he stood in doubt of them in Galatia; they were going back to the law for justification. Whilst in the epistle to the Thessalonians those written to are addressed as "in God the Father;" they could not be there without being set apart. But in his other epistles you will find the address is always to sanctified ones. He addresses them as those who were set apart absolutely to God. These passages go to show that sanctification is presented in Scripture as absolute: God has set the believer apart absolutely to Himself.

But there is the other side of this truth, namely, that God would have the believer set apart *practically* for Himself. This aspect of sanctification we find presented in what we have read in John xvii: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth;" also, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." In both these verses the sanctification is *practical*, not absolute; it is what goes on day by day.

Also in 1 Thess. v. 23: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here, too, it is the practical side, that which goes on continuously.

And once more, for there are but three pas-

sages in the New Testament which present sanctification in a progressive or practical aspect, Heb. xii. 14: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness (sanctification it ought to be), without which no man shall see the Lord."

Thus Scripture presents the twofold aspect of sanctification—absolute on the one hand, and practical on the other.

Let us now see the persons to whom this work of sanctification is attributed. In Heb. x. 10 it is ascribed to God the Father: "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God, . . . by the which will we are sanctified." Here we learn that God the Father *wills* it. In the last clause of the same verse, we learn that it is the work of God the Son—the One who came to do the will of God the Father—that is the foundation of it. And lastly, in Rom. xv. 16; 2 Thess. ii. 13; and 1 Pet. i. 2, we learn that it is the Holy Ghost whose power effects it.

It is blessed for our souls thus to find God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—Three in One, working for us, dealing with us that we may answer to His own heart. When we speak of the Person of the Godhead who immediately acts, it is always the Holy Ghost; the Father wills; the Son has in His work laid the righteous foundation for the accomplishment of the Father's will; and the Holy Ghost it is who acts and carries out the Father's will on the basis of the work of the Son.

In John xvii. 17-19, we find the means used to carry out this blessed work, namely, the word of the Father and the person of the Son.

In passing, let us notice how the two things that were and are ever present to the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ are brought out in this chapter: first, His care for the glory of His Father; second, His care for the blessing of His people. What brought Him down from the bright scene that was His own? It was caring for the Father's glory; this it was that brought Him down from the place He had had from all eternity. But there was, besides, His desire to save us.

In the first five verses of this chapter we find Him caring for the Father's glory. He is the blessed Man glorifying God in all His ways, ever well pleasing to the heart of that God and Father. He glorified Him in His walk here on earth. This, I believe, we find expressed in the words, "I have glorified thee on the earth." But He put the top stone to it all, He glorified God about sin, in His death on the cross. This, I believe, we find expressed in the words, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." This is what the first five verses present, while from the sixth verse onward, right through the chapter, we find His care for His people's blessing. In verses 6-13, He

presents His disciples to the Father; He says, I hand them over to thee that thou mayest keep them. And why? For two reasons: because "they are *Thine*," and because "I am glorified in them." And on this ground He commits them to the care of the "*holy* Father." The very epithet used by the Lord in connection with the name of the Father to whom He commits us, ought to bring to our minds what the character of our walk should be. If we are kept by a *holy* Father we ought to be holy (that is, separate from evil) in our walk. Adam was innocent before the fall, but the moment he fell, innocence was gone, and *gone for ever*. Now, in a scene where all is evil, we are kept from the evil by the "*holy* Father"; and we are to walk as He walked who was holy indeed, not alone in practice (which we ought always to be), but in Himself (which we can never be so long as we are here below. 1 John i. 8). From the fourteenth verse on he puts them in the place of testimony before the world—in His own place, and in care for them asks the Father to sanctify them through His (the Father's) word; and for their sakes sets Himself apart on high, that, by having Him, their treasure, there, their hearts may be drawn out of this world to Himself on high. Thus far it is care for their present blessing. From verse 22 onward, we find Him caring for their future blessing. He gives them

the glory the Father had given Him, that, being displayed with Him in that glory, the world might know that the Father had sent Him, and had loved them as He had loved Him, the Son. And lastly, we find this same care for their future blessing expressed in the desire of His heart uttered to the Father: "I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." What a blessed thing, beloved! Why are we going to be with Him where He is? Why are our eyes going to behold His glory up there? Because of the "I will" of Christ!

But to return. The means of sanctification are, as already stated, the word and the Person. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." "*Thy*," mark you, not "*the*"; it is the Father's word, it is all the Father here: it is the Father to whom he presents them, it is the Father's word He gives them, and it is the Father's word He says is truth.

What then is the Father's word? It is, I believe, that which reveals Himself, the New Testament especially, for it is there that we have the Father revealed. In the Old Testament we find the Almighty God revealed to a patriarch, and the Jehovah God revealed to a nation, but none ever knew God as the Father, till the Son came and revealed Him. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he

hath revealed him." The Son, in speaking to Philip (Jno. xiv. 9), says: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The Lord Jesus while here below declared what God the Father was as light and love, and in His own pathway through this world presented that which was according to the will of the Father and pleasing to Him: "I do always those things that please him." He has thus revealed the Father, and been the exponent to us of the Father's will.

And what is it all for? It is for our practical sanctification: He reveals God the Father's mind, He reveals His will, in order that we may "be imitators of God as dear children." Let us ask ourselves, is it so with us? Do we know anything of this? Are we answering in any measure to it? If our hearts know what it is to be subject to that will, then our walk will be the expression of it.

But there is, beside the Father's word, yet another means of practical sanctification. That word maps out the way through the scene, and dealing with the *conscience*, sets the believer apart from all in it that is contrary to the Father; but we want something *beyond* this scene, something outside it, something to deal with our *hearts*, and the Lord says, as it were, You shall have it. He goes on: "For their sakes

I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through *the* truth." And what is this? It is the blessed Lord setting Himself apart on high, in order that we might have something to deal with our hearts. He has gone on high to the Father's throne, that we might have an object there to draw our hearts outside this scene.

But how is "the truth" of this setting apart of Christ in glory to be known? The third Person of the Trinity—God the Holy Ghost—has come down to tell us of it. He has come down purposely to tell us where Christ is now, and of His glory there, and to cultivate the affections of our hearts for, and draw them out after, the One who is there outside the scene altogether, that finding our treasure there our hearts may be there also. So the Lord Himself tells us it would be, "Where your treasure is there will your heart be." He says: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." How were they to believe in Him as they did in God? They could not see God, and now they would not be able to see Him as hitherto they had seen Him, but they were to believe in Him without seeing Him, and there would be a divine Being here below acting in power to engage their hearts fully with Himself whilst He would be away, and by thus carrying their hearts outside the scene, set them apart practically while in it. The Lord give us to know what it is to have our treasure there, and then we shall have our hearts there. You

will never get your hearts there by trying to get them out of the world; the only way is by knowing Him there as your treasure. Thus He ministers to the hearts of His people; He would draw out their affections to Himself, and, in order to do it, He has set Himself apart at the right hand of God, and the Holy Ghost has come down to tell us of His presence and place in glory, that we might be sanctified practically by "*the truth*" thus made known.

Such, then, is the truth of sanctification in its twofold aspect, absolute and practical. You first get the distinct act of God in setting the soul apart absolutely for Himself; and then there is the dealing with it, the education of it, the pointing out to it that in its ways which is inconsistent with the Father, that it may be separate from such. Where the heart is in communion it bows to this dealing—it wishes it; and so it grows in sanctification day by day, the means being the Father's word and the person of the Lord Jesus setting Himself apart from this scene, in order that our hearts may dwell in that scene where He is.

If we look at what the Father's word, which sanctifies, reveals in connection with the subject of which I hope to speak—the distinctive character of the place into which God has called the believer—we shall find the truth: namely, that the Lord Jesus has come down into this world, and has, by taking in grace His people's place,

made their place in righteousness, whether as regards God, as regards Satan, or as regards the world, viewed either in its worldly or in its religious aspect.

It reveals moreover, that this place, and the distinctiveness of this place, in whatever relation it may be, is the fruit to the believer of the travail of the soul of His Lord, of the agony, death, and bloodshedding of the Son of God. It was at the cost of *Himself* the Lord made this place of distinctiveness for His people. Ordinarily we hold things dear on account of the one who has given them to us; and if the *least* of the blessings that we enjoy—if we may speak of the *least* where all are so great—has been won for us at the cost of the suffering in death of the Son of God, surely this should cause us to hold with tenacity those blessings, and conform our practice to them.

We separate too much the blessing and the blesser, and thus we lose power. We *are* blessed assuredly, but how came we to be blessed? Were there no depths to be gone down to, that we might be raised to these heights? There were. The eternal Son of God became a man—Son of God born in time—and went into those depths, to which the heights of glory are but the corresponding answer. We need to be assured of our blessings, but we need to associate them with Him who, at the cost of Himself, acquired them for us, our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ.

I purpose next to look at the fitness of the Lord, as to His person, to take this place for His people.

Meanwhile, may the Lord lead our souls into the power of His truth, may we esteem the privilege, and at the same time remember the responsibility of possessing it. If we have been absolutely set apart by God, it is to the end that we may be practically set apart to Him, and what is the place for us to take that it may be worked out in us? It is that of *subjection*—the very hardest thing for us naturally, but, blessed be God, what the new nature delights in. God does not look for power in us—*that* He ministers to us—His Spirit; but He does look for obedience. May He work it in us all for His name's sake. Amen.

[J. L.]

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“He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” Many Christians have not His commandments. Why? Because they have something else. If they were walking like Christ they would have the ear opened, and have the communication of His mind and wish. But it is attentiveness of heart that gets this; where there is this, Christ is faithful to show what He wishes, and if we are walking in relationship with Him we shall know it. The spirit that wants His will listens for it; but I must want that first of all, and *only* that, if I would please Him.

[J. N. D.]

“WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT  
SPOT.”

LUKE iv. 1-13.

LAST week, in speaking of sanctification, we noted that one revelation of the truth which sanctifies is, that the Lord Jesus, by taking in grace His people's place, has *made* their place in righteousness, and that the place they have, and the blessing they enjoy, is the fruit to them of all that the Lord in grace accomplished at the cross for God's glory, and His people's blessing—the fruit so far of the travail of His soul. I propose to-night to look at the fitness of the Lord Jesus to take His people's place; for, if one have to stand in the place of others, he must have in himself the fitness which renders him competent so to do.

Here an indispensable necessity meets us with regard to the one who would take the place of others in order to glorify God about sin, and bear their sins: he must combine in his own person that which is essentially divine and that which is essentially human. That which is divine, because He who had been sinned against was the divine Being, who must have satis-

faction; the one to satisfy Him must therefore be divine. That which is human, because, sin having entered, the God against whom that sin had been committed must maintain His character, and manifest His righteousness with regard to it, by executing judgment against it. This entails suffering; one who was in himself only divine could not suffer; it needed one who was human so to do. The indispensable necessity therefore in one who takes this place before God is, that he should combine in his own person a nature which, being divine, could satisfy, and a nature which, being human, could suffer.

Such a one was not to be found among men; all were but *men*, and moreover sinful, guilty men. God Himself alone could provide one in whom such a wonderful combination could exist, and such a one He has provided and presented to us in Him who bears the name of "The Lamb of God." In Him we shall find, as I hope to show, a Being essentially divine, and at the same time essentially human.

On turning to John i. we find the glory of the eternal Son of God unfolded: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." Here the glory of the Lord Jesus is spoken of. First of all, we find presented to us what He is, namely, the Word; this as being the expression of the mind, thought, and power of God Himself. Then another truth in

connection with His existence: “In the beginning *was* the word.” That is to say, His existence is an eternal existence. Then another truth in connection with His person: “The word *was with* God.” That is to say, He is a *distinct* person. And then a farther development of truth as to His nature: “He *was God*.” That is to say, He is, as to His *nature, divine*. Thus we have described in this wonderfully comprehensive verse One who in the beginning *was*; who *was with* God; who *was* God; One *eternal* as to His existence, *distinct* as to His person, and *divine* as to His nature.

Then in the second verse is another truth, one that bears on the distinct personality of the Lord Jesus. Some might think that He was a distinct person only when He came down to this world; but this verse proves His distinct personality through all eternity. “The same *was in the beginning with* God.” It was not only after that time began that this one came forth as Son of God, a distinct person, but when time had its commencement the eternally distinct Son of God *was there*. Here, then, we have the *divine* glory of the eternal Son of God set before us.

In verse 14 a further truth concerning Him is brought out, not what He ever was and is, but what He *became*. “The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,

full of grace and truth." Note that the coming down of the eternal Son of God, and His taking humanity into association with Himself, in no wise affected the divine glory that was His own from all eternity; it only placed a veil round that which, had it not been so veiled, must have shone to our destruction; yet the divine glory of that blessed One "could not be hid," could not but come forth through the beautiful veil of that humanity in which it was shrouded; it was the same glory that belonged to Him who was the only begotten of the Father through the countless ages of eternity, but seen in the person of Him who had now in grace become a man. Thus we have a divine Being here below as a man.

There is, however, another thing to be considered, namely, the character of the humanity the Lord assumed when He came as a man to the earth. • There had already been two samples of humanity seen there: one passed away for ever, the other still present; the one, that of the first man in Eden, a humanity that was characterised by innocence, that is, ignorance of evil. We know what became of it: Adam fell, and innocence was gone for ever. Since then, another phase of humanity has been present, and that is fallen or sinful humanity. Now the moment the heart gets through grace the smallest insight into the glory of the person of

Him who bears the name of “the Lamb of God,” it recognises that there *must* be some other character of humanity, for it is impossible that a divine person could be here as innocent, for His divine nature makes him omniscient, while, on the other hand, it is impossible that one who is divine could take a fallen, sinful nature into association with Himself; so that the glory of the person of the Lord Jesus precludes the thought that it could be either innocent or fallen humanity that He assumed; it must be another kind of humanity altogether, and so we shall see it to be.

Let us turn to Luke i. 35, where we find Mary bowing with beautiful lowliness of heart to the message of the angel, waiting only to know how the purposes of God are to be carried out. The angel says to her: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, that *holy* thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Here we have presented the true character of the Lord’s humanity: His was not innocent, not fallen, but *holy* humanity. He was “that *holy* thing which shall be born of thee” (a woman—hence absolutely a man) “shall be called the Son of God,” (hence essentially divine).

In Luke iii. the genealogy of the Lord is traced back to Adam in order to exhibit the

true Son of God a man on earth. In this character the Father's voice is heard owning the relationship and perfect acceptability in which that Man stood to Him, the Father: "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The requirement, therefore—the combination of the divine and the human in one person—is met in the person of the Lord Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God; and in this respect His personal fitness to take His people's place is seen. May our hearts enter more and more into the excellencies of that blessed One. We shall never get to the end of those excellencies; but God has in His grace given those who believe, in some little measure, to behold them; and He whose excellencies they are is the Son of God's love—perfect God, perfect man—Jesus Christ our Saviour and our Lord.

In the word of God we have the history of two men: Adam, the first man, the man of responsibility; and the Lord Jesus, the second man, the man of purpose, the man who answers to the heart of God, and who laid the foundation for the accomplishment in righteousness of the thought of God's heart. The first we find in Eden, with the principle that was to guide his conduct, namely, obedience—not obedience in order to *attain* a position, but obedience in order to *maintain* the position in which God his Creator had placed him. Satan comes against

this man; and we find him using one of the weapons with which he always attacks man: of these he has two, the one is allurements, the other terror. In Eden it was the former weapon that he brought to bear. It was all allurements that he presented to the eye of Eve—“the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life”—and, as we know, his end was accomplished but too well. With allurements he utterly overthrew the man of responsibility, who in his fall dragged into ruin with himself the whole of that creation in headship of which God had placed him, a ruin which is irremediable, for there is no reformation of the first creation. We know that Christ will bring this world into blessing when He comes to reign, but it will be by righteousness reigning in *power*; then He will thoroughly suppress evil: if it do raise its head, He will crush it. But evil will not even then be *taken out* of the world; not until the eternal state will righteousness *dwell*, though in the millennium it will *reign*.

In Luke iv. we find the Lord Jesus, the second man, the last Adam, taking His place as man before, and subjected to the attack of, that enemy under whose wiles the first man, Adam, fell. His position when thus attacked was exactly the opposite to that of Adam. In Eden there was everything to hold the heart true to the centre of its blessing, and yet in the midst

of it all Adam fell. How was it here with the Lord Jesus Christ? He was in the midst of a scene in which was nothing to sustain Him: He was in the "wilderness," a word that is used in Scripture to signify a place in which are no springs of God. There was a blessed river of grace flowing through it when He was there, but in itself no springs. It is not as exercising divine power that the Lord is here presented, but as a man acting in obedience and dependence.

This, too, is all mercy and grace for us, when we come to look at it. Supposing He had stood there and exercised divine power, it would have been simply a divine person overcoming the enemy by His own power. In such case, though blessed for us to see it, it would not furnish us with an example for our own pathway; but when we see Him there as a man, obedient and dependent, meeting the power of the enemy with a weapon that is through grace within our reach, and in this position with this weapon thoroughly defeating the foe, then indeed we have got a perfect example, in whose steps we are to follow.

On Satan's side it is the same weapon that he used against Adam in Eden that he uses here—his weapon of allurement. Three of the temptations which Satan presents to the Lord Jesus Christ are recorded. The first is, if I

may say so, a natural temptation: it applies to the human nature of the Lord. The second is a worldly temptation: it applies to His rights as the Son of man. The third is a religious temptation: it applies to the promises of Jehovah to Him as the Messiah, according to what we find written in the ninety-first Psalm. The Lord is tried as a man by adversity, by prosperity, and by religious deceits.

“The devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.” Let me observe that it does not at all seem to be with a view to cast a doubt upon the relationship of the Lord Jesus with His Father that the devil says “if”; such a thing he well knew would be in vain. It was with a more subtle end in view he made use of it. He tried, by presenting to the Lord that which was really true of Him—He was the Son of God—tried to make Him act in divine power, and so deny the character and the position He had taken, and in which He at that moment stood—that of a dependent, obedient man. But the Lord was not to be taken so. He was blessedly perfect; He will not act as a divine being, however truly divine; as a man He acts. And note the weapon with which He meets the enemy: the word of God. “Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” We may

notice that the Lord's quotations are all out of Deuteronomy, the book in which obedience is so pressed on Israel as they were about to enter the land. The enemy, met at each point by the word, is powerless against obedience, and has to change his ground at once. He does not, however, change his tactics; his weapon is still the same.

He takes the Lord up into a high mountain, and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world, and says, "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine." Here it is a temptation of a worldly character that is presented; and mark the subtlety of it. He to whom it is presented is the very one who, in the purpose of God, is to have it all, but who, according to that purpose, was to take it through a pathway of intense suffering. Again the Lord has recourse to the word, and answers, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

The thought here presented to the Lord seems to be similar in character to that presented in Peter's words to Him, when announcing His death: "That be far from thee, Lord;" to which the Lord replies, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but

those that be of men.” Why? Because the tendency of his words would have been to turn the Lord aside from the path of obedience, of suffering, and of death. Here the underlying thought would seem the same: Save yourself the suffering, throw yourself down and accredit me, and you shall have all without cost. This the Lord meets with the word: “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” The words “Get thee behind me, Satan,” should not be read here.

Again Satan is foiled through the word, again he is compelled to change his ground; but he still tries the same tactics—allurement is still his weapon.

He brings the Lord to Jerusalem and sets Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and says unto Him, “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.” Mark here again the subtlety of the temptation. Satan, discerning that the Lord takes his stand on the word, says, as it were, I will give you the word of God for what I ask; on that you can depend. Cast yourself down; has He not said “He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee, etc.” Mark how the Lord meets this. The word is His weapon. He says, as it were, God

never contradicts Himself, and God has said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." He had a word that met all the subtlety of the enemy, and what was the effect? Though the devil may transform himself into an angel of light, and quote Scripture, the word will detect him. To do what he asked—and apparently advanced Scripture in support of—would have been contrary to a direct word of God. He left out in his quotation the very few words that would have entirely defeated his purpose in quoting it—the words "in all thy ways." Why did he omit these words? Because it would not have been the *way* of a dependent man—the character in which the Lord then stood—to tempt God.

This principle of strict adherence to the word of God is of deep importance in a day of infidelity like the present—a day in which you will find Scripture quoted for all sorts of ends—the Bible brought forward for all sorts of purposes; but you will invariably find that what is so quoted, so brought forward, would lead to that which would be in direct contradiction to some positive word of God. Let me say, if you have got the substance—the positive word—do not let it go to grasp the shadow—the infidel deduction—though there may appear to be Scripture in support of it. The effect of grasping after the shadows that infidelity presents, seems to me to

be illustrated by the fable of the dog of old, who, when passing over a stream by a plank, with a piece of meat in his mouth, saw the reflection of the meat in the water below; he had the substance, but seeing the shadow, grasped at it, and in so doing lost the substance. That is just what infidelity would have you do. It would, by presenting to you a shadow, cause you to let go the substance. You may not be able to at once detect the counterfeit, but you know that you have, in the word, got that on which your soul can rest—you have got the substance. Keep firm hold of that, and any difficulty man may put before you will be made clear to you in God's time; He will expose the counterfeit. God has given us the substance—His word. Our place is through grace to hold it fast, not grasping at shadows—the speculations of vain men.

To return. Here, then, we see the Lord taking His stand as man in dependence and obedience, the weapon wherewith He meets the enemy being the word; it is the only weapon that He uses. But what is the result? The enemy, completely foiled by it when so used, has to leave Him: “The devil departed from him for a season.” The whole scene furnishes us with a practical illustration of the words in Psalm xvii., “By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer;” and of those in 1 John v., “He that is begotten of God keepeth himself,

and that wicked one toucheth him not." The Lord, as man, overcomes the enemy by simple adherence to the word of God, as He stands in his place of dependence on God.

The first man, Adam, fell before the foe through disobedience and independence; but here we find the second man, the last Adam, victorious over the enemy through obedience and dependence.

So far, then, as the wiles of the enemy in allurement go, the Lord's fitness to take His people's place is fully demonstrated. The foe has brought his weapon fully to bear, and has failed to accomplish his end—the turning aside of the obedient man.

That we may gather up through grace the practical lessons the Spirit would teach us, let us turn for a moment to the first epistle of John. We have seen that there are three temptations of the Lord recorded in the gospels. He may have been tempted all through the forty days (Mark i. 13), but three only are recorded; and God has in His grace taken care that the three which are recorded are the very ones whereby the enemy seeks to seduce souls in the present day—the temptations common to ourselves. The devil always uses weapons adapted to the people he is attacking. He will use them in one way against one person, and in another way against another person. I doubt if he have more than two—the two we have spoken of,

namely, allurements and terrors—but he is a perfect adept in the use of them; just as I may have but one sword, but I know how to use it in many ways. A thrust that would reach one might not be calculated to reach another; therefore a different thrust would be made at that other, but the weapon wherewith it is made would be the same.

In 1 John ii. 12 we find the aged apostle addressing believers generally as “children;” but in verses 13–27 he distinguishes different degrees of maturity amongst them; he notes the features which characterise each degree, the dangers that beset each respectively, and also the safeguard that God gives to keep them from the snares by which the enemy seeks to seduce or entrap them.

The degrees are fathers, young men, and babes. What characterises the babes is the knowledge of relationship — they know the Father. That which characterises the young men is the energy of faith, and victory over the foe through obedience and dependence. That which characterises the fathers is the knowledge of Christ. Now let us look at the dangers that beset them.

The trial peculiarly adapted to tell on a babe, and either hinder his entrance into, or turn him aside from, the path of obedience, would be adversity. And here we find the enemy, well

knowing which trial to bring to bear on each, at work to turn the babes aside by adversity.

"Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." Seeing those who had taken up the profession of Christianity going out from their midst would be likely to stumble the babes; and again there were some *among* them endeavouring to seduce them into doubting as to the possession of eternal life. Thus the enemy is seen pressing trial by adversity upon the babes. It was a temptation similar in character to that which he first tried upon the Lord Jesus.

A trial by adversity would not be so suitable for the accomplishment of the enemy's ends with a young man; it would be calculated rather to stir up all the energy that was in him. The enemy, therefore, has another character of trial for him, namely, prosperity. He presents to him the world. "Love not the world; neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Here we see the way the enemy deals with the young man. He does not try by adver-

sity to *drive* him from the path of obedience, but endeavours by prosperity to *seduce* him from it. It is a bait, if I may say so ; it is not adversity, but prosperity, that he presents to the young man.

Do we not need to have the enemy's wiles thus laid bare ? Do we not need the warning God in His word so graciously gives us ? We are passing through the world, and the word that is here used for world does not signify the material earth on which we walk, but an organised system, and in this case a system organised by Satan, designed to minister to the natural man, and thus to keep him from God. It is by this that the enemy seeks to seduce the young man from the path of obedience—to withdraw him from the place of dependence. This trial answers in character to that presented in the second place to the Lord—trial by prosperity.

Neither of these trials would be so likely to tell on a father in Christ. The snare from which he would be more in danger would be some religious deceit ; Satan will not, therefore, try either adversity or prosperity with him, but will try him by religious deceits.

And now, what are the safeguards that God has provided for each in order to preserve them from the danger and through the trial ? Let us look at the twentieth verse. There we find the safeguard for the babes : they have “the unction

from the Holy One," and in verse 24, the word that they had heard from the beginning: "Let that, therefore, abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father." These are the two things which, combined, God presents as the safeguard to preserve the babe in Christ from falling a prey to the dangers of the way—to the wiles of the enemy.

To the young man, whose danger is being seduced by the world, God in His word unfolds the true character of the world, its source, and its end: "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world; and the world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." And to the young man, as to the babe, God presents a double safeguard: the love of the Father and the word which reveals His will; these are what God has provided to keep him from falling a prey to, from being seduced by, the bait of the foe.

How far can each of us say that the love of the Father *does* exclude the world? Do we know anything of this practically? The reason that saints are too often found dabbling in the world is because they have *not* the love of the Father in them; if they had, and enjoyed that love,

how could a system set up in direct opposition to Him whose love they enjoyed attract them? Satan has formed a world that is in direct opposition to the Father; but when the Father's love is known and enjoyed, therein is found a safeguard that excludes the world.

And now as to the father in Christ: what is his safeguard? Religious deceits are brought to try him; his safeguard is Christ. The father has known “Him that is from the beginning”—Christ the living Word. Thus, in the case of the father as of the young man and as of the babe, the word of God is the safeguard, and obedience thereto the path of safety from all the power of the foe, who is powerless against obedience.

Paul, in speaking to Timothy, his son in the faith, of the last days, tells him the features that will characterise them, and amongst others is found religious deceit: “A form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” Also a resistance of the truth by imitation of it. Do you know anything of this form of godliness, but denying the power thereof? You say, I mourn over it. Why, then, do you not turn away from it? You have not got to attack it; you have only got to turn away from it. The word itself is your authority to do so: “*from such turn away;*” and on this each child of God is not only authorised, but *responsible*, to act. At such a time, and in such a state of

things, Paul commends to Timothy three things ; " My doctrine," the holy Scriptures, and the person of Christ.

Thus God has provided for His people in everything. Though the enemy may press us hard, and be an expert in the use of his weapons, God has provided a perfect safeguard for us in His word. May the Lord give us to gather up and lay to heart the practical lessons that He would teach us from these portions of His word, and that, having that word, we may in dependence on Him recognise and fulfil, through grace, our responsibility of acting in obedience thereto. Is it not true that what we need in the present day is not so much the knowledge of additional truth—not that we do not *need* truth—but rather to be in the power of the truth that is known?—so to be in the power of it that it should *command* us. We need to be obedient ones, we need to be dependent ones, following in the steps of Him who has gone before us—that blessed One who, in His pathway on earth, met and defeated all the power of the enemy by simple obedience, simple dependence. May each one indeed follow Him, remembering that, if believers at all, they are set apart (sanctified) to His obedience—that is, to obey on the same principle on which He obeyed who could say, " My meat is to do the will of him that sent me."

We observed, in opening, that the enemy had

two weapons whereby he sought to accomplish his ends on man. In Luke iv. we saw the attack of the foe by means of his weapon of allurement on the second man, and his utter failure in that attack. This being so, “he departed from him for a season;” but only for a season, as the time would come when he would again attack Him, and that with the second weapon—terror—with a view to driving Him from the path of obedience, having before failed to seduce him therefrom. The time, place, and mode of this second attack we have, I believe, presented to us in Luke xxii., where the Lord is seen in the garden of Gethsemane. He there, as a man, meets the enemy who is armed with his weapon of terror.

This scene is at the end of the Lord’s ministry. At the commencement we found Him taking his stand upon obedience and dependence, and afterwards all through His course see Him spoiling the enemy and victorious over him, but never, as is too often the case with us, does victory take Him out of the place of dependence. Victorious all through, on what ground do we find Him here at the close? “He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down and prayed.” He still occupied in His perfection the very ground on which He stood at the beginning—that of dependence and obedience. He thus meets the foe, when wielding his weapon of terror, on exactly the same ground and principle

as those on which He met him when wielding his weapon of allurement. The enemy approaches and presses on His soul the terror of that which He would have to undergo. The Lord, in His perfection, shrinks from the fearful ordeal; He prays: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," but goes on to add: "*Nevertheless*, not my will but thine be done." He is the obedient, dependent man; the Father's will He will do at all cost.

Notice that, in the wilderness, Satan three distinct times pressed the Lord with the weapon of allurement; here in the garden he three distinct times presses Him with the weapon of terror; and three times the Lord presents all to the Father. From His hand He will take all—from the *Father's* hand He will take the cup. It was on the cross only that He drank that cup; but here he was gazing in spirit into its depths, estimating those depths as one only could who was Himself absolutely perfect; but, estimating it fully as He does, He presents it to the Father, and in obedience bows to receive it from His hand.

What can the enemy do? He has brought his second weapon to bear with all its power, seeking to drive the Lord thereby from the path of obedience, only to find that he can do nothing, for he has met an obedient, dependent man. He is utterly defeated after having used both his

weapons to the utmost of his power ; the effect of the pressure that he brought to bear serving only to bring out more brightly and fully the perfection of the blessed Man who was subjected to it, and to manifest His perfect fitness to take His people's place. In all the testing of the enemy in which the first man fell, the blessed perfection of the Christ of God shines out in all its glory : He is victorious as man in obedience and dependence over the power of the enemy in allurements ; He is victorious over the power of the enemy in terror, and then he goes to overcome him finally in the death of the cross, and thus “ destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life subject to bondage.”

May we derive true blessing to our souls from meditating on the person of the Lord, both as a divine Being and as the perfect Man, and also on the perfection of His ways as He walked a man here on earth, remembering that, in so walking, He has left us an example that we should follow His steps, that we are sanctified to His obedience, and that our responsibility is to walk as He walked.

(J. L.)

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There is an undistractedness of object that humanly speaking is in itself power.

(J. N. D.)

## “NONE RIGHTEOUS.”

2 COR. v. 14-17.

TO-NIGHT we come more directly to the thought on my mind, namely, the distinctive character of the place into which God has called the believer, whether as to Himself, as to Satan, or as to the world, and also how this place has been acquired. We have already had presented the thought that the Lord Jesus Christ, by taking in grace His people's place, has made their place in righteousness: that is to say, the place a believer now occupies is the answer on God's part to the work of Christ on the cross, a work whereby God was fully glorified.

Let us now turn to Scripture and trace therefrom the position of man, that we may see how it came to be a necessity that the Lord should take His people's place if He would bring them into blessing.

Man, in the opening out of God's day, appeared in all the blessedness and innocence in which he was placed in the garden of Eden. It was a bright dawn. But man, acting in his own self-will, departed from that place in which God had set him, and not only forfeited his place, but was driven out from the presence of his

Creator. He hearkened to the voice of his wife and the serpent's lie, was driven out from the place of blessing, and was thenceforth a fallen creature instead of the innocent one that he had originally been. He is God's creature still, truly, but he is a *fallen* one. Now it was not till Adam was driven out from Eden that his posterity sprung up on this earth. We, then, as descended from Adam, start with a nature which is that of fallen man—the very opposite to what God is. We were born in a position of ruin, and our nature answers to the fallen stock from which we have sprung, and is energized by a will that is opposed to God. The result, as to our practice, is that we are thoroughly guilty before God, and have rendered ourselves individually subject to the judgment of God on account of that practice.

Now, if this be our condition, what do we need? On the one hand, as to our state by nature, we need to be reconciled to God; and on the other, our practice being guilty, we need clearance from our guilt, and positive righteousness in addition. These are necessities which arise owing to the state in which we are found, and to the practice that we have followed.

In the Old Testament Job, wearied by the speeches of his friends, asks the question, “How should man be just with God?” Now, the epistle to the Romans is the New Testament answer to this Old Testament question: how

shall man be just with God is the subject-matter of it. Let us look at it for a moment.

We find, in the first chapter, Paul, after setting forth his credentials as apostle, presents the Lord Jesus Christ according to the promises of God, "made of the seed of David according to the flesh," and also "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Thus he presents him as the object of faith. Then, verse 14, he speaks of the value of the gospel, and in verse 16 tells us what that gospel is, namely, "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith." The great subject of the epistle is thus seen to be the Son of God as the object of faith, and the righteousness of God revealed on the principle of faith to everyone who trusts in Him.

The apostle then proceeds to show what made the righteousness of God necessary, namely, the fact that "wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Therefore, if a soul have not this righteousness, he falls under the wrath that is revealed. He then, from chapter i. 19 to iii. 30, enters into an elaborate proof of the guilt of man. To show what it was that

made wrath necessary, he in doing so takes up the two great classes into which the race of man was divided, namely, the heathen Gentile and the religious Jew. Heathendom is first arraigned, and in verses 19 and 20 we find the first ground on which he proves this guilt, namely, the testimony of creation. The created things of this world bore witness to man, from the time of their creation, of the eternal power and divinity of Him who created them. Of their testimony man took no notice—did not recognize the eternal power and divinity therein set forth—and was on this ground guilty, the testimony leaving him without excuse.

In verse 22 we find a second ground on which the apostle proves their guilt. In Gen. iv. we learn that men began to call upon the name of the Lord, and, after that, Noah became a “preacher of righteousness;” that is, there was a traditional knowledge of God handed down from father to son. On the ground of this knowledge the apostle takes them up. What did those who possessed this knowledge do? Instead of bowing to the God of whom they had this knowledge, they did what men of the present day do: they attempted to measure the infinite by the finite. The infidel nowadays urges that he cannot believe what he cannot understand. And who made your senses? Can your senses measure the God who made them?

So, "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Man would not own God, would not have God. God therefore orders that, as they would not honour Him, neither should they recognize what was due to themselves; and, with man who would not glorify God, Satan takes the place of God. Man consequently deified his lusts, made of them a religion, and his religion from that time became not merely a *corrupt* but a *corrupting* thing; man's religion itself corrupted man. Man knew that the God of whom he had a knowledge was opposed to the lusts he loved, and he consequently tried to shut out all thought of God, that he might follow his lusts unhinderedly. This being so, God gave him up to his lusts.

There was, however, one thing that man got at the fall, and which he has had ever since—conscience—that which takes knowledge of good and evil. The effect of conscience, in the midst of the evil here described, was to cause men to judge as evil that by which they were surrounded; but, the will not being subject to God, the only effect of the judgment of evil was that they moralized about it whilst they still practised it themselves, or took pleasure in those who did so. The question therefore arises, would this moralizing about evil, while still practising it, save them from the judgment of God? The case of this special class the apostle meets in

chapter ii. 1-16, where he shows that the judgment of God is according to truth, and that consequently the *evil-doer* would not escape, however he might moralize. "We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" God's long-suffering is shown on purpose that the *evil-doer* should be led to repentance, but, continuing to practise the evil, he would inevitably fall under the judgment.

Having thus closed the case of the moraliser, the apostle resumes his general proof of the guilt of man, taking up in verse 17 the case of the privileged Jew. The Jew would be ready enough to admit the guilt of the Gentile, but here the apostle turns to him, and asks, What about yourself? You are the one who has God's law; you boast of it; you are a teacher of this law; and what is the effect on you of the privileges of which you boast, of the law which you teach? You are not governed by it, and the truth is, that the God who gave you this law is more dishonoured by you to whom He gave it than by the dog of a Gentile to whom He never gave it at all, so that you are, if anything, the more guilty of the two in His presence.

In chapter iii. 9 the apostle sums up the

guilt of both Jew and Gentile, but to seal home the guilt of the Jew, the favoured one, more distinctly upon him, he turns for a moment to the law, and shows what it said to those who were under it. Here we find one of the most minute and solemn descriptions of fallen man. If he be taken up as to his person, "It is written there is none righteous, no, not one." If, as to the *activity* of his mind "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." Or if in the detail of his members, "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes." Such is man as to his practice, and that in the most favourable circumstances that could be; such the verdict of the law about him. If man be viewed individually, the result is that "every mouth is stopped;" or collectively, "all the world subject to the judgment of God." Thus the apostle proves the universal guilt of man, and demonstrates what made wrath necessary.

Man being at a distance from God as to his position, and opposed to God as to his practice, in such a way as we here see set forth, and without righteousness for God, what is to meet his

case, so that he may be not only sheltered from judgment, but God may be free to bless him? Only through an atonement offered to God could man's case be met. But for this a spotless victim was requisite. Could such an one be found amongst men? No; “for *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” The solemn conclusion, therefore, to which man is reduced is, that, as far as man is concerned, he is *lost*.

But God has resources deep enough to meet everything, and God presents to us His own beloved Son as the one who is able to open up the way that He may bless and that sinners may be blessed. But in order that this might be so, He must glorify God about sin; He must take the place and bear the judgment due to those for whose blessing He came; He must *die*. Thus alone could God maintain His own character, and at the same time exercise in righteousness His love and grace. Thus alone could sinners be brought back to God that He might bless them.

In speaking of the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, it is well to see clearly the double aspect of that work, that is, its aspect Godward—which is atonement; and also its aspect manward—which is substitution. The first is that in which the Lord Jesus has glorified God about sin; the second is that in which He has

in grace taken His people's place, has stood as their substitute before God, has borne in His own person the wrath due to their sins, and been made sin for them, that they "might be made the righteousness of God in him."

In Rom. iii. we get the first aspect, namely, atonement. There we find God spoken of as acting in grace towards certain who have sinned, justifying them freely; consequently, we have brought before us the ground on which He can do so consistently with His own character—a holy God who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity—and that ground is atonement. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation* through faith in his blood." Is God's character then called in question by this exercise of grace? Not for a moment! The blessed Son of God has come down, died as a propitiation on the cross of Calvary, and God, having been glorified thereby, having had every demand of His holy nature met therein, is not only free to minister blessing to any poor sinner believing in Jesus, but is consistent with His own character in so doing. The blood of atonement is the ground on which His righteousness in justifying is declared: "To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in

Jesus.” Thus we find God has been glorified by the atonement wrought out by the Lord Jesus Christ.

But now to take up the second side—that of substitution. The Lord Jesus comes and actually takes, as their substitute, the place of those who now believe on Him, to receive at the hand of God what was due to them on account of the offences they had committed. In this we see Him, not as the victim of atonement glorifying the nature of God, but as the bearer of His people’s sins. In the latter part of chapter iv. Abraham’s faith is presented to us, and it is beautiful to see how entirely he was above surrounding circumstances; he neither looked *in* at himself nor *out* at Sarah, but *up* to God. “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform;” and the consequence was, “it was imputed to him for righteousness. And it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for *our* offences, and was raised again for *our* justification.” Here we have, beyond a question, the blessed Christ of God taking in His grace His people’s place, and acting as the sinbearer—their substitute. What

happened then? "The Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all." If the Lord has thus taken in grace His people's place, what is the result to them? They are justified—are cleared from all that guilt, under the judgment of which they must have sunk had not another borne it for them.

All this, however, is rather negative in its character. It is clearance from guilt; but there must be also positive righteousness. Righteousness *from* man God by law demanded but failed to get. In that of which we have been speaking God is seen acting in grace, and we find that when man had no righteousness for God, God, in that glad tidings which is the power of God to salvation, reveals righteousness of God for man. This righteousness the apostle describes in chapters iii., 21, 22 as a divine righteousness wholly apart from law, "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." Thus, as there is on the one side for the believer clearance from all his guilt, so there is on the other, on the positive side, divine righteousness—righteousness of God.

It is important that souls should understand this—what God's righteousness is, what it is to be made the righteousness of God in Christ.

Creature righteousness consists in the fulfilment of the duties that flow from the relation-

ship in which he stands to one having a claim over him. God's righteousness is His perfect consistency with Himself, with His own nature and character. This is seen in His acts, which display that nature and character. Now, man, as the creature of God, is responsible to have righteousness for God his Creator. This God demanded in the law, which furnished the creature with the perfect rule of his responsibility to his Creator, as also to his fellow-creature. In the fulfilment of this man has utterly failed, and so failed to render to God the righteousness due to Him. The case then stood thus: on God's side, a righteous requirement from His creature by means of a holy, just, and good law; on man's side, complete failure in meeting the righteous requirement of his Creator.

Thus God was dishonoured through the sin and failure of His creature, and was consequently under obligation to Himself to manifest His righteousness, that is, His consistency with Himself, with His own nature and character as pure, holy, and absolutely intolerant of evil, in the judgment and condemnation of the evil—of the one who committed it. To do so would be His righteousness. To have visited this judgment on man, however, would have entailed the eternal punishment of the whole human race. This God does not desire. “He will (desires to) have all men to be saved.” How could this be

consistently with His own character, man's case being such as described ?

Christ, the Lamb of God, has come ; has presented Himself before God as the one on whom God could display His righteous judgment of sin. Christ has presented an atonement to God for the dishonour put on Him through the failure of man, His creature. He has glorified God's nature as to all. But in this offering of atonement to God, Christ has also borne in His own person the judgment, the penalty due, on account of their failure in their responsibility, to every soul believing on Him.

Thus the entire question at issue has been taken up by Christ. In and on Him, a sacrifice for sin, at the cross, God's righteous judgment of sin has been displayed. God has been glorified as to sin and is, in consequence, free to act in grace to any poor sinner believing in Jesus. Failing atonement, God was not free, if one may so speak, to act thus. To have done so without atonement having been offered to Him would have been to have done it at the expense of His righteousness, which demanded the condemnation of the sinner—the one who had failed to meet God's righteous requirements. Through atonement a way of escape has been opened for the sinner. God, having been glorified by it, is freed from the obligation of condemning the soul that believes on Him who wrought the atone-

ment. God has condemned the evil in the person of Him who was guiltless, and can now, where there is faith, let the guilty go free, accounting that not only his evil but himself has been condemned in the condemnation of the One in whom he, through grace, believes—the One who, while glorifying God in atonement, at the same time stood as the substitute for that believing soul.

But more. If atonement have, by glorifying God's nature and character, freed Him from one obligation, it has, through that same nature and character, laid Him under another. He owes it to the man Christ Jesus, who went into death in order to glorify Him, that He (God) should glorify Him (Christ) personally. To do so would be God's righteousness. This He has done, and therefore in Christ glorified as man is seen God's righteousness. But at the time Christ glorified God by atonement, He also stood as the substitute for everyone who believes in Him. God has proved His acceptance of Christ's work by raising Him from the dead and giving Him glory; and, having done so, He owes it to Christ to justify every soul for whom that work was wrought. To do so would be simple righteousness on God's part. In doing so He would display His consistency with Himself—His righteousness.

Every justified soul, therefore, is a monument

of God's righteousness, for it is by and according to that righteousness he is justified. He is made the righteousness of God in Christ.

From this it will be seen that God's righteousness is not a thing put to the believer's account. The believer *himself* is made the righteousness of God in Christ. He stands before God in Christ, clear as Christ. Nor is it Christ's righteousness imputed to the believer, as is sometimes said. It is only as having part with Christ in death that any soul is made righteous, but the righteousness which it is made is that of *God*. †

Thus far, then, we see the believer cleared from all his guilt and having a positive righteousness before God.

We must next look at the sin in the believer's nature. The believer is forgiven on the ground of the blood that another, who has borne his sins, has shed. But he finds he has an evil nature in him, and until he learn the fulness of redemption, and what God's action with regard to that nature which He finds within has been, he is troubled; for he argues, and argues rightly, that such a nature never can stand before God. Sins God forgives on the ground of the blood; the nature which produced those sins God never forgives; with it he deals in another way. We find that His blessed Son has taken His people's place, not alone with regard to the practice—the sins—but the nature too, and God has in

Him, a sacrifice for sin, not forgiven but *condemned* sin in the flesh. “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.” Here we find the nature that is within treated of, and the testimony of God is that He has condemned it. The result to a soul that has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ is that, while still conscious of having within a nature that never can stand in God’s presence, he knows on God’s authority that that evil nature has already been the subject of God’s judicial action—has been condemned by God—and that he is no longer associated with it—no longer in it (though it be still in him) before God. What he has now to do is, in full liberty and in the power of that risen life in which the Spirit acts, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, to take God’s part against it, and, reckoning it dead, allow it no place. If this be not done the nature will be active, and the product of that activity will be sins, about which God will be obliged to deal governmentally with the believer—His child—that, the sins being confessed, communion, not relationship, which had by these sins been interrupted, might be restored. But the root *sin*, the nature, God has already dealt with, not by forgiving it or extracting it from, but by condemning it *in*, the believer. “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.*"

Chapter vi. enters into this most fully. "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." "Our old man" signifies the nature that the believer argues can never stand in God's presence. What has happened to it? Why, God has brought it to an end by the execution of judgment upon it, and by death the believer is discharged from sin. We read, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." The next verse, "Likewise reckon ye also *yourselves* to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" or more correctly, "*in* Jesus Christ our Lord." Now this tells us not only of God's condemnation of the nature, but it tells us of the introduction of the believer into a new standing altogether. God's judgment of the Adam nature is seen in the condemnation of Christ when a sacrifice for sin, and, in this, death has severed the believer from the Adam association in which he stood. But God has raised Him from the dead, the One in whom this was accomplished, even His own

blessed Son, and this risen One is the believer's life, and he, possessing this life, stands before God in an entirely new association, not in Adam but in Christ Jesus. Christ has died to sin once, but now lives to God. God has brought Him up from the dead, and the believer is now, as to his standing before God, not any longer in Adam, but in Christ risen from the dead. Blessed be God! the life that we possess is the risen life of the Lord Jesus Christ. The believer was by nature associated with Adam; death has come in and severed this association; next God has come in and raised up from the dead the One who died, and the believer has been introduced into a new association, even with Christ risen from the dead, and has now no standing before God but in that risen One alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Thus, with regard to sin, the believer is delivered. The twofold bearing of the truth is, that Christ has died *for* His sins, hence he is forgiven; and that he has died *with* Christ, and hence he is delivered; and that the life that he now has is the risen life of Christ, and that in the power of the Holy Ghost. Hence, also, sin has no more dominion over him, he being no longer under law, which demanded good from a bad man but did not produce it, and condemned the man for not having it, but under grace, which does not demand but does produce.

Under grace a new nature has been bestowed, in which life in the power of the Spirit acts and produces fruits pleasing to God: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law."

But when thus brought nigh to God, does the believer stand in a mere creature relationship to Him as formerly? No, the Lord Jesus, when revealing Himself to Mary after His resurrection, delivers to her a message which discloses the relationship into which those who believed on Him were introduced. He there says, "I ascend unto my Father, and *your Father*; and to my God, and your God." The relationship of the believer, therefore, to God is that of a child to a father. As we have seen, it is "ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Or as we have it in John i., "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons (or more properly *children*) of God."

We see how perfectly thus, as to God Himself, Christ has made our place: we are forgiven through the blood, stand before God in divine righteousness in an entirely new place, no longer in Adam but in Christ Jesus, and in positive relationship with God as His children. The Lord give us in some little measure to enter into the blessedness of that into which He has, by taking in grace our place, introduced us!

One point I might just touch on before closing, and that is, that the Lord Jesus Christ has also made our place as regards Satan. See Heb. ii. 14, where we read: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and *deliver* them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Satan had the power *of* death, a power permitted of God, one that he had acquired through the lusts of man. Now, the Lord has taken His people’s place, and, by going into death, has broken the power of him who had the power of it, and, as the result, the believer is delivered from the power of him who had that power. Death is now in the hand of the blessed One who is the believer’s life, and when the believer does pass from this scene, he is laid to sleep by Jesus, the One who loves him, and who gave Himself for him, and who Himself, as the One who has power *over* death, exercises the prerogative of laying His own to sleep. The apostle in Col. i. 12, 13, when giving thanks to the Father, who has made His people, His children, meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, adds: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness (that is, Satan’s power), and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”

As regards Satan, therefore, the believer is, through the work of Christ, delivered from the bondage in which he was through fear of death.

And now let us ask, At what cost has this deliverance, this introduction into the presence of God in blessed relationship with Himself, been accomplished? At no less a cost than the travail of the soul of the Lord Jesus Christ. He died to make it ours; He lives to bring us into the power of it. May it be ours ever to connect the blessing with what it cost that blessed One to win it for us, so that we may hold it dear; and may we day by day enter more fully into it with quiet, praising, joyful spirits, as we walk with Him here below, waiting that time when He shall come to introduce us into the full fruition of it with Himself on high. [J. L.]

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To promote and maintain the rights of One only entitled where they are not owned, or only carelessly acknowledged, is not only the duty but the happiness of a righteous soul.

[J. B. S.]

## “OUTSIDE THE CAMP.”

HEBREWS xiii. 8-16.

IN considering the distinctiveness of the place into which God has called the believer, whether as to Himself, as to Satan, or as to the world, in either or both of its aspects—whether worldly or religious—we have seen what the truth which sanctifies reveals, namely, that the Lord Jesus, by taking in grace His people's place has made their place in righteousness. The fitness of the Lord thus to take His people's place has been already considered, also the fact of His having done so as regards God and as regards Satan. The result to the believer as regards God we have seen from the word to be his reconciliation to God, his introduction into His presence. Cleansed from all his guilt, associated with the risen Man at God's right hand, in whom the believer is, as to his place before God, taken into favour in the Beloved, in the relationship of a child to God, who has now been revealed as Father. The result to the believer as regards Satan is that he is delivered from his power, that power being broken when the Lord, through death, “destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ;” and is delivered from

that bondage in which he all his lifetime was through fear of death. What we have now to consider is the Lord in grace taking His place as man in the world, that we may learn therefrom our true place as regards it.

From John i. 14, we have already seen the Lord was made flesh. He came down to this earth and walked a man among men, full of grace and truth, the declarer of the Father. If we refer to verses 10, 11, of this chapter, we shall see there the reception man accorded Him at the very outset of His career. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." He who was Himself the Creator of all, stood in the midst of the creation He had formed, but it knew Him not. There were, however, others with whom He had relationship more intimate than with the world around, "his own" people of Israel, a people chosen of God from among the nations of the earth, a people carefully instructed to look forward to the coming One. To these He came. How did they receive Him? "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Thus, at the very outset of His career, instead of being received by the world He is rejected.

If we turn next to Luke iv. 16, we shall see there also the enmity of men to this blessed One who came down in grace among them. Having met and foiled the enemy in those forty days of

temptation in the wilderness, as we have already seen, he comes to Nazareth, goes into the synagogue, opens the book, and, after having read a portion from the prophet Esaias, pours forth such words of grace as man had never heard before. Man is attracted by the sound of grace. "They wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." It was an unwonted sound in their ears. But while wondering at the grace, the evil of man's heart comes out : they recognise the lowly place He had in grace taken in order to bring Himself near to them—"Is not this Joseph's son?"—and take advantage of it to despise Him and refuse the grace He proclaimed. This being so, the Lord turns the light of truth on their consciences ; He brings to their mind what had happened in the day of Elijah, when Israel had departed from God—a day when God passed beyond the bounds of Israel and sent his servant to a poor gentile widow of Sarepta, by her to be sustained, and to that poor gentile He displayed His grace. Again, in the days of Elisha, God had, in the exercise of His grace, passed beyond the limits of an apostate, grace-despising people, and, though many lepers were in Israel, that grace took up and healed a poor Assyrian leper. Thus, by bringing truth to bear, He warns them against despising grace, lest, despising it, God would do as He had done before, and carry His grace beyond them to others.

The effect of this is to bring out the true character of the heart of man in its enmity against God and grace: "All they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." Such is the reception accorded by man to this One full of grace and truth at the opening of His ministry among them!

Nor was it different at the close. Look for a moment at the 22nd chapter of this gospel. Here I find the Lord Jesus Christ, having been in this scene where he ever "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil"—here I find Him betrayed by His friend, subjected to the mockery and indignities of those He had permitted to take Him, and arraigned before the chief priests. No impartial trial was His. Another gospel (Mark) supplies us with the fact that they "sought witness against Jesus to put him to death;" yet none could they find. But they will not be baulked of their purpose; bent on that purpose—His death—they will condemn Him by any means. In reply to their question, "Art thou, then, the Son of God?" He witnesses that part of the good confession which would most deeply involve Him with them: "Ye say that I am;" and, for this witness of the

truth, is condemned. Brought before the Roman governor, as we see in the next chapter, He witnesses the second part of the good confession—that which would tend to involve Him with Pilate. In answer to the question, “Art thou the king of the Jews?” His reply is, “Thou sayest it.”

And now, just as Christ has witnessed the good confession in the presence of those who would condemn Him, God is careful to establish a testimony to the spotlessness of that blessed One, and that through the heathen judge himself. Pilate says, “I find no fault in this man.” Again, on His return from Herod, to whom He had been sent, the testimony of Pilate, based on Herod’s action towards the Lord, is still the same: “Nothing worthy of death.” And so saying the Roman governor seeks to release Him. But no, not so would they have it; their heart “is fully set in them to do evil,” and nothing will satisfy their dire enmity save “away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas.” Was ever such a picture of the heart of man? Here we have, as it were, two men presented to them from which to choose one: the one, a Man who had in his own person presented God in grace to men—One who had gone about amongst them ministering grace to them in every possible way—God’s Man; the other, a man who had in his own person presented the characteristics of Satan

—corruption and violence—Satan's man. Which will they choose? Satan's man, Barabbas, is the man of man's choice, while for the Man of God's choice nothing will satisfy them but a cross: "Crucify him, crucify him"—the further appeal of the Roman governor only furnishing opportunity for a more determined expression of their hatred: "They were *instant* with loud voices, *requiring* that *he* might be *crucified*. . . And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required." They *would* have it so. It was their *will*, and to that will was delivered by the guilty governor the blessed One who had gone about doing good, the only one since the fall of man on whom God's eye could rest with *perfect complacency*, the one concerning whom He could, in expressing the affection of His heart, say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The only place the world would give to Him was a cross. Thus we learn the reception and place accorded by the world to the Lord of glory come in grace and love, a man amongst men.

If we view the Lord's path while passing through this world, we find that He ever walked in the most absolute separation from it. As to place in it, He, though Creator of all, though Son of man who is to have all, had not where to lay His head. As to association, His path was one of distinct separation. In speaking to the

Jews, in John viii. 23, He distinctly tells them He is not of this world. He, though in it, belonged to another sphere. In John x. 36 we find another passage referring to this; He says to the Jews: “Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world,” etc. He came down from God into this scene on God’s behalf, separate from everything in it, carrying out the mission on which He came. Then in chapter xvii. He twice repeats this truth, That He was not of the world. In verse 14 He would seem to refer rather to the fact that, while passing through it, He was not of it—that is, as to association. He was truly a man in the midst of it, going through it, but He was not of the world through which He went. In verse 16 He perhaps speaks rather in view of His own proper place as outside of, not belonging to, not coming from, this world.

Such was the place of the Son of man in this world. Let us now see the result flowing from the cross to those associated with this world-rejected One—the result to them as regards the worldly world.

In writing to the Galatians Paul, in chapter i. 4, speaks of the object the Lord had in view in giving Himself for His people: “Who gave himself for our sins;” but, besides, “that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.”

There is the effect of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its result to the soul that believes in Him is deliverance from this evil world through which he is passing. In Gal. vi. 14. we find the Apostle speaking of the effect of the cross on himself, a believer, as regards the world. He says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Paul had looked upon this world as a place where good was to be found; but in the cross of Christ he has discovered the true character of it. It was a corrupt, guilty thing, and had at the cross cast out in rejection the only one who truly manifested good, who was for, and displayed, God in this scene. That One the world took and nailed to a cross. By that cross the world was henceforth crucified to Paul, and Paul, who had found his all in the One it crucified, was crucified to it.

Do we, like Paul of old, enter into this true and legitimate effect of the cross as regards the world? There is not a believer who is not thankful for the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, because through it he is cleared from the guilt of his sins, in it he sees the condemnation of his nature as a child of Adam, and deliverance therefrom. But that is not all the result flowing from the work of the cross. The cross of Christ has also come between the believer and

the world. The effect of the cross of Christ is to draw the line of separation between everyone that believes in Him and the world that has rejected Him. This being so, the only way in which believers can enter into association with the worldly world around is by stepping over the line of separation which their Lord has made between them and it by the sacrifice of Himself. What must be the character of such an action in the eye of God, who judges all things in the light? What the dishonour to the Christ who loves us, and has given Himself for us? What the loss, incalculable, to our own souls? May we truly recognize and act according to this result to us, as regards the world, of the cross of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Num. xxxi. furnishes us with an illustration of the inevitable consequences of joining affinity with the world. Israel, following the counsel of Balaam, had joined affinity with the Midianites; they had formed associations with the world. The result of their doing so is that they prepare conflict for themselves. Here they have to go forth to war against the very people with whom they had joined affinity. The word of the Lord to Moses is: “Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites;” and Moses’ word to the people: “Avenge the Lord of Midian.” Just so do believers prepare conflict for themselves by forming association with the world. The time

is sure to come when they will have to treat as foes the very people with whom they have joined affinity. It is blessed to see, however, that when there is true readiness to break with all that would ensnare, God gives full victory; so it was with Israel, so it is with the believer.

If it be asked, What place, then, is the believer to have in the world? the answer is, The place his Master had. What place was that? No place. The believer, then, is to have no place either. It is not place or portion in this world that the Lord presents to His disciples, but the cross; as He said (Matt. xvi. 24), "If any man will come after me (the world-rejected One), let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." In John xv. from verse 12, the Lord instructs His disciples as His friends. Mark what He tells them in verse 19: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are *not of the world*, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Here we find the believer's place as regards, and the portion he is to expect from, the world through which he is passing. He is not of it, but chosen out of it by Christ, and while in it has from it the portion his Lord had—hatred.

Again, in John xvii., 14, 16: "I have given them thy word; the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I

am not of the world.” In verse 14, the point seems to be that the believer, though in the world, is not of it—that is, as to association; and in verse 16 the point seems rather that the believer is one who, by faith, recognises that his place is in another sphere—in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, not yet, though soon, to be *with Him* there. His place of acceptance there marks our place of acceptance with the Father; and our place there determines our place here as regards the world through which we at present pass.

The Lord give us to recognize that, through the cross, He has entirely separated us from this world, and, recognizing that, may we through grace walk according to it. The great things in the world are not half so ensnaring as the little things; the heart is afraid of the great things, but is prone to allow itself in the little things. We do well to remember that it is “the *little* foxes that spoil the vines.” If these have been at work, may we know what it is to take them by self-judgment, so that the place of separation from the world, which is ours through the cross of our Lord, may be maintained in all its integrity to His honour and our blessing.

It is because this separation from the world is not maintained by believers that they so fail to enter into the joys of the relationship into which God has brought them to Himself—that of

children to a father, and the portion He has given them. Separation, therefore, from the world is indispensably necessary to the practical enjoyment of our blessings. Those who are before God as members of the new creation cannot have concord or fellowship with those who are members of the old creation. In 2 Cor. vi. 14, where we have the characteristic features of each given, we read, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Between such opposites there can be no concord; hence, if the believer desire practically to enter into the joys and privileges of that new creation of which he is, through grace, a member—of that relationship in which God has set him—he must "come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing." So doing, he enters practically into the joys that are his. "And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty." I believe we get distinctly the

worldly world presented to us here; in another Scripture we get the religious world. If we want to enjoy God according to the revelation He has been pleased to give of Himself—our Father—and His things, we must come out from the worldly world: separation from it is indispensable. May the exhortation of the first verse of chapter vii. (which verse really belongs to the subject we have been considering in chapter vi.) have its full power in our souls, and that which is exhorted be practically true of each one.

Thus far, then, as to the place of the believer as regards the world in its worldly aspect. Let us now consider the place His Lord has made for him as regards the world in its religious aspect.

In what we have read in Hebrews we get the Lord Jesus Christ taking His place as to the religious world. From time to time during His life we find Him in that city which was then the centre of the religious world—Jerusalem; there in gracious service to those who were in it, but always in separation from it. Never did He join affinity with it; never did He take a place in it. There is surely deep significance in the language used, the fact stated, in Mark xi. There we find the Lord day after day in Jerusalem, carrying on His gracious service; but invariably the word which closes the history of His day's service is, "when even was come he *went out of*

the city." He could not take any place in it. Had He done so He would have had to judge it on account of its corruption, and He came not to judge but to save. His own very grace was shown by going out of the city at eventide. During His life He was found in the midst of it, but associated with it we never find Him; and at His death, where do we see Him? Suffering without the gate.

Jerusalem was the centre of that religion which had been appointed by God. Its religion was not a humanly devised thing, nor was it a copy of another religion that had preceded it; it was what had been appointed by God Himself. And what was the place the Son of God, in grace a man among men, took in relation to that city—the centre and representative of the religion of the day? *Outside it.* He took that place in His grace and obedience. True, man's hands put Him there, and so demonstrated His own guilt: "By wicked hands was he crucified and slain;" but it was also true that He was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." In His life there was never association with the religious world, but in His death there was *absolute separation* from it.

Now, we have said that the Lord, by taking in grace His people's place on the cross, has *made* their place in righteousness. What, then, is the result to them of His having suffered outside the

gate? He, by that suffering, has made their place outside the camp—that is, outside everything that has to do in a religious way with man in the flesh. What is especially taken up in this passage is this: those addressed were Christians, but who, before they had through grace embraced Christianity, had belonged to Judaism. In embracing Christianity they had given up Judaism and become Christians. The Jews who still adhered to Judaism maintained that they had the true altar (an expression used for a system of worship), and that of it those who gave up Judaism and embraced Christianity had no right to eat. Here the writer denies their assertion, and affirms that not the adherents of Judaism, but those who had given it up—Christians—were those who had the true altar, and that of it the adherents of Judaism—those who serve the tabernacle—have no right to eat.

He then refers to the place in which the sin-offering was consumed, and shows that the Lord Jesus, the true sin-offering, suffered without the gate, and exhorts the Christians He is addressing to fulfil the responsibility that devolves on them consequent thereon, namely, to occupy the place their Lord by suffering without the gate had made for them. This they were to do by going forth to Him “without the camp.” If such were the responsibility of the saint when the religion of the day was adapted to man in

the flesh, and had, as such, been set aside by God, what is his responsibility in every day in which the religion of the day assumes a like character, even long after God has set aside that order of things? It is surely the same: "Go forth to him without the camp."

It may be asked, What constitutes the camp? The answer is, An earthly religious relationship with God outside the sanctuary; a religion established on earth, having priests between the people and God; a religion suited to man in the flesh. Such a religion was Judaism, and from it the true believers are here exhorted to "go forth."

If we turn to Heb. ix. we shall there find the features which the Spirit of God defines as characterizing the camp. "Then, verily, the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary." Here we find one feature, *a worldly sanctuary*. This is then described as being divided into two parts—verses 2, 7—into one of which those who were priests could go; this was called the holy place. But into the second, which was called the holy of holies, the high priest only could go, and that only once a year, and then not without blood; the significance of this being, as the Holy Ghost explains, that "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." That is to say, there was no free access to God; God was shut in and man

was shut out. In this we find another feature characterizing the camp.

Again, in this ceremonial certain offerings were made. The efficacy of these is here spoken of, and the Spirit of God states that they were ineffectual to make the conscience of the offerer perfect: “Sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.” Here we have yet another feature of the camp: in it a perfect, that is, purged, conscience was unknown. Nor was an eternal redemption. Thus we have, as the features characterizing the camp, the religion suited to man in the flesh: a worldly sanctuary; no freedom of access to God, but a body of priests officiating between the people and God; no purged conscience; and no eternal redemption.

In verses 11-15 of the chapter, the Spirit of God unfolds the features that characterize Christianity, where we find quite another order of things to that which we have just been considering. In the first place, there is no worldly sanctuary, no tabernacle made with hands. It is not earth, but heaven itself, which is the sphere of Christian worship. It is in the holiest, the very presence of God Himself, the Christian worships. See chap. x. 19. That is, in Christianity there is free access to God; as another Scripture has it: “By him [Christ] we have access, by one Spirit, to the Father.” Again, the sacrifice which

Christ has presented to God, His own blood, is effectual to purge the conscience. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Here a purged conscience, therefore, we find to be another of the characteristic features of Christianity. But there is yet another characteristic, namely, an eternal redemption. "By his own blood, he [Christ] entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption."

Thus we see that the features characterizing Christianity are free access to God in the holiest, a purged conscience, and eternal redemption, and, as is added in verse 15 of this chapter, an eternal inheritance. By comparing the features characterizing Christianity with those characterizing Judaism—the camp—the contrast will at once be apparent; and the amalgamation of the two will be seen to be impossible, the two things being in direct opposition the one to the other. To attempt to amalgamate them is to lose both.

It remains for us to see to which description the religious world around us answers. In speaking of the religious world, I do not speak of individuals, but of the religious system of the day. Is it marked by the first distinguishing feature of Christianity, freedom of access to God?

It is not. No doubt God is most truly entitled, as God Almighty, as Most High, etc., but is the religious world of the day characterized by the adoption cry, “Abba, Father”? Individuals in it may no doubt, through God’s grace, know the sweetness of that cry, but it is not the characteristic of the religious system of the day; on the contrary, that system is marked by the absence of free access to God, by a worldly sanctuary in which a body of priests is found between the people and God. Again, as to a purged conscience, in this, as in the case of access to God, individuals may through grace possess it; but is it a characteristic feature of the religion around? Alas! it is not; on the contrary, there it is too generally considered presumptuous for any to say they have forgiveness of their sins, have that which is a distinguishing feature of Christianity, a purged conscience. Again, as to an eternal redemption, or an eternal inheritance: is this a characteristic of the religion suited to man in the flesh which is abroad in our day? No. Thus, when we come to examine to which of the features the religious world by which we are surrounded answers—that is, to the features characterizing the camp, or to those characterizing Christianity—we find it is to the former, and not to the latter, it answers.

And if this be so, where is the place of the Christian with regard to it? Outside the camp.

"Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." He suffered without the gate for you, and has thereby made your place with Him outside—outside the camp. The believer has no other true place than clean outside it all.

Note, too, the character of that separation. It is not merely negative—there never was a soul maintained right by mere negative separation; you must have something positive. It is, "Let us go forth without the camp"—that is the negative side; but it is also "unto *him*," and there we have the positive. It is separation from the evil to Christ. The Lord would have the believer separated from what is contrary to Him, most surely; but He would also have him separated positively to *Himself*; and if the separation be not to Christ, it is simply another form of sectarianism. What is separated to may be a truth in itself, but such is not a separation according to God, if the separation be anything short of the Christ outside the camp. However right in itself the thing separated to may be, the character of the action is sectarian.

But now let us mark the character and spirit in which the separation is to be carried out. We are to go forth to Him outside the camp, "*bearing his reproach.*" He who is truly separated to

Christ outside the camp will be there with a lowly, sorrowing heart, feeling the failure and wreck in the hands of man of that which was once set up so bright and so beautiful by the hand of God Himself—the church of God on earth. He will feel that he, too, has at one time been a party to helping on the failure. Nor should any who may through grace have been led to occupy this place outside the camp imagine they are a testimony to any great thing—though in one sense they are a testimony to a great thing, namely, a great ruin. The fact of their being but a little remnant acting on the truth is a testimony to the ruin of the whole. Therefore if we go forth without the camp in a spirit which God can own, it will be in a lowly spirit, bearing Christ's reproach. Our personal walk and ways should testify for Him in such a way that, if any sought to reproach Him, they would cast that reproach on us, so fully were we representing Him, answering in our little measure to what the Lord says of Himself in Psa. lxi. : “The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.” He so perfectly manifested God here below, that, when man wanted to reproach God, the reproach fell upon Him—Christ.

Now, beloved friends, with what are you connected?—with that of which the characteristics of Judaism are the distinguishing features, or

with that of which the characteristics of Christianity are the distinguishing features? The Lord give you to answer the question in His own blessed presence, and enable you, if connected with the former, to apprehend and fulfil your responsibility by going forth to Him outside the camp—to Him who has by His death made that place for you. Other place, as regards the religious world around, the believer has not, and as long as he fails to occupy this he fails in loyalty to Him who, at the cost of Himself, made that place for Him. If through grace you are connected with the latter and already occupy the place your Lord has made for you outside the camp, may it be in that spirit of lowliness and grace, while at the same time faithfulness, of which He can approve.

But another point arises here : can it be that God would have His people remain as isolated individuals here below. Clearly not ; else where the force of the exhortation : "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is" ? or, what the meaning of the prophecy uttered by Caiaphas, when he prophesied "that Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also he should *gather together in one* the children of God that were scattered abroad." Where we see such statements in Scripture, we cannot but conclude that God must

have some ground on which He would have His people gathered.

What, then, is God's ground of gathering for His people in this day? It is the church of God—the body of Christ; that alone is the ground of gathering for God's people. In Eph. iv. 4 we read: “There is one body and one Spirit.” Mark the absolute character of the statement. Though ruin be all around, it still abides true that “*there is one body and one Spirit.*” God's ground of gathering abides the same, and no amount of ruin absolves the believer from his personal responsibility. If he be true to his Lord he will recognise this, and walk in the practice of the truth revealed, though in doing so he find himself all but alone.

But, it may be asked, what is this church of God? To arrive at a correct answer to this we must lay aside tradition entirely, and seek God's thoughts from His own word. In the epistle to the Ephesians, chapter i., we find the apostle Paul prays that the saints “may know what is the hope of his (God's) calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power toward us 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, far above all principality, and power, and might, and do-

minion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, *which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*" Here we find what the church of God is: it is no worldly sanctuary, but that body of which Christ, the living risen Man in glory, is the head.

Of what does that body consist, and how is it formed? It consists of true believers, who, by the baptism of God the Holy Ghost, have been formed into one body and united to the Head in heaven. This we find in 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." The body of Christ, then, which is the church of God, is composed of true believers, and of not merely true believers as such, but of true believers who are indwelt by the Spirit of God, and who are thus of that body which He, by His baptism on the day of Pentecost, formed for the first time on earth, and which He has maintained on earth ever since, and still maintains—the church of God, the body of Christ. "There is one body and one Spirit."

Let us now look at the way in which this truth of one body is declared—the way in which

it is shown out. In 1 Cor. x. 17 we find these words: “We, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread (or loaf).” Here we see that in the one loaf on the Lord’s table we have that which symbolizes the unity of the one body: many particles bound together; many parts, one whole. The responsibility of the believer is always according to the character of the relationship in which he is, and God always expects us to act according to what He has made us. Having made us His children by faith in Christ Jesus, our responsibility is to be “imitators of God as dear children.” But, besides this, from that at which we have just been looking we see that God has by His Spirit made us members of that body of which Christ is the Head, a body formed and maintained here on earth as a present thing by the Holy Ghost. What, then, is the responsibility of the believer in *this* relationship? We find it laid down in Eph. iv. 3: “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” The way in which this is practically carried out is by walking in the fellowship of that Spirit—the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of truth. To walk in His fellowship, therefore, the saint must walk in holiness—that is, separation from evil, and in truth—that is, according to the revealed will of God.

We see, then, that God has a ground of gather-

ing for His people in these last days, and that is the church of God, the body of Christ. The One to whom they are gathered is Christ, the one alone centre, by the one Spirit. To endeavour to "keep the unity of the Spirit" is the responsibility of the believer, and the question for each is: Am I answering to God's revealed truth in this respect? Am I occupying the place our Lord has made for me outside the camp—the ground which God has provided? Am I endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?

The mere profession of occupying such a ground is not sufficient. All such profession must be tested, as it is possible to occupy a ground assuming to be God's, without the origin of that ground being divine. It is possible to adopt the theory without the practice, and such has happened. There are two indispensable requisites to be fulfilled ere any ground can be acknowledged as being God's, and therefore as having a claim on the saints of God. Those requisites are: (1) That the origin of the ground be divine. (2) That the practice characterizing that ground be consistent with the character of Him whose ground it assumes to be.

Now, as to the fact God has but one ground: "There is one body and one Spirit."

The centre to which God gathers on that ground is, one Lord: "There is one Lord."

The power by which God gathers is one: one Spirit.

When, therefore, the ground is really divine in its origin—is really God’s—saints will be gathered on *one* ground, to *one* Lord, by *one* Spirit. When so gathered they will own, and be in communion with, all those previously gathered after this manner on this ground. To take a place apart from any so gathered, who were walking according to the truth, would be to be guilty of the sin of independency, to assume a ground which is unknown in Scripture, and which is a dishonour to the Holy Ghost. It may be that where this occupying of an independent ground has taken place, there may be a great many apparently right things done by those occupying it, but the doing of these will never constitute the *ground* right; and the first really right action of every saint who is true-hearted to his Lord will be to depart from such a ground.

As to the second requisite. For a ground to be God’s, the practice allowed there must correspond not only morally but doctrinally with the character of Him whose ground it is—the *Holy* God, who gathers by His *Holy* Spirit to the name of His *Holy* Son, the Lord Jesus Christ—“He that is *holy*, he that is *true*.” That is, a ground to be God’s must be characterised by *holiness* and *truth*.

When, therefore, the origin of a ground assuming to be God's is not divine, or when its characteristic features do not correspond with the character of Him whose ground it assumes to be, such a ground has no claim whatever to be recognised as God's ground, even though each individual soul on it were a true believer.

In a day when, alas, such grounds are to be found, having their origin on the one hand in independency and that human arrangement which is a dishonour to the Holy Ghost, or on the other, in a neutrality which manifests indifference to the glory of Christ, it surely becomes every saint of God to search the word in dependence on God, that he may have His mind as to his place and pathway. What is the responsibility of the saint when things are so? We have already seen it. To maintain at all cost the unity of the Spirit towards those who occupy such a ground. How is this unity of the Spirit to be maintained towards such? *By not walking, or having communion, with them; by separation from evil to Christ.*

May we ever remember that the occupation of God's ground for His people in these last days is not optional with us. The Lord has at the cost of Himself made His people's place; "the corn of wheat" has fallen into the ground and died, and now brings forth much fruit. The believer, therefore, is responsible to his Lord to occupy

the place that Lord has made for him. He *owes* it to Christ to do so. By neglecting or refusing to do so he fails in loyalty and faithfulness to his Lord, and cannot be held guiltless.

If the religious world around have assumed the place of the camp, the believer's place is outside: to “go forth” is his responsibility, a responsibility he cannot evade without the most solemn consequences.

If Christians, professing to see the evil of the camp, have gone forth professing to occupy a divine ground, and yet are not on that which God has Himself established, and by His Spirit maintains—a ground not characterised by holiness and truth, where there is either indifference to the glory of Christ or dishonour to the Holy Ghost—the place of those true to Christ, of those who fulfil their responsibility—“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”—is outside, apart from such.

We have to remember that if we would be in the current of God's thoughts we must have before us God's Christ above God's people; God's ground, not man's organizations; the unity of God's Spirit, not the unity of Christians; Christ's glory, not Christian likings.

The Lord keep us true and faithful to Himself, through His grace ministered, His strength perfected, in weakness.

May we, walking in the power of the truth

and under the guidance of the Spirit, enter more and more fully into the distinctive character of the path and place He has made for us as regards God, Satan, or the world, whether worldly or religious, and answer to it, remembering the cost at which such blessing has been made for us; and waiting for the moment when we shall see face to face the blessed One who accomplished all, and who will Himself come and introduce us into the full fruition of all He has accomplished.

[J. L.]

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God will not allow nature to come out; He will not use it. It is not a question of who is the strong man in mind or body; the moment you attempt to do God's work with either you fail.

[J. B. S.]

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SAINTS ought to be known as great peculiarities: "Your body full of light;" like an apparition; something seen in the darkness; something so distinct that, though people might not be attracted by it, they should not be able to help noticing it. The world should see the saint walking in the power of Christ; knowing what Christ has done for him, he ought to be all brightness, and joy, and rest of heart, here upon earth showing forth the beauty and grace of Him who has set him in all the brightness and perfection of Himself before God.

[J. B. S.]

## THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, AND FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST.\*

WHEN we examine the word of God as to the nature and character of true Christian knowledge and of our fellowship with Christ, one is astonished to see upon what it is based, and by what means it is to be held and maintained. Even this feeling is deepened as we inquire further, what must be its wonderful subjects, and when, or how, to be accomplished and realised by us, "in the light where God dwells." Nor must we forget the fact that this knowledge and fellowship come in upon the proved insufficiency of that mode of intercourse, which nevertheless shone out brightly in one and another with whom God walked upon the earth, before the flood and since, and to whom He gave testimony that they pleased Him.

Whatever the grace and the goodness were on God's part, in such intimacies with the patriarchs, or afterwards with prophets and kings and the nation of Israel, still, the ruin and the groaning of creation were so identified with sin and death on man's side as to offer no fit materials for real fellowship with God, either in the righteousness of His ways, or, much less, in the holiness of His own nature.

\* Sequel to "Alliances and Confederations," p. 1.

Besides all this, there lay things in the mind of God which creation and the creature could not bring to light, so that another ground for lasting and true communion with Himself was wanted for their display. This has been formed, in the wisdom of God, by sending forth His beloved Son into the world, and by our accomplished redemption through the cross of Christ, which has met all such existing deficiencies and antagonisms, and removed them. And not only so, but that same work, in death and resurrection, has brought us to the Father as "*new creatures,*" in present and everlasting favour, through the Son of His love. The foundation of Christian fellowship is thus based upon our redemption to God by the blood of Christ, and is formed by the ascension of our Lord Jesus to the right hand of God, in His declared worthiness to become the centre and depository of all the purposes of God, and worthy of all honour and glory, as having now carried them out and made them true in Himself. The second man in heaven, exalted above all principalities and powers, and head over all things to the church, must needs have been established *there* for Himself, according to the counsels of God, and in His own righteous title, before a fellowship with the Father and the Son could be revealed, or *we* be called into the participation of it by grace.

Christian fellowship, whether in its objects or

subjects, lies, therefore, outside this old creation, though announced and designed for those who are yet amongst its ruins. It exists in the glorified Son of man, in the place where He now sits as head and "beginning of the creation of God." Another revelation of and from God was thus required to make Him known in the Son, and has been since introduced by the Holy Ghost, according to the promise of the Father, come down as the glorifier of Christ, the centre of God's counsels, and, moreover, as the witness to us that we are united to Him, who has there become our life in glory. Born of God, created anew in Christ, quickened, raised, and seated together in Him in the heavenly places, are some of the necessary changes and qualifications requisite on our part for this fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost, too, as the Spirit of adoption, has come down to dwell in us, the witness that we have not only this life in Christ, but are brought into the relationship of children with the Father. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba." This is very blessed for us, because realized in the consciousness of life—divine life—known and understood in this relationship with God, and vital in our hearts, as enjoyed in the Father's delight in us. We are one in this with His beloved Son, and the Holy Ghost produces in us the new-born

feelings and affections which respond to love like His. "We dwell in God, and God in us."

In the earlier account of the communications of this life, we may recall how Jesus said to Nicodemus, respecting fellowship in the earthly things, "You must be born again," to see or enter into "the kingdom of God." Beyond this, and when the time was come—not merely for the heavenly things to be told out, but for the hidden mystery of Christ and the church, and the secret purposes of God to be brought to light, and made known to us in the ascended Son of man—how could *such* communion be maintained on our part, except under the unction and anointing of the Holy Ghost? God might, and did, in times past make His ways known to Moses, and His acts unto the children of Israel, for these were *earthly*, and therefore mainly governmental, or dispensational, in their accomplishments. But something worthy of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ remained "hidden in God," till the Son of the bosom came forth in His marvellous ministries to make it manifest, first in His own person, and then to lay the foundations of these counsels in present grace for us by His cross. It is the coming glory that must fully tell out the secret and display the manner of the Father's love to us, by our being caught up to meet the Lord in the air, to see Him, to be like Him, and to be with Him

where He is. Moreover, this eternal life, which was with the Father, was manifested to us, and has been seen, and heard, and handled, when "the Word was made flesh," and tabernacled amongst us. This is the life which has been imparted to us, that we might be competent to understand the things which are freely given to us of God. We have also the "mind of Christ." Our body, too, is "the temple of the Holy Ghost," which we have of God, and by this Spirit we are anointed for present fellowship with the Father in unclouded peace, and sealed unto the day of redemption. How true is it, not only to faith, but in our knowledge of ourselves, that "if any man be *in* Christ, he is a *new* creation, old things are passed away, and all things are become *new*; and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ."

Thus this eternal life is in the Son, and those who are united to Him, "who is our life," are all one in this communion of life, and are spiritually made *one*, as having the mind of Christ and the unction of the Spirit. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost constitute this divine fellowship, in their own Person and Godhead, but in a well-known relation to us in love; and it is in this, by grace and redemption and our new creation, we are called and comprehended, as brought to God, in the Son of His bosom. "Thou hast given him power

over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." This object and comprehensive purpose was thus stated in John xvii.: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." It is into this circle we are introduced, in the light where God dwells; and that so really, that the Spirit who writes of it, and establishes us in this communion, declares these as *our* realities (summarily, by John), and says, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;" and, "these things write we unto you, that *your* joy may be full." Blessed portion for us, as known in and by the Holy Ghost!

These Scriptures, and such considerations, may determine our first inquiry, viz., upon what Christian communion is based, and, likewise, with whom and by what means it is held. There yet remains the question in what this fellowship consists, and collaterally, too, in what respects does it differ from God's testimony to Himself in this Adam creation, and likewise from His intercourse with Abraham as "the father of many nations," or with David, "the man after God's own heart," and the royal promises of the throne and kingdom in Jerusalem. These inquiries are of the deepest interest, as opening out the ways of God to men on the earth, and are profitable to us as displaying "the manifold

wisdom of God," from first to last, so much of which remains yet to be accomplished in the times and seasons that, as Jesus said on His departure, the Father hath put in His own power.

The earliest lessons by which God gave forth this knowledge of Himself to His creatures was by the six days' work of creation, and the responsibility of mankind consisted in glorifying Him as God, in the light and consciousness of His providential care and goodness, "filling their hearts with food and gladness." Indeed, Paul's epistle to the Gentiles opens by the testimony it bears to these facts as the basis of such intercourse, viz., that "the invisible things of God were clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." But man changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of corruptible man and four-footed beasts, so that the ground and material for *this* intimacy were alike lost.

Creation had, nevertheless, its wonders, past finding out, and its deeper mysteries, which were hidden in God. The great external world, or "the heavens and the earth," manifested the former; but, the inclosure out of it, as in Gen. ii., contained the latter. In the beginning "God created" the heavens and the earth, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the

waters, this is Gen. i. ; but in the midst of this creation "the Lord God planted a garden" eastward in Eden, and *there* He put the man whom He had formed. "Great things past finding out, and wonders without number," in the heavens above and in the earth beneath, as Job said, still occupy the faculties of men, as material for speculation or for scientific research and for theories by which *they* become great. Would that they were convicted in conscience by this abiding external testimony to "the power and Godhead," as that very knowledge from which they have departed, and on account of which sin they will be judged. Such have not yet even glimpsed, much less walked with Him in, the other and deeper mysteries of "the garden," so as to find out the kernel that lay inside this great outer-shell. Creation "has its mines for silver and its place for gold, where they fine it; iron is also taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone;" but Jehovah employed these afterwards, when *He* wrought in gold and silver and precious stones, and in purple and scarlet and fine twined linen, to give forth to His people His intentions about heavenly things, and their better sacrifices, which, in due time, opened out "the new and living way into the holiest."

There lay hidden, however, in the counsels and purposes of God, a secret undisclosed, a

mystery of which the garden that "the Lord God planted" was to be the special depository. Adam was only a "figure of him that was to come," and of whom it is written, "the Lord possessed *me* in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." This hidden One, and the yet undisclosed mystery of Christ and the church, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, were *now* to be brought forward and put into shape and form. It was in the planted garden of Gen. ii., where God wrought with the man, in the midst of creation, that He displayed this masterpiece. It was *there* "the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."

Creation may have, and does hold, its secrets and wonders under "the power and Godhead," but the garden contained this "mystery," hidden in God Himself from everlasting, and now set up (in time) upon the earth. Nor will this be fully taken out of mystery till Christ comes a second time and the shout bids us rise up to meet Him; then to be manifested eternally in the new heavens and the new earth, to which the visible heavens and earth, which are now,

become in this view merely provisional and introductory.

These formations and foundations for the true knowledge of God and of Christ's glory, and this mystery of Christ and the church, which will be for the full manifestation of His wisdom and power, from everlasting to everlasting, have been thus introduced in "the planted garden," and embodied in a way and manner with which we are familiar, through scenes in our every-day life: "Therefore shall *a man* leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." The comment and application of this by the Holy Ghost, when the time came to make this "one flesh" a matter of revelation and testimony by Paul, recurs with freshness and power to our souls: "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." It is passing into its completion *in us*, by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost—we, who are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones, and have been baptized by one Spirit into this unity. That which was from everlasting, before ever the world was—that which was set up in Eden, when God rested from all the works which He had made—has now ceased to be in mystery, through this work of the Holy Ghost in uniting *us* to Christ as Head.

It is in this innermost circle of His own delights that *we* find our place and portion, who

are by grace and adoption brought into this oneness with Christ, the exalted Head over all things to the church, which is His body, "the fulness of him who filleth all in all." Our fellowship is thus established with the Father and the Son by the Holy Ghost, and Christian communion is properly comprehended in this, and in the mystery of Christ and of God and the church. Before the fall, and before sin entered into the world or Satan tempted Eve, we are taught by these Paraisaical symbols what the grand result is to which God is working for His glory. The first in pattern, and the first in an *unfallen* creation, but the last to be made manifest is the Bride of the Lamb, when the glory of God descends out of heaven, and the new Jerusalem is seen to come down as a Bride, adorned for her husband. Indeed, we may ask, how could this world, when sin had entered into it, and death passed upon all men because that all had sinned, *possibly* supply even a type of *our* great mystery, and that mystery "Christ and the church," His body and His Bride?

This may serve in outline as a reply to the inquiry, in what Christian fellowship properly consists. It exists in that which the Father's love kept hidden in Himself, for the Son of His bosom, till "the fulness of the time was come" for Him to send "forth his Son, made of a woman," to accomplish all that was given Him

to do for the glory of God in the heavens above and the earth beneath, and to make an end of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone (were the words of Jesus, at that hour); but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." It was out of *this* deep sleep, for three days and three nights in "the belly of the earth," and out of the side of Him who lay there, that the woman, the Bride, was formed: "He loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Christian fellowship consists with Christ in "all things that the Father hath," as well as in the glory which the Father has given the Son; and beyond this, in a personal communion and present enjoyment of that love wherewith He is loved—a love which is in itself greater and more blessed than all that such love can bestow. Still the Father's love to His Son will and must display itself for its own delight and Christ's glory, and to magnify likewise His person, as well as to make great His names and titles, in this world, where He has been disowned, and before angels and principalities and powers in the heavenly places, who waited upon Him in the days of His humiliation. It is into all this

coming scene of joy and blessing that we are introduced as "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," whatever the height and depth of the purposed glory may be. We are to be with Him, even when, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him, in whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated that we should be to the praise of his glory." This is the church's portion, and marks the difference between Christ and Christian fellowship, from the intercourse by which the knowledge of God, as Almighty and Jehovah, was maintained with the patriarchs and the people of Israel, under Moses and Joshua, or David and Solomon and the prophets.

Another difference is that all their blessings were given out in promises, and under covenant to a Seed, for the restitution of all things in the earthly places. Let it be observed that if, as we have seen, "the garden" contained more precious deposits and mysteries within its sacred inclosure than the great external creation possessed, even before the fall of Adam, its lord and head, it yet remained for God in grace to come forth into this groaning creation and proclaim Himself as above the ruins of sin, and Satan's power, and the penalty of death which even He had inflicted upon the sinner. He who alone

could make *such* a path for Himself did so, and brought in His reserves in the way of promise and covenant to a Seed, because original blessing in Adam was forfeited, and because sin had entered in and man was driven out. It was in this character, too, that He trod the path of "the burning bush" with His redeemed people, after the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; and in all things God has been, and is still, so manifesting Himself. By the six days' work of creation the *invisible* things were and are seen, even His eternal power and Godhead; and by the seventh-day rest He discovered Himself yet further. The garden inclosed the image of Him that was to come, and the yet undisclosed mystery of His deep sleep, and then the woman, pointing to the far off marriage of the Lamb. "God brought her to the man."

The blessing was thus first secured for Christ and the church by what "the Lord God planted" and made, and brought and united to Adam in Paradise, as it lay with Himself, in counsel, before the fall. Besides this, the declaration of judgment against sin was afterwards made to Satan, "the liar and murderer from the beginning," that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. It is here we find the fullness of present and eternal blessing grouped together for ultimate and everlasting glory, and

the curse upon the devil pronounced, till the bottomless pit opens its mouth for him, and finally the lake of fire. What a way God has made for the knowledge of Himself in the midst of ruins like these !

The reserves of God are only to be summed up in the Seed of the woman and the gift of the Holy Ghost. The faith of God's elect finds its relief and resource in this promised Seed, the last Adam. The path of one and another, as recorded in Hebrews xi., passed out of the great external creation and its groanings (in hope) as they saw Christ's day, and were glad. The "better thing," which God has reserved "*for us,*" for which they wait, and all creation too, connects them with the hidden purposes of the garden in measure, and is become their safe and sufficient guarantee of unforfeited blessing, that they too may gather up their best and brightest hopes in the Seed of the woman. Promises and covenants and prophecies of varying character and extent are scattered all along by God on the pathway of the forlorn and destitute. Good things to come are assured to faith in the midst of increasing evil and corruption, even after it repented God that He had made man upon the earth, and He had destroyed it with a flood. Israel will be brought into this knowledge of God hereafter, through *their* fellowship with Christ, as the Messiah of this once "cast off people : " "For they shall all know me," etc.

Blessings and promises and covenants abound further, as we follow Noah out of the ark, and are confirmed by "the bow in the cloud" to him, and to his seed, and to every living creature. If we trace the pathway of God Almighty with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, through the book of Genesis, it is but to see that God has given out to them afresh all created blessing, of "the heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills." Nor is the record of God in His ways with His people only by promises of future blessing, for the book of Exodus is replete with deliverances and victories over oppressors, and from cruel bondage and the iron furnace. The "I am" came down into their midst and gave forth the knowledge of Himself in the person of Moses and Aaron, as the Jehovah of Israel, and went along with them "to find out a resting-place" for Himself and His people.

If it be wonderful to see God thus giving over again the natural blessings of the heavens and the earth, which were originally connected with Adam, and putting all under sure promise and covenant to the Seed, how much more marvellous is it to see Him exalted at the right hand of God, and to know now this second man *there* and who He is! The "appointed heir" has been born of the woman, and, as the true Seed of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has come into the world with an indisputable title to all covenanted and promised blessing. Still more wondrous will it be when, as the Son of man and Seed of David, the word made flesh, He shall come "a second time," to take every promise *out* of promise into fulfilment, and every covenant, from first to last, *out* of covenant into manifested blessing. He has yet to do this.

Besides all this was God's desire that the Israel whom He loved should make Him a sanctuary and a tabernacle, according to the patterns shown to Moses in the Mount of God, that He might dwell amongst them, and accompany them by the pillar of cloud or of fire, by day and night. To these were added in the book of Leviticus sacrificial types, and a knowledge of God in external relations, by means of "a ritual," to be observed in their daily, monthly, and yearly offerings. Only one person could be trusted with patterns which were to express *these* thoughts of God, or show the manner in which He was to be worshipped as became Him who dwelt in the Holy of Holies, and yet in grace had to do with a people in their sins. Only two persons, and those endowed by the Spirit of God "in all cunning workmanship," were authorized to construct these vessels and put them into their splendid forms of glory and beautiful significance, and this they did.

Here, again, we may ask, who could He be that in due time was to take everything in the sanctuary and tabernacle *out* of figure and form, and embody them in Himself? Who could He be, and what is His name, but Him who, "when he cometh into the world, saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a *body* hast thou prepared me." He who "taketh away the first, that he may establish the second," declares that he has taken all *out* of shadow into substance and divine reality, for himself, and for His own, and for God. The outside world, replete with all its promises and covenants, the nation with its tabernacle and sanctuary, accompanied by the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, all pointed on to the coming One who did but cast all these shadows before Him.

Add yet to these, other and more gorgeous displays of God's thoughts, given to David and carried out by Solomon, for "the temple of Jehovah's rest" in Jerusalem, with the royalties of the throne and the glory of the coming kingdom, and we shall see who *He is* that required the tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple in the Holy Land to pre-figure Him, in such sort as that eyes of flesh and blood might catch a glimpse of Him, and human thoughts become familiar with Him. With what joy did they say, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write."

Beyond the Pentateuch and the Chronicles of the Kings lie the long line of the prophets and their prophecies, which spread out over the millennial earth and the populations of the world. And who is to carry prophecy *out* into all its fulfilments, both in the heavens above and the earth beneath, so that not "a jot or tittle shall fail," but Him who has already gathered types and patterns, promises and covenants, around Himself, to illustrate the glory of His person who required them all, in order to form the basis and supply the material of an abiding fellowship with God, and to demonstrate that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Before He comes forth from heaven in His own glory and the glory of His Father and the glory of His holy angels, He has left the bright witness behind Him, at the mount of His transfiguration, that all natural and national blessing was His by birthright as well as by righteous title, as Son of Abraham and Son of David. The Holy Ghost adds His witness to this, by Peter, in his second epistle: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty, for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such

a voice to him from the Shekinah, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

He has, moreover, left an undeniable witness on Mount Calvary, the mount of His crucifixion, that every sacrificial type has been taken up and fulfilled in his sufferings and death, and confirmed by His resurrection. It was on Mount Calvary He cried out of the darkness, "Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani." He who was greater than all that represented Him, and who said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," hung upon the cross and gave up the ghost. All was done that was given Him to do, up to the glory of God in the Holiest; and, "behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent," as the only but all sufficient answer on the part of God the Father, and of creation to its deliverer, that a new and living way was opened into the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus. All that He undertook has been carried out to perfection below, and confirmed for un-failing blessing by His ascension "to the right hand of the majesty on high."

God is left free, in His own unsullied holiness, to act for His own glory; all hindrances have been taken out of the way, and nothing before Him to judge, except the enemies of Christ and the wicked, who refuse the outlet of the cross

as the open door into fellowship with God the Father in present and eternal blessing.

It belongs to God, *now*, to make manifest the further knowledge of Himself in the heavens above and the earth beneath by a visible Christ, when He brings in the new character and measure of glory which is due to the second Adam, as the reward of the travail of His soul. What a consideration is this for the Father's love, and with what delight will He open out the glories of the Son in the ages to come! No longer hindered by the unworthiness and incapacity of the creature, but having the worthiness of Him for His only rule who said, "Glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee," what must the blessing and the blessedness be, when the Lamb once slain is the governing object for the display of the Father's love, as well as of His wisdom and power, and we, by grace partakers in His joy, one with Christ, and introduced by Him into this fellowship!

The difference between the Old Testament and the New, or between the nation and the church, or between Judaism and Christianity, is that in the former God could only give out His intentions of blessing till the incarnation of Christ took these all into possession in His person, and made them yea and amen in Himself and to the joint-heirs by His death and resurrection. Christianity is Christ known in fulfilment,

the Holy Ghost in present testimony and witness, and God glorified in accomplishment.

Another difference in the ways of God is this, that originally He made a responsible man in creation the starting-point and a typical centre of His actings, whereas the Son of man, the second Adam in glory above, the beginning of the new creation of God, is now become the glorified Head, the eternal centre and source of unfailing bliss and joy. In the new order of the Apocalypse, the holy Jerusalem is seen *descending* out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, whereas in the old order of Genesis, everything was committed to Adam in responsibility, and was to issue from man to God, and failed when tested on that *ascending* scale.

But to return from these considerations of earthly blessing for "the future earthly people" in earthly places, to our own proper Christian fellowship with Christ, where he *now is* in the heavenlies.

They and we are alike in this, that we wait for the respective manifestation of blessing and glory to each, in full result, because Christ has "sat down" on the Father's throne. The hour for these manifestations of accomplished purpose belongs to God, and waits upon His will to open out who has the times and seasons in His own hand. He will gather out the church first, and complete the body of Christ, as the Bride, the

Lamb's wife, and translate her into the heavens, where we take our places as sons likewise in the Father's house. The intentions of God, which were given out in mystery from the garden which the Lord God planted in Eden, are the secret things which we carry along with us, over and above all the external ways of God to Moses, and his dispensational acts to the children of Israel, and even His present government of the world and the Gentiles, without hesitation or reserve. We have another calling and destiny, beyond the great outside world or the elect nation taken out from the nations in its midst; we are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world.

It is important to see that nothing in the way of mystery, or promise, or covenant, remains unfulfilled in the person of Christ, through His work upon the cross, in our redemption and His own resurrection, for the glory of God the Father. Moreover, the Holy Ghost has come down to dwell with us, as the witness and seal of this great fact. The Son of man has been in the heavens for the last eighteen hundred years in no less a character than the glorifier of the Father, and as "the forerunner" of His people, there to appear in the presence of God for us. His new and present work of priestly intercession for us is near its end. How close all must be, now upon fulfilment, and on His coming forth as

the Melchisedec, "King of righteousness, King of peace," to bless His willing nation, and the twelve tribes of Israel in Emmanuel's land, after the manifestation of God's power has taken up the church to be with Christ, and in glorifying us with His Son.

What was once hidden in God from before the foundation of the world, has been set up in the garden in figure, taken out of figure by the appearing of Jesus Christ the Son and Heir, and made yea and amen in Himself, and for the church by His death and resurrection. His entrance into heaven itself, where He sits on the right hand of God, is witnessed unto us by the Holy Ghost sent down from above as the glorifier of Christ Jesus, "the Lord of lords, and the King of kings." What remains, but that the last great action of God should draw aside the heavens which conceal the hidden One, as He afore time rent the veil which concealed Himself, and bring out into manifestation and result by His coming and glorious appearing the world's deliverance, and the universal blessing for which the whole creation is yet waiting?

The Christ of God is Himself sitting on the Father's throne; the church on earth is waiting for the Lord's descent and the shout; the departed ones who are with Christ are waiting; creation is waiting in hope for the manifestation of the sons of God; Israel is waiting to be

gathered from the four corners of the earth at the second coming of the Messiah, Jesus-Jehovah; the Gentiles and the nations wait for the appearing of the Root of Jesse, for Him that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, for Him in whom the Gentiles shall trust. It belongs to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to begin this new history of "manifestation of all in glory," by the "rising up" of Christ in heaven, where He now sits on the right hand of the throne of God. The expectation of the redeemed waits upon the Lord to come forth, and put into manifestation in the heavens, and upon the earth, the hidden counsels of the Father and the Son, as to the body and Bride of the Lamb, which were from everlasting, and to substantiate the promises, with their covenants to the fathers, of permanent peace and blessing on this earth.

The moral power of such revelations as these, and especially when connected in the soul with the revolutions and judgments of God, which make room for their establishment in the heavens and upon the earth, is formative of the life and character and walk of the "man in Christ" *now*.

He has new ideas and other objects, which attach him to another order of things, of which the glorified "Son of man" is the head and centre. He has other principles of action, which are supplied from "this knowledge of God," and

find their strength and joy in "this fellowship with Christ;" and practically he is separated from this present evil world—his "citizenship is in heaven."

Such union on the one hand, and separation on the other, is but the proper fruit of Christianity by the indwelling Spirit, and marks those who walk with God. One and another of our apostles have written to us of these things, and lead the way, under their varied ministries. Peter would have us "pass the time of our sojourning *here* as obedient children, calling upon the Father," and exhorts us further, on the behaviour suited to us, "wherefore, beloved, seeing that *ye look* for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless."

Paul, according to his anointing, carries us into "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable (he says) are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of

them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands: saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever" (Rev. v.).

J. E. B.

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THERE are many saints of God wanting to peer into their own to-morrow—wanting to have their future for a week laid open before them; but God will not allow it; it would but crush us could we see it. We have no rest of heart, except as we know that the future is the Lord's, and the present is ours with Him. (J. B.)

## THE FATHER.

LOVE.

JOHN, xvii. 26.

THE Lord concludes this wonderful chapter with stating what He *had* done, and what He *would* do. What He would do was to bring His disciples into the same condition on earth in which He was Himself. "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." This was not the love of God to the sinner. True enough, it was love that *reached* the sinner. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But it is something inconceivable that we are here as much the objects of the *Father's* love as His own blessed Son, the One who pleased Him in every detail, glorified Him in every act and word on earth. So He says here, "The love wherewith thou hast loved me"—they may know the very same love that I do. It is something impossible to grasp, poor, feeble things as we are, continually warped by one thing and the other; it is too wonderful a thing that we should be learning here, that the Lord educates us into the same love that He has Himself; and nothing gives a man such

dignity as the knowledge that he is loved by one superior to himself.

The true saint is like a star in the sky—perfectly independent in itself, but in perfect harmony with every other one; the fellowship is there, but the individuality is there too. As the apostle says, “I have learned to be satisfied in myself:” that is, I am self-contained; and nothing gives such self-containedness as the knowledge of perfect love. Would that we knew more about it, all in concert, all blended together. One star does not light one part of the sky and another that. If you brought the brightest lamp in the world into this room, it would not put out the others; it would only join them, and all work together. That is fellowship; and at the same time we are all self-contained, satisfied in ourselves. We work in concert, but that does not destroy or take away for a moment our independence, though I do not like the word. But I have learned to be satisfied in myself; I do not go outside myself to seek satisfaction. That is the wonderful place that a Christian is in. He never ought to go outside himself; for, as the Lord says to the woman of Samaria, I can make you perfectly happy, so that you need never to go outside yourself. I know what you are—a wretched creature who has looked in vain for happiness in this world. You have had five husbands already; you know what all

earthly joy is; but I will give you something that is inexhaustible—you shall never thirst: “It shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life”—a thing you can never get to the end of. You may say you have not so much as you might have, and that is true, but still it is *in* you.

Now the Lord Jesus Christ concludes this wonderful chapter by saying, “I *have* declared unto them thy name, and *will* declare it.” Thus He declares that you know the Father, and that you know the Father’s love. You might know a person and yet not know his love. But that is the order: you know Him first. As with a child, it knows its mother a long time before it knows her love. So you know the Father.

If I turn to John’s first epistle, I find the babes — the lowest class — know the Father. I cannot say that all believers are up to this class, but Scripture does not recognize a lower one. “I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.” That is the third class. There is nothing looked at lower. It does not say they have known the *love*. Every babe—the youngest—knows the Father; and, of course, the action of divine grace is the love of the Father. A babe in arms knows its mother, how she caresses it and the like, but, as it grows up, it learns the love the mother has for it. The reason why there is this defect—that there

are not more of the babes know the Father—is because of the way the Gospel is presented to the soul.

There are two aspects of the gospel. There is the way it affects *you*. You say I have received great comfort; oil and wine He has poured in, He has healed my wounds; my poor heart and conscience are wonderfully relieved by the grace of God. But that is not all; if you stop there you do not speak of God at all; you speak of His goodness to *you*. If you limit yourself to that, you are limited to your own feelings about it, and the effect it has upon yourself only, and of the relief it has brought you from the terrible distress of a wounded heart. But the prodigal son says, My father *kissed* me. The first notice he had of grace *reaching* him, though not the first work of it he had, was the father falling on his neck and kissing him. When it comes to that side, what would such a soul say? He would say, Well, I know at least how my father feels; I know how he received me; I have the knowledge of the Father. So the very first action of grace towards the prodigal was to show him the will of the Father. This makes a very great difference between what he could say, and what the man who fell among the thieves.

The gospel tells me what a wonderful thing it is that God could meet my conscience; but also it conveys to me that there is a thought in the

heart of God about an undeserving person like me. And there is this lack in many a one who can talk of the wonderful relief that he has got from the grace of Christ, for the very reason that He did not know where it came from. But if I know it, I can always count on having it again. I know my Father to begin with; I have to learn the greatest thing afterwards—the love of the Father in me; but I still know the love of the Father has reached me, and therefore there is no grade given lower than the babe that knows the Father.

To a soul that talks to me only of how happy it is as knowing the finished work of Christ, I can but answer, Well, that is all very well, as long as it is smooth water, but when it gets rough, what will you do? I can say I am anchored in the love of God, and, though I may swing on my moorings, I can never be moved, for I am in safe anchorage. All here comes to me from one spring, and that spring is the heart of God. You must connect your heart with the love and not with the benefit, otherwise you have not got established. I am not only clear of everything that was against me, but I am brought into a new kind of love—the love of the Father. It is not merely His power, His greatness, but it is the knowledge of what He is in Himself to me: “I will declare it.”

I believe we should have a great many more

hymns to the Father if we were more in this knowledge ; not that I am against hymns praising the Saviour for the wonderful work He has wrought, but if we were really in the sense of the sphere in which we are, and He leading the praises in it, we would have a great many more to the Father, He leading us into the consciousness of the place into which He has brought us.

One passage more in connection with this subject ; it is Gal. iv. 6 : " Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." You see it is an entirely new sphere, one you get into by the Spirit of God ; a new origin altogether : life is come out in a fuller way—it is more developed ; it is now " that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." As an illustration it seems to me that Old Testament saints were like a bird in the nest : it has life, but it has never flown out of it. But in the New Testament the saint is in a new sphere, like the bird in the air. I believe no Christian ever gets thoroughly free until he sees, not only that he has a new nature, but a new sphere. God does not send forth His Spirit to *make* you a son ; He did that before ; but " because ye *are* sons " the Spirit *is* sent. I have got into a new sphere, new power, new relationship—some of the intelligence that Christ had of the Father. It is not the same measure—no one could think it was—but

it is the same character. If you can call God your Father with the smallest particle of the intelligence of Christ—and it must be that, or you are not a son—you have got the Holy Ghost with the intelligence of Christ. “He hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” I need not go into the variety of blessings that the Spirit of God brings in, but I am in relationship with the Father, and I have a divine sphere where I can enjoy my divine origin.

I now turn to 1 John ii., to see how this love comes out; we read in verse 14, “I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.” Now that is addressed to young men, not babes—to those who are strong, who have overcome the wicked one, and who have the word of God abiding in them; very fine Christians. But take care; the world is your snare; and not the bad world either, for you have overcome it; “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

Mind you now, the Lord in John xvi. closed the chapter by showing the disciples that they are to *overcome* the world, and, in chap. xvii. that they were to have instead of it the *Father*. He could say: I can go through the world; I

made it; I know the beauty of it far better than anyone, for I saw it before the trail of the serpent was on it; I knew how to make it according to the Father's pleasure, and we both looked upon it and saw it was very good. And when I came to it, did I get anything out of it? No, nothing. I looked for figs and there were none. The mere creation did not know Him though He was in it. And now He says, I am going to instruct you, my people, into such a knowledge of the love of the Father as shall make you superior to the world. So "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

The knowledge of this love puts you above everything that is in the world. Get the most beautiful scenery, the most lovely things of any kind, they will not *love* you; you may love *them*, and they may feed the natural tastes of your heart, but there is no love. But the Lord would acquaint us with the love of the Father as that which makes us superior to all that is in the world; and it will make you so self-contained, that you can say: I am not looking round for anything; I do not want things here to tell me of that love, for I interpret all *by* that love. Souls are very much damaged by dwelling on the different ways in which God's love has met them in different circumstances; it is not circumstances, it is *Christ* that is to educate me into the love of the Father. I have the greatest

teacher and the greatest lesson: the Son Himself is my teacher; and He teaches me the wonderful nature of the love of the Father.

I believe, if you knew something of this love, you would say your life was a most interesting thing, for everything in it is bringing out the love of the Father. There may be a reverse here, an affliction there, and a trial on beyond, but it is all to teach you the love of the Father. And there is a great deal more love shown in His checking you by some trial or sorrow, than by His allowing Satan to present something to you that will attract you and draw you away from the Father. Who is best able to judge what is suitable to me here—my own heart, or the heart of the Father? This is a thing that we do not get to at once. Of course, we would sooner have a bright day than a stormy one, but earthly favour always tests you, because it is an opportunity for your weak point, whereas in trial you always turn to God. Were Gideon's men proof to favour? So people are always looking for what is pleasing to themselves; and if you make your own heart a criterion for what you are to have, you are like Job. You are not to look upon yourself as a person entitled to favour. When Job acknowledges that he is vile—when he says, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes;" then God says, Have any favour you like—*double!* A man is not fit for earthly favour until

he acknowledges he is not fit for any ; and generally people only have favours that they may surrender them. Abraham says, I will not have the green fields ; I will not choose ; and Lot chooses.

Practical work is the thing ; and the question is, Are you getting on with this great teacher ? Are you listening to Him ? Do not tell me you are looking at this or that circumstance ; I suppose every one of us could write books as to all that God has done for us, but the *love* of the Father is the greatest thing that ever can be shown us. Supposing things do not come as I wish them : well, I say I must learn the love of the Father in them. Thus my life becomes a most interesting history : every little circumstance, every little thing I meet here on earth, I have the key to in this love ; I can explain it all. Others may not be able to understand, but it is a cypher between Him and me, and I do not want any one else to know it ; it is enough that I know it myself. All I want people to see is the grace that is in me because I have learned this great lesson from this great teacher.

Do not make yourself an object, but “Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God” that *He* may make you one—“that *he* may exalt you in due time ; casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.” “Seek not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of

doubtful mind; for all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." You would be surprised, if you knew how to interpret His love, to see how it cares for you in everything. There is a danger of getting what I would call sentimental about this, and if you are sentimental in divine things you lose the whole power of them; it is imitating the oil of the sanctuary, and the soul that did that was to be cut off. But the soul *should* get the sense that it is to deal with everything on this new ground: thank God, it is a fine day; well, I hope it will not be a snare to me. It is a rough day; well, thank God, I belong to a sphere where all is pure and bright.

May each one of us know what it is to celebrate the coronation day—the day when Christ is crowned in our heart. Abraham made a feast when Isaac was given his proper place in his house; and your greatest day here is the day when your heart keeps festival in the knowledge that Christ is crowned King there. After that, though you may see all go in death, as he did, you are risen in the light of the resurrection day—in the light of the eternal day. You have begun eternity; it is time no longer—it is eternity.

May our hearts get such a lesson in the love of the Father, that, instead of being depressed

by trying circumstances, or elated by what are called providential interpositions, we may know that we are the objects of this wonderful love, and are being educated into it by the only one who knew it in all its power as He walked here below through this wilderness world.

(J. B. S.)

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I DO not think a man could exactly "joy in God," and then get into the seventh of Romans. You see joy in God is not joy in salvation. We do not generally get joy in God until we have done with ourselves. You get joy in salvation first in Rom. v., and then troubles by the way, and then joy in that. Joy in God is another thing. In Rom. viii. it is we are set before God; it is not exactly what God is for us. The man in the seventh of Romans is "none of his." The ground of sealing is the remission of sins. God cannot have me in Christ without having Christ in me, and when Christ is in me there is liberty. And if Christ be in me the body is dead as to will; I do not own the body at all.

(J. N. D.)

## THE SON.

LOVE.

EPHESIANS V. 25.

THE apostle here speaks of the *manner* of the love of Christ. He can in another place tell of His love as an individual thing to himself, and each of us can well say with him "He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*."

Now, it is important for us to see how far we have entered into this love. No doubt the love is there, but when we enter into it is only when we in some measure enter into His own sphere—there where there is nothing to hinder our acquaintance with Him. But we find that we are often occupied with a great deal that is connected with Christ and connected with ourselves, and yet that is not Christ. Of course, we are all at first occupied with the *service*, but it is a greater thing to be occupied with the One who *did* the service. The woman who touched the hem of His garment had an immense idea of Christ: she wanted to touch One who had not only such power for perfect blessing, but who also so delighted to communicate the blessing. "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be made whole." She had an immense idea of what He was—of what God in His nature was ;

as it says, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." — "If I may but touch his garment."

But more than this. She has not got to His love yet, though she has got to His service. But she has to do more than that; the Lord will not let her stop there. Perhaps no one in this room has ever had a greater idea of the Lord Jesus Christ, ready to serve the suffering and the helpless, than she had; but she has not reached the knowledge of His heart. Do you mean to tell me that there are not people on earth who have touched His garment for healing to their souls, and yet who have never known His heart? I hope to show you that there is a very different result when we have reached His love. I propose to bring before you cases of persons in different states of soul with regard to this, so that each may have an opportunity of seeing to which class he belongs, and that we may thus be shown how the difficulty is met, and the soul brought into conscious relation with the heart of Christ. The knowledge of Christ's love culminates in heaven. If I want to know the Father's love, the Son teaches me. If I would know Christ's love, in *heaven* it passes knowledge.

The first Scripture I call your attention to is Gen. 1. (Read verses 15-21.)

Now this passage alludes primarily to the restoration of Israel to Christ in the day when He shall be made known to them, and they will be made sensible of what His love is. But it also brings before us a class of souls that has not yet reached the knowledge of the love of Christ, though they have of the service of Christ. This knowledge does not come at the moment of reaching His service. When the children of Israel put the blood on the door-post, did they enter into the fact that the lamb had to be roasted with fire? No; it was afterwards. And Paul, did he know at first the work of Christ, and why he was not consumed in the glory? No; it was in those three days during which he was "without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." It was then he was made to enter into all the judgment of the law—into what Christ went through for sin; it was then he learned how God could bring one like him into His own presence.

In this passage in Genesis we have a beautiful figure of the gospel. Jacob sends Joseph to see how his brethren fare, and they first cast him into a pit and then sell him to the Ishmaelites, who carry him down into Egypt, where he is first a slave and then a prisoner before being raised to the throne. With the famine there come the tidings of relief, and the brothers go down to Egypt, and find there is food to be got from Joseph only. He receives them,

and they live upon his bounty for seventeen years; but they never knew his heart all this time, though they enjoyed his service. And do you not think souls go on in the state of not knowing what Christ is? If these brethren had been asked what they thought of Joseph, they would have said, there never was such a brother. Had they ever got at his heart? Never. This does not come until the father dies—until death supervenes; and then they are brought into the terrible light. They never had a disclosure of his heart until now; both things come out together: "We did unto thee evil," and "Joseph wept when they spake unto him." And he says, "As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not." And then it adds, "I will nourish you, and your little ones"—I will now let you into the depths of love that are in my heart. And "he comforted them, and spake to their hearts."

There is an entirely new sense, a new link as to Christ, that the brethren have got into here. They have reached his heart, the spring of all, and they can say, All my interests are His. Just as the Lord says to Zaccheus, "Come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house;" we are going to God's house, but until we get there He will come to ours. He says, "I will nourish you,

and your little ones ;” weak things that you cannot look after, I will. Practically, it is what the soul knows when it receives the Holy Ghost : “ The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

There are only three classes, however, which I wish to bring before you this evening ; and in the first of these I see my guilt. There was a time, whatever you may be now, when you did not like to hear the name of Christ spoken of ; there was a time when you did not relish it ; there was a time when, though you would not say anything offensive to the one who did so, for you were too well brought up for that, yet you could not tolerate him—and what was that but hatred ?—“ He that hateth his brother is a murderer.”

The real loss in souls is that they have never got to Christ. They have never come to close quarters. As the woman : when she saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and fell down before Him, and “ He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort : thy faith hath made thee whole ; go in peace.” I see it continually in people, and I say you never have been close to Him yet ; there is a screen between you and Him. For that very reason I think God sometimes brings people almost to

death, that they may know what it is to be outside everything with Christ alone. It is, He says, that you have not touched my heart, and it is with many a soul as with the bride in the Canticles, "I sleep, but my heart waketh;" and the Lord will not let them stay in such a state. A sense of depression often comes over the soul from the fear that sin is not gone. As in the case of the widow of Sarepta: she may have been saying, What a blessed woman I am, to have had a prophet in my house all these three hundred and sixty-five days; but the moment her child dies, she says, "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" This after he had shown such continual interest in her! But death has to come in to teach her the resurrection and the life.

Well, this is the first class I alluded to: the soul must get the sense of the guilt of its *nature*. It is not a question of what you have *done*, but it is *yourself*; and you cannot get the sense of what that is until you get the knowledge that it is all gone in the death of Christ; and then you say, What a wretch I am to have to do with this blessed One; but I have learned what His heart is. Just as Peter, when he had lost all self-respect, went out and wept bitterly.

I next turn to Luke v., where I get another class, a class which is brought out in Peter

himself. Here it is not merely a person knowing the service, but I find a person who is himself serving. Peter is a devoted person. You say, Well, a person who is serving Christ must know Him. That does not follow. "Perfect love casteth out fear," and there is yet fear in Peter. I have to learn the criminality of my nature first; but there is another thing I have to learn here, and that is its unsuitability. Supposing I were going on all right, and never did anything wrong, like Job; well, there is a time coming when you will have to find out what you are in the sight of God. Job ends with saying, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Here Peter gives his ship, just as a wealthy person now gives his house, for the service of the Lord. He is exemplary in giving up both his time and means for the Lord's work, and he is also obedient. If the Lord say, "Let down your nets for a draught," he answers, "At thy word I will let down the net." He does not put forth his own superior knowledge as a fisherman. Besides, he is loaded with favours. But now there comes a change for this exemplary Jew. He falls at Jesus' feet, and says, though he had been doing everything that was right, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O

Lord." What made this great change? It was the fact that Peter had come close to Him, and so he saw what he was himself.

And this accounts for another class. You hear of a person very devoted, very earnest, and, yet, to your surprise, you find him one day very depressed. Why? Because he has never yet known the perfect love of Christ. I do not care how good you may be, or how criminal, but at the Lord's table you are told that it is His love that has brought you to the place in which you are. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The light truly discloses to me what a terrible thing I am in the sight of God, but at the same time it opens out to me the depths of the love that could give itself for me. "He that feareth is not made perfect in love;" therefore it is added: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world." We are as much out of judgment now as He is. It does not say we shall be in the next world; we shall *all* be so there—we all agree to that, of course; but the point is that we are in this world.

Peter now has such a sense of what he is, that what is the result? He forsakes all to follow Him. It is not whether the employment was a right one or not, but he surrenders all—

leaves all to follow Him—the practical effect of learning what the love of Christ is.

The third class I bring before you is where the heart deepens in His love. John xi. 33. It is very important to understand that I never know what the love of Christ is till I learn it where every human stay is gone I first see it when I am criminal, as did Joseph's brethren; next in all that is good, like Peter. But now death comes in; and who is to bear me up?

My impression is that Mary had some doubt of His *love*, for she cheered up at once when she heard He was come, and had called for her. Martha had doubts of His *power*. It is a terrible thing in sorrow to have doubts, misgivings of His love. What is here set forth is how the Lord makes known His heart at such a time: it is always in the breakdown of man, for it is man that is always in the way; so, as is said, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." The case is hopeless. Who will come in to comfort the heart? I will, says the Lord; and "Jesus wept." When He saw Mary weeping He sympathized with her. With Martha He does not sympathize, because she is not subject to His word. So He *talks* to Martha, but He *walks* with Mary; He does not neglect any. He does not say a word of His power; it is only His *love*. And He does not say, as I

most likely should have done, Dry up your tears, for I am going to raise him in a few minutes. No; "he groaned in his spirit;" He said, I know more deeply than you do what a terrible thing it is that is here. I see the most beautiful, the most wonderful thing that I ever made, gone down into death before my eyes. So it is the Son of *God* that is glorified here, whereas in the next chapter it is the Son of *man*, for He goes down into death Himself. He says here, You have lost the human heart, the arm of flesh that was your comfort; but I will teach you what a perfect eternal *heart* is; I will teach you how I can enter into all the depths of your sorrow; I will show you that there is One who can be even nearer to you than Lazarus was; and you shall be able yet to go through the wilderness, saying to Lazarus, I have learned how I can do without you, for *He* was sufficient for me when you were gone; and now I have got you too. The Lord loves to make His people perfectly happy.

In the next chapter we find the most wonderful scene of conviviality that I suppose there ever was upon this earth. Mary is the only one who comes in with a discordant note. She says, I will speak of death; I will anoint Him for His burying; and as *He* is going down into death, there is nothing precious to me upon earth that I will not cast into His grave. The

alabaster box in Luke is for a living Christ; that in John is for a dead one. All goes in the tomb with Him. Like Ruth, she can say, "Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried."

I need not give any more examples; if you take these three classes and exercise your soul upon them, you will come to the simple conclusion that it all consists in getting near to Him, the great effect in every one of the cases is that man is *out*, and that Christ becomes the great and only joy—the one singular object of the heart. You say, I know what a desperate thing my nature is—how criminal, how unsuitable, and how desolate. Talk of not being criminal! I know I am. Talk of not being desolate! I know I am. Talk of not being unsuitable! I know I am. But He has been known in His love in each breakdown of myself.

I now just pass on to the climax, which we find in Eph. iii. The apostle's prayer here is not prior to the believer being in heaven, but on his reaching this wonderful standing in consequence of Christ being there; and the result is the desire that he may supersede everything. It is exactly like Jacob having come to Bethel—he was not confirmed in the name of Israel until he got there; so until you come to heaven you will not be able to enter into the wondrous fact of what Christ is to you. He prays "that Christ

may dwell in your hearts by faith; 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." It is not like the first chapter, that you "may know what is the hope of his calling," but that you may be able to enter into the fulness of that scene into which wisdom has brought you, and "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled into all the fulness of God." Christ is that. He asks that you may get a deeper sense of what Christ is to you.

Very few read the Canticles without being pleased with them; but really we ought to be a great way beyond the Canticles. The bride there longs to know more of Him, and is only happy in His company; and, I would ask, is the believer now only happy in His company?

The difference between the Canticles and the present moment is that I have now what is not to be found in them; I have union to Christ by the Holy Ghost; and what is the use to me of that if I have not His company? If I cannot be in concert with Him now, I prefer to be Mary Magdalene, who said, I cannot live without Him. You may say she was very ignorant—did not know resurrection; but I do ask, is the company of the Lord Jesus as necessary to you as it was to her? If not, I tell you you may have more intelligence but you have less heart,

and I would sooner have heart any day than intelligence. Always go upon your heart rather than your intelligence; for John had more intelligence than Mary, but the Lord communicated His mind at first to Mary, and not to John. It is to the one who has most heart that you always make communications about yourself, for you can reckon upon his love. And what shall I discover in His company? Why, all His love—that love which passeth knowledge.

I allude briefly to one passage more, as showing what a relief the soul has in leaning on this love as it goes through the world. It is Rom. viii. 35. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The Lord lead us, beloved friends, every one of us, to know more of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, for His name's sake. Amen.

(J. B. S.)

## THE HOLY GHOST.

POWER.

JOHN xvii.

THE great subject of this chapter is that we are here to represent Christ. It is not so much service—indeed, service is not spoken of in the chapter—it is that we are here to represent Christ. In the anticipation of His leaving the earth, the Lord, as it has been said, presents us as Himself before the Father, and then presents us as Himself before the world. He looks up to heaven before He speaks, and then sets forth that we should be His representatives where He is not. This is the greatest desire of His heart in leaving us here.

Let us look a little at the different things which He gives us, in order that we may be able thus to represent Him.

We must first see that He has left the earth—that He has been rejected, and is not here. This the soul must learn as a distinct truth before it can know what it is to be for Him here. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” Both Jew and Gentile rejected Him; the Jews said: “He ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God;” and He was delivered over to the hands of the Romans. As Peter

says: "He was disallowed of men." You cannot understand Scripture without seeing this. Many do not believe that Christ is rejected, so they think that human means and influence can be used in His service. If you believe that, you do not believe the world has rejected Christ; for you cannot expect the world to be the rejecter and the upholder of Christ at the same time. Honest, conscientious people say the *Jew* rejected Him, but the *Gentile* did not; so we can use and make subservient to the cause of Christ everything that is of Gentile power. So all they can appropriate they do. But I say, while you use *that* power and *that* means you cannot be using the power of the Holy Ghost; it is impossible to be using both together.

It is a great and a solemn thing that we are here to represent Christ; it is a simple fact that ought to interest every heart. The Lord, going away from earth after having shown out the nature and character of His love, says, I am going to heaven, but I leave you here to represent me; and I can state that, by the power of the Holy Ghost, you are glorifying me.

The church will come down eventually from heaven, "The fulness of him that filleth all in all"—the full magnificent display in detail of all the beauty of Christ, and nothing but Christ; but, meanwhile, we are each left here to act as should a component part of the great future.

It is not a question of serving ; a person on a sick bed who cannot serve at all can glorify Christ. Chapter xv. is service. This is not service ; it is representation. You are here to represent Christ where Christ is not, as the full and true picture of what Christ is ; and so the apostle says, " that I may *win* Christ."

Scripture says that man, both Jew and Gentile, rejected Christ. Power was committed by God to man—to the Jew first, afterwards to the Gentile ; and at the time of the death of Christ it was found in the Romans' hands. This power, I may say, was a *downward* thing ; it was given from God to man, and man used it to crucify Christ. This being so, God says to Him, " Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Man is thus utterly disqualified ; and now, if Christ be to be maintained on earth, it must be by an entirely new power—the power of the Holy Ghost. And to that power we are indebted for everything : it is a power that is entirely unknown to the world—that power that is against Christ.

I now turn to chapter xiv. Christ has been rejected by the power that man had ; and now, consequent upon that rejection, and upon Christ sitting at the right hand of God, a new power comes in—that of the Holy Ghost. All the Old Testament saints were born by the Holy Ghost, and yet God allowed them to use natural power

in His service ; not only such as King Solomon, when the people were in the land, but Daniel and others in Babylon. But Christ has now been rejected by man : all his resources were brought to bear against God's Son on earth ; and now God maintains the saint on earth independently of everything that has pre-existed. I want to draw your attention to the character of it.

We read : " I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever ; even the Spirit of truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. But ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." The first thing I learn is that the Holy Ghost is a divine person who comes to earth, who is sent down here, but whom the world can neither see nor receive. The power that I am to receive on this earth in the absence of Christ is an invisible power ; it is no more to be seen than the power by which the walls of Jericho fell down. It is an immense thing when the soul gets hold of the fact that there is a power here that the world cannot receive. The difference between the Holy Ghost being here and Christ, is that Christ was visible whilst the Holy Ghost is invisible. Men may not have acknowledged Christ as a divine person, but they could see Him ; but the Holy Ghost is neither received nor seen. Did they see the power by which Jericho

fell down? No; they saw the results. In a certain sense steam-power is of this character; for the moment what is called steam becomes visible it ceases to have power—it is not steam any longer; it is only vapour.

The Holy Ghost came down to comfort my heart during the absence of Christ, so that a simple believer may say, I am entirely independent of the world—as independent as the armed men outside Jericho were of the armed men inside. He comes down from heaven and takes up His abode in the soul, when it knows that it belongs to Christ. And this gives me power: “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts.” You have got the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost never leaves the one in whom He takes up His abode. He may retire and let you feel that you have lost His support when you have grieved Him, and then you break down and do some foolish thing. So it is in their acts that saints always show out what they are. They may be able to talk very well, but it is in action that it comes out whether you have grieved the Spirit or not. If you have, He will, if I may use such a very familiar expression, “leave you in the lurch,” when you come to act; but when you confess, He is ever ready to come to help you—to restore your soul. So you cannot, as David did, pray “take not thy Holy Spirit from me,”

for, though you may grieve the Spirit, He will never leave you. The Holy Ghost fills the new bottle after creating it; first there was only the old bottle. There is great confusion in Christendom as to this: the thought prevails, that He takes the old bottle and improves it. It is not so; it is a new creation altogether. As it has been well said, "He first builds the house and then dwells in it."

How then are you to get the Holy Ghost? By coming to Christ. You must get into another thing entirely—something outside yourself. The Lord Jesus is not only "He that taketh away the sin of the world," but also "He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Chap. xiv. tells me that the Holy Ghost is come down to comfort my heart during the absence of Christ, and I am thus entirely independent of the world, which will neither receive Him nor see Him; so do not you try to get the world to understand it.

In chap. xv. we have another phase of the world: the world will hate you; "Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Now mark how the connection comes out. The Lord says, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you," the simple meaning of which is that they were to die for the brethren as He had died for them. Any divine going into the world was to be with

the object alone of seeking for the lost souls in it. What does Christ in His love do? He clears you from your sins. But people reduce love to mere charity, which is just doing to a person what he himself would wish done. There are two characters in this love: one that I remove from you everything that hinders your being near Him, and the other is that I remove from myself everything that would hinder my being a good and efficient servant to you. That is the thirteenth of Corinthians: a man stripping off self that he may be a true servant.

And what does this produce for me in the world? Hatred. You will find that nothing produces more hatred and more envy in the world than leaving your own relations and friends for the Lord's people. We ought to be like an island of the most devoted love in the midst of a ruthless sea, which seeks by all means to swamp it.

In the end of the chapter we get it in a less individual way: "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; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." It is now not so much individually as in testimony for Christ, here where I am placed with this hostile power against me. In the former case it is the Father

who sends Him; of course I need not say He is the same person. He is the *Witness* here, whilst our *Comforter* individually. And now this same Person—this invisible Person—is the One who is here to testify for Christ. Supposing I had power over every one in this town, supposing they were all my servants, I could not make them stand for Christ; I might make soldiers of them, I might mark the name of Christ on them, but I could not make them *stand* for Christ. Indeed, that is just what the world has done, and has thus lost both.

Passing on to chapter xvi. I find the Spirit, having come, “convicts the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” Here it is not that I am hated by the world, but that I oppose it. Not only does it hate me, but I stand against it. I am a witness against it; I stand with the Holy Ghost, and the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth is the incontrovertible witness that sin is on the world. The Lord grant us to know that the Holy Ghost is as near in the church as the air that we breathe. In Acts ii. we find the way He came down, and He never went back; after all the failure He is still with us; and I ask you solemnly to weigh the fact that He has not only come down to be a Comforter to us, but also to stand for Christ. We read that He first “filled all the house,” and then that He “sat upon each of them.”

He did not lose His power by giving to them. I beg you to ponder it, for it will produce a great effect on you. It is not now that the world hates the saints only, but that the saints are opposed to the world. The world is the culprit; the saint is the witness in the witness-box; and he says: I fix the brand of sin on you; you may hate me, but I am against you. It is not that I do not seek their souls. "He will *convict* the world;" convicted does not mean converted; if they are converted, they cease to be of the world.

Now you must see this, and you must accept it, else how can you carry it out? There are three steps in truth: you must first accept, then admire, and lastly adopt it. You may say, But admire it as I may I cannot carry it out. Never mind that; if you admire it, you are sure to get it in the end.

The saint is called to entire separation from the world. I am like the armed men going round Jericho: I say to the world, I cannot touch you; but you certainly shall not touch me. They never ought to have taken anything out of Jericho—that was where their failure was; they never ought to have taken anything but the poor Rahab saved by the scarlet line. And that is all the business I have with the world; I do not seek for any acquaintance whatever, I only go into it to seek for souls.

It is just here that failure comes in. People say: I own the Holy Ghost as the only means for comforting my soul during the absence of Christ, but I do not see why I should not use the power of the world to promote the work of Christ. I answer that in the measure in which you give up the Holy Ghost as the *only* power to act for Christ here on earth, you also lose the sense of His power in your own soul. You are separating between the advantages and the responsibility of the Holy Ghost. He is One whom the world cannot receive, and when you get worldly neither can you. It was thus that the church lost it. Ananias and Sapphira lied against the Holy Ghost just because they did not see Him. Do you think they would have done it if they had? If they had had the High Priest before them instead, with the Urim and Thummim, they would not have dared to do it. Oh, there is no one there! was their thought. They go in and say it was sold for so much. And so Peter says, You have lied to the Holy Ghost. And that is just the lie of Christendom: they do not believe that He is here.

You see, then, that if you take the place of testimony, what a portion you receive. The world will hate you. But now we find the compensation that the Holy Ghost gives to the person who takes this place with Him. It says: "He will guide you into all truth; he will show

you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." Beloved friends, it is as clear as possible, that if you have this, you will "*glorify Him.*" I do not believe a person can have a real sense of Christ at God's right hand in the glory who has not taken his place with Him on earth. He does not communicate to your hearts heavenly things until you have taken your place with Him on earth. "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

We now come to the last verse of chap. xvi. where it is not only opposition to the world, but we are to overcome it. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." *Tribulation*, that is not *trouble*: trouble is in the heart; this is another thing altogether, and brings us on to the seventeenth chapter; here we are overcomers of the world, as the Scriptures put it in another place, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" The world does not see nor receive the power that I have got—does not recognize it. And it is not only that the world hates me, and that I oppose it, but that I overcome it. So in chap. xvii. the Lord, as the One who has overcome, leaves us here. He gives us now the Father instead of the world; we have lost the world as

our place, and He opens out to us what the Father was to Him here. All the organized thing here we are to be superior to, and so He opens out to us the different things that are to enable us to be thus superior. I very briefly call your attention to them, merely reading without making any comments on them.

The first is (verse 2) "eternal life." "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Then He says in verse 6: "They have kept *thy word*." Count the things yourselves as we go on, and see what a wonderful place He puts us in—as victorious; not only as suffering, but as overcoming. Verse 8: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;" and verse 9: "I *pray* for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine." We are to be kept in all the sense of belonging to this new origin. It is a new origin, entirely apart from the old order of things; I am superior to the whole; I am not in it, or only so as a bird is that walks on the earth; I fly quite away from it; I belong to another expanse and region altogether. He gives them the words his Father gave Him, and they know "that I came out from thee, that thou didst send me, and I am glorified in them." Then verse 11 He manifests to them the name of the *Father*, to keep them

in their new position. In verse 13, "They might have *my joy* fulfilled in themselves." That is where we are. Then verse 15: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest *keep* them from the evil." Then: "They are *not of the world*, even as I am not of the world." And then (17): "Sanctify them through *thy truth*: thy word is truth." That is the knowledge of the Father; it is not the knowledge of other things. Verse 18: "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also *sent them* into the world." That is our mission. Verse 19: "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be *sanctified* through the truth." That is, we are to be as separate from everything here as Christ in heaven. We are all a long way off that. Then, verse 21: "That they all may be one;" and 24: "That they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." That is the joy which He had, which we are not in yet; but which He has given to us, to set us in superiority to the world.

I say thus, beloved friends, He has constituted us to be here, in a scene where He is not, as representatives of Himself; and I say, are your hearts really set—for that is the answer you have to give to Him to-night—are your hearts *set* upon thus being as standard rose-trees, though in yourselves but poor briars, to set

forth the qualities, the features, of Him where He has set you. Do not say that you have not got the power, for that He himself has sent down to you—a power entirely outside the world, and whose primary action is to set forth Christ. You will always know that you have got the Holy Ghost by His action: He ever seeks to connect with Christ in glory; that is His work. And in the world I get hatred, because I am the expression of devotedness to those who are Christ's in it. It is not the gospel that calls out hatred; it is devotion to His own. And then if you want any one thing here for Christ you shall have it; if you want a room to preach in, if you want a jail shaken, the Father will do it for Christ. There is not the same demonstration now, but there is the same power—the very power that shook the jail. The Holy Ghost is here standing for Christ, and has been ever since the day when He filled the house where they were; in the dark ages He was just as much here as now, but souls did not know it. Thus it is true I have lost the world, but, if I have, I have gained heaven, and now I am to be victorious here.

•He then opens out the desires of His heart, which I have not looked at so much as what He gives us to constitute us representatives of Himself.

The Lord awakes in each one of us the simple desire to thus represent Him in a world where He is not.

(J. B. S.)

## OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

A CHRISTIAN is one who has been brought by grace and power out of his old standing and condition in the first Adam into an entirely new place in Christ, the second Man, the last Adam. We read in Ephesians that "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, . . . and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." This gives us our place before God as "accepted in the Beloved," a place which is ours now as fully as it will ever be, for nothing can add to or take from the value and perfection of Christ in the sight of God; and this is the measure of our acceptance.

Before we go further, let us see how this wonderful deliverance out of the old condition and its consequences, into the new one with all its blessed associations, has been accomplished. The word of God reveals the fact that man, as man, is a sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, without strength, an enemy to God, without hope, without God. In this terrible condition,

when man had neither the ability nor the desire to turn to God, God came down to man in the person of His own Son, whose presence here in this world, though "full of grace and truth," only served completely to establish the fact of man's utter alienation from and enmity against God. The cross was the answer to the display of perfect love and grace; and whilst in it we see the final breach between the world and God, it became the occasion for the display of all the boundless resources of grace which were in the heart of God, for it was there that "God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." He became "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," and there, "being delivered for our offences"—for all that we had done as sinners—"was raised again for our justification," "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree," making propitiation and purging us from them before God, so that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God." But more than this: "God made him to be sin for us;" as made thus sin for us, He endured the forsaking of God. Here, then, is much more than the purging of sins. The root and spring of all the evil is dealt with; sin in the flesh is condemned and judged in the person of the One who is our substitute, so that, having part in His death, we are not only forgiven, but

delivered out of our old Adam state. We have been "crucified with Christ," and, having been so dealt with, have been raised and seated in Him in resurrection life. Thus He Himself is our indefeasible title to all that God's heart has purposed for us, whilst the Holy Ghost, sent down and dwelling in us, makes good that title to us now, as "the earnest of our inheritance," as well as being our power of life and walk, while we are still down here.

Thus we are forgiven and delivered, and on our way to the glory, the glory which the Father has given to Christ, and which He has given to us. We who had no part nor lot in that work, whereby God was perfectly glorified as well as redemption wrought, are destined to share the glory of the Son who accomplished it, and for this we are predestinated to be conformed to His image. "When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Wonderful grace, which can thus take up the vilest to be vessels in which His glory shall be manifested! and wonderful, too, the person and work of that blessed One who has made it possible for God to be just and yet the justifier, and, even more, the *glorifier* of those who believe in Jesus.

Now, we have already seen that we have been "predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son, that he might be the first-born among

*many brethren.*" Accepted now in the Beloved, "as he is, so are we in this world," heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, our living associations in heaven, although not yet there, sons of God awaiting our manifestation, but with the knowledge that "when he shall appear we shall be like him." All this excludes and forbids the thought of attainment of perfection here, whilst "he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." Still, the goal set before us is outside the circle of this earth, and hence Paul, who so well understood it, says, "not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 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."

Now, when we are conformed to the image of His Son, God can and will manifest us, and not before; for then, and then only, shall we be in every way a true expression of Christ. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." The Lord Himself says, "I am glorified in them;" John, that "we shall be like him;"

Paul, that "he shall be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe."

Thus, introduced as we shall be into "redemption spheres" in company with heaven's beloved One, sharing His glory, and knowing that we are loved of the Father as He is (which is also true now), it will be Christ who will be displayed in us. In all the glory and happiness and perfection of that scene we shall never be independent in any sense of the One "who loved us and gave himself for us," either for our own eternal enjoyment or for that which makes us fitted for heaven. Blessed thought indeed, and blessed hope too, in the midst of all our failure here, that the day is coming when we shall not only see Him, but "*his name shall be in our foreheads!*"

But while here in the body we are waiting for this, and, indeed, for the accomplishment of all the purposes of God, save redemption, upon which all is based. By the accomplished work of Christ on the cross we have been made "meet to share the portion of the saints in light." We have been "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love." We are "reconciled to God." Still we are in these bodies of humiliation in which sin dwells, though it should never be allowed to act. We are not yet *what* we shall be—"conformed to the image of his Son;"

nor yet *where* we shall be—in heaven ; but in the world, surrounded by everything that is not of the Father. What then is our responsibility while here ? To walk as Christ walked, *independent* of the world ; *wholly dependent* upon God ; answering to our acceptance by walking acceptably—“ worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing ;” and, as towards the world, to be a testimony to Christ as He was to the Father. He could say, “ He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”

For us to live it should be Christ. Our part is to exhibit Christ, and in order to this it is important that we should clearly understand that there is nothing in *self* to be cultivated. The moment we attempt this, it will not be Christ, but ourselves, we shall be seeking to exhibit ; an improved self, if you like, but still *self*. It is not that a Christian is not to be amiable, and the like, but whatever he displays should be a fruit of the Spirit which indwells him, a result or outcome of the life in him, so that he is an expression to all around of that life which is of Jesus and not of himself ; and to this end we are exhorted to “ bear about in the body the dying (putting to death) of Jesus,” which is the reverse of cultivation, since it is keeping the cross on everything which is of ourselves. We have the treasure in earthen vessels, not to display the vessel, but the surpassingness of the power of

God. Hence, the weaker the vessel, the greater the manifestation of the power ; the thinner the lantern, the better the light it carries is seen ; and thus we become the exhibitors, not of natural amiability and so forth, but of Christ ; the life of Jesus is manifested in the body.

But there is yet another thing we have to learn, and that is the grace that can and does help us in this direction when the will is broken. "We which live," says the apostle, "are always delivered into death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh." This no doubt had reference primarily to himself as the Lord's servant, made to realise in his own surroundings what death was, in order that the life might be manifested and work in the Corinthians by him ; but there is a divine principle of grace here which has an application beyond the particular case of Paul, and that is that God helps us to manifest Christ by this delivering to death in some form or another, be it by sorrow, trial, or difficulty, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested even in the mortal flesh. Thus we realise, as Paul did, what death is.

Now, are we in earnest about this ? Do we so enter into the purposes of God as to us in connection with His beloved Son, and are we so filled with Himself as we gaze on the unveiled glory, that we ourselves are, as it were, passing

the sentence of death upon all that is not connected with that purpose? Do we meditate upon, and, in measure though it be, enter into the immensity of the grace that has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that we are seeking in a moral sense to blot out the image of the earthly by putting death upon it, or, in other words, by putting down the flesh?

These are serious questions, and must receive a true answer in the affirmative from ourselves, each one, before we can expect to occupy the place given to us down here, as exponents of an absent and rejected Christ.

J. G. H.

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The intense need of the soul is present association with Christ in heaven. I *must* get to His person; and then I am filled with joy. But I say when I see it, If I am to have that, it will cost me *everything*. And so it will; and that is the very reason why I must have the Holy Ghost first. It is "changed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord." The Holy Ghost says, I can take you up into heaven. I could never get there by myself; He takes me in; and, if I grieve Him in any way, I at once lose heaven for the time.

(E. P. C.)

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## “ THIS ONE THING.”

PHIL. iii.

THERE are two ways in which we may look at the Christian: one, according to the counsels and thoughts of God, and the efficacy of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ; “by one offering perfected for ever”—accepted in Christ Himself before God, everything that stood against us put away, and the believer cleared completely and for ever from his old condition in Adam, taken out of that old condition, and put into the acceptance of Christ Himself: this is the grace wherein we stand. But evidently there is also another condition in which the Christian is seen, and that is as walking in this world.

This walk of the Christian we get in two ways—in the epistle to the Philippians and in Hebrews. In Hebrews it is looked at in respect to the grace Christ obtains for us as Priest on high; not the operation of the Spirit *in* us, but the work of Christ *for* us, and grace to help in time of need. But if in Hebrews you get the Christian down here in weakness, needing help and getting it, in Philippians you get him down here, and the energy and power of the Spirit of God working

in him. We have to pass through the world, and there are difficulties in our path, temptations to draw us aside ; but one walking in the power of God's Spirit rises above all the difficulties in the midst of which he is. In Philippians is brought out the power of God's Spirit acting in one walking in the right path, and the result is a person entirely above it all, one who can "rejoice in the Lord always." We may remember, too, that Paul had been four years in prison at the time, two of them with a soldier chained to him ; and, what was still more trying, his work as an apostle put a stop to, his activity all come to an end. He might have reproached himself as to going up to Jerusalem, and so on, but he does not ; he rises above it all. You never get sin mentioned in this epistle—it is never spoken of ; nor is the flesh, except as having no confidence in it, in a warning to avoid its religiousness ; it is simply a walk in the power of the Spirit. In the previous chapter you get the graciousness, and in this the energy of the course—the full energy of the Christian going through this world. He does not here speak of the cross as that which puts away sin ; it has another character here ; it is looked at practically ; it is being "crucified to the world" here. It is the book of experience, according to the spirit of the Christian on earth.

Imprisoned, so that he cannot be active, yet

Paul says, It will all turn to my salvation; it will all turn to good, and I can rejoice in the Lord always. This comes with power when we remember where he was when he could write thus. He looks back and contrasts his own course with that of those who had made profession, but were still going on with the world.

Let us first look at the character of the energy with which the apostle ran this race. He says he has not yet attained, is not yet perfect: this is because he is looking at his state. We must just see what he means by this. In the first place, he has not a thought of his own righteousness at all. There was a righteousness which he had had; there was a righteousness which he had boasted in; he had had it, all that which depended on himself: "touching the righteousness which was in the law, blameless." But the moment the spiritual character of the law was seen it was all over; all that flesh could trust in was gone for him. We all know how, when he was in the full flush of his career, the Lord met him, and he discovered that all that had been gain to him, all of which he had boasted, had only served to bring him into open enmity with God. All this knowledge, all this energy of character, he had only made use of to try to destroy the name of Christ. It was not a question of his sins; it was that all he had valued as good was gone, his conscience proved to be misdirected,

his legal righteousness nothing worth. There, on his way to Damascus, with authority from the high priest, he found himself in the presence of Christ, and in open enmity with Him; and in that presence all that he was as a religious man, "blameless"—in the outward sense, of course, for he found himself to be the chief of sinners—all that Saul could clothe himself with outwardly was gone smash, and he himself left to dwell in darkness three days, to go through in his own soul what this terrible revelation had discovered to him. The practical effect of thus seeing this Christ in glory was to put down in the most powerful way all that was of man. The first thing we need as sinners, and get through the cross of the Lord Jesus, is "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins;" but here it was not sins, it was righteousness put away. What he had stood before God in was all gone; it was brought out in the strongest way in his own experience what man was in his best estate: the upright, honest, law-keeping Pharisee was only enmity against God. And it was not only that *he* had failed—that was not the thing; it was that the whole structure, the moral structure of man, was brought out in the sight of God and done with. It was the end of the first man; and this not as a doctrine, but practically, for we must learn everything in our own consciences if it is to be a real thing.

It was total, entire condemnation of man in the flesh in his best form ; the best man in the world was the chief of sinners—best as man goes. This, evidently, is a truth that we can learn in different ways, either as seeing ourselves open sinners in rebellion against God, or by discovering that what we esteem best is utterly valueless before Him. Innocence is gone ; man fell from Paradise, and that is all over. There is no going back to the tree of life ; and from that time forward man must be either an alien from God, an enemy in his mind by wicked works, or else he must have a heavenly place with God. On the road to Damascus, Saul meets the Man in the glory, and then he is judged in his own conscience, and is found to be an open, ceaseless enemy of God. It is easy for us to see that our sins must be judged by God, but we do not see at first that the mind and affections of the flesh are enmity against Him. But here you see there is an end of Saul, and of everything that the flesh was in this world—this world that was not Paradise, and certainly was not heaven ; this world in which the *good* things were worthless in the sight of God, and certainly the *sins* were not any use.

Outwardly Saul was the best man possible—as man goes ; conscientious, religious, righteous ; and there he was an open enemy against God. There was nothing to be found here, conse-

quently he looked out of this world and saw Christ in glory; he saw Him, there where he stood; and the effect was the old man was perfectly judged, and there was a new one in heaven. All that he was was gone. It is not a question of sins, but of righteousness. In another place he says, "I had not known sin but by the law." But supposing there were a righteousness according to the law, no man had ever reached it except the blessed Lord Himself; but even if Paul *could* have reached it he would not have it now, for he says, I have got another; there was "the righteousness of God" for him now. The law required righteousness from man for God, but that was now all given up; besides, none had attained it. It is "not having mine own righteousness;" it does not say, not having my own *sins*. It goes a great deal farther than that, and I press it on you. Theoretically a man blameless, he says, I will not have it at all. The whole standing, place, and condition of the first man is a judged thing in his soul, and another Man, Christ in glory, shall be for him that which he was. The condition of the first man has been shown out by the revelation of the second Man, and Paul follows Him. Thus I get the whole ground and standing of legal righteousness swept away. Nobody had it, of course, still that was altogether the ground he was on; but now, he says, I will not have my own at all, for I have got another.

You cannot have the two before God. Seeing this sets aside a thousand things that are floating in the world. A man will have perfection now-a-days ; he says, I will not go on sinning. And he is quite right : he has no *right* to go on sinning. But God would not thank me for my righteousness, not when I clothe myself in an Adamic robe, for I have got another thing altogether in Christ. Paul does not speak here of his position in Christ ; it is not here : “ There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus ; ” it is the condition of soul of those who possess this “ no condemnation.” And the condition of Paul’s was that the revelation of Jesus Christ had set aside in him all that was of himself ; it was the righteousness of God that he had, and that does not go from man to God, but from God to man. When did the prodigal get the best robe ? when the Father put it on him. “ I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.” The whole nature, the character, and the quality of it is a judged thing. But mark, when this Christ was revealed, his mind and heart and desire never stop short of reaching Him, and then what happens ? Away goes all your perfection here. He says, The glory I saw in Damascus ; that is what I want. It was no longer the judgment of the old man ; it was the hopes of the new.

He says to him : “ I am Jesus of Nazareth.”

There was no longer any question about it; that Man was there in the glory—the carpenter's son—the One whom they had rejected. They all fell down at the glory of that light, though they knew not what it meant. And in that light Paul was totally and entirely condemned and done with; Christ took the place of everything. All that he had counted gain was gone. Supposing he were a learned man—well, who was that gain to? To Paul, not to Christ; it is only building up, and furnishing, and giving credit to, and adorning that old thing that has been judged as enmity against God.

And it is not only "I counted," but he has gone on with Christ; he adds, "I *do* count," as a present thing. All that I esteemed best—righteousness, learning, birth, everything—"I do count them but dung," for I have seen Christ and I want Him, and the things of this world I count nothing. He has revealed Himself to me in grace; He has proved His love to be above all my enmity, and now I must have Him. Paul was a man whose whole course and career were marked by an object that was before him; and it is the object that is before us that marks our course, and gives it its moral character. Paul followed after Christ. Let us ask ourselves, Are we following Christ in this way? Is this what governs us? I do not say we may not be distracted, but is He the object after which we

are running? We cannot have two at the same time. Has there been such a revelation of Christ to our hearts that we have Him as the only object before us?

And I will ask here—for it is very current in some places, called "higher life," and truly, alas, for so many Christians follow the world—what is true Christian life? It is "higher life," and no mistake, for our calling is a "calling above"—that and no other; I have no calling to anything down in this world. There is no calling for the Christian according to the word of God but the calling to a risen, glorified Christ. What is put before us is a glorified Christ; we are going to be like Him; and you cannot have a right object except as that object is a glorified Christ, because that is the *only* Christ. Christ down here is a pattern for our walk, but there is no such Christ now to attain. I cannot win a Christ down in this world, because there is no Christ here to win. Attempting it only lowers the standard of holiness, and instead of being "*higher* Christian life," it is *lower*. It is the hope of being like Him in glory that makes a man now "purify himself even as he is pure." The object that I get before my soul in this race that he speaks of is a glorified Christ, and that only; that is what I am going to attain; I am going to be like that Christ that I have seen. Whatever progress Paul made he was so much

the nearer to Him, but he had not got Him ; he would only get Him when in his glorified body. There is no other Christ to run after or win ; not that our affections do not cling to Him in humiliation, but it is a glorified Christ only who is the object of our hearts. I may get to heaven now in spirit, and be happy there with Him, but I never attain to Him, I never win Him, until I am with Him in the glory ; it is then I shall have *won* Christ.

When all that was Paul was judged, it brought him into all kinds of difficulties ; for instance, now he was going to be tried for his life ; but he had done with Paul, he had the sentence of death in himself. Many may not, none perhaps, so realize it as he did, but the consequence was, he was always "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," so that the life of Jesus was made manifest in his body. He had the sentence of death in himself, that he should not trust in himself, but in God, which raiseth the dead : that is, he says, The God I know has raised Christ from the dead, and therefore I am not afraid of death, of trial, of anything that may come on the road ; I can glory in it all.

It is not only patience and hope as in Romans ; here it is "the fellowship of his sufferings." We are always called on to suffer with Him here. We hardly know what it is to suffer for His sake—a little trial perhaps now

and then ; but to suffer *with* Him we *do* know, for we cannot go through this world of sin and sorrow without suffering in principle what the heart of Christ suffered. We can rejoice in the saints when they are going on well, but there is nothing else in it to rejoice anyone ; it is only the world that crucified Christ, except, of course, poor sinners, and he must speak to them ; that is all he saw in the world.

“ If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” That does not imply doubt ; but he says, Even if death be on the road I will go through it, and shall only be made like Him if I die. Here I get the apostle fixed on an object—Christ in glory, and nothing short of it ; and here he will have suffering with Christ, let it cost him life and everything, if but only he may get this place—part in the first resurrection ; for he is looking at it here not as our position, but as attainment. It may be a bad road that I tread, but I get refreshment by the way, and it is the road He travelled.

“ Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect ; but I follow after.” There is the activity of the life. In these days, when people are giving up Christianity on all sides, it is well to know what Christianity is. Christianity is perfect peace, perfect reconciliation with God, perfected for ever before Him ; and as regards my path in this world, it is the eye on

Christ Himself in glory, and one undivided energy to get after Him. Every step we take we get more of Christ, and are more capable of knowing Him, and thus the effect is practically to form me into His likeness. This bringing in of the life of Christ to my soul enables me to see Him in the glory, so that even now I get more like this resurrection I am aiming after. The resurrection from among the dead identifies itself with winning Christ; raised from the dead speaks to us God's perfect delight in us in Christ.

Then he speaks of perfection: "As many as be perfect." A perfect Christian is a full-grown man in one sense; it is the same word as the "perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And what is that? It certainly is not being like what Christ was when He was down here, for there was no sin in Him, so the thought of being like Him is a mere delusion. He that walks *with* Him up there, walks *like* him down here, but to *be* like Him as He was down here is not possible. To *walk* like Him, I repeat, *is* said; but to *be* like Him would be to be absolutely sinless. To be conformed to Him in glory, that we *shall* be, and therefore the heart desires and runs after it now; and that is what he calls a perfect Christian. It is not one who knows what it is to have got the sins of the old creation cleared away—it is not knowing

the work of Christ which puts away sin, hardly measured either by the sin, for it is the whole state of the nature; all is settled, and I know that "by one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified," that there is no more a question of anything to be settled between me and God, that I have liberty before Him in the sense of His favour; but then I say, Is that all? All my debts are paid, but am I to have nothing to go and buy anything with? Am I henceforth to starve, without possessing a farthing? Then it is that the soul comes to see that, having part in this forgiveness, it has also part with the last Adam; he has got hold by grace of this Man in the glory, and knowing this, I say, my whole soul is in that; I have seen the excellency of Christ Jesus, my Lord, and it has set aside everything here. I have done with it all; I belong to another place, and no longer own this old man.

It is then the Christian has got to be what he calls a perfect man; he has this object before him, he has got Christ's place before God, and he grows up into the stature of Christ; not that he has not still got a lot to learn, but he has got into his place; he is of full age, he discerns good and evil, he has got hold of his place in Christ, and he knows it. This sets aside the flesh altogether, and also that which is a deceptive thing to many, perfection in the flesh, for Christ

in glory is my only perfection. In the world I am running a race, I have not attained yet, but Christ has laid hold of me for it.

He then puts in the strongest contrast those who are not thus perfect: "If in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." I can walk with one who only knows his redemption in Christ with just the same love, but I look for him to get hold of this also.

Then he talks of another thing, of those who have the profession of Christianity, but who are "enemies of the cross of Christ;" they are not exactly enemies of *Christ*, though in the end it comes to the same thing. In Paradise God got rid of man as a sinner; at the cross, as far as his will was concerned, man got rid of God in grace. The very disciples ran away: they could not stand it; as He said to them, "Thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards." Amiable or unamiable, all either ran away or banded themselves together against Him. Satan was proved to be the prince of this world. People fancy he is not the prince of it because the gospel is preached in it, but the gospel never would be preached in it if he were not the prince of it. He brought all the world up against Christ, so the world is judged, and all

that is in it. “The world is crucified to me.” The cross—really a gibbet—put an end to all human glory. He came down to that to put an end to everything of man. There is no such infamy as the cross; nothing but a slave or a bad criminal was ever put upon it. Thus Satan was proved by his influence over the world to be its prince; that is what the world is, and that is the very reason that the Lord says, “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee;” and therefore the world is convinced of judgment, and righteousness is proved how? “Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool,” is God’s answer. And He sits there till the judgment of the world is to be executed; it sees Him no more as the Saviour. And now because He glorified God in that place of sin we carry out the testimony of the grace that seeks sinners.

These were enemies to the *cross* of Christ. They carry the name of Christian and go on with the world. Of course, the true Christian may get into the world and be ensnared; it is not that. The enemy of the cross of Christ put Christ *there*, and now if I look for righteousness it is *not to be found in the world that did that*; I must look for it in Christ up there, for righteousness has done with the world.

Then see the place that he puts the Christian in: “For our conversation is in heaven;” our

whole relationships in life—all that my life is involved in, and develops itself in, is in heaven; I am to run here having all my relationships up there, because Christ is up there who is my life. What a definite thing the Christian life is—not here at all.

“From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Now what is He called “*Saviour*” for here? We are all saved in a certain sense—we have got eternal life; but in this epistle salvation is the *result* of redemption, not merely redemption. Practically Israel was saved out of Egypt as soon as the Red Sea was crossed, but they had not got the place till they had got through the Jordan too. We get in the Red Sea Christ’s death and resurrection. The blood upon the lintel gave them safety while God was passing through destroying the first-born; the question between God and the people as to their sin was settled, still God was in the character of judge there, and He passes them by. But it was not deliverance. But when they come to the Red Sea He says, “Stand still, and see the salvation of God.” God has now come in as a Saviour and taken them out of the place they were in, and now they are delivered. When I get to Jordan it is yet another thing; the waters open not to bring them out, but to bring them in; not that Christ was dead and risen for them, but that they were dead and risen with

Christ. So you get the Red Sea smitten, so to say, whilst in Jordan the ark stays in the water and we go through with it. The reproach of Egypt was never rolled away till they got into Canaan ; and so with us : I do not get deliverance and full power in heavenly places until I see that I have died and risen with Christ ; I do not get into my place until then.

Now have you got there, beloved friends ? If so, all your desire will be there, and you will be longing to be there too. Christ is there, and the Christian's heart is with Christ, his affection is in heaven, and he looks for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He gives the Christian as one who has seen Christ in the glory, and who says, That is my hope ; my citizenship is in heaven, and here in this world all I am to do is to run after Him as fast as ever I can to get there.

And my hope is not to die, blessed though that be, but to look for the Saviour, “ who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” We are running the race towards the place where our standing is. We are in Christ, but that is not the thing here. Got it we have ; but how far does the cross really tell us the tale of what we are ? not only that our *sins*, but that *we ourselves* are put away. Can you say with the apostle, “ The life which I now live *in the flesh*, I live by the faith of the Son of God ? ” Is there nothing in

the circumstances down here by which we live? We must go through them, but are we *living* by them? Are we living to Him in that sense? There are many Christians who have no distinct idea that they are to take up their cross and follow Him. May we learn that *the times press*. May our hearts so really look at Christ that we may be in conscious relationship with Him, our affections there with Him, and because they are there, looking for Him to come from heaven to change this vile body because it will not suit that place. Where are our hearts? Have we the deep blessed sense that He has associated us with Himself? "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." The Lord give us so to have our eye on Him that we may have all the blessedness of the consciousness that He has taken us to be with Himself in His unutterable love, and that we may thus know real deliverance from the power of sin and the world. The Lord fix our eye on Him with steadiness and earnestness of heart, so that we may say with David, "My soul *followeth hard* after thee."

(J. N. D.)

The early Christians presented in a beautiful way the Nazarite character. They walked as those whose hearts Christ had taken away with Him into heaven.

(G. V. W.)

## SURPASSING GLORY AND SURPASSING POWER.

2 Cor. iii. 7—iv. 9.

THERE is a great contrast introduced in this third chapter between the ministry which had its day on this earth and that ministry which is now in progress, and, I may say, very near its close. It is of importance to understand what is the character and nature of these two ministries. They are in complete contrast, the former not answering in any measure to the latter. There is a distinct and definite ministry from heaven at this present moment which has for its object a formative character in God's people. There are two things that stand out very prominently in this ministry in contrast with the former ministry; and when I speak of that, of course I refer to that which was instituted on this earth at Mount Sinai, given to Moses with a distinct and highly definite purpose of God in it. These two things which mark the present ministry from the heavens are quite apart from, and not to be found in, the ministry from Sinai. They are spoken of in this third chapter, and cannot have escaped your attention :

they are *liberty* and a *formative efficiency*. These are the great characteristics of the present ministry. I will speak presently of what the purpose of God is with respect to the character which this is intended to produce in God's people ; but these are the two great features of it : liberty in contrast with bondage, and a formative power in contrast with the entire absence of anything of the kind in the ministry from Sinai.

To be simple about it : when the ministry of Sinai came it was embodied in the ten commandments, which were written upon tables of stone, and were given by God in the character of one who was making a demand upon man as he was, he being incompetent to answer to it. That was the special characteristic of it. It was God demanding ; God come to look for that which man had not to give. He looked, for instance, for righteousness, but man had none ; He looked for a character suitable to Himself in the then revelation of His character, but man had not that suitability ; and the consequence was that man, being unable and incompetent to render to God what God was claiming from him, fell under the condemnation and power of death which was attached to that ministry. Hence it was " the ministration of death " (chap. iii. 7).

And that must be always a ministry of death which makes a demand upon man in the flesh.

I do not care what it is ; even the most exalted ministry that could be conceived from the heavens, if that ministry were to come and claim from us on the ground of what we are, it would be a ministration of death, just as the Sinai ministry was. The moment a demand is made by God upon man as he is, that instant condemnation is fixed upon the creature on whom the demand is made. That is the special mark of what we may call the Sinaitic ministry—that worn-out system which is now passed away, in God's grace. The consequence of that ministry was bondage and not liberty ; hence you see the apostle, in contrasting it here in this chapter, says, "The Lord is that spirit." It should be a small *s* ; it is not the Holy Ghost : what he means to say is that the Lord is the spirit of all that is in the Old Testament. You will find certain things represented in the former thing, in the way of types, and so on ; but the *spirit* of it all was the Lord Himself. Then you have the Holy Ghost in the next clause : "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." This marks the new position in connection with this new ministry. The Holy Ghost is there ; but if the Holy Ghost be there, then there must have been previously a ministration of the very thing that was formerly demanded, namely, righteousness ; because it is the ministry of righteousness, and glory, and the Spirit, in contrast with the ministry of bondage, death, and condemnation.

Well, now, that is simple enough, at least as to the doctrinal part of it. The previous order of things, and, I may say, that which people want to revive in a mongrel way now, consisted in God making demands upon man in the flesh; and, if God do so, man must necessarily come into the condemnation which inevitably flows from it, for he has no righteousness for God; he is in unrighteousness. But now what comes out is this: that God, from the glory, from the very place where that blessed One is at the right hand of God, *ministers to* a creature upon this earth a righteousness that he had previously *demand*ed from him. He *ministers it to him*, instead of looking that man should be up to the glory of God, from which he had fallen so far short. It is a ministry of glory, and of righteousness, and of the Spirit; that is, the Holy Ghost is the characteristic power of everything which is based upon this righteousness—the pedestal upon which it all stands.

But there is something more, an exceedingly blessed and important element, in this second ministry, far beyond even what I have spoken of as to righteousness and the Spirit. It is its formative power; the effect of being under the ministry of glory is to be transformed into the likeness of the blessed One in whose face the glory shines. The law never did that. The law never made a man like itself, but condemned him for

his *unlikeness*. It cursed him on account of his shortcomings ; and, let me say, that if it did not do that it would cease to be the law. You will thus see the folly of taking away the penalties of the law. What good would it be if they were taken away ? If you take away the penalties of the law you destroy the whole power of it. The law, without its necessary penalties, is a miserable thing, good for nothing. The principal constituent element of law, its characteristic, its very nature, was this, that it condemned man for being short of its requirements. Man was short of the chief requirements of the law of God, and it condemned him necessarily because of it.

What is it that suits a poor, wretched creature now, in the full consciousness of his shortness, and inability, and feebleness ? Just this, that the very thing that he had not for God, God has for him ! Man had no righteousness ; God gives him righteousness. He was under bondage ; God gives him liberty. He could not stand in the presence of the glory ; God ministers glory to him. And the necessary consequence of that is, the *formative* power of which I was speaking.

I ask you affectionately, are you in the *liberty* of that ministry ? Do you know, in your soul and in your conscience, the liberty that comes from being under that ministry ? That you have got a righteousness which is suited to the presence of God, and that the glory from whence

that righteousness is ministered to you, and the One in whose face the whole glory of God shines, is just the One who suits you ; and, besides that, as you look at that blessed One in all the glory of God where He is, do you know the transforming power and effect of that vision, producing in its feeble measure (because of the vessel upon which it acts) something of the likeness of Christ, “ changed into the same image from glory to glory ” ?

You see, it is a wonderful thing to think of, what the purpose of God is about it ; and this is where the deficiency is in every one of our souls. The thought of God is to have a people on this earth walking in the steps of His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the heavens. That is His thought, His present thought about His people ; and if you and I have not in our souls the sense of that, that God is seeking to have a people upon this earth, in their feeble measure the reflection of His own Son in the heaven, how can we have that communion with God which apprehends His things ? If the thought of God be to have a heavenly people upon this earth, in the life of His Son, you cannot go on with this world ; and if this be *not* God's thought, what is ? If God be seeking to have a heavenly people, a people in their practices, and ways, and walk, and character, and relationships, heavenly, if that *be* His thought, then we cannot

possibly go on with the world. I do violence at once to the purpose of God if I do.

If we mean to go on with the world, I think it would be far more honest if we said, "No, God has *not* such a thought in His mind at all. His purpose is to have a people here to enjoy the world as much as they can; that is His purpose." I think it is a great deal better that we should be honest with our hearts and consciences. There is nothing God hates and detests so much as unreality. The great thing that He is looking for in His people is *reality*, and not to be trifling with conscience about these things. Better for you to give a denial to the fact, and say, "God has no such purpose; Christ did *not* go up to heaven to form a people like Himself, and the Holy Ghost did *not* come down to keep a people like Christ." It is better to say so at once, and then go hard and fast with the world. There is nothing so miserable and detestable as a sort of truckling with this wretched, polluted world, taking just as much of Christianity as you think will suit you. This is exactly what people are doing. They take just as much of the truth of God as they think will put some sort of status upon them; but the part that cuts them, that strips them of the thing their heart clings to, they turn it aside. It reminds me of what used to be done in days gone by, and is even now very common: people take and read

the word of God—the Old Testament; they find most wonderful promises and blessings, and wonderful prospects for the Jew, and they take them to themselves with the most perfect self-complacency; but what is done with the curses? They quietly leave those. This is exactly what people are doing with their consciences with reference to the truth. They take as much of the truth of God as suits them (what a terrible snare it is!), just as much as will make their consciences easy to go on with the devil and the world; but the part that cuts them asunder, that exposes them for their worldliness, that brings them in as short of this wonderful testimony, and shows them up with the light of God streaming upon them in all its brightness and glory—they turn aside from that. Believe me, you must either take Christianity or leave it. You cannot mix Christianity and earthly religion. This is what people are trying to do, but it is the destruction of the testimony of the people of God in these last times where it is the case. They are semi-Christians and semi-Jews. They find that God gave certain things to a people on this earth, and they take them for themselves, thus setting aside the heavenly character of the testimony committed to them.

But when I open such a Scripture as this, for instance, a Scripture that shows me the beloved Son cast out of this earth, rejected, refused, and

despised, spit upon by the world and the people of the world, and the glory of God put in the face of that blessed One up there whom man despised, I have no question whatever about the character of the ministry, and about the character of the glory. The very rejection of Christ upon the earth, and the very glory of Christ in the heavens, opens my heart to all the liberty that is up there, but equally shuts me up to the narrowness of His path down here. You cannot help it. And therefore I feel it is really of moment to bring people at issue with their consciences about it; and I do feel it is a solemn thing to stand here and say it; I feel, before God, it is a very responsible thing, to speak any word for God in such a moment as this; but there is nothing that is working more mischief and more harm at the present time amongst the people of God than that sort of half-and-half bowing to the truth. There is a want of straightforward, open facing of the question with conscience, a turning aside of the edge and power of the word of God from the soul. And not only so, but some are positively seeking by the Scriptures to vindicate this degradation of the truth of God. I say it is a very solemn thing, and one which everyone of us ought to seriously lay to heart. Do we really mean to be governed in our ways by the thoughts of God? May He give you and me a firmer

grasp in our conscience as to what the character of the thing is that He has introduced from heaven, in connection with the glorified Man up there! His purpose is to find down here on this earth a people in some little measure after the fashion of that blessed One who is in glory. That is His purpose and thought.

And therefore you get that last verse of the third chapter, which comes in in connection with this: "We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord"; not like Moses, who had his face covered that the children of Israel could not look upon it. You remember the circumstance which the Holy Ghost refers to. Moses went up to the mount to receive the tables of testimony, and when he came down the second time, his face shone; and the shining of Moses' face, as he came down, was the reflection of the condemning power of that law which man could not stand, and therefore he covered his face, not when he went into God, but when he came out to man. Man could not look at him, because every ray that shone from that face made a demand upon man which he could not meet. But here is a more brilliant glory: a glory that shines, not from the face of a poor weak man like Moses, but the whole glory of God itself, the unsullied radiancy of His glory, the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of His own Son. Is

not that a wonderful thing, that you are positively capable of looking at the radiancy of the glory of God as it streams from that blessed face? Capable of gazing at it! Why? Because I have got righteousness under my feet instead of condemnation, and the Holy Ghost in me instead of my being in bondage; and every ray of glory that shines from that blessed face in the heavens is the reflection to my soul of the completeness, and sufficiency, and fulness of His finished work—the eternal pedestal of blessedness He has set me upon.

But there is more than this. As I look at that glory it has a *formative* power in me. I tell you, beloved brethren, and I say it to myself, as well as you, what we all stand in need of (I speak especially to those who have a genuine desire in their souls to be a little more after the power of this ministry) is, to be long enough in the presence of that blessed Christ who is glorified to catch the features of that Christ, and so have Him engraven upon the “fleshy tables of our hearts.” That is what is wanted. It is not an *effort*. You might try to be like Christ in glory until you were worn out with trying, and you would not catch one feature of His. The very fact of your striving proves your inability. But what is it? It is a thing that nobody can explain. I do not believe you can ever convey to another what it is to sit engrossed with that

blessed One who is there in glory. Who could explain it? It is a thing that a person may speak of out of the fulness of his own heart; but who could convey either the satisfaction of it, or the effect of it upon oneself, individually? The word of God speaks to me of the fact, but there is no man living, nor has there been one, who could convey to another, be he ever so intelligent, or spiritual, or earnest, the sense which his heart gets while he sits as clay in the hands of that glorious potter. It is impossible to describe it, and yet it is a *reality*. It is a reality, that the person who sits in the company and presence of the glorified Christ, insensibly to himself, contracts moral likeness to Him.

When Moses came down from the mount, though it was the mount of condemnation, there was a glory streaming from his face which no one could look at; but there was only one man in the whole of that company who was insensible to the fact that there was glory in his face, and that was himself. Where did he get that glory? He went up and he was alone with God in the mount, and the glory, though it was a question of condemnation, was reflected upon his face when he went down. You and I, with unveiled face, no veil either on us, or on that blessed One up there (for I think the passage will bear the thought of that), there is neither a veil upon Christ nor upon us, everything is open, unveiled;

and, as we by faith look at that blessed One, as we sit before Him, as we are sufficiently passive in His presence, He is engraved on our hearts by the Spirit, and when we come down there is the reflection upon us.

You know perfectly well what it is to meet a person who gives your heart the sense that he has been with Christ, who reminds you of Christ. But how seldom is it the case! What I feel so deplorable, and what one mourns over, is that, even with reference to the very best of things, we leave so much the impress of *ourselves* upon them, instead of Christ. That is what is so sad. In what is done for Christ, we are more impressed with the one who is doing it than the One for whom it is done. What one longs for, what one's heart yearns after, is to be just like clay in the hands of the potter, as our hymn expresses it:

“Thou art the potter, we the clay.”

God's thought is that we should be as clay, *absolutely passive*, so that the potter might leave the mark of His own beautiful hands upon us. What a wonderful thing it would be if that were the case with us, as we move through these scenes of sorrow, and difficulty, and trial, and temptation, and besetment, surrounded by all that is in this poor, wretched, miserable world that the devil will head up with his masterpiece

of iniquity against Christ, if we were distinguished, not so much by what we say and do, as by the way that hand governs us, controls us, guides us—the hand of the potter. That is the meaning of this last verse of the third of Corinthians. As I said before, it is not *effort*, it is not grasping after something, it is not seeking to possess yourselves of anything, it is simply this—“ We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image.” That is the clay entirely under the hand of the blessed potter.

It is a wonderful thing that God should take such a thing as clay to reflect His glory in. I will speak of that more fully presently ; but what I want to press now is that there is this *formative* power in this ministry. Instead of demanding or seeking for anything from us, it brings to us from the heavens the thing we could not give, and besides that, it transforms us into the image and likeness of Christ, as we are sufficiently like clay in His hands.

Now, may I ask you affectionately—and I do not want to make anybody depressed or morbid—but I ask you, how much of your time do you really sit down and sit before the Lord? How much time and leisure have you, not merely from the business of this world, but even supposing your service is for the Lord, how much time have you for this that I am speaking of?

Do you not know that in order that there may be great outgoings, there must be great incomings. There will be no out-shining, if there is not in-shining. What is it then? Simply this, that my heart and soul have leisure enough, both from the things without and within, to sit down in the solitude of the presence of that blessed, holy, glorious Person who is in heaven, finding my delight in Him for His own sake. Now what do you and I know about that? What do we know positively, in our own souls, of that blessed, wonderful retirement, sitting in the company of Christ, blind to all else save His beauty and His glory, deaf to every other sound but that of His voice!

“Oh for a heart submissive, meek,  
My great Redeemer's throne,  
Where only Christ is heard to speak,  
Where Jesus reigns alone.”

Would not a person come out from a scene like that be *redolent* of Christ?

Some one once said to me, speaking of another, “I like to be in the company of So-and-so.” I replied, “Why?” The answer was, “Because they always remind me of a third person.” “Who is that?” “The blessed One in glory.” Oh, what a blessed thing it is to walk through this world, and, as we meet each another, in our business, our households, or domestic relationships, to remind each other of that One in glory, to have the fulness of that Christ in measure reproduced

in poor, wretched creatures like you and me. It is a most blessed thing—the most marvellous ministry that could be conceived.

Well, now, if we come to the fourth chapter, there are only three things I will speak of in connection with this ministry. They are in the seventh verse. He says “we have this treasure,” and it is “in earthen vessels,” and there is what is called “the excellency of the power,” or, as I believe it should be, “the *surpassingness* of the power.” These are three wonderful things to get before our thoughts.

“This treasure,” what is it? I do not think the treasure is so much the estimate that my heart forms of Christ, as the value that God has found in Him. That is the reason, I believe, why it is called a “*treasure*.” I do not deny the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is to be a treasure to His people, because you get the Scripture elsewhere: “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;” but here the treasure, which is, of course, Christ, is presented more as it is looked at from God’s side. It is the treasure in God’s estimation. It is what the thought of God is as to this blessed One. Christ is *His* treasure. How did that treasure come into the vessel? Look at the sixth verse for a moment. He says: “For God, who commanded that out of darkness light should shine, hath shined in our hearts, for the shining forth of the knowledge

of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." That is the way the treasure comes in. It is not that *I* have possessed myself of the treasure. It is a wonderful thing—it sustains one's heart—to think of the sovereignty of the grace of God; to think of that sovereign grace in its actings, as well as its purposes. How, then, did this treasure find its way into our hearts? Let me ask, how did light come into this dark world? Remember this, the sun was not the creature of the first day; it was created afterwards. How then did light come? What was the light of the first three days in the old creation? This: "God said, Let there be light; and light was." Just so spiritually in our hearts: God, in His wonderful, blessed, sovereign way of dealing, God Himself, who commanded that out of darkness light should shine, is the God who has shone in our hearts. It is not merely a ray from Him, or some emanation from Him, but God Himself shining; that is a very different thing; God Himself shining; in a man's heart, in all His blessed, illuminating power, "for, or in order to, the shining forth of the radiancy of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Take an instance of it. This very Saul of Tarsus himself, on the road to Damascus, a persecutor, who had never had a good thought of Christ, nothing but hatred, a man who thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name

of Jesus of Nazareth, suddenly, in a moment, without the slightest warning, saw "a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun," a light that put out the sun, shining in his noonday splendour, and a Saviour in glory was revealed in his soul. He is thus the living instance of the way this blessed treasure is deposited in a man's soul. Paul himself, who was writing this, is the living instance of the way in which God would command the light to shine out of darkness in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The whole glory of God is thus expressed.

And you cannot understand one single thing about the glory of God, except as you understand how it is seen in the face of Jesus Christ, and it is in the presence of that glory that my conscience is dealt with; and if you think you can learn God in any other way, you are seriously mistaken, because the moment you bring your understanding or your mind to bear upon the things of God, apart from your conscience, there is the greatest danger of shipwreck as to faith. If I really see the whole glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ, I cannot help being challenged in the depths of my conscience, and that is the blessedness of it. There are royal roads to learning in other things, but not in this. The moment you have to do with God and Christ,

you are convicted, and the earliest expression of your heart in the presence of that glory must be, "I abhor myself." And yet, as I said, this leads to confidence, and is the only thing that is *formative* in our hearts.

That is the first thing. Next observe where this treasure is placed; that is the second point in the verse: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." You may have often observed that when man has anything valuable, he generally encases it in something that is far more valuable. The outside coverings of man's valuable things are generally a great deal more brilliant and valuable than the thing that is inside. The casket eclipses the jewel. Not so with God. He takes His treasure, the costliest thing, the most valuable and precious to Him, and puts it in the most contemptible vessel that you could conceive, that is, a poor, fragile vessel of clay. This is what he calls an earthen vessel; a poor, perishing, fragile vessel of clay.

But then he has a purpose in this; it gives Him the opportunity of doing two things. First, His delight is to *make everything of the treasure*, and second, He is pleased to bring out the surpassingness of the *power*. There is not only the surpassing glory of the treasure, but the surpassing power with which He works in the vessel—the vessel broken to atoms; indeed, not worth anything until it is broken to pieces; but behind

this poor vessel there is surpassing power. This, indeed, is a wonderful sight to look at. The whole power of God goes along with the poor vessel, into which He puts this treasure. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassingness of the power should be of God and not of us." But we have not only to accept the breakings that God brings upon us; but beside that, and in addition to that, we must keep the sentence of the cross, the death of Christ, which has given us liberty from the condemnation to which we were exposed—we must keep that death upon ourselves. God breaks the vessel; but we must keep the sentence of death upon it as well, in order "that the surpassingness of the power may be of God and not of us."

I do not pursue this further, but would ask you to think of these three things which are connected with this ministry: first, the vessel of clay, just what you and I are; secondly, a treasure placed in it of surpassing glory; and thirdly, a power that is surpassing in its efficiency *behind* it; and that power ever working in company with nothingness and weakness and self-abnegation, as well as a complete, utter, thorough denial of the flesh and the world. You cannot have power otherwise; and there is no manifestation of Christ, no shining forth of Christ, except as this vessel is entirely as clay in the hands of the potter. There is no shining in, or shining out

either. It must be clay for Christ, the treasure, to shine into, and clay for the Holy Ghost to bring the features of Christ out of, so that others may see them.

The picture alluded to here is no doubt Gideon's army. They put the light into the pitcher, but the light never shone out until the pitcher was broken. They had to break the pitchers, and then the light shone. And no doubt the Spirit of God alludes to that fact here. You have the shining in of the glory, and you have the surpassing power working that it may shine out. These two things go together, namely, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shining into our poor earthen vessels, or pitchers, and the surpassing power of God that works through these vessels for the display of the brilliancy of Christ.

How little our hearts are really up to God's wonderful purpose in giving such a ministry as this from those opened heavens! How little of affection there is in our hearts to enter into the purpose of God and into His thought, that, in a world which rejected His Son, cast him out, despised Him, nailed Him to the cross, there should be those who should be the expression, the manifestation, of that blessed, wonderful One whom the world rejected, but whom God glorified. Do your hearts desire that? Is that what you long for? Is that your purpose and

object? Is that what you propose to yourself? God will help you if you have such purpose of heart. Can you say to Him, I have only one desire, that I should be upon this earth a vessel in whom the display of the glory of thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, should be found in every circumstance here? God delights to help us, and you will have the comfort, the sustainment, of being in communion with His thought. I do not know any greater comfort in the whole word of God. Oh, the blessedness and rest of having through grace common mind with the Lord in any little measure! God and His people of one mind about those things that relate to the glory of His Son. It is most wonderful grace on His part to bring us into such a place that we can have like mind with Him, and to enable us by such *surpassing* power.

Suppose I see one turning his back upon everything in this world, who looks for nothing in it, who has no interests here, who does not expect anything, and would not take anything from the world. I say, What surpassing power is displayed in that man! If I see a poor, feeble creature lying on a bed of sickness, racked with pain, the poor body pressed down with disease, morn, noon, and night, and one who might be tempted to say, What good am I, a trial to everyone about me, and a burden to myself?—yet if I see, amid all the weariness and pain,

instead of complaint, satisfaction, instead of querulousness, rest and quietness, instead of quickness of temper, the blessed manifestation of Christ in meekness and endurance, I say, What a surpassing power there is there!

That is what this ministry is able to do, beloved friends, and that is God's thought about us in relation to it. There is not a circumstance in life, or a detail in our history, or a position that we can be called into, whether sickness or health, pain or its absence, prosperity or loss, trial or ease, there is not a single thing too many for the one who is satisfied to be clay in the hands of surpassing power. And more than that, it is in these very circumstances that Christ is endeared to us, for He alone is our sufficiency for all. Also, it is *where we are*, not where we would be, that the blessed God desires to have His Son seen in us.

This is the testimony that is really lacking at this moment. Every one has heard us speak of *doctrines*, and we are supposed to be clear about them, but people are amazed to see so little of the doctrines practised, because they fail to see anything correspondingly in us. Oh, for that manifestation of the truth, that exhibition of Christ which would stop the mouth of the rejecter, and would commend itself to the consciences of men! And hence says the Holy Ghost, "by manifestation of the truth commend-

ing ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (ver. 2). Men would be forced to say, Though I hate those people because they are so narrow, yet at the same time my conscience is bound to give this testimony, that they seek to please God. Herein is the efficiency of the power manifested, that in every circumstance, every service, everything I have to do, I am to be an expression of the skill of the hand that is handling me.

The Lord, by His Spirit, give our hearts to desire to be His handywork, to say in reality, and to act it as well, Lord Jesus, take me and form me after the fashion of Thine own heart, place me where thou wilt, only grant me this desire, that Thou mayest be magnified in my body, whether I live or die! Oh, may our hearts prize more than ever this blessed ministry, characterized as it is by such glories as we have had before us!

(W. T. T.)

To hold myself dead is my *privilege*, for Christ has died; but it is my *necessity* for my testimony. Death so wrought in Paul, that only life wrought from him to the Corinthians: that is testimony.

(J. N. D.)

## THE HOLY GHOST.

JOHN i. 29-39.

THERE are three things in this Scripture in which Christ is in relation to us. The first is, He takes away the sin of the world ; God sent Him to take away everything that offended Himself. This is the groundwork of all in the soul ; if it have not got hold of this it has not got simple confidence, but if it have, it can say, as we learn in another place, " As he is, so are we in this world ; " we are not afraid of the judgment ; as to the sin, we do not see it all taken away yet, but for us who believe it is taken away to faith. The soul never gets settled rest with God if it do not see that God has satisfied *Himself* ; it is He who has " provided himself a lamb," it is not I who have done it. According to the Levitical order they had to bring their offerings, and it is true that I come to the Levitical side too ; but it was not I who went and found Christ. I only appropriated Him ; God provided Him ; He sent His Son for Himself, and satisfied Himself in doing so.

Some little time ago, in a train, talking to a stranger of these things, he said to me, " I know all that you are saying to me, but nevertheless

there will come doubts." "If God have satisfied *Himself*," I said, "how can *you* have any doubts?" "I thank you for that," he said. He felt the importance of it at once. God only is able to remove the distance that lies between Himself and you. The holiest man living does not know the measure of the offence that he has done against God. There never was but one Man who knew it, and that One bore the punishment that was due to it: "He taketh away the sin of the world." The simple heart lays hold of it: God sent His Son, and He knows it, and He did the work, and therein maintained all that was due to God. It would be an immense favour to say to one of my children, You have committed a great offence against me, and you cannot settle it, you cannot repair it, but I will tell you what I will do: I will settle it myself, according to my own mind. Now, what would a sensible child say? Why, Father, I am very glad, and amazed at your settling it yourself, because then you will certainly satisfy your own mind, and it can never cause any more coldness between us.

Thus the first thing is taking away everything that is objectionable; the second is something conferred—a new thing brought in. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is a new thing altogether; it came from an ascended Christ. The third is a new place.

In John's baptism the Lord took His place with the godly ones here upon earth: He cut Himself off from that which connected Him with Judaism. There were three parts in His life. He lived a private life for thirty years; then for three years He was the servant of God, until His service culminated at the Mount of Transfiguration; then He comes down from this point, after He had been the perfect man both in private life and in public life, to become the victim—to meet the judgment of God which we had incurred for ourselves; He sets His face stedfastly to go to Jerusalem. And now we are entitled to glory, because the Person who paid our debt has been raised by glory. Paul woke up to find himself in glory without a word as to his sins; but then he could not see for the glory of that light, and was three days and did neither eat nor drink. It was then that it passed through his soul how that in the cross God could bring such a sinner as he was into such a place: that was eating "the lamb roast with fire." God brings the sinner into His own presence. Thus we are to be in the same dwelling as Christ Himself. The moment John's disciples get to Him, they ask Him, "Where dwellest thou?" and He at once answers, "Come and see." The first thing is to take away sin; the next, to bring in an entirely new power—the Holy Ghost; and the sum or fruit, that you are to be in the same place as Himself.

Now, the moment you find you are really set in holiness you want to change your place. I always doubt a person being really holy in his tastes who does not seek for heaven. "This is not your rest; it is polluted." It is a mistake to say it is not. Everything around you appeals to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Look at a shop-window; is not that polluted? You cannot go into a friend's house without saying, He has done up his house to meet my flesh. You tell me a thing that addresses the spirit here, that helps up your heart here. Except the Spirit of God in the scene, you do not find anything here; all here diverts the soul from God.

Now what I purpose to do as shortly as I can is to divide this subject of the Spirit of God into four heads. First, how we get the Spirit; second, what are the effects of the Spirit; third, how we promote the Spirit; fourth, how we grieve the Spirit.

First, how we get it. Some think, and very rightly too, that we are *born* of the Spirit. But in the 5th of Luke we read that "new wine must be put into *new bottles*." The figure there of the Spirit is "*new wine*." As some one has said of the Spirit of God, first He builds the house, and then He dwells in it. You must *have* the bottle before you can *fill* it. The world will use Christianity as a patch, and so try to

make itself better, but it has become worse through Christianity than it was before, which you can see by comparing 2 Tim. iii. with Rom. i.

There are certain denominations that do not see the new bottle at all, and yet they own the action of the Holy Ghost. Hence it is more difficult to detect their mistake than with the world. I find Christians trying with the new wine to make the old bottles new; they expect the Holy Ghost to work upon the old bottles. This might be without conversion. I read that a man can come into a meeting of saints, and "falling down on his face, worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth;" but there is no new bottle there, though there is the wine. What I want you to understand now is not the new wine, but the new wine *in* the new bottle. There must be first a new bottle.

Well, first, how do I get it then? You get it by faith. I do not want to speak of any interval of time—there *is* interval—but I want you to see that it is a *distinct* thing. I will show you first the doctrine of it. In Galatians you read: "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He, therefore, that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" There

was the "*hearing of faith*," that is, the way the Spirit comes: that is the first thing. Practically speaking, we have no link with Christ but by the Spirit of God; and, if that were simply carried out, it would set aside a good deal that people are now quietly going on with. Mere happy feelings, pious feelings, and so on, never connect you with Christ; it is only the Spirit of God, and we have a great deal to learn about the wonderful position that He puts me in. The flesh is what binds me to man, but God has broken that bond; the bond that bound me to the first man was broken by Christ, and now I am not in the flesh but in the Spirit. But some one says, How then do I *get* the Spirit? Every one of you here, I trust, knows what the new bottle is—you all have that; but the thing is to get the new wine. Very often a person does not get it until he is dying. It is not a question of salvation we are dwelling upon; it is that which gives the soul consciousness of being bound to another—to Christ. A new bond, the Holy Ghost, binds you to Christ, in consequence of the work which has freed you from the old. I ask every soul here, Are you bound to Christ? I say there is no other bond to Him but the Holy Ghost, and it comes "*by the hearing of faith*." But while you are seeking something else you are dimming the truth. Christ has put away everything that was against you in the sight of God,

but how long is a soul often after he believes, before he sees Christ risen and gets peace. You do not get either righteousness or peace until you see Christ risen. If I am in debt, and someone comes forward and offers to pay the whole for me, and I see him go into the bank to do so, it is not when I see him go *in*, but when I see him come *out*, having paid it, that I feel satisfied. I must see Christ come out of death, out of the grave, and seated at the right hand of God in heaven, and know myself by the Spirit connected with Him where He is.

I turn now to the seventh of Romans, to show the practical way in which the soul finds the necessity of having the Spirit of God. "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" There is the new bottle, but without the Spirit of God. The new bottle says, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," and yet I am wretched. Why are you? Because I have not power to rise superior to my state. That person has not done with the flesh. The apostle is not describing his own experience, but that of a person who has not got the Spirit of God. I say I have desires after holiness. Well, that is the new bottle; you have a new nature, but the new nature has not power over the old thing; you want *power*, and you only get power in *Christ*: "I thank God, *through Jesus Christ our*

*Lord.*" Now you see where I have got to: I have not to do any more with man in the flesh; it is crucified; I have done with it. God has done with it in the cross, and God will never revive the bond He has broken in the cross. Can you say, God has done with it on the cross? I do not say you will not find it rising up now and then, but God has broken the bond in the cross, and He will never revive it. Of course, I suffer for it if I let it get up; if I "sow to the flesh" I shall pay for it; but God never revives it. I suffer for it if I do, because I not only sin, but I revive that which God has done away with in the cross. The only way for me is to drop it as a man would a stick that is broken, and say, That stick is no use to me any longer.

In the parable of the good Samaritan it says, he "set him on his own beast." He took him away from his own power, and put him on that of another; he took him off his own legs, which were weak and powerless, and put him on a beast with four: his own legs were useless. The point we all stop short at here is what happened to that man. This is the earthly side of grace. We get the heavenly side in the parable of the prodigal son. In the one I am brought to the Father's house, in the other to the inn. Both are blessedly true; I cannot do without both. I cannot do without an inn as

long as I am in a poor world like this; I must have *somewhere* to be; this room is an "inn." I have got the blessing—the oil and the wine—but I am perfectly powerless, and the more powerless the better, because then I will drop myself and trust to Him.

Have you ever come to that? If you have, you find that you are united to Christ. You have the document of grace written out upon your heart, and at the bottom the seal is put. That is one grand effect of the Spirit of God; He is the seal on the document. You would not like the seal put after only a few lines were written! The Holy Ghost comes in to establish the fact that the man had the oil and wine in his wounds. As has been said very truly, no one ever got *out* of the seventh of Romans until he got into it; we must find out where we are, and we all go through it, one as well as another; we must all find out that "in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Well, then, waive it! There only are two men; One is on the right hand side of the road, the other on the left. The one on the left hand [side ruined me; well, I cross over to the One on the right.

Thus, you have got to the Spirit now in the eighth of Romans: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." I will give you an illustration in the fifth of Mark's gospel to show

you a simple mode of learning this positive truth.

“A certain woman, who was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment: for she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.” Now, mark you, there was a case of weakness, perfect powerlessness; every effort to get on, like the seventh of Romans, but every effort only made her worse and worse. But she has faith in Christ; just a touch, and she is whole. Now it is all done, you say. But no, it is not all finished. But is she not cured? Yes, she will never get a bit better cured; the bottle is made, but there is something more to go on in the soul. I often see it in people: they know that there is a divine work done in their souls, but they have not had an interview with Christ, they do not know that they are united to Him.

Now the woman is cured, but the Lord has to bring out another thing in her: He says, “Who touched my clothes? and he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.” Then the woman, “fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace;” and I believe if souls would go and tell the Lord, You are the only

one I have to do with now, they too would "go in peace." Look at the fearing and the trembling that you see in souls, and some even think it is the right thing; it gives them the comfort that they have something new and divine.

To get positive relief there must be confession. You get the same idea in the tenth of Romans: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." I do not believe people are walking in the consciousness of salvation if they are not confessing Christ—not confessing their *sins*, but confessing *His worth*. The more I am like a Jonathan confessing the worth of David, the more am I walking in the consciousness of salvation. There is always "the heart" and "the mouth": the inside and the outside. It is then she finds she is connected with Christ; she finds He has not only done a work for her, but He calls her "daughter." It is "Daughter, go in peace." She is acquainted with Himself; she says, I know not only what He has done for me, but I know I am His.

Now I turn to another point; that is, what it effects. In the third of John—I am not going through all the effects, but will merely just touch upon one or two—He says: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,

even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." But there are two things in the Christian. In Numbers it says they not only looked to the brazen serpent and lived, but there was God's well. He said, Come, and I will give you water; and they sing to it. There are the two things: life given by faith, and water given to sustain the life given. You have here a crucified Saviour, the Son of man lifted up; and I say, what then? Why, I have life. And what comes next? Why, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." "Sing ye unto it!" and people *ought* to sing to it! And why should not *we* sing to it, and be filled with the Spirit? It is inexhaustible; there can be no failing of it, whilst on the brightest festive day the wine was out. There is man for you! But here in the fourth chapter, to a poor sorrowful woman who had done everything she could to make herself happy in this world, He says: I will give you something that will make you perfectly happy without your ever going outside of yourself; you shall "drink waters out of your own cistern, and running waters out of your own well." And yet with all this you find people murmuring, discontented, dissatisfied. The fact is, you do not

“sing to it;” you are not, as the princes were, occupied with it.

Another effect is that it makes you superior to man. You can worship; you have become another being; you have got into another state of things altogether. I have a fund in myself that is inexhaustible; I have a store filled with everything that I want for God and internal enjoyment. In the new bottle I have the new wine; and it is, “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be *filled* with the Spirit.” If I am, there will be “melody in my heart to the Lord;” and “melody” is a wonderful thing. It is not the mere chanting of a song, but it is the heart in full accord to Christ.

And now I turn to another passage to show the practical effect of having the Spirit of God, to which I attach a great deal. It is in Rom. viii.: “If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” We all know how we fail when we try to repress bad habits, cares, anxieties, worries of any kind. I try to repress a bad temper, but do I succeed? I find that my heart is like a river; repression only makes it swell the higher. I will take for an instance what every one would consider a very good man—a teetotaller; he has repressed himself into good habits, but there is no virtue imparted. As has been said, “Sublimate the flesh as much as you will, it will never yield spirit.” Repression

is only the negative side. The teetotaller has repressed a bad taste, but he has not got a good one instead of it. You may pick up a weed, but that will not make a flower grow in the place of it. Self-culture represses bad habits, but in doing so it only makes the *will* stronger; it has only strengthened itself to repress the bad habit. If there were any good in you to come out it would be another thing; but there is not any virtue produced. Now the Holy Ghost will not only repress your bad habits, but will actually give you new tastes, so that a drunkard will love sobriety. He will not only not allow the bad thing, but will also put a good one in its place.

Now I turn to Gal. vi. to show you what promotes the Spirit. In the seventh verse you read, "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." That is the way to promote it. It is well for us to study ourselves a little bit, for there is nothing more sure than that people reap what they sow. You say, I am going out for a day's amusement. Well, then, to-morrow you will be dull, and you will tell me you are depressed and do not know why. It is because you have been sowing to the flesh. If you had been sowing to the Spirit, waiting on the Lord, doing His will, do you think you would have been dull and depressed? But, you say, how am I to sow to the Spirit? Well,

I find I have to check my mind constantly, to be continually watching myself, I think of such foolish things. Do you look upon the Spirit as a second self? and as a second self ever superior to yourself? I have now got the Spirit of God to be in me! It is the most wonderful thing! I do not think people at all estimate such a fact. And do I minister to that Spirit, or am I ministering to the flesh? As some one said lately of Noah, he did not mean to get drunk at all; he only wanted to indulge himself a little. I feel one has to be careful about everything, even to such a thing as reading the newspaper; if it come to be a question of indulgence, you are sowing to the flesh, and if you do you will reap corruption; any indulgence is sowing to the flesh.

And now just one word upon grieving the Spirit. We read in Ephes. iv. : "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." A person who has grieved the Spirit is very like one who has never had it, but I have hardly time now for dwelling on the difference that there is between them. The fact of having grieved the Spirit often does not show itself until you come to do something, and then you find He is not there to

support you. As it was with Samson: he awoke out of his sleep, and "wist not that the Lord was departed from him." The Spirit retires when He is grieved, as you get in the Psalm: "Be not silent to me, lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit." Often when I have felt powerless I have said to myself, You have been grieving the Spirit, and you have not settled that grieving. What settles it is getting the feet washed.

Now nothing can disturb my acceptance—not all the weakness of the human heart; but the smallest thing disturbs my communion, and God will not let the smallest thing pass. He brings it up. He says, If you will not judge yourselves you must be judged; "for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." To me it is melancholy to see saints making much of themselves when they are under the chastening hand of the Lord, trafficking upon the sympathies of their brethren because they are suffering for their failures. There should be such an answer of divine grace coming out of the broken vessel that every spectator should be occupied with the grace instead of looking at the vessel. God may put a person in prison for his own good and for service too, and there is no greater prison than sickness.

Well, a very small thing grieves the Spirit of God. What a wonderful thing it is to be bap-

tized with the Spirit! What resources I have in myself! If you understand it at all, *do not grieve the Spirit*, so that He may go on with you and help you, and that you may be able to say, I have a wonderful back, I have a wonderful power, though I have nothing but an "inn" here. The Lord lead our hearts practically to understand the magnitude of being sealed by the Holy Ghost.

(J. B. S.)

It is said, Did not God make these things? Of course He did, who else could? God made the trees in the garden, but Adam used them to hide himself from Him. Man takes these things and uses them to separate himself from God if he can, and the question is, not whether God made them, but the use man puts them to. Cain went out from the presence of God and built a city, and then used the things God had made in order to make himself happy without God. It is a great delusion to speak of God making the world as it is. He put man in Paradise, not in the world. The world is the fruit of sin and Satan. The point is this: we have a world which has rejected the *Son*; what has it to do with the *Father*? All we can do with the world is to go through it as Christ did—a testimony for God in it.

(J. N. D.)

## THE ARTIFICIAL AND THE SPIRITUAL.

2 COR. iii. 18.

It is very clear and distinct, feeble though the measure be in which the soul apprehends it, that it is only as we are occupied with Christ where He is that we are like Him in our ways. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

But, I may ask, have we grasped in soul, or rather, have we been possessed by, all that is implied in these wondrous words? Do we not often detect in ourselves a lack of that spring and power of life which impart quietness and ease and restfulness of heart? And in the absence of these, yet knowing they ought to be there, are not many forced into what I must call an artificial state of soul, which carries on its very bearing the opposite of life and the Spirit?

There is something refreshing and beautiful in the spring and freshness of life, and it matters not how diligently or carefully formed anything *resembling* life may be, the difference between what is artificial and what is real is at once apparent.

Light and heat are neither of them, nor both

together, the tree, most invaluable though they be as the soil and atmosphere, as it were, in which it is planted. A Christian is, as such, in the light, and he is moreover the object of the Father's love, even in the measure of it in which Jesus was loved—"hast loved them as thou hast loved me" (John xvii. 23).

Now, is there not a great difference between a soul held and governed in divine power and reality by these things, and one who, because painfully sensible of the mere outside owning of them, is seeking to hold them? It is just the difference between my heart keeping the peace of God, and the peace of God keeping as in a garrison my heart. But there is more than this difference, for there is the practical effect. If the soul be not held, but be seeking to hold, there is ever prominent in its state, the unrest that invariably accompanies *effort*: disquiet and fear about almost everything, as well as uncertainty even where most was expected from God. The contrary to all this is Christianity. Unseen realities are the governing power acting on the soul, absorbing and commanding it, the affections of the new man, *formed, sustained, and satisfied* by Christ, their only object; and, as a consequence, rest, quietness, and ease in the most untoward circumstances, walking in that path which "the vulture's eye hath not seen."

There ought not to be anything forced about us as Christians ; effort of any kind betrays the absence of power. The presence of Christ not only imparts to us, but secures through us, all that is suitable to His presence ; effort tells the tale of our being out of His presence, and is invariably resorted to for the purpose of acquiring that which is the simple result of being in His presence, and of being acted upon by Himself. I do not for a moment wish to excuse anything like sloth, or ease, or self-indulgence of any kind, in anything, much less so in these things which have to do with man in the Spirit and not in the flesh : but I do feel it is a great and solemn reality to press upon the people of God that the presence of Christ can alone command the heart. What a blessed thing for a poor worm to be held by the presence of the Lord of glory ! Oh, I cannot but speak of it ! such glories as are indeed to be found here : to be the subject on which His presence acts, instead of our poor hearts and thoughts acting on Him ; to be the subjects of light and heat, such light and love, too !

What was it formed John ? Was it not that he leaned on the bosom of Jesus ? John lay there because he knew it pleased his Lord and Master ; and may we not do the same ? How much effort was there about John when he lay there ? Did he find it difficult to say, " Lord,

who is it?" Peter may have felt it difficult, and was glad to use John's nearness; but as to John, the question came forth as the simple and natural result of being where he was. That bosom was everything to John: he was not thinking of *being there*, or of the *results* to him of being there; he was there for its own sake; hence he was not restless or unnatural. That blessed Person on whose bosom he reclined was to John "*all*." Oh, to have the sceptre of Christ swaying its dominion of life and liberty from pole to pole in our poor hearts! Our looks would then tell of Him, our words speak of Him, our thoughts rise and set in Him, and all so easily and naturally, that is in spiritual power; in a word, Christ would be our life practically, as He is our life truly and really; the glory of the Lord would thus transform us into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The Lord alone knows what searchings of heart this leads to. The heart that has passed through it alone knows what it is to rise and walk apart from all that once governed and influenced it, often, too, beyond what we suspected even; but so it is. Yet Christ is worthy. May we know what it is to be in some more full measure the subjects of His power and presence before Himself, formed by Him alone, long enough in the mount, as it were, to catch the

pattern of the glory, not because of the good of it, nor even in the first instance that we may be a testimony to others, or enriched ourselves, but because of what He is in His own intrinsic blessedness and preciousness.

It is a great cheer to the soul to know that the whole power of God, by the Spirit, is for us in the maintenance of this blessed walk on earth; only as Christ alone fills our eyes and hearts are we enriched ourselves, or any testimony to others; thus it is we are at rest, having reached the haven of quiet. Another has blessedly said, "Heaven is the metropolis of Christianity;" may we know it so in deep blessedness. If a Jerusalem or Rome were enough to divert for a moment such an one as Paul, surely much less prevails with us who have so little of that divine energy and power which characterized him in so remarkable a degree.

May He by His own Spirit so attract, win, and satisfy the hearts of His beloved people, presenting to them Him who alone can secure this in them, that they, finding their all in Christ, may be like "a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

W. T. T.

“THOU SHALT SURELY REJOICE.”

DEUT. xvi. 1-15.

THESE three great feasts of which we read here were the feasts of gathering “in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in.” All the males were to go up there; all the people were to be gathered up round the Lord. There was the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, these three; and connected with the Passover, though not exactly the same thing, was the Feast of unleavened bread.

In Acts ii. we read: “When the day of Pentecost was *fully* come;” and then follows the fulfilment — that of which this feast was the type; but of the Feast of Tabernacles there is no present accomplishment. It is after the harvest and after the vintage; it is the millennial time of rest after the discriminating judgment of God has taken place, and after the treading of the wine-press, His complete vengeance on the adversaries. Then this feast comes in; it is the rest remaining for God’s people. They dwelt in booths as a sign that they had been strangers and pilgrims — that the Lord had brought them out of Egypt. I just say this that

we may see the bearing of these feasts. With the first of them we are all familiar—the Pass-over, the death of Christ. And the unleavened bread we get the apostle applying himself in Corinthians: "Let us keep the feast; not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." One other point I would notice as to the Feast of Pentecost, that we may apprehend it better, and that is, that it was connected with "the morrow after the sabbath." It is outside the old creation and all that has to do with it; it has to do with Adam innocent no more than with Adam guilty; Satan's power, and sin, and death, and judgment, all that is past and gone; man, in the person of Christ, has got beyond it—is identified with Him before God in the new creation. That is Pentecost.

"Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, even the bread of affliction." Sometimes, I do not say *always*, we are apt to remain in this feast of unleavened bread, and not get on sufficiently to the others. It is all right, of course, that we should have to do with it; we must have holiness: "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "Thou camest forth from the land of Egypt in haste;" Pharaoh, that is the devil, was behind them, and they were just escaping from the judgment. It is just deliverance. You get out of Egypt in haste; you are obliged

to put the dough on your shoulder as fast as you can, that you may not be caught by the judgment; and so you have the seven days of unleavened bread. It is deliverance, but it is occupation with the state in which you were when you were delivered, so it is “the bread of affliction.” There must be holiness, or we cannot have to say to God; but we do not get fulness of communion and blessing in it, and therefore we read that as soon as they had eaten the Passover they were to turn in the morning and go to their tents.

But when you come to the day of Pentecost you get this: “Thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God, with a tribute of a free-will offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee.” There is not a bit of that in the Feast of unleavened bread. There they had to escape, and that was all; but here I get the heart satisfied with the Holy Ghost. They had the fruits of the land now; they had that which they were brought into, and not only that which they were brought out of. Of course, that which they were brought out of is not to be forgotten; we shall not forget it in heaven; it is the Lamb slain that is the foundation of everything; but I have more than that here: I have the free-will offering of thanksgiving and praise. But even that is according to the *measure* in which the

Lord our God has blessed us; and in that "thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God." And then we find the fulness of grace: it is "with thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow that are among you." So I get here these two things with joy: the free-will offering to God, and thanksgiving and praise; and, having these things in our hearts, we have everything except the glory. We have life, we have righteousness, we have Christ Himself; we have all that the Father's love and the Son's love can give us by the Holy Ghost. I do not say we *enjoy* it all, but everything in that sense we have got into—we have actual possession of it all in heaven: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." So the strangers, and the widows, and everything can rejoice.

And then "thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and thou shalt observe and do these statutes." That is, there must be present obedience, and the remembrance that we were bondmen, and then the heart free for the things that are God's; there is the enjoyment through the Holy Ghost of the things that are freely given us of God: "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. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit”; and “where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.” God’s righteousness is settled, the conscience is perfect, and we are in that place in spirit where we can be occupied with God Himself, and not merely with what He has given us.

After this comes the Feast of Tabernacles, “after thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine”—after the judgment, as we have seen. That is the reason that, where it is spoken of in John vii., the Lord says He could not go up to that feast; it will be the millennial glory, and He would not go to that. But afterwards He goes up, “as it were in secret,” and on the eighth day, “that great day of the feast,” He cries, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” He lets us into the new week of heavenly glory, and in the Holy Ghost we do realize it, though we are not in it yet.

Another characteristic is that it is not “*according as*” now, as it was in the Feast of Pentecost, but it is “because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in *all*, therefore thou shalt *surely* rejoice.” It was all right to come out and eat the Passover, and go to your tents in the morning, saying what poor wretched sinners you were; it is all right to remember that all the

days of your life—we shall remember the Lamb slain in the glory. I have the sense that holiness *must* be, and I go with a personal, individual sense of it, and sit in my tent to keep the feast of unleavened bread, and bless God for having delivered me from that in which I was. And besides this I find that I have got into an entirely new place—a place in which God has made a habitation for Himself. I am risen; I am in the new creation; it is a new thing altogether, and the old is all done with; and so I come with a free-will offering, and I worship as I realize the coming down from God of all the blessings that He has given us in the Holy Ghost. Thus, in Pentecost, it is according to my spirituality that I rejoice. It is not merely that I have been delivered, but that God's heart is to *give* to me, and God sees flowing out from me praise and thanksgiving according to the spiritual state of my soul.

But in heavenly places I go a little farther and discover what I have in Christ; in Him I find that "all things" are mine, both "things present" and "things to come," and there I can rejoice *always*—there I can "*surely* rejoice." How could a person, if he had not spiritual power, think of *eternal* praise? Now it is according to the measure of our spirituality, but then it will be because He *hath* blessed us in all things. God's heart satisfied with seeing us in the full

blessing of all He has brought us into ; Christ's heart satisfied with seeing of the travaïl of His soul ; the saint's heart satisfied with being fully like Him and with Him, and He fully glorified.

This is where God has set us ; and how far, beloved friends, do your hearts go with it ? It will be surely the Lamb that was slain there ; but in what measure does my soul get hold of the second feast, and say, “According as the Lord my God has blessed me” ? And then how far can my soul, even now, enter into all the blessing which God has prepared for them that love Him, having no present but what is future. We are strangers and pilgrims here, but if we are right our conversation will be up there “where Christ sitteth.” God grant that it may be so in our hearts.

(J. N. D.)

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God exhausted all His resources as to showing the manner and way of His love when He gave His only-begotten Son. The sin that man brought in, the death that man brought in, the ruin that man brought in, never made any

change in the heart of God; they only presented the opportunity for showing the love that was there—“*perfect love.*” When that Son of God was put upon the cross for me, God poured out upon me such an expression of His love as can never be shown again.

I could lie down to-night and die saying one word, and that word, “Amen.” Amen to all that I am—to all my ruin, my misery, my degradation—nothing too bad for me; but not stopping there: there is no comfort in that; but amen, too, to all that Christ is; amen to all the perfect love that God is to me in Him. If you think there is a single thought about you in the heart of God that you would sooner not have there, then you are not resting in “perfect love;” and you never can know the joy that God would have you know until you pillow your heart upon His love—His perfect love to you.

Can you let Him roll perfect love in upon your heart? If you can, it ejects fear as it comes in: “Perfect love casteth out fear.” A resting-place for a poor soul in this world is only found in “perfect love.” And God would have that love that is perfect *towards* you made perfect *in* you.

(E. P. C.)

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