

THE REMEMBRANCER

A MAGAZINE FOR THE LORD'S PEOPLE

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

("IF THE LORD WILL").

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them. . . . Yea, I think it meet . . . to stir you up by putting you in remembrance."

—2 PET. i. 12, 13.

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The Remembrancer

“ HIMSELF.”

Luke xxiv. 27.

Dear Reader:—May *He* HIMSELF be more personally with and before us! a *nearer* and *more real* Object than ever!

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

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

Let not this evangelic age, dear reader, give you the *work* of Christ alone. It tends

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that way. Without His work, all would be nothing. But let not doctrinal acquaintance with His work keep you from *personal acquaintance* with HIMSELF.

Fairer than all the earth-born race,
Perfect in comeliness Thou art ;
Replenished are Thy lips with grace,
And full of love Thy tender heart.
God ever-blest ! we bow the knee,
And own *all fulness* dwells in THEE !



CHRIST'S TESTIMONY.

“What He hath *seen* and *heard*, that He testifieth.” (*John iii. 32.*)

It is an ordinary thought concerning divine revelation, that Christ's mission was but to complete what prophets had begun ; and that He added only another link (the most important it may be) to the chain of God's revealed counsels, which from the earliest ages had been running on.

This by no means gives an adequate view of the testimony of Him who “comes from above, [and] is above all.”

For if we find, in the blessed person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the divine substantiation of every preceding type and promise, and anticipate in His reign the accomplishment of every foregoing prophecy, so must we understand that, in virtue of the place from whence He came, He becomes the Revealer of truth, flowing from a centre

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in which prophets never stood, and opens a field of glory on which the eyes of prophets never gazed. For "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven." "He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what He hath *seen* and *heard* that He testifieth."

But these revelations of the Son, "these heavenly things," of which He alone could speak, form the very basis of the church's communion and the bright objects of her hope. It is the grace of God to put us in the place of sons, and then to treat us as sons, in confidence and love, by giving us the Spirit of His Son, and by unfolding to us all His blessed thoughts through Christ, and all the counsels of His will. And how should our individual hearts rejoice in that touching expression of confidence towards us, "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you!" (John xv. 15).

A suffering Christ, and resulting glories, might be learned from the Spirit's testimony in the prophets; and the necessity of being born again, born of water and of the

Spirit, in order to even Israel's entrance into the kingdom of God, might be gathered from the same testimony. The earthly things of this kingdom which are Israel's portion, are the subjects of prophetic testimony. But the heavenly things which could only be revealed to us when the cross had opened a way for us into heaven, belong to the testimony of Him who comes from above and is above all.

"What He hath *seen* and *heard*," is the special subject of His testimony, and requires not only the new birth, but the Spirit of God's Son, and the relationship of sons in order to enjoy.

Moses stands as a type of Christ, as a prophet, or revealer of the mind of God; but even in the type, though bearing the same name, he is distinguished from other prophets, in these emphatic words: "Hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold" (Num. xii. 6-8).

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the *prophets*, hath in these last days

spoken unto us by His SON" (Heb. i. 1, 2). This as to the title of Son is at once admitted to assert for Him who bears it a dignity superior to the whole array of prophets; but it is not always as clearly seen that it marks an equally corresponding elevation as to the character and subjects of *the revelation* of the SON. This is partly intimated indeed in the terms of this passage, which are expressive of the insufficiency of all preceding communications; but it is fully declared in the words, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 18).

What pregnancy of meaning is there in the very terms of this passage, if, alas! familiarity with their expression, and worldliness of affections did not blunt our spiritual apprehension! "The only begotten Son!"—"The *bosom* of the Father!"—"He hath *declared Him*!"—adequately expressed this wondrous subject—the revelation of GOD!

The heart might well be arrested to dwell on the *grace* of God, which shines forth in sending such a Messenger to reveal His mind—for "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"—but it is the special revelation made by Christ as the Son, which is our subject.

He is apart from all others in this, that

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He reveals GOD; and so reveals Him as to bring our souls into association with all that characterises the blessedness of heaven. For "*truly* our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

He is indeed apart from all others in the accomplishment of redemption. He stands alone as the Captain of our salvation; and He is equally alone in the manifestation of the Father, and the revelation of what gives a character to heaven.

Prophets could present God's character and ways as they were manifested in His government of this world, and His dealings with men; and blessed and wondrous are the various traits which are thus brought out; but without the Son, *the Father* must still remain unknown. Now, indeed, we can say, "we have *known God*, or rather are known of God," as well as "we have known and believed the love which God hath to us." (Gal. iv. 9; 1 John iv. 16.) None but He who is from heaven can reveal what is in heaven.

"If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man which is in heaven."

They are not God's counsels about the

earth, nor Christ's glory there, which are revealed by the Son. These are the subjects of the prophetic testimony, and of Christ Himself in the Apocalypse when He takes the prophetic place. But as the Son He presents those revelations through which we have fellowship with heaven, and we are called to walk as sons of God and citizens of heaven while pilgrims here on earth.

For even that oracle of the prophet which is taken up in the New Testament, "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," receives a new application in the hands of the Spirit, and introduces to a far higher sphere of glory than that which attaches to it in connection with Israel's hopes. It is in the New Testament applied to "the *hidden wisdom* which God ordained before the world unto our glory"; and leads into "the deep things of God"; the wondrous portion of that church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood, and which has "the mind of Christ."

Hence the necessity of faith, and a spiritual mind in the church of God, in order to distinguish between the earthly things and the heavenly things of Scripture, and to apprehend that portion in grace which God has given to her.

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While the first tabernacle was standing, its unrent veil and yearly entrance of the high priest with blood into the sanctuary, declared that "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." Nor could the worshipper (as now) with a purged conscience be invited to "draw near," until Christ, "by His one offering, had perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and opened for Himself a way as the High Priest of our profession into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us." But we must remember that He who ascended is the same that descended first—and there is the proper place of the Son in heaven, in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, distinct from the place He takes in resurrection there for us.

There is the love of Christ which in honouring God reaches in obedience even unto death, and in divine compassion to the laying down of His life for us. But beyond this, there is the declaration to us of that blessedness which only He who "was in the beginning with God and was God" could declare. It is not circumscribed by the presentation of the happiness of the Father's house, as the object of hope and the home of the weary; but it leads us into the interior joy of that house as characterised by Him whose house it is. It is not creature-bless-

ing nor creature-joy that is the subject of the testimony of Him of whom the Spirit wrote, "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father;" but it is the characteristic joy of heaven, as the dwelling place of God—it is that which makes heaven heaven, and stamps its joy with the divine character of the fountain whence it flows.

"They that dwell in Thy house will be still praising Thee" (Ps. lxxxiv.), shows the blessed occupation of that house; but when we listen to the voice of Christ telling us what He hath *seen* and *heard*, it brings us into participation with the very springs of that divine goodness, from which flows this unceasing heavenly joy. And O let it be remembered that it is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of His *Son*, that is given in order to enter into the communion and the displayed glory which characterise the home whither we are being led.

But where is the heart to estimate this confidence of love? Where the affections so set free from earth and self, as to be able to enter into this divine and heavenly joy?

How much of heaven in its real character may we learn, by following the footsteps, and tracing the ways of that blessed One, who on earth was owned of heaven! And into what an atmosphere are we introduced as we hear Him, in Luke xv., or Matt.

xviii., teaching us the mind of heaven in contrast to the ways of man and the earthly mind! But what perfection is there that is not found in Him who was God manifest in the flesh, and who would form our souls now by making us acquainted with the character and ways, the thoughts and counsels of God, and by leading us into all that distinguishes the home of the divine love.



“HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM
HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH
UNTO THE CHURCHES.”

Revelation ii. 1-7.

It is good to be occupied with spiritual affections, or rather with the subjects which vivify them, with those things which are not seen, which God has revealed to us, and which are of the world to come. The Holy Spirit presents to us many of those things which we shall enjoy later, in full measure, but which are for our present enjoyment.

That which the Spirit says to the churches is for the peace and the joy of the children of God. The Spirit says, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches:” not merely what is said unto one church, but to all. This, therefore, concerns us individually, for it does not say,

“Those that have ears to hear,” but “*He* that hath an ear, &c.” According to His faithfulness, the Lord Jesus takes cognizance of the present state of the church. That which is in question here is not accomplished salvation, but the particular state in which the church is found, or even the state of such and such an individual, as we may judge from verse 2: “I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience,” &c. At the same time, Jesus is there revealed to us as judging the state of those to whom this is addressed. There are also particular promises fit to sustain the remnant of faithful ones, in the midst of the special circumstances by which their faith is tried. The promises which are presented here, differ from those which are made to the church in an absolute and general manner. They apply also to the church, and the church enjoys them. However, they have particularly as their object to sustain faith in the circumstances in which we may be found, whether as a remnant in the midst of the unfaithfulness of the mass of the professors, or as faithful in the midst of the trials which we are called to pass through. Now, for the conflict, we need discernment, in order to understand where the conflict is found; what is its main point. Faithfulness is found in contrast with the evil which the Lord re-

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veals, because we are on God's side in this world.

We need to understand that the interests of Christ are our own—that His battles are our battles ; and the more we lay hold of this idea, the stronger and happier we are. (Ex. xvii. 16.) Happily, in Jesus these things do not fail us. Although Jesus identifies Himself with the church, He nevertheless judges the state of the church.

Christ manifests Himself here as judge, but in love ; not as in the latter day for the wicked, but as a Priest who discerns all in order to remedy the evil.

You will find in Leviticus that, after the consecration of the priests, all the things as to which it was a question of being clean and unclean are presented together. It was they who were to know how to discern between the clean and the unclean. The priesthood had to discern everything. And it is also what belongs to the Christian, not as to one who fears the imputation of sin (although he has a responsibility), but because he has been anointed by God to distinguish between good and evil, according to the holiness of the service of God.

That is why Jesus takes to Himself this character of authority ; that is the general idea which He gives of Himself. "These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars

in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." (Ver. 1.)

We find in all the addresses to the churches these words, "I know thy works." He takes cognizance of all that is done. It is very comforting that God has put us in such a position; and we are responsible according to the grace of the position. This responsibility increases according to the measure of grace in which we are placed. A servant and a slave do that which the master demands; but the child enters more intimately into the interests of the family, and he is responsible according to the position in which he is placed. It is good that we too should consider ourselves under this point of view. An Israelite might have done things which a priest would not have dared to do; many things were required of the priest for the service of God, to which no other man among the people was bound; then he was to discern good from evil, according to his nearness to God, as the anointed of God. We ourselves, also, are priests. We have the knowledge of good and evil—a privilege acquired through sin at the beginning; so that this has been our ruin, but, at the same time, a thing which proceeded from Him who willed it thus—a thing good in itself, and which we possess now according to the intelligence of the Holy Spirit, in virtue of

the obedience of the second Adam. When Satan led away Adam to infringe the prohibition which God had made him, Satan added, "God doth know, that, in the day ye eat thereof"—of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—"then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The word adds, "The Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil."

Two things are always found, as in the garden of Eden, responsibility and life—the two trees. Adam acted in his responsibility, and failed as to it, before having life. This is why God must needs drive him out of Eden, because God did not permit that he should have life together with sin. There are the two great principles, responsibility of good and evil, and life: Christ alone has reconciled them. When the law was introduced, it presented responsibility, and not life. The law places man in responsibility as to his salvation; but instead of life, it pronounces condemnation and death. Christ, on the contrary, takes the responsibility on Himself, and becomes at the same time the source of life. Christ took upon Himself our responsibility before the judgment of God, and has placed us under a much higher responsibility—responsibility according to that life which He has given

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us. Consequently, He judges Christians, not to condemn them, in their every-day conduct. But treating them according to the holiness of this life, He judges their walk, that grace may always be given them, according to their need, and to maintain them in communion with the Father and with Himself. He intercedes at the same time for His own before God, not to obtain their justification, which He has perfectly accomplished, but to take them out of their difficulties and maintain them in the path of faith.

Jesus, therefore, takes notice of the state of the church and says, "I know thy works." It is not to condemn, but it is as being Priest, and thus having to manifest the new man according to all the grace which is given him, and we shall see how far this responsibility goes.

Verses 2, 3. "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." Here are many excellent things, and one might have thought that there was nothing but approbation; but it is not so. "Nevertheless I have

somewhat against thee." Christ cannot come down from the height of His love. He would have fruits according to the love which He has for us. A worldly person would say, Is it absolutely necessary that I should do that? Have I need of these things? Am I bound to do that, as a Christian? But the love of Christ cannot be content without seeing fruits. It is like a father who loves that his child should succeed, that he should bear fruits capable of rejoicing him, and in keeping with the love which he shews him. The child may be slothful or lazy, but the father devotes himself to him; if there is not a response to the care taken by that love, neither is there contentment on the part of the father. If there is not with the conscience of that love, the same ready response as at the beginning, there is not the sound which goes to the heart of Jesus. It is better not to play at all than to play false tones. One has abandoned one's first love, and there is not that love which responds to love. Jesus is not a hard Master; He only requires these things from us in love. He says, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." It is something which does not suit the ear of Christ, something which is not in tune: it is the first thing of which Christ takes notice—"thou hast left thy

first love." They had patience; they could not bear them which were evil; they had laboured for the name of Jesus, but—"they had left their first love." If love is wanting, something essential is wanting. The heart has begun to be occupied with itself. A wife may do for her husband all that she did before; work as much, be wanting in nothing as to her duties; but if the husband does not find in her that which satisfies the heart, all is wanting: the wife has ceased to be occupied with him in the same manner.

We love something, and if it is the affections of faith, Christ is the Object of them. As soon as he ceases to be the Object of our thoughts, the thing is seen; He at least perceives it. After being delivered, we are full of love, and we only see the light. We think that sin is dead within. In the measure that the heart is filled with other things, the springs of this love are weakened; and if we ask ourselves, Do you still think as much of your Saviour as when you received Him for the first time into your heart? We notice that we have left our first love. I can be occupied with good things; I may seek souls; but if I no longer think as much about Jesus—about what He is for me—all is marred. If I am before God, I am always little in my own eyes; I feel myself responsible to God, and I am nothing. I judge

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myself, there is love ; but if I get far from Him, I think of myself, and weakness increases. There is no longer the same discernment. There is no longer the same love. One is no longer at a height to view things as Christ views them; one is not at a height to shew grace. This is the leaving of one's first love, and of the patience of our hope. .

The apostle Paul, writing to the Thesalonians (chap. i 3), reminds them of "their work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ." In the church at Ephesus are found works, labour, and patience ; but they are no longer the work of faith, the labour of love, the patience of hope. The Lord says to them. "Thou hast abandoned thy first love." Each one of us can address the same question to himself, "Am I as much occupied *with* Christ? Have I not left my first love?" And, if we are in this state, cannot the Lord apply these words to us? "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

Verse 7. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life." It is not with us as with Adam, who had only a responsibility of obedience : our responsibility

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refers to a conflict with Satan; and the proof that we are the strongest is that we can conquer the power of Satan. We may fail, it is true. If we were in no wise in the conflict against Satan, it would be because we had not life; but, besides this conflict in principle against him, one must also conquer in the details.

The tree of life, which is here referred to, is no longer in man's paradise, but in God's. In Eden, the paradise of man, there were two trees. Satan succeeded in entering there, and all was marred; but God's paradise was arranged by Him and for Him, after all was lost, and that by a work of love and glory, which causes the other to be forgotten. The paradise of God is a work of grace, which is the consequence of what it is God's good pleasure to do when man has failed. The paradise of man was a test of what man is; that of God is the consequence of the fact that Christ has resisted and overcome all evil. As the other was the place where the responsibility of the first Adam was—responsibility as to which he failed—we are placed with the life of Christ in us, and put to the test in the midst of evil with that life, not as men, but as Christians. The world thinks to be put to the test as men, but they are mistaken; the Christian alone is put to the test, in order to manifest in the

world a life which is not of this world. Now let us see how Christ introduces us into the midst of all that.

The question is not, if I conduct myself well, I shall be accepted. No, it is not a question of that. The world thinks that it is a question of a conflict, destined to satisfy certain demands of God ; it is an error. For the Christian, the conflict is the exercise of the power of the Holy Spirit in him who has already eternal life, who obtains the victory over the world, of which Satan is the prince and the head. In order for us to enter into the conflict, it is necessary for Christ to take away all our sins ; for if any remained, it would be with God that we should have to do. The difficulty was found on that side, and it is the practical state of souls not set free ; but we must be without sin before God ; and being His in this world, and He being for us, we can enter into this conflict—where evil does not enter at all, where flesh cannot subsist—and there have the victory over Satan.



FRAGMENT—Faith in Christ as He *was* in His humiliation and resurrection, makes a man a Christian. Faith in Christ as He *is*, guides Christians in fellowship. And faith in Christ as He *shall be*, gives a hope that maketh not ashamed.

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A MEDITATION ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PASSOVER AND THE RED SEA.

It is well to distinguish, for our souls' profit, the difference between the Passover and the Red Sea.

In the Passover God appears as a Judge ; in the Red Sea He manifests Himself as a Deliverer, but up to this latter the people are still in Egypt.

In the former character God is satisfied through the blood that is before Him. That expiatory blood of redemption secures all sheltered by it infallibly from judgment. It bars the way to God as Judge, for He does not enter within, but seeing it, says, " When I see the blood I will pass over." Note well, it is not said, When *you* see it, but when *I* see it. Oftentimes the soul of an awakened person rests, not on its own righteousness but, on the way in which it sees the blood. Now, precious as it is to have the heart deeply impressed with it, this is not the ground of peace. Peace is founded on God's seeing and valuing it aright, for, Jesus " offered Himself without spot *to God*". God (who abhors and has been offended by sin and who alone has a true estimate of its horribleness) cannot fail to estimate at its full and perfect value the blood of Jesus, for it answered everything that was perfect in

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His being, and so He says, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). It may be said, But must I not have faith in its value? This is faith in its value, seeing that God looks at it as putting away sin; your value for it looks at it as a question of the measure of your feelings. Faith looks at God's thoughts, and His word gives them. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17).

But the blood, which kept the people from God's judgment, meant something far deeper and far more serious than even the Red Sea, though judgment was executed there too. The blood signified the moral judgment of God, and the full and entire satisfaction of all that was in His being. God, such as He was, in His justice, His holiness, and His truth, could not touch those who were sheltered by that precious blood. But let us remember that if "God is light," as He is (and what has been said above refers to Him in that aspect of His character), blessed be His name, "God is love" too, and "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10); and again "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ (the dearest Object of His own heart) died for us" (Rom. v. 8). If it was the blood

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of the Lamb that met all the requirements of God's character as Light—that Lamb was the gift of God's own heart, as being "Love." Nevertheless God, even in passing over is seen as Judge ; hence, so long as the soul is on this ground, its peace is uncertain though the ground of it be sure. Though truly converted, its way is still in Egypt, because God has still the character of Judge to it, and the power of the enemy is still there.

Now at the Red Sea God acts in power according to the purposes of His love ; consequently the enemy, who was closely pursuing His people, is destroyed without resource. The Passover delivered them from God's judgment, the Red Sea from their enemies.

As a moral type, the Red Sea is evidently the death and resurrection of Jesus, so far as the real effecting of the work goes in its own efficacy, as deliverance by redemption, and of His people as seen *in Him* ; God acting in it, to bring them, through death, out of sin and the flesh, giving absolute deliverance from them by death, into which Christ had gone, and consequently from all the power of the enemy. As to our standing and acceptance we are brought to God : this is our actual position in the world, which then becomes the wilderness on our way to glory. We are made partakers of it already through

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faith. Sheltered from the judgment of God by the blood, we are delivered, by His power which acts for us, from the power of Satan, the prince of this world. The blood keeping us from the judgment of God was the beginning. The power which has made us alive in Christ, who has gone down into death for us, has made us free from the whole power of Satan who followed us, and, as to conscience, from all his attacks and accusations. We have dooe with the flesh as our standing, and Satan's power, and, being brought to God, are in the world with Him.

The world, who will follow that way, is swallowed up in it. This is a solemn warning: for the worldlings, who call themselves Christians, do take the ground of judgment to come, and the need of righteousness, but not according to God. The true Christian goes through it in Christ, knowing himself otherwise lost and hopeless; the worldling in his own strength, and is swallowed up. Israel saw the Red Sea in its strength, and thought escape was hopeless: so an awakened conscience, death and judgment. But Christ has died and borne judgment for us, and we are secured and delivered by what we dreaded in itself. The worldling, seeing this, adopts the truth in his strength, as if there were no danger, and is lost in his false confidence.

THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF DIVINE LOVE.

1 John iv. 16.

This passage is one of much beauty and comfort to the earnest and lowly soul, for it presents to us God, thinking of us from our state of utter sinfulness on to judgment itself, and displays His love from beginning to end.

In general, this epistle presents us Divine life, that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested here below in the person of the Lord Jesus, communicated to others, that thing, as it is said, which is true in Him and in us.

The Gospel of John, besides the doctrine of the Comforter, presents to us God manifested in the Son, and life in Himself; the Epistle, life communicated to us, and that life known in its fruits of love to the brethren, and obedience or practical righteousness.

In the passage before us, love is especially the subject; and first, love as partaking of the nature of Him who is love. He that loveth is born of God and knows God; partakes of the nature and knows Him who is it, as partaker of it.

Possession of a nature, (and without possessing it is impossible,) makes us know

what that nature is, what the being is who has that nature. A mere animal does not know what a man is, his way of thinking, feeling; a man knows what a man is. What an angel is, save as the part of connection with God necessarily reveals some elements of his nature, he does not know. He that loves, knows God, for he is born of Him, being partaker of the divine nature: a blessed truth, the spring (righteousness being introduced), of eternal joy and infinite delight.

But when we come to the practice down here, we find difficulty in it. I love the brethren: what coldness after all, often self has come in, and I fail in love. I cannot trust my own heart a minute. Can I really say I am born of God and know God when I find so much in a treacherous heart that, after all, belies what I desire? I hope, I fear—there is no liberty of spirit. And it is so far well; but, therefore, the blessed Spirit gives us the knowledge of love from another side, and where it is perfect: in God Himself, His ways and dealings. In this the love of God is *manifested* towards us, in our case. But let me briefly analyse the passage, that we may seize its completeness and bearing. First, in verses 9, 10, God's love to the sinner; verse 12, the enjoyment of His love in the saint; and 17, perfected in the bold-

ness it gives us for the day of judgment.

First, His love to us as sinners. The eternal Object of God's delight, His only begotten Son, was sent in blessing to us, and with this two-fold object—first the positive blessing, what is given, that we might live through Him. We were dead in sin, God gives us a new life—a divine life. We no longer live through Adam, but through the Son of God. He that hath the Son hath life. Our existence towards God is divine life in Christ. God has thought of our ruin in love, and given us eternal life in His Son.

But we were guilty also, as responsible beings before Him. Here His love has met us. He has given His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. It is not law, nor duty, though it was there, but because it was there, ruin, failure and condemnation. But love is not in that we love God; (which is what we have to look for in our hearts if we seek the proof of life there, but then really under law), that law required, and rightly—but in that God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. It is not requiring what we ought to be from us, just as this is, but putting away, making a holy propitiation for our sins. We were dead in sins, and He gives us life. We were guilty, and He has given Him to make propitiation for our sins. He has met our

whole case, in both its aspects as sinners. Now the love of God is known, the heart free, the conscience purged, He can exhort us to love one another.

Now we have to do with a saint, and he has more privileges than being forgiven and having life. No man has seen God. How know Him, even if we have a life and nature which capacitates us thereto? know Him as an Object fully before our souls, and so known. Before the world this was in Christ personally present revealing Him (see John i. 18), and He was rejected. But how in us? If we love one another *God dwelleth in us*, and His love is perfected in us. Here is the saint's privilege. He enjoys the love of God, poured out in his own soul. God dwells in Him by His Spirit, and makes His presence known in infinite and enjoyed love, but as dwelling in the believer. It is not still that we love Him, but that His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us. It is in our hearts, but what is there is the love of God, known and enjoyed by His own presence. If God thus dwells in us—which we know, because He has given us of His Spirit, and sheds that love by His very presence abroad in our hearts—we may well say perfected in love, for what is more perfect than God in love, and what more perfect exercise and display

of it in *communication* to us than His dwelling in us Himself, who is it perfectly, and sheds it abroad in our hearts by His presence ; but even this looks out when the proof of it is to be given. We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. You cannot separate the enjoyment of God's love in us by His presence, from that in which it has been perfectly displayed in His own work to His own glory. And this portion of the Christian is not a special or extraordinary proof of progress. It is the Christian state. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in Him and He in God. For God, if He dwell in us, is infinite, and we dwell in Him, feel surrounded, and are, by His goodness, love, power, so that our abode and rest is in Him, and in the fulness of His love. All this may be realized in different degrees, but it belongs to every one that confesseth JESUS, the lowly Man, to be the Son of God. Of course, he does not speak of hypocrites.

But again the apostle carefully brings us back to look at the love as in God, as displayed towards us. We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. Whatever the enjoyment of the love and realization of it, it is always the love in Him, sovereign love, which He hath had to us.

We know God. God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in Him. Here, though the love is ever the same, what God is and what He displays to us, yet the order of thought is somewhat different. I am dwelling in love, the enjoyment and consciousness of this love, and its power in exercise towards others. I dwell then in God, for God is love ; dwelling in this he dwells in God, for this is what God is. His soul rests, reposes, and confides in Him, surrounded by His goodness, and so as that love is active in his soul, shed abroad and exercised there, God is in him, God being love, and deigning to dwell in us. First it was the fact, God dwells in the saint, and as infinite, the saint in Him. Now as to his enjoyment and privilege, he dwells in God ; and then as to the activity of love, God dwells in Him. The first fact is this state, and the double blessedness of God Himself, and the activity of His love. All this is simple. Rich and eternal and pure life now enjoyed in joying in God Himself, and exercised as it was in Jesus, in love to His, and every sinner around.

We now come to the *third* step in this blessed chain of love. Herein is love perfected with us, that we might have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world. Love has looked

on from the time of our sin, looked in and dwelt in us by the way, and now tells the tale of its perfectness for that day, when God's judgment calls all in question but the fruit of His love. But how should this meet the day of judgment? Here love is perfected with us, we are as Christ is, who is the Judge; what fear, then? Oh, how has love thought of us, from the state of sins and death right on to judgment, and given us to stand now, "*in this world*" as Christ Himself is before God. Who shall find fault in that! Shall Christ whom we are like, or God whose delight is in Him? We have boldness for the day of judgment. No place in which the Christian is so bold, when he knows his place in Christ. When we stand before His judgment seat we shall be perfectly like Himself; and as He is, so are we *in this world*. Many a sincere person, I mean sincere Christian, does not see this his place in Christ. He may say, I am a poor sinner, and the cross just suits me. Blessedly true. But change the phrase: I am a poor sinner, and the judgment seat just suits me! That will not do. Yet we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10). There we must be fit for the Judge. A dirty man is fit to be washed—a debtor for one who comes to pay his debts, but a righteous person for a judgment seat; and we

have here the measure of this : Christ, who sits to judge, is my righteousness. When I appear there, I shall appear in glory, shall be like Him, bear His image, having been *raised* in glory—my vile body fashioned like His glorious body. Here there is no room for fear. Grace has put the believer in Christ now, and through His work he is accepted in the Beloved; as He is so is the believer in this world. How can I fear if I am as Christ? Note, it is not as He *was*. He was without sin, knew no sin even when He was down here. If I say I have none, I deceive myself, and the truth is not in me. *But my place before God is in Christ, not in the flesh.* There is no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus. But as He *is*, now He has finished the work and by Himself purged our sins having by one offering perfected for ever those who are sanctified, through the offering of His body once for all, and now as He *is*, so *are* we in this world, accepted in the Beloved. I repeat, what room is there for fear? Is not this love, perfect, thoughtful love, that in the place of judgment, there we find perfection? Then, I know I am like the Judge, like the Lord in glory, like my Saviour. Gracious love that has thought of my sins, and spiritual death in them; blessed and blessing love, God's dwelling in me; and

perfected love, in that I am as Christ, God's own Son, so that where surely fear might be, fear is cast out. Love has made me know now what love has done, and while it makes me enjoy itself now, God dwells in me and I in Him, makes me look back and see it active when I was a dead sinner, a love that flows from itself out to me, so that I reckon on it, yea, learn its perfectness when I might fear, and find that love had counsels of infinite wonder, to make me as Christ the Son of God, a Man in glory, and righteousness of divine perfection, even the One before whose judgment seat I shall stand, like Him, His righteousness mine. Love has left nothing unthought of that could make me exalt God as infinite in grace, and enjoy His goodness in a righteousness which He has made mine. There is no fear in love. Where shall fear find a place, from my state of death in sins up to the judgment seat of Christ. He cannot love me too much, but He cannot love me more, and my heart is at rest.

And note here, though we pass through it, and it is very natural that we should, yet *hope* as to the judgment day is not the true feeling of a believer at all. We hope because we see goodness, and know there is such a thing as redemption; and we fear because we see that there is that in us which cannot stand before the judgment of God.

We vacillate, are ill at ease, and when the thought of judgment comes in, there is torment because there is fear. God would not have us so. He would not we should have torment. He would have us walk with Him happy, and in *confidence*. Fear is not confidence. But if we have to be judged, that is, our state decided according to our works in that day, (for we shall all stand before the judgment seat,) we shall certainly be condemned. "Enter not," says the heart that knows what sin, and what flesh is in God's sight—"enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight *shall no man living be justified*." But the believer has learned this as to himself before the judgment comes, and has fled for refuge to the hope set before him, and knows that redemption is as certain, as complete, and divine righteousness as satisfactory, if I may use so feeble a word, as his condemnation was certain. He does not mix up as his portion judgment *for* sin, and redemption *from* sin. He owns fully the one and his own deserved condemnation, and believes fully in the other. He does not destroy the force of both by mixing them together. Judgment according to what he is, would, he knows, have been certain condemnation. Divine righteousness, (and we are the righteousness of God in Christ,) is necessary.

and perfect acceptance. Grace has given it to him, has made it his. As He is, so are we *in this world*, for we have it by faith, we have boldness in the day of judgment, and there is no fear in love, our portion is perfected in this. *Raised in glory*, he is manifested before the judgment seat, but glorified before he is there, his vile body fashioned like Christ's glorious body, by that power which can subdue all things to itself. Knowing then as he is known, he looks back from that blessedness, bearing the image of the heavenly, on the countless ways of love, which has brought a poor feeble creature, justified through Christ the Lord, all the way along, that he might know himself, and the love which has led, thought of, sustained, borne with, lifted up, and brought there to enjoy and praise, made like the Lord, the love that has done it, and to dwell in a holiness where no evil can enter, and which is only joy, and find JESUS the Lord of Glory, the First-born among many brethren. We love Him because He first loved us. But oh, how imperfect are all our thoughts of that day. Our part is to dwell in, and think of Christ, to serve Him with an undivided heart here.

O Lord, Thy love's unbounded—
 So sweet, so full, so free—
 My soul is all transported,
 Whene'er I think of Thee!

36

Yet, Lord, alas ! what weakness
Within myself I find,
No infant's changing pleasure
Is like my wandering mind.

And yet Thy love's unchanging.
And doth recall my heart
To joy in all its brightness,
The peace its beams impart.

Yet sure, if in Thy presence,
My soul still constant were,
Mine eye would, more familiar, -
Its brighter glories bear.

And thus Thy deep perfections
Much better should I know,
And with adoring fervour
In this Thy nature grow.

Still sweet 'tis to discover,
If clouds have dimm'd my sight,
When pass'd, Eternal Lover.
Towards me, as e'er, Thou'rt bright.

O guard my soul then, Jesus,
Abiding still with Thee,
And if I wander, teach me,
Soon back to Thee to flee.

That all Thy gracious favour
May to my soul be known ;
And versed in this Thy goodness,
My hopes Thyself shall crown.

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PSALM XLVI., AND PRACTICAL RE-  
FLECTIONS THEREON.

GOD is our refuge and strength, a very  
present help in trouble.

Therefore will not we fear, though the  
earth be removed, and though the moun-  
tains be carried into the midst of the sea ;

Though the waters thereof roar and be  
troubled, though the mountains shake with  
the swellings thereof. Selah.



There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of GOD, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.

GOD is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: GOD shall help her, and that right early.

The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

JEHOVAH of hosts is with us; the GOD of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Come, behold the works of JEHOVAH, what desolations He hath made in the earth.

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire.

Be still, and know that *I* am GOD! I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

JEHOVAH of hosts is with us; the GOD of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Psalm xlvii., gives us one most simple truth, but a most solemn and weighty one—one much needed by Christians in the heavings of this world, and in the tendency to seek relief by human effort. “Be still, and know that *I* am GOD!” That is the exhortation. The encouragement is this: “GOD is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” But if GOD takes this character, the waters may rage and be troubled, and the mountains shake with their swelling; we can be still. For no matter what power

or swelling there is, if GOD be there, our refuge. Only we must wait, and wait till He comes in: and here it is faith is tried. Hence, "and know that I am GOD." This may be by the exercise of patience, or the resisting the tendency to human effort. But the truth contained in the Psalm is a most blessed and precious encouragement, which no one trouble can touch; for trouble is at the utmost from the creature, and GOD is GOD. But it implies that nothing else is a refuge, and this is perfect reliance, and implies that all else may be against us.

The great point is, that it is GOD as such who is our refuge and strength. He does not say, "JEHOVAH": further on in the Psalm, where *relationship is in question*, He does. Here the point is, that it is GOD in His nature contrasted with man—indeed with every power; for, "If GOD be for us, who can be against us?" Faith gets hold of this. He is a refuge, where we may resort for safety; and He is strength, so that no adverse power can reach or succeed against us. It supposes that trouble, yea, insolent swellings of power, are there; but He is a very present help. This secures fully; but the help is not always a present apparent one. But GOD *Himself* is looked to; and the fact that we are left wholly to Him, and that no other resource is there, makes all

the power of evil immaterial to us ; for it is nothing against GOD. "What confidence is this?" said the king of Assyria to Hezekiah (Is. xxxvi. 4). Other help we might calculate and compare the value of. This only requires faith : "Ye believe in GOD."

Against this help all effort is unavailing ; only we must wait for it. Human efforts shut this help out. It is another kind of resource which is not faith. GOD may command activity, and faith acts confidently. But this is never man's way ; and when the matter is in God's hands, when there is not a duty, then our part is to be still, and we shall soon know that He is GOD. Human effort only spoils all. No human planning is ever right. In His own time and way, GOD will come in. There are duties. When there are, do them : but when the power of evil against us is there, and there is not a duty, the path is to be still. Human efforts prove want of faith and restlessness, and planning is mere flesh. Of course integrity is needed to trust GOD, because it is GOD's holy nature which is trusted. This absolute trust is called for when the power of evil is rampant, and endurance till deliverance is the path of the saint. There is another thought here. GOD (the Most High over all the earth) has a dwelling-place, where the rivers of His grace refresh : then the city of

GOD, Zion and the temple ; now the church. There the streams of refreshment run, and He will preserve her (not now as Zion, the city of GOD's solemnities, but in a better way), and there He enters into the proper character of His own relationship. And there He gives peace, having destroyed all the power of the enemy. Then will he who has waited know who is GOD—we in yet brighter and holier scenes.



FRAGMENT.—How beautifully in John iv., the Lord's perfection, in submission to His Father's will, opens out into the large sphere of blessing into which that submission introduced Him. He had been rejected in Judæa (a sore trial and sorrow to Him) as to the beloved people, and had taken His way where "He must needs go," "wearied with the journey," and sat, as He was, on the well. *Here grace flows forth*—such was the effect, in His perfect love, and rejection of promises in His person ; and then His "meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him." This opens, thereon, out for His heart into fields "already white for harvest." And it was more than Jewish promise—it broke forth into life eternal, and, in point of fact, does take up all that was of God in the previous ways of His grace—reaped what had been sown. We have other instances of this, as Matt. xi. *Oh, for littleness and lowliness of heart.* "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart."

## IN THE HOLIEST.

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The vail's rent! God bids me enter  
By the new and living way—  
Not in trembling hope I venture,  
Boldly, I His call obey—  
There with Him, my God, I meet  
God upon the Mercy-seat,

In the robes of spotless whiteness,  
With the blood of priceless worth,  
He has gone into that brightness,  
Christ rejected from the earth—  
Christ accepted there on high,  
And in Him do I draw nigh.

Oh, the welcome I have found there,  
God in all His love made known!  
Oh, the glory that surrounds there  
Those accepted in His Son!  
Who can tell the depths of bliss,  
Spoken by the Father's kiss!

All His joy told out unhindered,  
Nought but Christ His eye can see,  
Christ into His joy has entered,  
And in Christ He welcomes me.  
Would I know how dear to God?  
Priceless, as Christ's precious blood.

"There," He saith, "and thus I meet thee,  
On the Mercy-seat above;  
There I commune with thee, greet thee,  
Tell thee all thy Father's love;  
There thy blest reward shall be,  
All that Jesus is to me."

42

One with Him, O Lord, before Thee,  
 There I live, and yet not I,  
 Christ it is who there adores Thee,  
 Who more dear, or who more nigh?  
 All the Father's heart mine own—  
 Mine—and yet His Son's alone.  
 Place of glory, place of blessing,  
 Place where God His heart displays,  
 All in Thee, O Christ, possessing,  
 Thine the voice that leads our praise,  
 Thine the new eternal song,  
 Through the ages borne along.  
 As within His Temple olden,  
 Was there seen no costly stone; \*  
 Nought but cedar, carved and golden,  
 Nought but Christ, and Christ alone;  
 So the stones so dearly bought,  
 God in heaven beholds them not.  
 All the worth I have before Him  
 Is the value of the blood;  
 I present, when I adore Him,  
 Christ the first-fruits unto God.  
 Him with joy doth God behold,  
 Thus is my acceptance told.



### THE RENDING OF THE VAIL.

*“Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the Ghost. And, behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” (Matt. xxvii. 50, 51.)*

The rending of the vail was an event of the highest possible importance; having

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\* 1 Kings vi. 18.

also the most obvious, and especially characteristic, meaning. Under the Jewish system, God had conferred benefits, given laws, sanctioned them by judgments; but man had been kept at a distance. God had never revealed Himself. He dwelt "in the thick darkness" (1 Kings viii. 12; 2 Chron. vi. 1); and if He condescended to dwell amongst men, He was within the veil, where none could approach—in a word, unseen. He governed from His throne; but direct approach was forbidden. The thick darkness and the barrier of Sinai, or the veil of an unlighted holy of holies, secluded Him from man. Had He shown Himself in light to a sinful world, it must have been utter condemnation. Darkness had no communion with light (see 2 Cor. vi. 14). Unseen, He might in patient grace bear much which man's ignorance committed, and govern in mercy. But in due time, when man had been fully proved in all possible ways—without law, under law, under promise, prophecy, government, and even grace in the mission of God's own Son—and proved utterly bad, the time was come for God to show Himself in grace, such as He really was. Had He done so before, man could not have been properly put to the test. This he now has been; and then in infinite grace, when we were yet without strength, in due time

Christ dies for the ungodly. Now if God came forth merely as light or holiness when man was wholly wicked and his will antagonistic, He must, in the nature of things, have driven man out of His presence, unless holiness means allowing sin, whereas it means not allowing it. Yet God must be holy (that is, He cannot allow sin when He deals with it, or He would be morally like it, which would be a blasphemous denial of Him). How, then, does He act? In the death of Christ He manifests His holiness in the perfect taking away of sin, that His perfect love may flow out, never so shown to men as in this act. Now, God can fully reveal *Himself* without a veil. His holiness is perfect blessing, because shining out in absolute love, sin being put away. As a sign of this wonderful all-changing change, the veil which before hid Him is rent in twain from the top to the bottom, signifying Christ's death, according to the whole figurative arrangement employed to typify these things. And so the New Testament uses this event: "Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a ['the'] new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say his flesh . . . let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," etc. Again: "Into the second [that



within the vail] went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood . . . . the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure," etc. (Heb. x. 19-02; ix. 7-9).

Now here we have the vail and its accompaniments declared to have precisely this force in the mind of the Holy Ghost. According to the whole system of Scripture, and that in its deepest moral elements, whether of man's relationship with God, or in reference to the peculiar position of Israel, which we know historically was then closing in, the rending of the vail had the most clear and weighty significance. Nothing could have had so much. It was the central expression of the whole change of the divine way of dealing with man, and of man's relationship with God by the cross. The vail was a part, and a central part, of the system then established of God--nothing could have such a distinct signification as its rending. It signified, as has been said, the change of the whole relationship of God and man. In referring to a vail and its rending, one must consider the meaning of its being there, to know the importance of its being rent. God's being concealed or revealed is not an unimportant idea; and the rending,

at Christ's death, of the vail which concealed His throne and glory, is not difficult to understand. It is a figure, of course, as all those parts of the tabernacle or temple were, but a figure of the most intelligible simplicity, and pregnant with meaning.



### THOUGHTS ON MATTHEW XI. 25-30.

The Lord, though deeply and thoroughly sensible of Israel's rejection of Him, bows completely to the will and wisdom of God in it. (See Isaiah xlix.) "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." In this His blest supremacy was fully shown. "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." The knowledge of God makes all necessarily good to us, for it comes from Him. It may be very contrary to our nature. To Jesus, men's rejection of His message was, of course, painful. It threw Him on the sovereignty of God His Father, whom He knew, in the fact that His Father had hid these things from the sages of the world and revealed them to the despised and weak. He acknowledged the Father in the thing done, and in its suitableness to the whole order of God's dealings in such a world. That, of

course, was all that the Son of God, or we taught of the Spirit, could desire ; but it was in circumstances which required perfect submission of heart and way.

But this perfect submission of the Son gave rest and brought His person out to light. If He was thrown entirely on the Father, it was because He was Son, and because of His entire rejection in that character, in which, while perfect and showing who He was, He had not taken His glory and would have taken but the earthly dominion. The secret was that this was but "a light thing." *All things* were delivered to Him of His Father, and by reason of the very glory of His person, being Son of God, no man knew the Son but the Father. His service now was to reveal the Father in the prerogative of grace. For none knew the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. "Come unto me," says this only patient Witness of love—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Here I am, the rejected One, to whom in sure title all things are delivered of my Father ; but One whose heart has bowed in all long-suffering of love, who has learnt submission, who has felt what it is to be pained and scorned and outwardly to find no refuge but submission. Come to me. Men may have

rejected me, but I am the Son, and none knows the Father but as I reveal Him. Whosoever is burdened and passes not on with this haughty world, whosoever labours and is heavy-laden, here I exercise my love. "Come to me and I will give you rest." I have learnt now to speak a word in season to him that is weary. (Compare Isaiah i., and the end of Rom. viii., with its full extent of blessing to us).

It was the Lord's submission under such circumstances, which brought the sense to His soul, and the revelation to others, of a much better portion than that of Messiah according to the law and the prophets. Into this, so to speak, He was rejected; and blessed be God for it. He had manifested patient gracious love to the nation, but they repented not even where His mighty works were done. The dispensation, although Messiah came in person, ended in failure. "Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain." He had stretched out His hands to a rebellious and gainsaying people. When He came, there was no man. For His love He had hatred. Reproach broke His heart. His hopes for the people, the title that He had, the title of His own love, were cast aside. Still there were babes who saw what was hidden from the great. "So it seemed

good in thy sight," was the hinge of the Lord's comfort. This was enough. But what follows on this rejection? "All things are delivered unto me of my Father;" a wider, fuller, and more real glory. Yet high as He is, He bids all come, and declares He will give them rest—the rest of the revealed Father's love.

There is none else to come to. All have proved faithless. Come to me! Who could say this but the Son of God? Who could give rest to all that come but the Son, Jehovah Himself? But One will give rest freely and bountifully, the meek and lowly Son of God. He gives rest supreme, as One who knew what peace was in trouble as none ever did. He speaks the secret of it to others. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It is not now "I will give." That He could do as Jehovah and God the Lord; that He would do. But the word here is, "ye shall find." I have learnt the way. ("Lo! I come to do thy will, O God.") It is found in the path which Jesus has trodden. He alone trod it or could tread it perfectly in this world. And yet it is not violent or laborious. In one sense it is easy, as the Lord says. Submit! Say, "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." Such is His yoke, and

thus we learn of Him, who ascribed all to the Father, not to the circumstances. Hence He gave thanks to the Father always for all things, as we may and ought to do in His name. "It seemed good in thy sight." That was enough. It was perfect submission, and the Father beamed out in it. Its value hangs on the perfect knowledge of Sonship. The whole is most blessed and to be learnt only in Christ. The infiniteness of the Son's divinity was kept up, in His humanity and therefore apparent humiliation and present inferiority, by His absolute inscrutability therein thus specially and signally maintained; while His oneness with the Father was made known in His competency to reveal, and supremacy of will in revealing, the Father. Both held their place most beautifully, maintaining the person in the glory of communion with the Father, and the inscrutability of God thus manifested while the Father was revealed. How wise, perfect, singularly divine is Scripture! There is nothing like it. No wit of man could have framed such a sentence as that.



FRAGMENT--The human mind cannot see the glory of Christ in having come off the throne of God to the cross: but the believer, having received "the mind of Christ," can see something of it; and he finds that according to the measure in which he can enter into the humiliation of Christ, in that same measure he sees the beauty of it.

## GOING ON WITH GOD HIMSELF, AND NOT LEANING ON THE INSTRU- MENT USED IN OUR BLESSING.

*Philippians ii. 12-16.*

It is ever profitable to lead the minds of the saints to the Scriptures themselves for instruction, so that every truth should have their direct authority. We find ourselves happy in reading the word, when we are able to catch the leading thought of any part of it, so as to carry it along with us. We hardly know how much we are all suffering from the traditionary use even of the Scriptures themselves. There can be little doubt but that the quotation of isolated texts at first arose from subjection to the Scriptures as authoritative, even as we find the apostles themselves, in their writings, elucidating the principles they were unfolding, by an appeal to the Scriptures of the Old Testament in the briefest manner possible. But this appeal was never intended by them, to set aside the legitimate meaning of the words so quoted in the connection in which they stand. Now there are several current texts quoted, either in support of favourite dogmas or used so carelessly as hardly to convey any meaning at all, which when taken in their context have

great force. Surely we cannot but detect the wiles of the enemy in this, who knows truth to be our only power against him; and if he can vitiate it, he gains great advantage over us.

The text—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," is one often used to prove man to be a co-worker with God in his salvation, and to nullify the truth that salvation is all of grace and of God. It is asserted from these words, that those who have believed on Christ have after all to fear and tremble, lest He should leave them, or they should lose Him, statements entirely subversive of the peace of the gospel. A single glance at the context, at once shows that this is wretched sophistry. It is not addressed to us as an isolated precept, but most remarkably connected with what goes before and what follows it. The sentence begins, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation, etc." The word "wherefore" throws us back farther, in order to trace the mind of the Spirit in the apostle, and there is evidently a connection between "my presence" and "my absence," and "work out your own salvation." Then if we look to what follows, we have the reason for the fear



and trembling; not lest God should cast them off, but "for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." And then follows some special application, and that the great end they ought to keep in view was to manifest the relationship between God and themselves, and in very deed to show forth that they were sons of God, in the eyes of men, by their blamelessness and harmlessness.

But let us, for a little, advert to the general scope of this epistle. Philippi was endeared to the apostle by many solemn recollections. It was the first European city he visited, after being forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach in Asia. His visit was signalized by the conversion of Lydia, his hardships, and the remarkable conversion of the jailer. Paul was now in prison, the Philippians were left to other care; blessed indeed of its kind, but of a lower order than that which was apostolic. This however had its advantage—it should throw them more immediately on God; and this was what the apostle desired to do. There might have been an undue leaning even on himself, so as to prevent their souls from immediately resting on God. We so often put the channels of blessing in the place of the fountain, that God in His wisdom deprives us of the channels, that we may come at once to the

Fountain-Head. Yes, poor wretched creatures of sense, we desire to have something visible and tangible, and thus keep away our souls from happy dependence on God.

We find the apostle led to thanksgiving on their account, for their fellowship in the gospel from the first day even until now. And his confidence for their continuance, was not his own apostolic authority nor even in the present care of their bishops, valuable as both were, but in God. They might have looked to Paul as having begun the good work in them, but Paul looked higher. He knew, unless God had gone out before him, his ministry would have been in vain. Its fruits might have lasted for a little moment and then withered. He was confident of this very thing, that He which had begun the good work in them, would perform it until the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the point to bring their souls to, that it was God's work and not Paul's, and therefore not dependent on his personal presence. If they were looking to Paul, there would be no steadfastness in them in the time of trial. Now that this was the leading thought of the Spirit in this epistle, will be more apparent by noticing another portion of the first chapter. The apostle knew full well the nourishing and cherishing love of the Lord Jesus, in

providing for the edifying of His body by means of suitable ministry, until we all come together unto a perfect man. He therefore places ministry in the light of a real blessing, when used as the means of Christ's own providing and not put in the place of Christ Himself. The higher the blessing, the greater has been our power of corrupting it. After speaking of his own desire to depart, and be with Christ, he turns himself to their condition and says, "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: *that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs,* that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

He longed to serve them, he greatly desired to see holy progress among them, but he did not desire that such progress should be the effect of *personal influence*, but of the consciousness of God's having begun and still continuing the work in them. There might have been order, or even energy of

service, produced by the presence or authority of the apostle; but the apostle knew how far more solid that would be which was the result of grace working in them, and therefore he seeks to establish their souls in it, showing them the mind of Christ as that which it was their privilege to have to act on. And it is on this he grounds his exhortation, "Wherefore, my beloved," in chap. ii. 12. He first seeks to associate their souls with Christ: "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy." The apostle uses no personal influence: he leads their thoughts to their permanent blessings in Christ, which did not at all depend on circumstances. Their consolation in Christ did not depend on the apostle's presence; the very way of putting this with an *if*, showed that he fully reckoned on their readily acknowledging that there was consolation in Christ. His desire for their being like-minded he knew would only be attained by their having the mind of Christ. There might be, and necessarily would be, much personal attachment to Paul, but they might have the mind of Paul and be outwardly kept together thus by unity of doctrine, but Paul desired that their like-mindedness should be the result of living grace.

And when he had set before them the mind which was in Christ Jesus, to call out the grace of Christ which was in them, then it was that he addresses them in the passage before us:—Wherefore, my beloved, as there is always consolation in Christ—always fellowship of the Spirit, as these essential blessings do not depend on ministry of any kind, but on oneness with Christ, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His own good pleasure. It is man's way always to give the glory to the instrument, it is of the Spirit to lead away from the instrument to God Himself. And what true blessedness it is to realize the simple truth, that "all things are of God." He may use a hundred channels of blessing, because He delights to make others share in His own blessedness—that of communicating blessing to others. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And for this reason God puts us, who are properly only receivers, into the place of givers. But He has not left the real and essential blessedness of His saints to any uncertain channel of blessing. He may even in judgment remove all these channels, still He remains Himself to work in them, both to will and to do. It was indeed a most happy thing, that the obedience of the

Philippians had been more marked in the absence of the apostle than even in his presence. This had not been the case in the churches of Galatia. The personal presence of the apostle had been a healthful check on the entrance of error there. But when he had gone from them, they were not so cast upon God as to be able to know the value of truth, so as really or zealously to contend for it. "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected *always* in a good thing, and not only *when I am present with you*" (Gal. iv. 16-18).

This helps us much to estimate the healthy state of the church at Philippi: the presence of the apostle there, had helped them to make everything a question of obedience to God; at Galatia they had been content to walk before the apostle. His absence had a very different effect on the two churches. In the one instance, they became careless about the truth; in the other, more entirely cast upon God, so that their obedience increased. There is a double action as it were, destructive of the sense of individual responsibility; the one arises from the teacher setting himself between the soul and God, and the other from the much greater facility

there is in those taught to walk unto well-pleasing before men, rather than before God. How important therefore the words—"your own salvation." The sense of it leads the soul immediately to God, and keeps it in a healthy state of dependence on Him. It leads the soul to a sense of actual power—"God worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure, therefore do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless." Blessed dependence indeed, which leads the soul into consciousness of divine power for action. It does not measure the difficulties then by its own, but by God's strength. And it only presumes to act on the warrant of acceptance, yea that the very action is intended to show it forth, that ye may be (not to make to be surely, but to show that we are) the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, holding forth the word of life.

There is one other remark in connection with this, and that is that the apostle showed them that his service among them had no reference to himself personally. If he had confidence that God, who had begun the good work in them, would continue it until the day of Jesus Christ—after Paul's ministry had long been ended—he looked also to his own ministry in reference to that

day—"that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." It was not that they might walk before him, but that they might walk with God. It was for this that the apostle laboured, and he would keep their eye steadily set where his own was set, on the day of Christ—the day of discovery—the day which would prove every man's work what sort it is. May the Lord deepen in the saints the sense that God worketh in them, that they may act under a more solemn sense of their individual responsibility to Him. Amen.



### FRAGMENT.

"The path narrows as we near the goal."  
Every prop must fall but one.

"Thy rod and *thy staff*."—Jacob crossed the Jordan with it, and it is beautiful to see him close the scene in worship—"leaning on the top of his staff." May it be ours, too, so to close this earthly pilgrimage, if we are called to die, or patient hold it till the Lord Himself call us hence away—to be "for ever with the Lord."

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."



## A GLANCE AT THE CHURCH OF GOD: ITS PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

The word of God presents to us a Church formed on earth by the power of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven when the Son of God sat down there in glory, having accomplished the work of redemption. This Church is one with its Head; it is the body whereof Christ, ascended on high and seated at the right hand of God, is the Head. (Eph. i. 20-23; ii. 14-22; iii. 5, 6; iv. 4-16; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13; John vii. 39; xi. 52)

This precious redemption gave occasion to the establishment of Man in this glory in heaven, to the manifestation of this glory such as it is in Jesus, and to the participation of poor sinners in the same glory. Ephes. ii., is a full development of the doctrine, connecting it with the great principles of eternal truth, the Jew being a sinner and child of wrath as well as the Gentile; and both, previously near or afar off, as it might be as to earthly administration, were brought nigh in the true sense, and made one new man in one body, *both* being reconciled to God in one body by the cross. That is, not that Gentiles were brought into a company of Jews, but that Jews and Gentiles were alike brought out of the position they were

previously in, \* into a new body in Christ, where there was neither Jew nor Greek.

In the name of Him who has accomplished the redemption and is seated in the glory, the Spirit, come down as Witness of these things, has called believing sinners to come out from the world which had rejected Him, and to enjoy the boundless grace which, according to the counsels of God, has thus called and has washed them in the blood of Him whom the world has crucified. This same Spirit who, by the means of those whom God chose, had thus called sinners and communicated life to them, has also united them in one body, whose Head is the glorified Christ, and of which the Spirit Himself is the bond with Christ, and in which He serves as the bond between the members one with another. But this is a living and powerful bond, and it acts by a divine operation in the members.

The Church, then, is a body subsisting in unity here below, formed by the power of God, who gathers His children in union with Christ its Head; a body which derives its existence and unity from the work and presence of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven as the consequence of the

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\* In the account of Paul's conversion, Acts xxvi. 17, "delivering thee from," should be, "taking thee out from" (*exairoumenos se ek*).

ascension of Jesus, the Son of God, and of His session at the right hand of the Father, after having accomplished redemption.

United by the Spirit (as the body to the head) to Jesus seated at God's right hand, the Church will be manifested without doubt in its totality when Christ is displayed in glory ; but meanwhile, inasmuch as it is formed by the presence of the Holy Ghost *come down from heaven*, it is essentially viewed in God's word as subsisting in its unity on earth. It is the habitation of God through the Spirit, characteristically heavenly in its relations, but having an earthly pilgrimage as regards the scene where it is found at present, and where it should manifest the nature of Christ's glory, as His epistle of commendation to the world, for it represents Him and takes His place. It is the Bride of Christ in its privileges and calling. It is presented as a chaste virgin to Christ for the day of the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Evidently, this last thought will have its accomplishment in the resurrection ; but what characterizes the Church, as quickened according to the power which has raised Christ from the dead and set Him at God's right hand, is the realizing and display of the glory of its Head by the power of the Holy Spirit, before Jesus, its Head, is revealed in person.

What is described in Ephesians and defined as the Church, is a state of things impossible to exist before the death and resurrection of Christ as its basis, and the presence of the Holy Ghost as its formative and maintaining power. Any definition we could give of it, according to Ephesians, supposes these two things. The Spirit of God, there, treats Jews and Gentiles as alike children of wrath, speaks of the middle wall of partition as broken down by the cross of Jesus, the actual exaltation of Jesus above all principality and power, and believers raised and exalted with Him, and both Jew and Gentile reconciled in one new man, in one body by the cross, and builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit; so that there is one body and one Spirit. It is declared, consequently, that "*now* unto principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." Moreover, while heavenly, by its union with its Head as *the heavenly ascended Man*, it exists now upon earth, and increases with the increase of God by that which every joint supplieth. It is where, as we learn in the Galatians, there is neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Christ Jesus. The Holy Ghost, come down from heaven, unites it to its glorified Head there, and thus it exists on earth, while it is heaven

ly, belonging to, and witnessing the character of, that place where it will be displayed in glory, and where its Head, whence it derives its being and power by the Holy Ghost, actually is.

There are two great truths dependent on this doctrine : the Church united to Christ in glory accomplished hereafter ; and meanwhile, as far as existing or developed on earth, the habitation of God through the Spirit. This is its calling, of which it is to walk worthy ; a calling clearly impossible in its very nature, till the descent of the Holy Ghost made it such a habitation.

That the saints will all be gathered into everlasting blessedness as partaking of Christ as their life, and redeemed by His blood, according to the counsels of God, and conformed to the image of His Son, is owned. They are all redeemed by blood, and all quickened by divine life. But the doctrine insisted on is this : that Christ, having broken down the middle wall of partition by His death, and ascended up on high, and sat down on the right hand of God, and thus presented the full efficacy of His work in the presence of God, the Holy Ghost has come down and united together believers in one body, thus united to Christ as one body ; which body is in Scripture designated the Church, or Assembly of God, and is His

habitation through the Spirit. In this, as founded on the risen and exalted Saviour, and united to Him, as seen on high, by the Holy Ghost, there is neither Jew nor Greek. Christ, so exalted, is entirely above these distinctions; Jew or Greek are alike brought nigh, as having been children of wrath, by the blood of that cross by which the middle wall of partition has been broken down. Hitherto God had saved souls. At Pentecost, He gathered His children into the Assembly on earth; He added daily to *the Church* such as should be saved. It is no longer salvation merely, nor even the kingdom. God begins to form His Church here below. (Acts ii.)

To make the Church a company of believing Jews, with Gentiles added to them, and *Abraham's seed* their proper definition, entirely shuts out this divine teaching; because the position given to the Church in Ephesians entirely precludes their being looked at as Jews; and the character of "Abraham's seed" comes in merely to show they are true heirs of promise, because they are Christ's, who is the Seed of Abraham and Heir of the promises. But, most clearly, this is altogether the lower ground on which to speak of Christ, in comparison with His glorious exaltation at the right hand of God, on which the Church as such is founded. Indeed, the being Abraham's seed is only a

*consequence* to us of our being in the Church. This is plainly shown from Gal. iii., where the apostle presses that Christ is the only Seed of Abraham, "and to thy seed, which is Christ." *His*, therefore, are the promises. If, therefore, we be Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed. That is, Christ having taken up alone in His own person all the promises, we, if united to Him, come into the inheritance of them. We are Abraham's seed, because we belong to the Church; that is, are united to Christ as our Head. But the union of the Church with Christ is much *more* than this.

No one can read the Ephesians attentively without seeing that the Church, as one body existing on earth, though heavenly in privilege and character, takes its place consequent on the work of the cross, the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God, and the coming down of the Holy Ghost. Hence to give any definition of the Church, which implies its existence (other than in the counsels of God), which speaks of its existence on earth (e. g. during the life of Christ on earth, or previous to His exaltation and the descent of the Holy Ghost) denies its nature and sets aside its character. If this doctrine of the word be rejected, the saints are deprived of their proper and blessed privileges, and the view of their

present condition, as compared with their calling, will be equally enfeebled and set aside. Abraham's seed we are individually, whatever the condition of the Church; and believing Jews or added Gentiles, whether we walk in unity or have the power of the Spirit or not.

Those who compose the Church have other relationships beside. They are children of Abraham. They are the house of God over which Christ, as Son, is Chief (Heb. iii. 6). But these latter characters do not weaken what has been stated: much less do they annul it.

The Church is the nearest circle to the only true centre, Christ Himself. It is His body, His bride. This truth is lost now to the greater part of Christians, and their want of faith has a sad consequence. They take up relations belonging it is true to those composing the Church, but inferior to those of the Church itself, and out of them form a system which they oppose to the most precious of all the Church's relations with God. It is true that we are children of Abraham; but why set us on this level in order to deny the position of Christ's Bride? The Gentiles are grafted into the olive tree, in place of the broken Jewish branches; \* but why use this,

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\* This was the order of the administration of



to reduce us to the level of the blessings and

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promises on earth, and not the calling of the Church, according to the mystery hidden from ages and generations, though the Church came into this administration of the promises in the character of *Gentiles*, in contrast with Jews in a special way. This is evident to any spiritual mind on considering the statement; but that it is so—that it is not the doctrine of the Church which is considered in Rom. xi.—is quite clear from the consideration of the following points. (By the Church I mean now, the heavenly body united to Christ on high, and manifested on earth by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.)—First, the Jews were natural branches, and the olive tree was their own olive tree. This clearly was not the Church: no one was naturally in it. Even the unbelieving ones were in the olive tree and had to be broken off, so that they never formed part of the Church gathered by faith, though they had ostensibly of the olive tree. Now, unbelieving Jews formed, in no sense or way, a part of the Church; but they did of the olive tree; yet it was of that olive tree that the good branches continued a part. Nor further, if they were living members of the Church of God, could they be broken off. Nor are Gentiles grafted into the Church in place of Jews, in the account we have of the Church in Ephesians: both are brought together into one new man. Next, the Gentiles, looked at as members of this body, could not be cut off: and still more would it be impossible to say that the Jewish branches, broken off through unbelief, could be grafted in again. Considered as the earthly administration of promises, nothing is more simple. The Jews, as a nation, had been the depositaries of them. Then the unbelievers were broken off, and the election continued in them in the clearer and better apprehensions. Gentiles became, at the same time, the depositaries of these promises in their administration here below. This system, being unfaithful, would be cut off; and the Jews will be received again, to be the depositaries of them in yet another condition, but which, note, will not then be the Church either. Proofs might be multiplied from the chapter; but these must suffice for any spiritual mind.

principles of the Old Testament? and this to avoid the responsibility of the position God has set us in, and so to get rid of the necessity of confessing our failure? Again, it is true that, in a general sense, we are God's house, a house in which are vessels to dishonour; and this truth is employed to justify a state of things which lays aside all that can appeal to the affections and heart of a bride. Let Christians weigh it!

Thence the putting off Christ's return to epochs connected with the judgment He will execute on an unfaithful house, and on a rebellious world. Thence, too, the loss of the desire of His coming—a desire special to the Bride, and inspired by the Spirit who dwells in her and animates her.

1 Corinthians xii., describes the Church, wherein gifts were exercised; describes it as one body on earth. So Ephesians i.-iv.; Colossians i., ii. Paul wrote to Timothy that he might know how he should behave in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. iii. 14, 15). There was then one Church, the pillar and ground of the truth, a body manifested on earth, a Bride who longed for the coming of the Bridegroom to complete her happiness; who meanwhile sought to glorify the Bridegroom, manifesting, by the Spirit's power in her, the glory

in which the Head was at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. If Jesus was in heaven invisible to the eyes of the flesh, His Bride was visible on earth for the purpose of manifesting the glory of Christ; she was on earth the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men. (2 Cor. iii.)

That God secures to the Church, viewed in His eternal counsels of grace, an indefeasible portion of glory in heaven, is certain. That, consequently, the gates of *hades* cannot prevail against that which Christ has founded on the confession of the Son of the living God, is most clear. But to use such precious truths to nullify the Church's responsibility to be here below a testimony to the glory of Jesus, is to employ the certainty of grace to destroy the necessity of a life which answers to it.

While, then, one would sympathize with the godly dread some may feel at any thing which seems to affect the salvation of all saints from the beginning, and the electing love of God in respect of them, it is well, on the other hand, to call things by their right, i. e., scriptural, names. The Spirit of God is infinitely wiser than man, and our business is to see, follow, and admire, His wisdom, as in other matters, so here. He has restricted the title "Church of God," in a New Testament sense, to those who are baptized with

the Holy Ghost. Let us also bear in mind that what is abstractedly true, may be used by the enemy to oppose the progress of truth given by God ; so, the Jews urge the unity of God against Christianity. It is thus Satan still acts, using previous truth, or that which is subordinate in importance, to hinder the special present testimony of God. A faithful Israelite could not have walked rightly before God, save as he intelligently recognized the place and responsibility of the nation to which he belonged. He could not overlook without loss the position in which God had put him. So with the Church : it is a body brought into equally distinct relief, though in a different way, having a given relationship with God, as much as Israel had. Saints were invisible before the Church was formed. The visible unity then was God's elect nation, the mass of whom were not converted. But the Church was called to manifest the glory of Christ hid in God : in short it was the light of the world. To say that it is "invisible" implies no testimony for Christ here below. For what is the meaning of an *invisible light* ? It is the denial of the title of Christ to unite His own, to gather in one the children of God who were scattered abroad, and, thus gathered, to display in them His power and glory. That the Church, alas ! is invisible is

too true. If so, it is fallen ; it is unfaithful to the glory of its Head ; it has failed as to the object of its establishment on earth. To recognize this truth—to confess the sin as fearful, a sin perhaps unpardonable as regards integral restoration—to confess, in this respect, our sin and iniquity—is what places us in our true position on this point. To justify such a state of things, to present it as regular and providential, as that which ought to be, is to show obduracy in sin : it is to want the heart and affections which seek the glory of Christ, and which prove that we have the consciousness of our relationship with Him as His bride.

Let those who would justify such a state of things say openly that the Church never ought, by its fidelity on earth, to have manifested the glory of Christ ; if not, let them own that we are in a ruin-state. I appeal to all the New Testament, to all the principles of God's word, to the history of the Acts, to the testimony of the Epistles, and to the conscience of the saints, to judge if the Church has maintained the testimony to the glory, the holiness, the love of the Bridegroom, and if she has maintained it as a faithful spouse, who ought to be engaged in it during the absence of the Bridegroom, knowing Him only, watching for His glory, and abiding faithful to Him so much the more as He is away.

## THE POWER THAT WORKS IN US.

*Ephesians iii. 14-21.*

The subject of prayer here is that there might be an inward power put forth by the Holy Ghost. Paul's heart was desiring to see the saints in a deepening enjoyment of Christ, and this by an operation of the Spirit unlimited in its measure.

They had the inner man, the divine nature communicated to them. God had looked upon them in His great love, not quickened only but given them out of His fulness. They were in a family every member of which is purged from sin. "I write unto you, children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake" (1 John ii. 12). The incorruptible seed is not the word of God, but that which is communicated by the word of God. The Christian is thus put into a position in which the creature does not stand. The first Adam was innocent but corruptible. The Second Man was pure and incorruptible. The believer now (in spite of that which is corruptible in him) has received this incorruptible seed, and that by the word of God. This they had: yet the heart of the apostle was not satisfied, but must go forth with energy that God the Holy Ghost might act in them according to their individual need, and that "according

to the riches of His glory," not only eventually to be enjoyed, but a spring of power now to be given, and that without measure. It *is the same Spirit to quicken and to strengthen* now as will fill the whole Bride. Paul put no limit short of this.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." This is not having happy fellys, or suavity of character, &c. It is one thing to be safe in the ark on the Ararat of God, and another thing for Christ to dwell in the heart by faith. Oh what a quantity of care goes out when Christ is there ! If Christ is the Master of the house, and dwelling in it, He does not let the dust and cobwebs accumulate, but He fills it altogether : and should a sudden start come to the heart, there will be found not fear, but Christ.

Some people make love among believers into a commandment. This is not the secret. If Christ is Master of heart and conscience, He will teach brotherly love; and then will be comprehended "with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height." See the connection of understanding with being rooted, &c., here and in Colossians ii. 2, 7. I shall not understand, save as divine (not human) affections are in exercise. Breadth, &c., of what? Soon after Christianity was launched, philosophy came in with progression. Paul knew no length

breadth, &c., save what was in Christ ; Satan knows many, but they are only his depths and can be detected.

Next, we are set in the fulness of God. Thus we have had first the inward strengthening by the Spirit ; next, this is shown by Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, rooted and grounded in love, that they might comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; thirdly, by this they might be filled with all the fulness of God ; and fourthly, this is described as the power that works "in us." This fulness of God calls for something back. All that God gives Christ is yours : then I must praise Him. Can I be silent ? Why not lift your voice to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all you ask or think ? We cannot expect too much.

Observe the distinct superscriptions of the prayers in the end of chap. i., and here. In chap. i. it is to God the Father of glory ; in chap. iii., it is to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, The glory of Christ as the Servant of God, and the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father are quite separate. It is very different for Christ to say, "My Father and your Father," and "My God and your God." When Christ took the servant's place, God was the Father of Glory to Him.



Christ's sympathy flows out according to need down here. We have His sympathies. If we knew more of Christ's sympathies, the children of God might have more for one another. If full of sorrow yourself, go and sympathize with another, and your own will be gone.

Many a saint, if he knew what Christ's sympathy was, would wish to be left alone. Christ does not sympathize with my flesh by thoughts, but what He does is for the glory of God. He may have to break my will, and bring it to His. He will take up all the good, and He can make the face to shine; but it is of no use for us to ask sympathy, if not set on the glory of God.

Our sympathy with Him is another thing: but He cares for it. (John xvi.)

Let me ask (as exhortation) whether you pray for the acting of the Spirit as prayed for here. One of the reasons why the light and knowledge given connected with God and His Christ is so little entered into is connected with lack of prayer for the operation of the Spirit in this way. Christ is in heaven now. He was the centre of the thoughts of the little company who followed Him in Galilee. Why should not you and I have Him practically as the centre of our minds and hearts? All with them was simply done in the light and at the word of their

Master. Had they boats to launch, nets to let down, all was at His word. This is a challenge to our hearts as to every-day circumstances. His presence in our hearts changes everything. It is very hard to be discontented when He is in the heart. How the thoughts of one's mind change with the company one is in! God has put us into a place where we may be sounding the unsoundable depths of the motives that have acted on Christ.



### ON KNOWING GOD'S WILL.

People would like a convenient and comfortable means of knowing God's will, as one might get a receipt for anything; but there exists no means of ascertaining it without reference to the state of our own soul. Further, we sometimes seek God's will, desiring to know how to act in circumstances in which it is not His will that we should be found at all. If conscience were in real healthful activity, its first effect would be to make us quit them. It is our own will that sets us there, and we should like nevertheless to enjoy the consolation of God's direction in a path which we ourselves have chosen. Such is a very common case.

Be assured that, if we are near enough to God, we shall have no trouble to know His

will. In a long and active life it may happen that God, in His love, may not always at once reveal His will to us, that we may feel our dependence, particularly where the individual has a tendency to act according to his own will. However, "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light;" whence it is certain, that if the whole body is not full of light, the eye is not single. You will say, "That is poor consolation." I answer, "It is a rich consolation for those whose sole desire is to have the eye single and to *walk with God*; not, so to speak, for those who would avoid trouble in learning His will objectively, but for those who desire to walk with God. "If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if any man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." It is always the same principle. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12). You cannot withdraw yourself from this divine principle of Christianity. Thus the apostle prays that "ye may be filled with *the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*, that ye might walk *worthy of the Lord* unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in *the knowledge of God*." The mutual connection

of these things is of immense importance for the soul. The Lord must be known intimately, if one would walk in a way worthy of Him; and it is thus that we grow in the knowledge of God's will. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ" (Phil. i. 9, 10). Finally, it is written, "he that is spiritual judgeth *all things*, yet he himself is judged of no man" (1 Cor. ii. 15).

It is, then, the will of God, and a precious will, that we should be able to discern it only according to our own spiritual state. In general, when we think we are judging circumstances, it is God who is judging us—who is judging our state. Our business is to keep close to Him. God would not be good to us, if He permitted us to discover His will without that. It might be convenient just to have a director of consciences, and we should thus be spared the discovery and the chastisement of our moral condition. Thus, if you seek how you may discover the will of God without that, you are *seeking evil*; and it is what we see every day.

"If any man will do His will, he shall know."  
(John vii. 17.)

## HOME.

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O! bright and blessed scenes,  
Where sin shall never come!  
Whose sight my longing spirit weans.  
From earth, where yet I roam.

And can I call my home,  
My Father's house on high,—  
The Rest of God, my rest to come,  
My place of liberty?

Yes! In that light unstained,  
My stainless soul shall live;  
My heart's deep longings more than gained,  
When God His rest shall give!

His presence there, my soul  
Its rest, its joy untold  
Shall find, when endless ages roll  
And time shall ne'er grow old.

My God the centre is:  
His presence fills that land;  
And countless myriads, own'd as His,  
Round Him adoring stand.

My God, whom I have known,  
Well known in Jesu's love,  
Rests, in the blessing of His own  
Before Himself above.

Glory supreme is there,  
Glory that shines through all:  
More precious still that love to share,  
As those that love did call!

Like Jesus, in that place  
Of light and love supreme,  
Once "Man of sorrows," full of grace,  
Heaven's blest and endless theme!

Like Him! O grace supreme!  
Like Him before Thy Face;  
Like Him, to know that glory beam  
Unhindered, face to face.

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O love, supreme and bright,  
Good to the feeblest heart !  
That gives me now, as heavenly light,  
What soon shall be my part !

Be not to me, My God,  
As one that turned aside  
To tarry for a night, and trod  
His onward path ! Abide

With me, as light Divine,  
That brings into my breast  
Those gladdening scenes, e'en now, as mine ;  
Soon my eternal rest.

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"THE FULNESS OF THE TIME ;"

"THE FULNESS OF TIMES ;"

"THERE SHOULD BE TIME NO
LONGER."

INTRODUCTORY.

The mind of man is so narrow that it would ever attempt to reduce the revelations of God to a few heads, which it might retain even when occupied about many other things. And hence we find "systematic divinity" perfectly compatible with worldly-mindedness. And this must ever be the case when the end of God in revelation is put out of sight, and another which meets man's selfishness is put forth for it. Even if we put forth the Church itself, an object confessedly dear to God's heart, as the end unto which God is working, rather than the glory of His own great name ; we, by this substitution, not only promote our own self-complacency and high-mindedness, but destroy the present use of the Church as the repository of God's counsels. One of the

most painful and alarming features of the day in which we live, is the existence of so much doctrinal truth together with very great ignorance of the Scriptures. The whole effort of men seems to be to bring all that is stated in Scripture into a certain number of propositions. And it is by no means believed that in Scripture are laid out to the spiritual apprehension all the Divine counsels and arrangements: so that we can look *back* and discover, under God's own comment, that His counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; and *forward* and assert, upon God's own declaration, what is coming to pass. The relation which the Scriptures bear to the Church is very remarkable. These *writings* occupy the place to the Church of God's *actings* unto Israel. "The things that happened unto them for examples ('types'), are *written* for our admonition, upon whom the * ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11). We have first, by direct inspiration of God, a narrative of facts—of facts so selected and arranged as to manifest a purpose of God: many material things—material, as man would judge—are either entirely omitted or but slightly touched on; and many apparently immaterial and trifling circumstances are largely expatiated on. Hence the man who would regard the narrative of the Scripture as mere history, would find it, to his apprehension, very imperfect; whereas, he who reads it in order to the ascertainment of God's purpose and mind, finds it complete and

* Ta tēlē tōn aiōnōn katēntēsen.
The ends of the ages are met.

perfect. For the Spirit of God gives prominence to those facts which are in pursuance of God's purpose. But we have, further, the comment of God Himself on those facts; and this forms a material part of the *Prophecies* as well as of the New Testament. And as we stand at the ends of the dispensations or ages, before they are all wound up, and their great results are fully brought out in the day of the appearing of Christ, all the truths that they severally teach converge and bear on us; and, therefore, are said to have been written for *our* admonition. Scriptural accuracy becomes therefore of the greatest importance to us; and when we see how the apostles of old used a single Scriptural quotation, as warrant for the assertion of a principle, and that our Lord has said, "the Scripture cannot be broken," this certainly demands much more attention than we have been ready to bestow. On reflection, also, it will appear, how much of Scripture we have received traditionally. There are numerous phrases in almost every one's mouth, which, from their having been received in this manner, carry no force with them, and are absolutely unmeaning. And constantly we find the soul of a believer resting on a promise of the Old Testament, when the same promise, with the addition of all the blessed relationship in which we stand, is given to us in the New Testament, in connection with Him "in whom all the promises of God are Yea and Amen unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. i. 20). As a familiar instance, we constantly find Isa. xxxiii., "bread shall be given him,

his waters shall be sure," used as a kind of traditionary promise; when the same security, with the blessed addition of the loving care of a Father's hand and a Father's heart, is given us in Matt. vi. 25-34: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that Ye have need of all these things." Surely, the other promise may be rightfully used; but how much more fully do we get it when it comes to us in our proper place—as children! Another instance where tradition has led to perfect mis-statement, is in the confusion of quoting Col. iii. 11, as though it were 1 Cor. xv. 28, "Christ is all in all." The truth is not denied; but it is, "Christ is all *and* in all;" that is, in the day of the manifestation of the Church, all that will appear will be Christ—nothing of the old Adam, and Christ will be in all; and we are called on to act on this truth now: to recognize Christ as every thing, and in every believer, be his condition what it may, as his grand characteristic. And this is quite different from God being "all in all;" which will not be manifested till after the millennium.

Now, I believe that such phrases as "The fulness of the time," "The fulness of times," "There should be time no longer," convey for the most part very vague ideas to the mind of Christians; when, at the same time, they are pregnant with meaning and instruction.

"THE FULNESS OF THE TIME."

The passage in which the first phrase occurs is Gal. iv. 4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

In all that God has done, He has revealed Himself to those who are in fellowship with Him, as abounding "in all wisdom and prudence." So that, if it be asked why so long a period elapsed before the promise made to the woman was fulfilled in the Babe at Bethlehem, the answer is, the time was not fully come. Much instruction needed previously to be given to man—much was to be taught him, through his painful experience of his real standing, before the great truth could be brought out, that creature unupheld by the Creator must fail—that tendency to fail is the very essence of creature; stability, the attribute of God alone. And what is the proof of both, but man's failure under every possible advantage, and his stable standing only through life in and from the Son of God? The first great lesson taught was the instability of man, though coming forth from God's hands in all the perfection of creature-ship. By disobedience he became independent of God; and being left to the trial of all his powers, he was unable to reinstate himself in the place of blessing which he had originally occupied. He had become as God, to know good and evil: as God, to assert his own will as his rule; but that will had not power equal to its pretensions, and could never open the way for him back into Paradise. "God drove out the man," and the condition into which man had fallen was impotence of will. Yes, had man had power equal to his will, he would have actually done that to which he will yet and shortly pretend—hurl God from His throne,

and occupy it himself. (See 2 Thess. ii.) But God has many times proved Himself to be "The blessed and only Potentate:" and the creature man has, whenever left alone, proved himself to be wise and powerful only to do evil, and to corrupt his way on the earth. How deeply important is it to recognize that the trial of man's power has been made, and that it has failed; and that all the activity and energy of the present day is but the busy bustling of that power which had failed before the flood; and that man, notwithstanding his toil and efforts, has not regained Paradise!

In the setting up of Noah as the head of restored creation, man was not similarly circumstanced as before. He had now had experience of the power, and justice, and grace of God. He was therefore called upon to acknowledge himself, not as creature standing in his own strength, but as having found grace with God as one lost, and this, by God's own prescription as to blood, and to acknowledge God as the righteous Judge, in His punishing murder with death—a punishment not hitherto appointed. But God was recognized neither in His grace nor in His justice; and men became "vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, &c.," (Rom. i.); and thus all the world went into idolatry. Thus man furnished a proof of his inability to sustain the new standing in which God had put him.

And now we meet with a new feature in God's dealings—"calling out;" and as this is connected with the purpose of God, it rises above failure; and the proof that the security rests, not in him that is called, but in Him that calleth, is immediately afforded. The condition in which man was when we are made acquainted with this part of the divine procedure, is thus given us of God: "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood ('river' *i. e.* Euphrates) in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor; and they served other gods. And *I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood.*" Now, here we see a certain fulness of time for the interference of God in this special manner. Previously to the deluge, judgment had not been tried; nor had man been *ostensibly* set as a sinner standing in grace, and acknowledging God as the Judge of all the earth. But now, all had gone into idolatry, as previously all flesh had corrupted its way on the earth. There was therefore the opportunity for God thus to interfere, and to show the irremediableness of the condition of man (the only blessing being to rescue him *out of* his condition); and further, to show that the standing of the one so called out was not in any communicated strength (for this standing was tried in the case of Abraham, and it proved man's failure, for Abraham went down into Egypt), but in the unfailingness of Him who called him. "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that

begat you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him" (Isa. li.). Now, this principle of "calling out" thus established, has been the principle and basis of God's blessing unto whomsoever: although, after its establishment, man was put under further advantages of trial, in order to prove that this basis alone could insure the blessing of the creature. The gifts and calling of God are not repented of by Him. God might create and destroy, and again create innumerable beings for the display of His glory; He might too uphold creature (as He has upheld the elect angels), by His sovereign power, so that the creature might keep its first estate. But then the great lesson of the failingness of the creature, and of the unfailingness of the gift and calling of God, would not have been afforded. Therefore is it that the promise made to Abraham in the way of grace was, four hundred years after, proposed to Abraham's descendants to be realized by their own competence. Such conditions they undertook; and, accordingly, the law was introduced: a system originating from Divine wisdom, having for its end the present blessing of the nation of Israel; yet, so absolutely did it fail, "in that it was weak through the flesh," that the possession of the land of Canaan was gotten, not by Israel's obedience to the Sinai-covenant, which was broken as soon as made, but for His name's sake who could say, in spite of all failure, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy: and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious."

Now, I do not think it is adequately considered that the law, as given by God, was in truth an experiment to determine what moral training under all the advantages of the consummate wisdom of the Giver, and of present interest to those receiving it, would effect; and it is not duly considered that the result was failure most manifest. "There is none that understandeth—none that seeketh after God: they are all gone astray; there is none that doeth good, no not one" (Rom. iii. 11, 12). And this the law says of them who had been under its discipline, as Rom. iii. 19, shows. The failure was not in the law. No alteration of *that* could have produced a different result; for "the law was holy, just and good." The importance of seeing the law in this more extensive bearing is very great and practical, in an age of advanced intelligence, putting forth all its moral as well as physical energies. And the attentive reader of Scripture will find that it, in speaking of law, argues on it in the abstract, showing its necessary insufficiency and failure; for if the law of God failed of producing a desirable end, *a fortiori*, the law of nature, and every other law, must fail—because the material to be worked on by it has in itself a principle opposed to law altogether. The great truth brought out is, that moral training, as a means of leading man unto God, has been tried on him under the most favourable circumstances; and that it has signally failed. Not to the impeachment of His wisdom, who gave the rule of training, but to show how entirely man had departed from

God, and to open the way for the introduction of a new power to bring him back to God.

But, before this was introduced manifestatively, trial was made of what moral suasion would effect towards bringing back disaffected and revolted man : there were proclaimed, as immediate consequences, judgment in the case of refusal to hear, and blessing in the case of hearing. This formed the ministry of the prophets : "Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets" (Hos. vi. 5). "I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets" (Hos. xii. 10). But the prophets, whilst they were thus a witness against man, were also a witness for God ; and by reiterated declarations of God's faithfulness, they turned the faithful from considering the failure of that which was before them, to rest upon the promises which they brought in.

2 Chronicles xxxvi. 15, 16, records the failure of this ministry also : "And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending ; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling-place ; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy." It is this very ground which our blessed Lord Himself assumes, when opening in parables, the divine counsels in mercy and judgment. "Again he sent another, and him they killed and many others, beating some and killing

some. "There was no remedy." "Having yet therefore one Son, His well beloved, He sent Him also, saying, They will reverence my Son" (Mark xii. 6, 7). The intermediate judgment and restoration appears to be passed over, although the same ministry* is reckoned as being carried on during the whole period: "the law and the prophets were until John." Then something new was to be introduced; but the very newness testified the complete failure of man. He had been tried before the flood, whether, left to himself, he could find his way back to God; but, instead of this, he only corrupted his way on the earth. He had been brought under the discipline of fearful judgment, the vestiges of which were all around him—but he went into idolatry. He had been tried by being brought into special favour with God in all outward blessings, and by a law being given him to secure him in the possession of them—but he lost all. He had been tried to be reclaimed by the ministry of the prophets, that he might return and be blessed; but he mocked and murdered these messengers of God's love: "There was no remedy." Here the history of man, as a moral and intellectual being, might close; and, as to remedying his condition by any moral means, it does close. The statement made by the apostle in the first two chapters of Romans is to this point: the

*It is important to notice the place which prophecy occupies in the dispensation of God. It is introduced *upon failure*, of the fact of which it has to testify; and, where the testimony is received, it has to sustain by promise.

Gentile given over to a reprobate mind; the Jew, no understanding in seeking God; none doing good; no fear of God before their eyes. And this too at a period of very advanced civilization among Gentiles, and of great external religion among the Jews.

It was when man was in such a condition, so that there was no remedy, that "the fulness of the time was come," and "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." Under these two conditions, the Son shows forth unswerving dependence and perfect righteousness; vindicating God in never departing from Him, in the midst of the most trying circumstances, and in carrying His obedience to the uttermost. Here was the One in whom God was well pleased: yet His bright example, His gracious words, His devotedness of life to cure man's misery, and His mighty miracles—all failed of producing in man's mind any emotion correspondent to the love declared in "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Surely, if moving appeals to the feelings, if MORAL SUASION could have reclaimed man, here was the opportunity! It is important to trace the personal ministry of the blessed Lord in this point of view, and to note the result of it: not the *improvement* of man, but the manifestation of man's entire inconsistency with God. It is a striking word, "The husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." There wanted apparently only such an opportunity as the love of God afforded in the gift of His Son, to evidence the latent

enmity of man's heart, and to show forth the fulness of its evil. And thus the rejection of the Son of God was the demonstration that the fulness of the time was come for God to bring forth His wisdom and power in triumphing over such manifested failure. And this He did in the Cross—at once the evidence of man's total failure as man, and of the necessity of setting up a new creation in resurrection; to be sustained in One as a Head who had proved Himself to be above failure. What a mass of moral truth there is contained in that expression, "The fulness of the time!" And how constantly need we now to recur to where we are, when God addresses us, preaching peace through the blood of the Cross: even as having been already proved to be irreclaimable by any other means than by being brought into union with One who can uphold us by His own power! And surely, after this, for any to go back to moral improvement as the way of bettering the condition of man before God, is only to manifest, through protracted bitter experience, that which He, who knows what is in man, has fully brought out and manifested already.

"THE FULNESS OF TIMES."

The expression, "The fulness of times" occurs Ephes. i. 10; and it is so distinct from that of "The fulness of the time," that the one is applied to a *past* fact, the other to one yet *future*: "That, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are

in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him." There is a connection between this expression and that which declares our standing, "upon whom the end of the ages are met." (See note, p. 83.) These ages or dispensations had all been cut short, each one had failed in man's responsibility; and before God takes them up again, He has (so to speak) left them: as it is written, "The Lord said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place;" and before He sets to His hand the second time to prove His superiority to failure—whilst we stand at the end of these ages—there is a secret process going on, of gathering out from every nation a body for Christ. When God takes up again these ages, then are we introduced into "The dispensation of the fulness of times." On this expression I would dilate a little.

This is the time of God's long-suffering and bearing with evil, instead of judging it. It is a limited period. "*Once*" the long-suffering of God lasted one hundred and twenty years, and then came judgment. But now it may be said, speaking generally, that God's long-suffering has been from the flood to the present day, and will be limited only by Christ's taking His power and putting His enemies under His feet. This period, therefore, becomes the period of testimony, corresponding to the times before the flood; * for although the long-suffering

* It is important to mark the parallel, that God has not interfered in such manner in judging the living of the world and the things of the world, since that time; and that He will again so interfere at the coming of Christ. (Luke xvii.)

began at the fall, yet was it specially marked at its close as a period of testimony, when Noah was a preacher of righteousness. So now, when man is despising the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, it is the period or *time* of testimony to the Cross and Resurrection to all the world; because all the world will be involved in Christ's coming to judge it in righteousness. (See Acts xvii. 34). Therefore the testimony is to every creature. "And the gospel must first be preached unto all the nations" (Mark xiii. 10). "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory before Him shall be gathered all the nations" (Matt. xxv. 31, 32). Connected with this is another time, and that is "*the time of misrule*" because power is in the hands of men, and not directly exercised by God. (Compare Ps. lxxxii.; Rev. xi. 17.) Consequently, it is *the time* of the Church's suffering; for the Church being in the midst of an evil age, and God not as yet interfering in judgment, suffering is necessarily its portion. (See Phil. i. 29.) But, to speak more definitely, it is *the time* of Israel's blindness and rejection, which is the mystery made known to us in Rom. xi., "Blindness in part is happened to Israel until," &c., and it is co-extensive with the period of "Preaching unto the Gentiles." Again, there is *the time* of Gentile supremacy; that is, their being the head, and Israel being the tail. (See Deut. xxviii. 44.) "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24). Once more, it is *the time* of creation's

thralldom: "*We know* that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now" (Rom. viii.). And this groaning is limited by another "until," as we read in Acts iii., "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out (or 'unto the blotting out of your sins'), that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive *until* the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets." There is *a time* also for Satan to "deceive the nations, to be going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. v. 8; *cf.* Job i. 7: ii. 2); and the limit of this we find thus stated. "He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled" (Rev. xx. 2, 3). But all these afore-mentioned *times* depend upon one yet to be mentioned. The Lord Jesus occupies His present position only for a definite period, according to that Scripture, "Sit thou at my right hand, *until* I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Ps. cx. 1). Now, "the dispensation of the fulness of times" is that in which *all these several times* will have run out, and into which they are all now running; and when the Lord Jesus leaves the right hand of God, then will God visibly interfere with all that is measured

by these times, The threads of them had been cut off at the rejection of Christ, and now they are resumed again. "The time of misrule" ends by Christ's taking His power and reigning. "The time of testimony" ends by judgment. "The time of the Church's suffering" ends by her being glorified with her Lord. "The time of Israel's blindness" ends by the vail being taken away (2 Cor. iii.), when the Lord Christ shall say, "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see" (Isa. xlii. 18; *cf.* vs. 6, 7). "The time of gentle domination" ends by the Stone cut out without hands smiting the image (Dan. ii.). "The time of creation's thralldom" ends by the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. viii. 19), and this we know, is when Jesus shall be manifested (1 John iii. 2). And Satan, who had in the ministry of our Lord asked not to be tormented before the time, will then know that the time of his restraint is come, though his judgment will even then be in prospect. Surely, a dispensation so marked is of the deepest importance! A dispensation in which all the apparent failures of God will be proved to have been but the means of displaying His power and wisdom. And so far from time *being done with*, as men say, at that period, it would be more proper to say that God is not *now* interfering in temporal things, but is only gathering to an eternal state, and that *then* He will interfere with things both temporal and earthly. This is of great importance; because the believer has now to do only with things *heavenly* and eternal, except so far as the present evil

circumstances of the world afford occasion for his learning obedience through suffering. And this leads me to notice the other expression—

“THERE SHOULD BE TIME NO LONGER.”

It is usual to say that time ends and eternity begins—a statement very vague and unmeaning, and involving much practical error. For the believer in Christ has *already* entered on eternity, and has begun to “look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. iv. 18). The expression, “There should be time no longer,” is found in Rev. x., and the context fully explains that it has no such signification as that “time ends,” but that it means no more time shall be allowed to elapse before the interference of God, and that God will no longer allow man to go on to the apparent frustrating of His purposes. “The angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer” (no longer any lapse of time); “*but in the days* of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished *as He hath declared to His servants the prophets.*” Now, if we have at all attentively con-

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sidered, how much of the prophetic testimony is yet unfulfilled, we shall immediately see that many of the declared events require a course of time when once the action begins; and, more than this, that the prophetic testimonies have most expressly to do with things connected with time. The expression, therefore, clearly does not mean that time is no more, but that the strangeness of God's ways, the mystery, as it is here said, of letting man go on, without God's interfering in judgment, is now finished; in other words, God's long suffering has reached its limit.

It would appear, from this expression, that the whole period (of which we are so boastful) of modern history is but as a blank before God; that His history of the earth, and the things in it, is already written in the Scriptures of truth; and whatever revolutions may take place, God's purpose of introducing earthly blessing is very definitely arranged, and all man's efforts will only tend to illustrate the completeness of his failure.

"Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts that the peoples shall labour in the very fire, and the peoples shall weary themselves for very vanity? For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk ii 13, 14.)

The Lord will not retreat,
Nor change His glorious plan,
Though all the devils meet
To aid rebellious man;

When once His word is passed,
When He hath said, "I will":
That thing shall come at last,
God keeps His promise still.

“THOU ART MY BELOVED SON; IN
THEE I AM WELL PLEASED.”

Luke iii. 22.

Now my eye rests on Jesus: I find the Lord from heaven *a Man!* All is to begin again. Do I ask, again, What is man? At once Christ comes out. Do I look at myself? At all around? What do I see? Enough to break my heart, if there is a heart to be broken. The only thing which prevents people being utterly broken down is that they have not a heart to feel things as they are. But a rest *is here!* I have got a Man now who satisfied God, this blessed Man on earth, in the presence of God, looking to God, and an Object to God! Not Messiah purging His floor, but Him in whom God's thoughts and purposes are all folded up—not man perishing before the moth, but JESUS, the Son of Man, not merely coming down from Abraham and David, but traced up, “which was the son of Adam, which was the Son of God”; the second Man—the last Adam—the quickening Spirit. What a relief; for what is man? What one's self when the heart's sin is known—giving up God for an apple from the beginning hitherto! But now a Man, a blessed Man, appears, “and praying.”

. . . The *dependent* Man for dependence is the essence of a perfect man. Truly we see *God* shining all through, but yet in Jesus the dependent Man in the place and condition of perfectness as Man. The root of sin in us is self-will, independence. Here my heart has rest! A dependent Man in the midst of sorrow, but perfectly with God in all, in humiliation, or in glory, it makes no difference as to this: the perfect is ever the dependent One. And when that blessed heart thus expressed its dependence, did He get no answer? "The heaven was opened." Does heaven open thus on me? It is open to me indeed, no doubt, but *I* pray because it is open; it opened because *He* prayed. I come and look up because the heavens were opened *on Him*.

It is indeed a lovely picture of grace, and we may be bold to say that the Father loved to look down in the midst of all sin, on HIS BELOVED SON. Nothing but what was divine could thus awaken God's heart; and yet it was the lowly, perfect Man. He takes not the place of His eternal glory as the Creator, the Son of God—He stoops and is baptized. He says (Psalm xvi.), "In Thee do I trust." He says to Jehovah, "Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee:" He says to the godly remnant in Israel (*i.e.*, to the saints that are in the earth,

and to the excellent), "all my delight is in them." . . .

And the Holy Ghost descends like a dove on Him—fit emblem of that spotless man! fit resting-place for the Spirit in the deluge of this world. And how sweet, too, that Jesus is pointed out *to us* as God's Object. I know the way the Father feels about Him. I am made His intimate, and admitted to hear Him expressing His affection for His Son, to see the links reformed between God and man.

Thus I get rest, and my heart finds communion with God in His beloved Son. It is only the believer who enjoys it, but the link is there. And if I find that in and about me which distresses the soul, I have that in Him which is unfailing joy and comfort. . . . With Him let heaven and earth be turned upside down, and still I have a rest. What blessedness for the heart to have the Object God Himself is occupied with!



WORSHIP: CHIEFLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE PEACE-OFFERING.

The peace-offering is the offering which typifies to us the communion of saints (according to the efficacy of the sacrifice) with God, with the priest who has offered it on our behalf, with one another, and with

the whole body of the saints as priests to God. It comes after those which present to us the Lord Jesus Himself in His devoting Himself to death (the burnt-offering), and His devotedness and grace in His life, but even unto death, and the testing of fire (the meat-offering), that we may understand that all communion is based on the acceptability and sweet odour of this sacrifice ; not only because the sacrifice was needed, but because therein God had all His delight.

The first act in the case of the peace-offering was the presenting and killing it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and sprinkling the blood, which formed the basis of every animal offering, the offerer being identified with the victim by laying his hands on his head. *

Next, all the fat, especially of the inwards, was taken and burnt on the altar of burnt-offering to the Lord. Fat and blood were alike forbidden to be eaten. The blood was the life, and necessarily belonged essentially to God ; life was from Him in an especial manner ; but fat also was never to be eaten but burnt, and so offered to God. The use

*The exceptions to this rule are sin-offerings of the day of atonement, and the red heifer, which confirm the great principle, or fortify a peculiar portion of it. The sprinkling of the blood was always the priest's work.

of this symbol, fat, is sufficiently familiar in the word. "Their heart is fat as grease:" "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked;" "They are enclosed in their own fat, with their mouth they speak proudly" (Psa. cxix. 70; Deut. xxxii. 15; Psa. xvii. 10). It is the energy and force of the inward will, the inwards of a man's heart. Hence, where Christ expresses His entire mortification, He declares they could tell all His bones; and, in Psa. cii., "By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin."

But here, in Jesus, all that in nature was of energy and force, all His inward parts, were a burnt-offering to God, entirely sacrificed and offered to Him for such a sweet savour. This was God's food of the offering, "the food of the offering made by fire unto Jehovah." In this Jehovah Himself found His delight; His soul reposed in it, for surely it was very good—good in the midst of evil—good in the energy of offering to Him—good in perfect obedience.

If the eye of God passed, as the dove of Noah, over this earth, swept by the deluge of sin, nowhere, till Jesus was seen in it, could His eye have rested in complacency and peace; there on Him it could stand. Heaven, as to the expression of its satisfaction, whatever its counsels, was closed till Jesus (the second and perfect Man, the Holy

One, He who offered Himself to God, coming to do His will) was on earth. The moment He presented Himself in public service, heaven opened, the Holy Ghost descended to dwell in this His one resting-place here, and the Father's voice, impossible now to be withheld, declares from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Was this Object (too great, too excellent, for the silence of heaven and the Father's love) to lose its excellence and its savour in the midst of a world of sin? Far otherwise. It was there its excellency was proved.

If He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, the movement of every spring of His heart was consecrated to God. He walked in communion, honouring His Father in all—in His life and in His death. Jehovah found continued delight in Him; and above all in Him in His death: the food of the offering was there. Such was the great principle, but the communion of our souls with this is further given to us. The fat being burnt as a burnt-offering, the consecration to God is pursued to its full point of acceptance and grace.

Turning to the law of the offerings (Lev. vii. 28-34), we find that the rest was eaten. The breast was for Aaron and his sons, type of the whole church; the right shoulder for the priest that sprinkled the blood, more es-

pecially type of Christ, as the offering priest; the rest of the animal was eaten by him who presented it, and those invited by him. Thus there was identity and communion with the glory and good pleasure—with the delight—of Him to whom it was offered, with the priesthood and the altar, which were the instruments and means of the offering, with all God's priests, and among those immediately taking part. We indeed should eat in the name of the Lord Jesus, offering our sacrifices of thanksgivings, the calves of our lips, and so consecrate all we partake of, and ourselves in it, in communion with the Giver, and Him who secures us in it; but here it was a proper sacrifice.

Thus then the offering of Christ as a burnt-offering is God's delight: His soul delights and takes pleasure in it; it is of sweet savour with Him. Before the Lord, at His table so to speak, the worshippers, also coming by this perfect sacrifice, feed on it also, have perfect communion with God in the same delight in the perfect sacrifice of Jesus, in Jesus Himself thus offered, thus offering * Himself—have the same subject

* Offering has a double character distinguished in Greek by *prosphero* and *anaphero*, in Hebrew by *Hikrib* and *Hiktir*. Christ offered Himself without spot through the eternal Spirit to God; but having done so, God laid the iniquity on Him, made Him to be sin for us, and He was offered up on the cross as an actual sacrifice.

of delight as God, a common blessed joy in the excellency of the work of redemption of Jesus. As parents have a common joy in their offspring, enhanced by their communion in it, so, as filled with the Spirit, and themselves redeemed by Him, the worshippers have one mind with the Father in their delight in the excellency of an offered Christ. And is the Priest, who has ministered all this, the only one excluded from the joy of it? No; He has His share also. He who has offered it has part in the joy of redemption. Further, the whole church of God must be embraced in it.

Jesus, then, as Priest, finds a delight in the joy of communion between God and the people, the worshippers, wrought and brought about by His means—yea, of which He is the Object. For what is the joy of a Redeemer but the joy and communion, the happiness, of His redeemed? Such then is all true worship of the saints. It is joying in God through the means of the redemption and offering of Jesus; yea, one mind with God; joying with Him in the perfect excellency of this pure and self-devoted Victim (though this, in measure brings in the meat-offering), who has redeemed and reconciled them, and given them this communion with the assurance that this their joy is the joy of Jesus Himself, who has

wrought it and given it to them. In heaven He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and come forth and serve them.

The joy of worship necessarily associates itself also with the whole body of the redeemed, viewed as in the heavenly places. Aaron and his sons were to have their part also. Aaron and his sons were ever the type of the church, not as Christ's body (that was wholly hidden in the Old Testament) but viewed as the whole body of its members, having title to enter into the heavenly places, and offer incense—made priests to God. For these were the patterns of things in the heavens, and those who compose the church are the body of heavenly priests to God. Hence worship to God, true worship, cannot separate itself from the whole body of true believers. I cannot really come with my sacrifice unto the tabernacle of God, without finding necessarily there the priests of the tabernacle. Without the One Priest all is vain ; for what without Jesus? But I cannot find Him without His whole body of manifested people. The interest of His heart takes them all in. God withal has His priests, and I cannot approach Him but in the way which He has ordained, and in association with, and in recognition of, those whom He has placed

around His house, the whole body of those who are sanctified in Christ. He who walks not in this spirit is in conflict with the ordinance of God, and has no true peace-offering according to God's institution.

But there were other circumstances we must remark. First, none but those that were clean could partake among the guests. We know that moral cleansing has taken the place of the ceremonial: "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." "God has put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (John xv. 3; Acts xv. 8, 9). Israelites then partook of the peace-offerings; and if an Israelite was unclean, through anything that defiled according to the law of God, he could not eat while his defilement continued.

Christians then, whose hearts are purified by faith, having received the word with joy, alone can worship really before God, having part in the communion of saints; and if the heart is defiled, that communion is interrupted. No person apparently defiled has title to share in the worship and communion of the church of God. It was a different thing, remark, to be not an Israelite and not clean. He who was not an Israelite had never any part in the peace-offerings; he could not come nigh the tabernacle. Un-

cleanness did not prove he was no Israelite (on the contrary, this discipline was exercised on Israelites only); but the uncleanness incapacitated him from partaking, with those that were clean, in the privileges of this communion; for these peace-offerings, though enjoyed by the worshippers, belonged to the Lord. (Lev. vii. 20, 21). The unclean had no title there. True worshippers must worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. (John iv. 23, 24.) If worship and communion be by the Spirit, it is evident that those only who have the Spirit of Christ, and also have not grieved the Spirit (and thus rendered the communion, which is by the Spirit, impossible by the defilements of sin) can participate.

Yet there was another part of this type which seemed to contradict this, but which indeed throws additional light on it. With the offerings which accompanied this sacrifice, it was ordered (Lev. vii. 13) that leavened cakes should be offered. For though that which is unclean is to be excluded (that which can be recognized as unclean), there is always a mixture of evil in us, and so far in our worship itself. The leaven is there (man cannot be without it); it may be a very small part of the matter, not come in to the mind, as it will be when the Spirit is

not grieved, but it is there where man is. Unleavened bread was there also, for Christ is there, and the Spirit of Christ in us, who are leavened, for man is there.

There was another very important direction in this worship. * In the case of a vow, it might be eaten the second day after the burning of the fat—Jehovah's food of the offering; in the case of thanksgiving, it was to be eaten the same day. This identified the purity of the service of the worshippers with the offering of the fat to God. So it is impossible to separate true spiritual worship and communion from the perfect offering of Christ to God. The moment our worship separates itself from this, from its efficacy and the consciousness of that infinite acceptability of the offering of Christ to God—not the putting away of sins, without that we could not approach at all, but its intrinsic excellency as a burnt-offering, all burnt to God as a sweet savour†—it becomes carnal, and either a form, or the delight, of the flesh. If the peace-offering was eaten separately from this offering of

* It may be well to remark that the peace-offering *supposes fellowship in worship, though many principles are individually applicable.*

† We may add of Jesus with the Father, and that in connection even with His laying down His life, but this is not our subject here. (See John x. 17.) But there, note, it is not done as for sinners, but for God.

the fact, it was a mere carnal festivity, or a form of worship, which had no real communion with the delight and ~~good~~ pleasure of God, and was worse than unacceptable—it was really iniquity.

When the Holy Spirit leads us into real spiritual worship, it leads us into communion with God, into the presence of God; and then, necessarily, all the infinite acceptability to Him of the offering of Christ is present to our spirit. We are associated with it: it forms an integral and necessary part of our communion and worship. We cannot be in the presence of God in communion without finding it there. It is indeed the ground of our acceptance, as of our communion.

Apart from this then our worship falls back into the flesh; our prayers (or praying well) form what is sometimes called a gift of prayer, than which nothing often is more sorrowful (a fluent rehearsal of known truths and principles, instead of communion, and the expression of praise and thanksgiving in the joy of communion, and even of our wants and desires in the unction of the Spirit); our singing, pleasure of the ear, taste in music, and expressions in which we sympathize—all a form in the flesh, and not communion in the Spirit. All this is evil:

the Spirit of God owns it not; it is not in Spirit and in truth; it is really iniquity.

It is well to note also, that we may begin in the Spirit and pass into the flesh in worship. Thus, for example, if I continue to sing beyond the real operation of the Spirit, which happens too often, my singing, which at the beginning was real melody in the heart to the Lord, will terminate in pleasant ideas and music, and so end in the flesh. The spiritual mind, the spiritual worshiper, will discover this at once when it happens. When it does happen, it always weakens the soul, and soon accustoms to formal worship and spiritual weakness; and then evil, through the power of the adversary, soon makes its appearance among the worshippers. The Lord keep us nigh to Himself to judge all things in His presence, for out of it we can judge nothing!

It is good to bear strongly in mind this expression, "that pertain unto the LORD" (Lev. vii. 20); the worship, what passes in our hearts in it, is not ours—it is the Lord's. The Lord has put it there for our joy, that we may participate in the offering of Christ, His joy in Christ; but the moment we make it ours, we desecrate it. Hence what remained was burnt in the fire; hence what was unclean *must have nothing to do with it*; hence the necessity of associat-

ing it with the fat burnt to the LORD, that it may be really Christ in us, and so true communion, the giving forth of Christ, on whom our souls feed, towards God.

Let us remember that all our worship pertains to God, that it is the expression of the excellency of Christ in us, and so our joy, as by one Spirit, with God. He in the Father, we in Him, and He in us, is the marvellous chain of union which exists in grace as well as in glory: our worship is the outgoings and joy of heart founded on this, towards God, by Christ. So, as Himself ministering in this, the Lord says, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." He surely is in joy and knows redemption is accomplished. May we be in tune with our heavenly Guide! He shall well conduct our praises, and agreeably to the Father. His ear shall be attentive when He hears this voice leads us. What perfect and deep experience of what is acceptable before God must He have, who, in redemption, has presented all according to God's mind! His mind is the expression of all that is agreeable to the Father, and leads us, taught by Himself, though imperfect and feeble in it, in the same acceptableness. "We have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. ii. 16.)

THE WALK OF FAITH, AS ILLUSTRATED IN DAVID'S EARLY CAREER.

How important, for all who are the Lord's, to bear in mind that, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. xi.). We cannot be God's children, but, "by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii.). But when we are the children of God we belong to the "New creation," and are looked upon as being, "In Christ Jesus," and what characterizes such is, "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. v. 7, 17). How deeply exercised then each one of us ought to be as to how far he or she is really answering to the mind of our Father in our daily walk, ever "looking off unto Jesus," the only One who ever trod the whole path of faith, the Leader and Perfecter of faith.

Our God, in His word, has given us some precious lessons and illustrations as to the walk of faith—nowhere, perhaps, more so (after the blessed Lord Himself, who in all things hath the preeminence) than in David, especially in the part of his life before he came to the throne.

Let us then briefly trace the history of David (1 Sam. xvi.—xxx.). Simplicity of faith keeps him in the place of duty, and contented there (cf. Heb. xiii. 5, especially New

Trans.), without desire to leave it, because the approbation of God suffices him (cf. John v.44). Consequently he can there reckon upon the help of God, as thoroughly secured to him; he acts in the strength of God. The lion and the bear fall under his youthful hand. Why not, if God was with him? He follows Saul with equal simplicity, and then returns to the care of his sheep with the same satisfaction. There, in secret, he had understood by faith that Jehovah was with Israel; he had understood the nature and force of this relationship. He sees, in the condition of Israel, something which does not answer to this; but, as for himself, his faith rests upon the faithfulness of God. An uncircumcised Philistine falls like the lion. He serves Saul as musician with the same simplicity as before; and, whether with him, or when Saul sends him out as captain of a thousand, gives proof of his valour. He obey's the king's commands.

At length the king drives him away; but he is still in the place of faith. There is little now of military achievement, but there is the discernment of that which became him, when the spiritual power was in him, but the outward divine authority was in other hands. It was the same position as that of Jesus in Israel. David does not fail in this position, its difficulties only the better bring-

ing out all the beauty of God's grace and the fruits of the Spirit's work, while very peculiarly developing spiritual affections and intimate relationship with God, his only refuge. It is especially this which gave rise to the *Psalms*. Faith suffices to bring him through all the difficulties of his position, in which it displays all its beauty and all its grace. The nobleness of character which faith imparts to man, and which is the reflection of God's character, produces in the most hardened hearts, even in those who, having forsaken God, are forsaken of Him (a state in which sin, selfishness, and despair, combine to harden) feelings of natural affection, the remorse of a nature which awakens under the influence of something superior to its malice—something which sheds its light (painful, because momentary and powerless) upon the darkness which encompasses the unhappy sinner who rejects God. It is because faith dwells so near God as to be above evil, that it withdraws nature itself from the power of evil, although nature has no power of self-mastery. But God is with faith; and faith respects that which God respects, and invests one who bears something from God with the honour due to that which belongs to God, and which recalls God to the heart with all the affection that faith entertains for Him, and all

that pertains to Him. This is always seen in Jesus, and wherever His Spirit is; and it is this that gives such beauty, such elevation to faith, which enobles itself with the nobility of God, by recognizing that which is noble in His sight, and on account of its relationship to Him, in spite of the iniquity or abasement of those who are invested with it. Faith acts on God's behalf, and reveals Him in the midst of circumstances, instead of being governed by them. Its superiority over that which surrounds it is evident. What repose, to witness this amid the mire of this poor world!

But, although faith, in the place it gives us in this world, suffices for all that we meet with in it, yet alas! communion with God is not perfect in us. Instead of doing our duty whatever it be without weariness, because God is with us, and when we have slain the lion, being ready to slay the bear, and, through this, more ready still to slay Goliath—instead of faith being strengthened by victory, nature grows weary of the conflict; we lose the normal position of faith, we debase and dishonour ourselves. What a difference between David, who, by the fruit of grace, draws tears from the heart of Saul, reopening (at least for the moment) the channel of his affections, and David, unable to raise his hand against the Philistines

whom he had so often defeated, and boasting himself ready to fight against Israel and the king whose life he had spared.

My brethren, let us abide in the place of faith, apparently a more difficult one, yet the place where God is found, and where grace—the only precious thing in this world—flourishes, and binds the heart to God by a thousand links of affection and gratitude, as to One who has known us, and who has stooped to meet our need and the desires of our hearts. Faith gives energy; faith gives patience; and it is often thus that the most precious affections are developed—affections which, if the energy of faith makes us servants on earth, render heaven itself happy, because He who is the Object of faith is there, and fills it in the presence of the Father.

Nature makes us impatient with circumstances, because we do not sufficiently realize God, and draws us into situations where it is impossible to glorify Him. On the other hand, it is well to observe, that it is when man had thoroughly failed, when even David's faith had been found wanting, and—departing from Israel—he had thrown himself among the Philistines, it was then that God gave him the kingdom. Grace is above all failure: God must glorify Himself in His people.

THE NUMBERING AND SERVICE OF THE LEVITES.

Numbers iii. and iv.

The Levites were taken up that the ways of God towards his redeemed firstborn might specially be shown out in them.

The Lord took them from among the children of Israel, instead of all the firstborn. "Therefore," said He, "the Levites shall be mine; because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord" (Num. iii. 12, 13).

They who were the special witnesses of the grace of God, in the day when judgment was poured out, were in a special way to be His own, serving Him in the ways of redemption, as set up in the mercy of God—the ways of His mercy and love to poor sinners lying under judgment. Such, in the shadows of the law, was the service of the Levites; and such, in the good things that have come to us in Christ, is the service of the saints.

There are two numberings of the Levites marked, one in the third chapter, and the other in the fourth chapter of Numbers; but with striking difference between them. In

chapter iii. they are reckoned from a month old and upwards; but in chapter iv. they are numbered from thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old. They are reckoned according to the days of their strength in the latter, and, accordingly, their several services are here revealed to them; but (chap. iii.) they were set in blessing as God's firstborn in the days of their weakness: for, not what they did for Him, but what He did for them, was the ground of their standing.

Here two things are taught us. First, the question of service does not come in, when we are taken up as the redeemed in Christ. Second, the demand for service begins at once, when we are looked at as strengthened by Christ. In this service, He reveals His mind, and we obey it.

Among the Levites, some had one service to do, and some had another; but responsibility to God made each do what he did. The sons of Kohath carried the sanctuary; the sons of Gershon carried the curtains of the tabernacle, and the hangings of the court; and the sons of Merari bore the boards of the tabernacle, the bars, the pillars, the sockets, and the pins. Such was the choice of the Lord for them, not of them for themselves. Had the sons of Gershon carried the ark, this would be self-will in

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them, not service for God, because He said to them, "Carry the curtains." Responsibility to God made each do what he did, and kept him from interfering in other things; and so it is now with the brethren in the Lord. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation" (Rom. xii. 1-8). The brethren are entreated by the mercies of God, to holy devotedness of themselves to God, and are exhorted

against being conformed to the world. Conformity with the world blinds men's perception of the will of God, and sets them doing their own will; but he who is transformed by the renewing of his mind, *proves* what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God: his affections and purposes are after his renewed mind; and the Lord has promised to him who has a single eye, that his whole body shall be full of light. All are called to their labours in subjection to God, as were the families of the sons of Levi. If the mercies of God are not kept before our hearts, then we fail in presenting ourselves aright. If conformity to the world comes in, and we lose spiritual energy in our renewed minds then we fail in proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. And if we go beyond our measure of faith, then we assume what we are unfit for.

This varied labour in service is all for perfect order. He among the sons of Merari who carried even the pins, bore what was necessary for the perfection of the tabernacle: *better for him to do this for God, than to despise his work, and assume another.* Equally would subjection to God keep the sons of Kohath happy in the holy service of bearing on their shoulders the

ark, and table of shew-bread, and all that belonged to the sanctuary.

We have God to serve as our purpose ; we have His word and Spirit to guide and lead as to the way of service ; and all as His redeemed, through the blood of Christ.

The burden of a Levite, as he went forward through the dreary wilderness, was a glorious burden : it belonged to the sanctuary of God, and was the witness of His grace and mercy to sinful men : and so with the service of the saints in the world ; their service is in what belongs not to the world. "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (John vi. 33). "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world ; again I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John xvi. 28).

In the sanctuary the uncovered ark of pure gold, with the cherubims overshadowing the mercy-seat, rested in the most holy place : the priest alone could there see and enjoy it. In Levite service,* the ark was covered over : still it was the ark ; from the sanctuary it came ; and inside that covering

* The communion of the saints, as having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, is according to the service of the priests.

The testimony of the saints, as sent into the world to give glory to Christ's name, is according to the service of the Levites.

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lay all the hidden splendour in which, in the sanctuary, it appeared. This made the burden a precious one to a devoted Levite: he knew whence it came, and what it was; and so, if it was *only a pin*, it belonged to the tabernacle, and the Lord told him to carry it.

In all this, the service of the Levite waited on and followed the service of the priest: this was the order established of God; and in all our service of testimony in the world, communion in the holiest with the things of which we testify, should ever go before. Thus it is that in responsibility we shall be led out, but also controlled. In the holiest we have our communion *with* Christ: in our service in the world we have our testimony *about* Christ; but this should ever follow, and be connected with the other.

If the acts of service of the sons of Kohath were made the standard to judge the conduct of the sons of Merari, then they might be despised in their service: but they did unto the Lord what they did, according to His will concerning them; and in His good will the sons of Kohath and the sons of Merari were all fellow-labourers in the same tabernacle.

So it was, that when Gaius, for the Lord's sake, received the strangers who, for His name's sake, went forth, taking nothing

from the Gentiles, the apostle adds, "We ought therefore to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth" (3 John 8). The poor preacher was a *helper* to the truth when he proclaimed Christ's name; and Gaius was a *fellow-helper* when he took him into his house, and fed and lodged him.

So again, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward" (Matt. x. 41). Here is one who is not a prophet himself; but he loves a prophet, and receives him as such, and thus becomes associated in blessing with a prophet. Did he assume to be a prophet when he was not one, then there would be no such association, and no blessing.

In all this may we learn subjection to God, knowing that if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

Such is the grace of God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.



FRAGMENT.—Did you ever notice Luke xii., the two things looked for in us? First, watching; its reward, making us sit down to table in heaven, and ministering the blessing to us. Secondly, serving *in what He sets us to do*; and the reward of that, ruling. But the first is wonderful, that He remains for ever our Servant in love. How blessed to have Him, and to be His.

PETER.

Luke v. 1-11 ; John xxi. 1-14.

The soul has its history as well as the body. The soul takes its journeys at times as well as the body. This we know and have experienced. Peter's spirit took a wondrous journey in Luke v. He is there at first, in the place of nature—an easy, kind-hearted man as ever lived, earnest to love and to serve ; and being such an one, he readily lent his boat to the wondrous Stranger who was there addressing the multitude on the shore of the sea of Genesaret. And when the wants of this Stranger were over, at His bidding Peter put his boat further into the lake, and let down his net for a draught.

But this was nature still. He had not left the place of nature yet—his own place, the place where his natural friendliness and easiness of temper had put him all his life hitherto. “Master,” said he to Jesus, “we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing : nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.”

But now the journey of his soul begins—a wondrous, distant journey, but performed as in a whirlwind. The chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof, in their way, were standing and waiting for him. The

draught of fishes which came at the word of the Stranger surprised the soul of Peter, and at once bore him into the presence of God. The Stranger was transfigured before his soul as in the twinkling of an eye. He was the Lord of the fulness of the sea, who could command the draught, and Peter stood in the presence of God. The living God, the God of glory, was in the place, and Peter had not known it till now, and the sight overwhelms him. He learns himself there, and he is confounded. "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." It is no more "Master" but "Lord." It is no more the *fisherman* Peter, who had been toiling all the night at his nets, but the *sinner* Peter. It is a new world to him, the brightness of which is too powerful. He is in God's presence, and it is too much for him. He learns himself where only we can duly learn ourselves, in the presence of the glory of God. We have all sinned, and come short of that glory, and that is discovered by our souls when that glory is reached for the first time.

This was a journey indeed! Peter was taken from the native land of his easy, kindly, but revolted nature (revolted, because it could not stand before God), to the dwelling-place of the glory of God; and he

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apprehends that place in the brightness of it, and is amazed.

But he must go still further into this new world. He must still travel; and the word, the further word of the Lord, the word of Him whose divine honour and rights had here been discovered to him, must lead him on. "Fear not," says Jesus to him; and when he obeys, and follows where those words lead him, his journey is ended. He may dwell for ever in the place he has now reached. He has left the native land of nature for the presence of God, and found it the home of a poor, convicted, conscience-stricken sinner.

Many a journey, I am sure, the soul of Peter took in after days. He had to pass through the rebukes of the Lord; and they ever give the soul a chapter in its history, or take it some stage of that living way which the word of God has cast up before us, and along which the Spirit of God bears us. But I am thinking only of one other journey which this loved and earnest man had to perform under the hand of the Lord. I mean that which he takes in John xxi. 1-14.

Here we find him again at his fishing. Sweet, natural scene! It is given to us in all the artlessness of truth. He and some companions are again on the sea of Galilee,

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and again a Stranger addresses him. In like simplicity and friendship which gave him character at the first, he does as this Stranger bids him; and he is, in like grace, rewarded by another heavy draught of fishes. This was a token. It was symptomatic of who this Stranger was. The finger may not be sensitive enough to feel the pulse, or the eye keen enough to discover the mark. Peter fails in this faculty, and John sees for him. "It is the Lord," says he to him. The eye had seen for the body, and then the foot begins its service. Peter's second journey begins, as we tracked him first in Luke v., with the speed of a single, devoted and loving heart. He is in the water at once to reach the Lord. He *now* knew Him as he had not when he began his first journey. He had already said to him, "Fear not." He now knew Him, and is not amazed. His presence is not that of a glory that was overwhelming, but of a glory that had already given his conscience a home; and though that conscience had every reason at that moment to be a coward, it is bold as a lion. The fisherman Peter, when introduced at first to the presence of God, had become, in his experience, the sinner Peter; but now the fisherman Peter becomes, in his experience, the loved, saved, accepted Peter. He will

tread softly, surely he will, for he worships in the presence of God ; but he treads confidently, for he is accepted in that presence, and courts it with all speed and all certainty. Right it was at first that in that presence he should be convicted and discover his sin ; right it is now that in that presence he should be a worshipper, a consciously accepted worshipper, for that glory had already spoken comfortably to him.

What two draughts of fishes these were ! What two journeys for the soul to take ! How Peter's spirit was called to penetrate the new world where the glory and the grace of Christ so shine ; and in the display of the grace that is there, I discover the same character after as before the resurrection. A blessed discovery for the soul. In other days, as in Mark iv., the Lord has to rebuke the disciples for their little faith, fearing as they had done when the storm rose on the lake. But ere He rebuked their unbelief He allayed their tremblings. He said, "Peace, be still" to the waves ere He said to the disciples, "How is it that ye have no faith?" And so now with Peter. He sits with Peter, He dines with Peter. The full, free fellowship of his heart with his loved One is made sure to Peter's spirit ere his Lord addresses Himself to his conscience, and brings his ways to remembrance. The

Jesus who had once calmed the sea ere He rebuked the disciples, now gives Peter an unbroken net full of fishes, and dines with him, ere He says to him, "Lovest thou me?" Oh, the secrets of that land which Peter had entered!



PHILIP "THE EVANGELIST."

The name evangelist is applied in Scripture to but one man, namely, Philip. No other is ever thus specially designated. The word occurs three times only, namely, in Ephes. iv. 11, where evangelists are mentioned as being amongst the gifts; 2 Tim. iv. 5, where Timothy is told to do the work of an evangelist; and Acts xxi. 8, where mention is made of Philip the evangelist. The verb "they evangelized" is used several times, sometimes joined with the names of the preachers, sometimes simply referring to them without even so much as giving their names. Special mention is made of a brother in the following passage: "and we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches" (2 Cor. viii. 18), but nowhere except in the above mentioned verse in the Acts do we find the word "evangelist" specially connected with any particular man. This gives Philip a special place in Scripture, and any

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details therefore which are recorded therein concerning one so distinctly marked out by the word of God as a bearer of the glad tidings, cannot fail to be deeply interesting to any desiring to do the work of an evangelist in the present day. The history of Philip's work and service is found in Acts viii. The first thing to which we would call attention is that his sphere of service was beyond the region which up to that time had been the place of testimony. We hear of him as preaching not in Jerusalem or Judea, where there had already been so much blessing, but in Samaria, to which place not only had the work not extended but where the people themselves were looked upon by the Jews as an inferior race. (John iv. 9.) We find him used there in a remarkable manner. The people with one accord gave heed to him and there was great joy in that city. News of the work there reaches to Jerusalem and the result of this is to lead out two of the apostles from the original place of testimony into a wider field and perfectly in accordance with the character of their testimony as marked out by our blessed Lord Himself in Acts i. 8. Peter and John are sent by the apostles to Samaria. No doubt the grace and care of God may be discerned in thus preserving the unity of the Spirit amongst those at

Jerusalem and Samaria, and very interesting it is to trace how this was done, but to follow this would take away the attention from the special work of the evangelist to fix it upon a truth which rather pertains to the whole church. The next thing we find is that Simon Magus is baptized. The workman, unless kept, is liable to be carried away or affected, not (as is sometimes incorrectly stated) by the blessing, but by that in himself which, in the midst of the blessing, has its influence and power from principles in direct antagonism (however sincere the workman may be) to the One who alone is the source of all the blessing. Whether Philip was to any extent thus affected, or whether there was any failure in spiritual discernment, we are not told; the fact remains, that one who had no part or lot in the matter had been baptized, and appears to have kept close to him whom he naturally looked upon as the leader in the whole movement. The presence of Peter and John who had been brought from Jerusalem through the result of the preaching of a less gifted vessel than themselves was used to bring to light the true character of that which had been admitted amongst the sheep and the lambs. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and the principle of corruption then admitted has since spread

to the fullest extent. The apostles themselves, taken out of their habitual course, preach in many villages of the Samaritans. Philip has thus been used to lead them in the order of that testimony in Acts i. 8, to which reference has already been made. Jerusalem 1st, Judea 2nd, and Samaria 3rd; it being reserved for the one born out of due time to complete the testimony by carrying the word to the uttermost part of the earth. (Col. i. 23.) Thus Philip had been greatly used. The whole city had been moved at his word, and (as is always the case where an evangelist works faithfully and according to his measure) had been enriched by the presence of other servants of the Lord more fitted to carry on the subsequent work than he who first brought into it the glad tidings. Are there not some who at the present day are acknowledged and accredited as evangelists who would consider such blessing to be the token for working in as large or even a larger sphere? Not so with Philip. The next step must be, as regards the earth, with one instead of many, but angel and Spirit must come in to share in this work. Philip is told by the former to go to the south, the road to the desert. No multitude can be found there, and the attentive and eager population of the city is succeeded by one solitary studious proselyte

of Ethiopia, who with but little intelligence is so occupied with his book that he reads it aloud, not even observing the one who had been sent for the purpose of bringing to him light upon its page. The Spirit had said to Philip, "Go near and join thyself to this chariot." The result happily is well-known to most of our readers. The work was done; and the same Spirit takes away the workman, but not the joy that that workman's word had caused. The water of life had flowed from Philip in the desert, and as regards Philip is no longer there, but it leaves therein a well which in its turn is to give forth its waters in the far off regions of Ethiopia.

The next thing we read of Philip is, that he was found at Azotus and that thence he preached through all the cities until he came to Cæsarea. We find no further mention of him until we come to chap. xxi. of the Acts where the expression is used which has occasioned these remarks. We thus have three distinct places named, 1st, Samaria; 2nd, the desert; 3rd, Azotus; after that there is a reference to the cities. The order of service is remarkable. 1st, with a large number. 2nd, with but one man. 3rd, no record whatever of any result either at Azotus or the cities between that place and Cæsarea. Many might say, "What

could ever have taken Philip to Azotus ? I never heard of any conversions there." The Spirit had caught away Philip from the eunuch, and we may justly conclude that he was not otherwise than in the line of the Spirit's action when found at Azotus. Surely there is a voice in such a history as this for any one who goes forth to preach the gospel in our own day, not only that he should bring exercise of heart as to his being in the current of the acting of God's Spirit and as to mistrust and judgment of self, so as not to be deceived by the enemy into mixing the vile with the precious, but also to encourage him in being instant in the work of the gospel whether with many or with few. But there is a yet higher, fuller and more blessed way of taking up the truth contained in this chapter than merely looking at the character of work to which this dear servant, so specially marked out as "the evangelist," was called. We are too apt to notice merely the work and the workman and to fail in entering into the thoughts and ways of the ONE who *alone* calls, raises up, sends, and directs for blessing ; the ONE of whom it is said, "He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." We would therefore desire that the reader should leave for a little while the scene in Samaria, the

desert, and Azotus, and in spirit (1 Cor. vi. 17) be with HIM who works all things according to His own will. The Lord sends forth His servants. (cf. Gal. i. 1, 10, 11.) He may use trouble, affliction, and persecution for this end. It was so in Philip's case; the persecution that arose upon the death of Stephen had been used to send the former outside Jerusalem and Judea, but God looks down from on high and sees this city of Samaria and intends to have a vast number taken out of it who are to be not only blessed on earth, but to be made like unto His Son in everything, to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, and to be manifested forth hereafter in the same glory. Angels may not carry the message to them. Who shall? Philip is the vessel to be used and the work is done. Again God looks down from on high and sees this one solitary traveller, and it is His will that he too shall be blessed for ever with that Son. Who shall be sent? Philip had been willing and obedient in the city to the multitude, he shall be the messenger to the Ethiopian. If Philip can thus in the work be led by Him who is on high, what room, opportunity, or desire, has he to measure the work by that result (or, alas, too often apparent result) which so influences and affects minds which estimate the blessing by that which the eye

can see and the ear hear and the natural mind and will accept and accredit. If looked at only from the earth, much would be thought of the work in Samaria, less of that in the desert, and nothing of Azotus; but when looked at from on high the three places may well stand side by side. It is to be noticed that angel and Spirit are both mentioned in connection with the work in the desert, but neither are found mentioned in connection with the city. There may be much more intercourse and communion with the Lord in a quiet and comparatively unknown work than in one as to numbers far more extensive.

These remarks may cause some of the dear and devoted evangelists of the present day to seek and to value more than they have hitherto done the direct leading of the Spirit in the work to which they have been called, to be more careful to discern the character of that which is, or seems to be, the result of their work, and to persevere in that work, whatever may be the outward circumstances which accompany it, ever bearing in mind the exhortation to the Corinthians, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE GOSPEL.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM. *Mark i. 14.*
 —The preaching of Jesus announced the kingdom, showed that the time was fulfilled, that the kingdom was at hand, that the people must repent and believe the gospel. We should distinguish between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of our salvation. Christ is the centre of both ; but there is a great difference between the preaching of a kingdom which is drawing near, and that of an eternal redemption accomplished upon the cross. It is quite possible that the two truths should be announced together. And indeed we find that the apostle Paul preached the kingdom ; but he also proclaimed an eternal redemption accomplished for us on the cross. Christ prophesied of His death, and announced that the Son of Man should give His life for the ransom of many ; but He could not announce an accomplished redemption during His life. Men ought to have received Him, and not to have put Him to death. Hence His testimony was about the kingdom which was drawing nigh.

This kingdom in its public power has been delayed because Christ has been rejected (see Rev. xi. 17) ; and this delay lasts all the time that Christ is sitting at the right hand of God until the time when He shall arise

from the throne of His Father to judge. God has said, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Ps. cx. 1). It is nevertheless true that the kingdom was already come in mystery according to Matt. xiii. This goes on during the time that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God; but when God's appointed moment shall come the Lord will arise and set up the kingdom, and with His own power will judge the living, and peace and happiness shall be established on the earth; and we who have received Him, whilst the world has rejected Him, shall go to meet Him in the air. We shall be for ever with the Lord, and shall come with Him in glory when He shall appear before the world, and shall reign with Him; and, what is still far better, we shall be like Him, and always with Him in the Father's house.

THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST.
2 Cor. iv. 4—As to the difference between the gospel of the glory and the gospel of the humiliation, the latter is pure grace in God, manifested here in Christ. John's writings show God revealing Himself in Christ to man in His life down here. In Paul's writings what we have habitually is man manifested in righteousness before God. The gospel of humiliation is perfect grace; it is

God coming down to man where he is, visiting him in his condition as such a one on earth. The gospel of the glory takes "this treasure" (ver. 7) and unfolds it. In Philippians ii., we have the whole line, from the time when Christ was "in the form of God" till He was on the cross, when, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death. This is the manifestation of God down here amongst sinners. But in the gospel of the glory, man is looked at as the old man totally set aside, yet man is in glory in virtue of the complete work that redeems us and justifies us, and gives us a place in the glory. The glory is the testimony to the efficacy of the work; the humiliation is the testimony to the greatness of the love. But it is all the same gospel. The gospel of the humiliation is God in grace, whereas the gospel of the glory is man in glory, of course as fruit of grace. In the gospel of the humiliation we have God in Christ, and in the gospel of glory we have man in Christ. The latter is a glorious result of the other no doubt, but it is a different aspect of the gospel.



FRAGMENT.—In the garden of Eden, man, conscious of sin and unable to bear the presence of God, withdrew from Him before God drove him out.

CHRIST IN HEAVEN, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT SENT DOWN.

Acts ii. 22-36.

This passage brings very definitely before us (Christ having been exalted as man by, and to, the right hand of God, consequently) how the disciples received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. This runs through all the instruction given here. The place of Christ, having finished redemption, is to sit now at the right hand of God, "expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Heb. x. 13). He has not yet taken His own throne at all; He is seated on the Father's throne. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. iii. 21). Thence He will "come again," as He says in John xiv., and receive us unto Himself.

Christianity is not the accomplishment of promise. Of the earthly part the Jews were the centre. But God meanwhile "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;" and then, till Christ comes again, He is sitting on the throne of the Father, and has sent the Holy Ghost down.

The Christian is one in whom the Holy Ghost dwells between the accomplishment

of redemption and His coming again. The thought and purpose of God about us is that we should "be conformed to the image of his Son." The Holy Ghost is given to dwell in us meanwhile, to dwell in us individually—collectively too, but I speak now individually. That is what the Christian is: Christ is his life, his righteousness: it is a ministration of righteousness and of the Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9); it does not say, "If he is not converted," though that would be true, of course. You see so many saints everywhere who are not settled in their relationship with God; the present power for this is the Holy Ghost come down.

The coming of the Lord Jesus is not simply a little bit of knowledge which we may add to the rest, but it is the hope of the Christian. If we die we go to Him, but what is held out to us is that the Christian is waiting for Christ. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28). If we die we go up to Him, and blessed truth too: but that Christ shall come, this is the hope of the Christian, the only full hope. "To depart and to be with Christ which is far better," but this is not the purpose of God for us; the purpose of God is that we

shall be like Christ. I do not want to be like Christ with my body in the grave, and my spirit in paradise: the expectation of the Lord's coming makes the person of Christ to be so much before the soul. I am going to see Him and to be like Him. Scripture does not talk of going to heaven, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8). "To depart and be with Christ which is far better" (Phil. i. 23): always the thought is going to Christ. That is what we all want personally, that Christ should have a larger place in the heart: "Rooted and built up in him;" "To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." "Christ is all," and He is "in all" as the power of life; having become our life, He is before our souls to fill them. Christ is the motive for the Christian for whatever he does, whether he eats or drinks; and his desires are never satisfied, and never can be, till he be with and like Christ. Therefore he is always waiting for Him. The Thessalonians were converted "to wait for his son from heaven" —(1 Thess. i. 10). The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ instead of being a little bit of prophetic knowledge, is interwoven with all the thoughts and condition of the Christian. Grace has appeared teaching us (Titus ii. 11, 12), and the grace that has appeared is the grace that saves. When the Lord went up

on high the Holy Ghost came down, and through the Holy Ghost we have not only the knowledge but the fruits of the place He has given us. The seal of the Holy Ghost is put upon us; the presence of the Holy Ghost is that which gives the full knowledge of our place and blessedness. Redemption, which brings us to God, is finished; we are exercised afterwards, all that goes on, but our relationship is never in question. I believe the government of God is most important when we are children; "He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous" (Job xxxvi. 7). This is most important and blessed in its place, but the great thing is first of all to get into the place where God has put us.

The very names of God go along with this. To the patriarchs He was "God Almighty," when they were strangers and pilgrims; to Abraham He said, "I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward" (Gen. xv.); to Israel He had given promises, and He takes the name Jehovah, the name of One who, having given promises, never rests until they are fulfilled. Then in the Revelation He speaks of Himself as the One "who is, and who was, and who is to come" (Rev. i. 8). All that was concerned in a certain sense with this world, but it is not so with us. We are called to suffer with Christ,

because Christ has been rejected, and this with the full knowledge of redemption. "And I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (John xvii. 26). God has another name, "Most High." You never find the name "Father" from Psalm i. to cl. "And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). "Life and incorruptibility" have been brought "to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. i. 10). The name "Almighty" does not carry eternal life. "Jehovah" fulfils promises, but does not give eternal life, but the Father sent the Son, "that we might live through Him" (1 John iv. 9). "For the life was manifested and we have seen it, and bear witness and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John i. 2). "And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 John v. 11). When we receive the Son, we get into the place of children; is the force of the expression in John's Gospel, "But as many as received him, to them gave he right to be called the sons of God" (John i. 12). The Son is there, and we are associated with Him completely and fully. In Matthew iii. the Holy Ghost

comes down upon Him, and the Father's voice says, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." There the full revelation of the Trinity is Christianity : we have the Son as man, the Holy Ghost coming down in bodily shape like a dove, and the Father's voice, in that wondrous scene of Christ taking His place publicly as Man : "I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John i. 34).

The Old Testament saints were quickened surely ; but if you take Galatians iv., you find they were not in the condition of sons : "The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all" (Chap. iv. 1). "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Ver. 6). That had not been the case before ; they were ordered to do this and that under the law.

"Verily, verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). He was totally alone, a true Man in His relationship with God ; even when He declared His Father's name to His disciples, they did not understand a bit of it. Then you see redemption brings us into this place.

Let me turn back to the basis of all this. Here am I, a child of Adam, with an evil nature and sins; Christ bore my sins, and that is all perfectly settled for ever; if it is not, it never can be; it is "once for all, for ever;" there is no other application as regards the putting away of my sins in God's sight. He does not impute them for the simple, blessed reason that Christ has borne them, and He is sitting at the right hand of God, because it is done. Many a true honest soul sees only past sins put away, but what about sinning afterwards? Go to Calvin, and he will send you back to your baptism, while the evangelicals go back to the blood. "For the law, having a shadow of good things to come can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. x. 1). "In which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience" (Heb. ix. 9). If I go into God's presence I have not the most distant thought that He imputes anything to me as guilt: that is what is wanting to so many souls. "Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of *sins*" (Heb. x. 2); it does not say *sin*, the old stock is there. "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again

made of sins every year" (Heb. x. 3). I go into the presence of God now, and I see Christ sitting, because by one offering He has settled everything. "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins; but this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Heb. x. 11-13). He sits at God's right hand, because He has finished that work perfectly: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Ver. 14). He has set them apart to God, and He has perfected for ever their consciences.

"The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing" (Heb. ix. 5). Now we have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." The thing is done; it was prophesied of before, but now it is done. "For ever" here means never interrupted. If I come to God, Christ is always there, and my conscience is always perfect. I may go and humble myself in the dust if I have dishonoured Christ; it is in the holiest that I learn how bad sin is. I could not be before God in the light until the veil was rent, but

“by one offering” Christ has perfected my conscience. When I go to God I find Christ, who bore my sins, sitting at the right hand of God because He has done it. This will make me see sin a great deal more than anything else. I have got a new nature, and I am in the light as God is in the light.

This turns the question from righteousness to holiness. So long as I am connecting it with a question of acceptance, it is righteousness that I want: suppose righteousness is settled, then I abhor the sin because it is sin, for itself. “Well but,” you say, “without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.” That is quite true, but you are looking for righteousness, not holiness. The clearance in that way is absolute; but there is another thing which gives my soul its place before God. Not only Christ died for my sins, but I died with Christ; the tree is bad, not only the fruit: then I reckon myself dead. In the first part of Romans we get nothing about experience. Suppose I owed £100 and that it was paid for me, no experience would be in question; but suppose I say to you, “You are dead to sin,” perhaps you would say, “Indeed I am not, it was working in me this morning.” Till you are clear about that, you are not settled in your place. The old tree has been cut down, and grafted with Christ. In Romans vi, I

reckon myself dead: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin" (chap. vi. 11); in Colossians iii. 3, we get "For ye are dead;" and in 2 Corinthians iv. 10, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." We find God's estimate and faith's estimate; and in Galatians ii. 19, we have the summary of the whole thing, "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." When I find a nature working in me contrary to Christ, I say it has been crucified with Christ, and I do not own it. "What the law could not do God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh," (Rom. viii). He has forgiven the sins and condemned the tree that produced them, but the tree that was condemned has died in Christ, before God and for faith.

I have to learn thus by the power of the Spirit of God, not merely that what the old tree produced has been blotted out, but that Christ is my life; "I am crucified with Christ," and sin in the flesh has been condemned. Where? Where you died with Christ: when Christ was there for sin, sin in the flesh was condemned, not forgiven; it died, for faith, where it was condemned. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I

thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord " (Rom. vii. 24, 25). Looked at as in that old man, I died in Christ. The moment we believe in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, then we get the sealing of God. Because the blood of Christ is upon me, then the Holy Ghost comes and dwells in me. They received the Holy Ghost on believing the forgiveness of their sins ; in Acts x., we find the same thing : faith received the forgiveness of their sins in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then the Holy Ghost came on them. As in the figure in the Old Testament, we are washed, sprinkled with blood, and then anointed with oil. The Holy Ghost comes, then I know where I am, that my standing is in Christ : "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus " (Rom. viii. 1). " In Christ " is my standing before God ; the Holy Ghost is the present power of it all ; the work is Christ's.

I get the other point, knowledge of salvation, and knowledge that I am not a child of Adam, but a child of God. "To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins" (Luke i. 77). "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." "The same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost " (John i. 29, 33). He could not baptize with

the Holy Ghost till He had died, and was risen and glorified. I know the place I have got into : the treasure is in an earthen vessel, but I have got the knowledge of salvation. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor, iii. 17). It is that which enables me to say with truth, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." There I get first the accomplishment of redemption; and Christ sitting on God's right hand; and the purpose of God, as the blood on the lintel and doorposts made the Israelites free, and they were brought from Egypt across the Red Sea, out of an old place into a new, so that Moses could sing, "Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation" (Exod. xv. 13). "Thou shalt bring them in" (Ver. 17). I get these two things, complete redemption is one; the other I have not got yet : Christ has entered as our Forerunner, I have not entered yet, but the Holy Ghost is "the earnest of the inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Christ "endured the cross, and despised the shame," and He is set down as Man at the right hand of God. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. v. 1, 2). I

know by the Holy Ghost that I am in divine favour. We have these three things.

1. We are justified, and have peace with God.

2. We stand in present grace, in divine favour.

3. When Christ comes again, we shall be in glory with Him. "That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me" (John xvii. 23). It is "That the world may *know*," not believe : this ought to be now, but it is very far from it. When it sees us in glory, it cannot help knowing ; when we appear in the same glory with Christ, people will think, "Why these people that we trampled under foot are in the same glory with Christ !" We do not wait for that : the world will know when we are in the same glory with Christ, but now we know by the Holy Ghost, "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them" (John xvii. 24). Beloved friends, just think of that :—your hearts ought to have the consciousness that He loves you as He loves Jesus ! A child might say, "I am a foolish child ; I think little about my mother ;" but he has no uncertainty about his mother's love to him. We never apprehend all God's love to us ; still we know we are children and sons. It is no uncertain place :

I know I am loved as Christ is loved ; we have poor wretched hearts, that is quite true. A true child does not measure its mother's love ; I am sure it could not, but it knows and is in it.

We have got "the adoption of sons." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father." I have got the consciousness of it; I know my place. We know God as our Father. The soul that has the Spirit of God dwelling in him knows not only the clearing of the sins of the old man, but that he is in the Second man, and knowing it, he cries, "Abba Father." "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all of one : for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb. ii. 11.) They are "all of one," one set, as it were. What is my life? Christ. What is my righteousness? Christ. He is not one with the unconverted world ; there is no union with the world in incarnation; He stood for us in the cross, but He has united believers with Him in glory. If I take the Father's relationship with Christ as Man, He is not ashamed to call us brethren. In Psalm xxii. He says, "Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. I will declare thy name unto my brethren." His work was finished : as soon as that was done, He comes out in resurrection, past the

power of death and of Satan, and He sends this message to His disciples: "I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God" (John xx. 17). He had never said that before, though He called them "sister" and "mother" and "brother" in a general way. Beloved brethren, what we want is to see how Christ has united us to Himself, to see the way God has brought us into the place of the Second Man, as sin brought us into the place of the first man.

One point more, our connection with Christ: "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter," "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Ah, it is a terrible thing that saints are so far from scriptural ground as to say we cannot know! We are in Christ, "accepted in the Beloved," and we have the Spirit of adoption. One thing more, besides the point I am on, Christ is in us. You cannot live on in sin, you are dead; that is where the Christian's responsibility is, not in connection with his acceptance ("By one man's obedience many shall be made righteous"). I know He is in me, having bought me at all cost, and there I get responsibility. I get the two things in Romans viii. "No condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," and "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of

His." You have been delivered, you have redemption in Christ, and you have been sealed with the Holy Ghost. I own nothing as life in the Christian but Christ: the whole of our lives should be the expression of Christ and nothing else, our "speech always with grace, seasoned with salt." Only one other thing, beloved friends; God is love, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts: therefore we get in the Epistle of John, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." We have the Person of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, so our bodies are temples: God is there in the perfection of His own nature; we have to watch not to grieve such a Guest. It is through the Holy Ghost that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts; that is the key to everything. "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also" (Rom. v. 3); it is the key to everything; I want it, and He sent it. Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, and the Holy Ghost comes down giving us the consciousness of the present relationship in which we are to walk.

"Be ye therefore imitators of God as dear children" (Eph. v. 1). How are we to imitate God? Was not Christ God? I earnestly desire that all our hearts may get hold, through the power of the Spirit of God, of the place we are brought into, that

we may have the consciousness of this, the knowledge of it through the Holy Ghost until we go to be with Him. The Lord give you to have this consciousness. Why, beloved, to think of the Father's love at work, and the Son of God having gone down to death for you, it is not much to expect!

The Lord give us to feel what we owe Him, that our whole desire may be to glorify Him.



THE WORLD.—Anyone who has closely observed the walk of Christians, and who has cared for souls with a heart in any little measure zealous for the glory of the Lord and desirous of the spiritual welfare of the dear children of God, will not have failed to perceive the fatal influence that the world exercises over them when it gains entrance into their hearts. God only knows, and the one who has suffered from it, by what subtle means, and under what an *amiable guise* the world often invades the heart of the Christian. But the manifestation of Christ to the soul, and the power of His presence, are never ways by which the world insinuates itself into the heart. Those, therefore, who are found, by grace, near Christ, are shielded from the influence of such feelings, and can judge them and everything which tends to make a way for the world within the heart, or for desires which are connected with the world.

THE OLIVE, THE VINE, AND THE FIG-TREE:

BEING NOTES OF AN ADDRESS MANY YEARS AGO.

I trust, dear brethren, that our souls may be directed to the importance of speaking as before the Lord. What we are speaking of is not merely like man's thoughts and circumstances, but the things of the Lord. May we all keep this in mind.

I would take up in connection with Romans xi., the wild olive tree. It is the expression of the character of the Gentiles, who are told in the Epistle to the Ephesians, to remember that they were "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." It is of great importance to understand the exceeding wideness of that expression, "Gentiles in the flesh"—"the wild olive tree." What we want is "to have no confidence in the flesh." We see what the flesh is in Philippians iii: "We are the circumcision," says the apostle, "who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." All the character which he gives to the flesh is the "concision," strictness of ordinances, legitimacy of descent, works of our own: these three things are marked as repudiated

flesh, though of a religious claim. They are also of great importance as marking the character of the flesh under all circumstances. The resurrection cuts off all boasting in natural descent. My descent is that I am born of God (John i. 13). We are "sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 18). When we come to look at the fairest character of the flesh in the world, what is it when it is compared with being sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty? If there were any title to anything in the flesh, the Jew had it; for the Gentile to talk of ordinances, descent, etc., is indeed folly.

When God has settled anything, it is settled. In the flesh we are Gentiles; in the new man we are born of God. If I get out of this, I get out of the Spirit into the flesh. In this Philippians iii., we have very severe names—dogs, evil workers, the concision. It is too bad for the Gentiles to come in and attempt to bring in that which has been set aside in the Jew by our Lord. Judaism had proper glory in the flesh; as concerning the flesh, Christ was a Jew. Here would have been the crowning of the flesh, if there had been anything good in our flesh. But He was rejected. There was no good thing in man, and therefore death intervenes.

We have the two principles of descent

and works brought before us in this chapter. Works never satisfy the conscience, for it appeals to something that is not in itself. This is all set aside, and therefore the apostle says, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." The character of the flesh is that it is "without God in the world." This leads us to see the character of the "wild olive tree"—the Gentiles. When the commonwealth of Israel is spoken of, it is not that they are strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope, but the contrary. (See Rom. ix. 4-6.)

The point of distinction between the wild olive tree, and the good one, is this: the last was an election of grace and promise; the first, the nation itself which failed. From the days of the fall there has been a remnant according to the election of grace. Abel, in this sense, was a remnant and a suffering one; but there was no interfering in judgment till the flood; then the world refused the Lord, and the remnant was preserved.

Here was interference in judgment, God's acting in the world; thereon Satan came in, and pretended to be the agent in the good and evil that was going on in the world. Then came in idolatry. Satan, having reduced man to misery, set himself up as God over him. Next Abraham was specially called

out as the remnant, as one connected with God. The church comes in on the accomplishment of its own redemption, though its glory is still held in hope, a remnant according to the election of grace, made the deposit of promise. And this is the olive tree. It is true that it becomes afterwards Israel nationally, and "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." God never repents of His calling, neither of Abraham, nor of Israel. All our hopes would be shaken if that purpose were not infallible, but (before this) faith is spoken of as accounted for righteousness.

Faith is never spoken of in the Scriptures as brought out before the time of Abraham. Abraham believed in Him who was to raise up Jesus from the dead. The character of his faith was, that it was faith in the resurrection. Resurrection alone takes man ruined in sin and brings in something beyond the reach of evil in a new scene—the risen man. We get the promises made to Abram (that are alluded to in the Galation) in Genesis xii., when he is first called out. There was the first breaking of the whole link of flesh as regarded Abram, and then the promise was confirmed to his seed after being risen from the dead. (Gen. xxii.) The promise was given to Abram, as the remnant called out, then confirmed to Isaac

consequently on the resurrection (in figure). The reasoning out of this we have in the Epistle to the Romans. The apostle there shows that the ground on which the promise comes is justification by faith.

The Jews chose to take the promises, not on the ground of the faith of Abraham, but on that of their own obedience conditionally; and the moment they got on this ground they failed. They tried to do some good thing, like the young man in the Gospels, who, wrong in principle, knew not that "none is good, save one, that is God." Israel accepted the ground of law for that of promise. The law rests on the stability of another party; the promise rests on the stability of the Promiser. The prophets always take Israel off the ground of law on that of promise. In taking the law they must rest on descent and ordinances; and this is what the apostle combats in Romans iii., iv. Up to chapter iii., he proves the universality of the guilt of the world, and the necessity of the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin. In chapter iv., we have the principle of the resurrection. He leads us out of natural life, out of the law, into the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus. Chapter viii. plants the Christian in his own proper place in the grace of God.

Then the apostle turns to the question of

what becomes of the Jew. Has God cast them off? No; their bringing in again rests on the promise of God in resurrection, as we read in the Acts: "And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he saith on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David." The apostle's argument in chapter ix., is just this: he asserts God's title (the election of the nation of the Jews still subsisting) to elect whom He pleases. How come believers to have all these privileges mentioned in chapter viii.? Because they are God's election; the principle is in God, not in the circumstances only of the election of Israel. Christ while necessarily the root of blessing is also the object of the promises.

Then there is another principle brought in, God's enduring with great long-suffering the vessels of wrath. God's dealings are suited to the bountifulness of His grace. The Lord brings out the remnant associated with Himself in an entirely new character; as we read, "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force." "If by any means," says the apostle, "I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead," and it cost him a good deal of suffering. This is the character which the Lord attaches to His ministry. He came to

the lost sheep of the house of Israel till John ix., x. Then He puts forth His own sheep, taking them out of the fold, to be one flock, one Shepherd.

What the church has to do now is to pitch its tabernacle outside the camp. We read in Exodus xxxiii., that every one which sought Jehovah went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation that was without the camp. Israel had failed, and then there was this seeking Jehovah, and Moses talking to Jehovah face to face. Christ's character is that He went without the camp, and in Hebrews xiii., we are told to go forth also unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. Israel's camp was not properly the world. If you look at it in its moral character, it was the world, but still it was called the holy city. But the believer is now called to go without the camp.

The children of the flesh, or Israel (the apostle shows in Romans xi. 7), reckon on what the flesh could reckon on, and are cut off; and if the Gentile branch continue (or have faith) in God's goodness, well. If I am bringing in anything between me and God's goodness, I am not continuing in God's goodness, though this may be only failure for a moment. He who has the Spirit, seeing what the apostasy of the flesh in him may lead to, watches against that power of

the flesh that would separate him from God; and this is the right use to make of the lists of the evils of the flesh that we have in the word of God. Continuance is not of the flesh; it does not depend on ordinances, but on living faith: "otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

Thus the remnant is clearly brought out. Inasmuch as the first remnant was amongst the Jews, the flesh in them turned back to ordinances. Will the remnant make progress? Undoubtedly, though it will always be comparatively a little flock. The majority will turn back to the flesh, and we shall have to say in humbleness of soul, "my work is with my God." The aspect of the work is towards all—the end towards God. *Our strength in the way should be drawn from God only.* Nothing may seem to be produced here sometimes in the way of results, but this should not cast us down. *Our temptation is to look to the blessing that is produced, and not to the Source that produces it, and that is the cause of much weakness.* In the Galatians and other parts of Scripture we have this most important and clear testimony that it is mere fleshly unbelief to go back to descent and ordinances—to the weak and beggarly elements. The moment we rest in them, we go on the ground of Judaism: "Ye observe days, and

months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed labour on you in vain." This was judaizing clearly, and Peter himself was ensnared by it. (See Gal. ii.)

The flesh is opposed, not so much to religion as, to Christ who brings the flesh to nothing. The Christian's character is not to be respected in the devil's kingdom. When God came into the world, where was He found? Go to the manger, and there you see Him; but there was no room for Him in the inn. If the Christian take the place of rank and honour in the world, it is not of the Father but of the world.

All this being settled as not being of the Father, it is quite enough to settle what is of man, and the Lord's answer to Peter on the point was, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things which be of God, but those which be of men" (Matt. xvi. 23). This turning back again to Judaism, to the weak and beggarly elements of the world, is in the judgment of the Spirit of God exactly identical with the worshipping of Juggernaut, and of stocks, and stones, and demons; it is contrary to the fundamental principle of justification by faith. This is the reason why the apostle says, "I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice, for I stand in doubt of

you"—you have gone off the ground of christian principles. There he changes his voice, and talks of the old law to those who wish to be under the law.

The remnant running all through from Abel downward were a poor remnant, not having its life below; it had no continuance here, for death must come in, and their hope must therefore be in the morning of the resurrection, for the sentence on the nation was, "they shall never see life."

I would say that I believe the vine is more ecclesiastical in its character, the fig-tree national. We have the fig character in Luke, where the nations too ("the fig-tree, and all the trees") are brought in (Luke xxi. 29). We read of the vine in Psalm lxxx.: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt, thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it." The vineyard was the circumcision, the nation generally. It was planted to produce fruit, but it failed. The distinctive character of the true vine is that it is judged by its fruits; it is not a question of ordinances.

Matthew xii., is clearly judicial judgment on the nation. The parable of the sower (xiii.) clearly, to my mind, presents an external operation after the nation had been found to be without fruit. There was no tree in human nature that produced fruit;

and then it is said, "Behold a sower went out to sow." The first three parables are addressed to the multitude; the last four are the Lord's own mind about things addressed solely to His disciples.

In the first place the Jews rejected John the Baptist, next they rejected the Son of man. Then there was the testimony of the Holy Ghost that the atonement had been really made, and that, if they repented, Jesus would come back again (Acts iii. 19, 20): all this closed with Stephen's rejection, whose spirit goes to be with Christ in heaven. Then Paul is called out to carry the testimony of grace to the Gentiles; but Israel, having rejected grace themselves, became the deliberate opposers of grace to others, as it is said, "forbidding us to preach to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sin alway, for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (Thes. ii. 16). They would not allow grace to go to the Gentiles any more than they would receive it themselves.

Still, dear friends, it is a blessed testimony to the patience of God that, after the church had been established from its Gentile centre—Antioch, Paul is found at Rome, a prisoner, testifying of Jesus still to the Jews, the Lord standing with him and strengthening him in the very lion's mouth

in Cæsar's household. When brought before the Emperor, there was no dimness of light in the apostle, no hiding that all which is not of the Father is of the world, but the expression of this plainly to the powers that be. God does not depart from His principles, nor dim His light that men may bear with it.

After David's house had failed, the sentence of blinding passed on Israel. It hung over them through this long period, and was not fully executed until they had rejected the testimony of the Holy Ghost, and resisted the grace of God to the Gentile.

As to the word "mystery," I believe, in principle, it may be thus explained. There is such a thing as loving righteousness and hating iniquity acting on the conscience. "Thou shalt not kill," for instance. There is no mystery in this. God could not deal in righteousness with the world. We know how it failed in this. Then the secret came in. Anything that was above and beyond the principle of the law of righteousness were "the secret things" (Deut. xxix. 29). "The secret of Jehovah is with them that fear him" (Ps. xxv. 14), and here comes in faith. The bringing in of the Gentiles, for instance, to be one body, the body of Christ, was known only by fresh revelation.

All that is consequent upon man's sin can hardly be "the mystery of iniquity." The

mystery of iniquity is Satan's taking the form of God's goodness, and claiming the worship that belongs to Him; as what the apostle calls the worshipping of angels (referring to something that was not of God), will-worship, and the satisfying of the flesh. Paul was, when he came to be the object of worship, a more dangerous demon than Theseus or Apollo. (See Acts xiv.) The way to judge of a thing is by the way in which it acts on the conscience, and the tendency of it is to draw away the soul from God and His worship. The Athenians worshipping the "unknown God" shows the very extremity of evil—the confession that in utter iniquity they did not know God.

Then as to "apostasy," it is simply the departure from the principle of faith, on which the dispensation is based, to the law for instance, the very taking of which, at Sinai, was an evidence of Jewish apostasy. God had borne them on eagles' wings on their way, given them manna for their food, held them up in blessed dependence on the constant exercise of His grace; but they chose conditions of their own and then departed from the first principle of obedience. "Thou shalt have none other gods but me." Man's doing was making the calf. When it was made, Providence, they said, did it (as Aaron told Moses, "I cast it into the fire,

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and there come out this calf"); then they worshipped it. When Moses saw it, he had it ground to powder, and made them drink it with water. This was faith.

The church is set on the ground of faith, on the discovery that the flesh has utterly failed, and that the risen Saviour has to be looked to: but it has departed in principle from being in the favour of God in grace as united to Christ, and the apostasy is coming in. The record of the apostasy is in Jude and John especially. The spirit of Anti-christ is not merely natural enmity to God, but "they went out from us because they were not of us." There is no hope at all then of restoration. There is unbelief; and is this continuing in God's goodness? "That day shall not come except there come a falling away first." The flesh always fails in the deposit entrusted to it. This is apostasy, darkening God's light. The flesh may have the form and keep up the form, but it will end in apostasy. What does Stephen say as to the rejection of the Holy Ghost by the Jews in that dispensation? He does not refer so much to the rejection of Christ or of the intermediate prophets, but he goes back to their original departure from God in the wilderness.

Church history is just the progressive history of what the church has done when,

having ceased to lean on God, it began to lean on itself. This is a most solemn thing. We have indeed "seen the end of all perfection;" but God has given us one thing on which the soul can rest, the Lord Jesus Himself. "He is precious," not only because He has redeemed us, but if "we have tasted that the Lord is gracious" in the consciousness of failure, how blessed to have something that the eye can rest on and be satisfied with! And God the Father is satisfied there. There our hearts are sure to get rest, and we can get it nowhere else. When the eye of Jesus passed over the wide field of His labour, and He could see no answer to it and could do nothing but pray to the Father, He was able to say, I rest in the Father, and the Father rests in Me, and here you may find rest. We find rest in the One in whom God the Father finds rest—in Jesus. What rest there is to our souls, in the sense of their feebleness in glorifying the Father, to know that in Jesus He has been perfectly glorified, and that now there has been fresh glory brought to Him by what Jesus has done for the church, and here the church is united with the glory of the Father.

As to the remnant, I believe it is properly Jewish. They are those who, in the midst of apostasy, are leaning only on God.

What is the duty of the saint as to those relations in which the word does not recognize him? I would leave a great deal to the individual's own conscience. Unless the principle were there, I do not see any good in enforcing effects. Many who are most faithful in pressing things on the consciences of others did act for a long time in those things they now condemn, when in principle they were just as faithful as they are now. We ~~must~~ have patience very often with those who do ~~not~~ understand. I like never to sanction the principle that is evil, but to stretch out my hand to help out the person who is in the evil. When Moses had been talking to God, and returned to the people, did he sanction their evil? No, not a bit, though he pleaded with God for them.

As to the fact of what the world is, when we say of a person, "He is getting on in the world," is it not well understood? God does not own those relations which constitute the world. All natural and personal dependence can be owned by God. In these we have given directions how to act; in none else. The moment this is departed from, you must get another principle to act on than simple fidelity to the service of Christ.

The place of the Christian is that of implicit obedience to "the powers that be," even supposing that Nero were king; for he

could not touch my portion which is heavenly, and therefore whatever the question be (unless it interfered with my obedience to God) I would not mind, for he could only bring me into the "the lion's mouth," and this might turn to a testimony; but he could not touch my resurrection life. Unless it were a question concerning God's honour, I would not come down from this principle and judge of what is right or wrong as to the things of the world. We are told to submit to the king as supreme, and unto governors as them that are sent by Him, &c. Whoever is king, he is "supreme;" for there can be no power but of God, or we deny the omnipotence of God. I have nothing to do but own what God owns. I get my example in Christ, who appealed to none but God; but still in the darkest hour of iniquity, when God's priests were interceding with Gentile power for the crucifixion of His Son, the Lord says, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." The power from God was submitted to by our blessed Lord, who committed His cause "to him that judgeth righteously," and this is our example.

I could not be a magistrate while Satan is the god of this world, for I cannot serve two masters; and if I cannot say on the bench that what Christ says is true, I must

be dishonouring Him and serving the world. In the millennium it will not be so. Then we shall rule; but I cannot now, because the principle on which power is exercised is not the honour of God. The magistrate is the resister of evil, but His word is, "If when you do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (1 Pet. ii. 20). I would rather have what is acceptable to God than all the civil rights in the world.

The duty then of the saints is submission: I know no other, or I must act on the principles which the flesh recognizes; I cannot seek a good object in a bad way. The object must be God's, and the way God's.

The Christian having a new nature, is entitled to judge all things, and to ask, Does this come from the Spirit, or from the flesh? What is the standard of the new man? "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. v. 48). Christ's example and the Father's perfectness are the principles on which the Christian ought to act, as it is said, "Love your enemies," &c. How have I drunk into the understanding of God's love? In His having brought salvation to my own soul? And I am therefore called to be the personal witness to the world that "none is good" but God, and that He is kind to the un-

thankful and to the evil, &c. It is not now, "be perfect with Jehovah." This has been settled in Christ, but the Father sends me now to present His perfectness to the world.

The world is withered in the activity of disappointed selfishness, and wants the beneficence of God. If a Christian gets his heart sunk in the listlessness and vanity of the world, a pretty witness will he be of God's character to it.

I see the Lord going "about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him;" seeking not "his own," satisfied with the Father, and we ought to be satisfied with Him, and not to be seeking our own, but to be seeking grace from the fountain of grace. How can a Christian broil and travail his soul in the things of the world? If the Lord said there was no rest to be found in the world, it is a foolish thing to seek. There is only rest in Him, who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Fellowship with Christ in the expression of God's goodness is the place of the Christian.

Strange to have to discuss whether the honour or power of the world belongs to the saint! As it is said, "that no flesh shall glory in his presence." What is honour in the world? There is no good in it, but that

it be given up for the Lord's sake ; this is the only good that I know of. Let me spend every shilling that I have in the service of the Lord, still it will be the mammon of unrighteousness ; but the Christian has the privilege of even turning the mammon of righteousness into the expression of grace. There would be no money or rank at all if there were not sin in the world. The person of rank is the receiver of respect, &c., and others are the givers : as a Christian I give willingly ; but he is the beggar in the world. I do not say this in the spirit of disrespect ; that would be quite wrong ; for disrespect towards others is ruinous in Christianity. Still the secret of the Lord is that what passes current in the world is given by those who, having heavenly riches, can give freely, because they have nothing to hinder them. Am I in principle to take what Christ did not ? Never. If heaven rejoiced over the Son of God and the King of Israel placed in a manger, what should our feelings as to the honour of this world be ? And yet we know how we should feel under similar circumstances in this world, where everything is measured by the standard of selfishness.

Let us remember these words about our Lord, "though he were rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9).

THE FATHER'S GRACE.

Father ! in Thine eternal power—
Thy grace—and majesty Divine—
No soul, in this weak mortal hour,
Can grasp the glory that is Thine !

E'en in its thoughts of sovereign grace
It leaves us all far, far behind ;
The love, that gives with Christ a place,
Surpasses our poor feeble mind !

And yet, that love is not unknown,
To those who have the Saviour seen ;
Nor strange, to those He calls His own—
Pilgrims, in scenes where He has been.

In Him, Thy perfect love revealed
Has led our hearts that love to trace
Where nothing of that love's concealed—
But meets us, in our lowly place !

But grace, the source of all our hope,
From Thine eternal Nature flows :
Could to our lost condition stoop,
And now, through Christ, no hindrance
knows ;

Has flowed, in fullest streams, below ;
And opened to our hearts the place,
Where, in its ripened fruits, we'll know
The eternal blessings of that grace !

And here we walk, as sons through grace,
A Father's love our present joy :
Sons, in the brightness of Thy face,
Find rest, no sorrows can destroy !

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Nor is the comfort of thy love,
In which we "Abba, Father," cry,
The only blessing that we prove ;
Because that love is ever nigh—

A holy Father's constant care
Keeps watch, with an unwearying eye,
To see what fruits His children bear,
Fruits that may suit their calling high ;

Takes ever knowledge of our state—
What dims communion with His love—
Might check our growth—or separate
Our hearts from what's revealed above.

Oh, wondrous Love ! that ne'er forgets
The objects of its tender care :
May chasten still, while sin besets,
To warn and guard them where they are—

But ne'er forgets ; but feeds them still
With tokens of His tender love ;
Will keep, till, freed from every ill,
They find their rest with Him above !

Oh ! wondrous, infinite, Divine !
Keep near, my soul, to that blest place,
Where all those heavenly glories shine
Which suit the brightness of His face !

O lowliness, how feebly known,
That meets the grace that gave the Son !
That waits, to serve Him as His own ;
Till grace what grace began shall crown !

COUNSELS TO YOUNG CONVERTS.

Cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. Depend on Him. There is power in Christ; there is sufficiency in Christ for all He would have you do or be. Some are allowed a long season of joy on first believing. But God knows our hearts, and how soon we begin to depend on our joy, and not on Christ. *He* is our object—not the joy. Sin no longer remains *on* you, but the flesh is *in* you to the end: the old stock will put forth its buds, which must be nipped off as they appear. No fruit can come of it. It is the new nature that bears fruit *unto God*. But though the flesh is in you, do not be thinking of this, but *think of Christ*. As you grow in the knowledge of Christ, a joy comes, deeper than the first joy. I have known Christ more or less between thirty and forty years, and I can truly say I have ten thousand times more joy in Him now than I had at first. It is a deeper, calmer joy. The water rushing down a hill is beautiful to look at, and makes most noise; but you will find the water in the plain deeper, calmer, more fit for general use. Cleave to Christ with purpose of heart. A distracted heart is the bane of Christians. When we have got

something that is not Christ, we are away from the source of strength. When my soul is *filled* with Christ, I have no heart or eye for the trash of this world. If Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith, it will not be a question with you, "What harm is there in this and that?" But rather, "Am I doing this for Christ?" "Can Christ go along with me in this?" Do not let the world come in and distract your thoughts. I speak especially to you young ones. They who are older have had more experience in it, and know more what it is worth: but it all lies shining before you, endeavouring to attract you. Its smiles are deceitful, still it smiles. It makes promises which it cannot keep; still it makes them. Your hearts are too big for the world: it cannot fill them. They are too little for Christ: He fills heaven, He will fill you to overflowing. "Cleave to the Lord with *purpose of heart*." He knew how treacherous the heart is, and how soon it would put anything in *His* place. You will have indeed to learn what is in your own heart. Abide with God and you will learn it with Him, and with His grace. If you do not, you will have with bitter sorrow to learn it with the devil, through his successful temptation. But God is faithful. If you have been getting away from Him, and other things have

come in, and formed a crust, as it were, over your hearts, you will not at once get back the joy. God will have you deal with this crust, and get rid of it. Remember Christ bought you with His own blood, that you should be His, not the world's. Do not let Satan get between you and God's grace. However careless you may have been, however far you may have got away from Him, count on His love. It is His joy to see you back again. Look at the sin with horror, but never wrong Him by distrusting His love. Mistrust not His work, mistrust not His love. He has loved you and will love you to the end. Talk much with Jesus. Never be content without being able to walk and talk with Christ as with a dear friend. Be not satisfied with anything short of close intercourse of soul with Him who has loved you and washed you from your sins in His own blood.



THE LORD JESUS IN JOHN XI., XII.

These chapters show us in what different channels the Lord's thoughts flowed from those of the heart of man. His ideas, so to speak, of *misery* and of *happiness* were so different from what man's naturally are.

The eleventh chapter opens with a scene

of human misery. The dear family of Bethany are visited with sickness, and the voice of health and thanksgiving in their dwelling has to yield to mourning, lamentation, and woe. But He, who of all had the largest and tenderest sympathies, is the calmest among them; for He carried with Him that foresight of resurrection, which made Him overlook the chamber of sickness, and the grave of death.

When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He abode two days longer in the place where He was. But when that sickness ends in death, He begins His journey in the full and bright prospect of resurrection. And this makes His journey steady and undisturbed. And, as He approaches the scene of sorrow, His action is still the same. He replies again and again to the passion of Martha's soul, from that place where the knowledge of a power that was beyond that of death had, in all serenity, seated Him. And though He has to move still onward, there is no haste. For on Mary's arrival, He is still in the same place where Martha had met Him. And the issue, as I need not say, comes in due season to vindicate this stillness of His heart, and this apparent tardiness of His journey.

Thus was it with Jesus here. The path of Jesus was *His own*. When man was

bowed down in sorrow at the thought of death, He was lifted up in the sunshine of resurrection.

But the sense of resurrection, though it gave this peculiar current to the thoughts Jesus, left His heart still alive to the sorrows of others. For His was not *indifference*, but *elevation*. And such is the way of faith always. Jesus weeps with the weeping of Mary and her company. His whole soul was in the sunshine of those deathless regions which lay far away from the tomb of Bethany; but it could visit the valley of tears, and weep there with those that wept.

But again.—When man was lifted up in the expectation of something good and brilliant in the earth, His soul was full of the holy certainty that death awaits all here, however promising or pleasurable; and that honour and prosperity must be hoped for only in other and higher regions. The twelfth chapter shows us this.

When they heard of the raising of Lazarus, much people flocked together from Bethany to Jerusalem, and at once hailed Him as the King of Israel. They would fain go up with Him to the Feast of Tabernacles, and antedate the age of glory, seating Him in the honours and joys of the kingdom. The Greeks also take their place with Israel

in such an hour. Through Philip, as taking hold of the skirt of a Jew (Zech. viii.), they would see Jesus and worship. But in the midst of all this Jesus Himself sits solitary. He knows that earth is not the place for all this festivation and keeping of holy day. His spirit muses on death, while their thoughts were full of a kingdom with its attendant honours and pleasures. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

Such was the peculiar path of the spirit of Jesus. *Resurrection was everything to Him.* It was His relief amid the sorrows of life, and His object amid the promises and prospects of the world. It gave His soul a calm sunshine, when dark and heavy clouds had gathered over Bethany; it moderated and separated His affections, when the brilliant glare of a festive day was lighting up the way from thence to Jerusalem. The thought of it sanctified His mind equally amid grief and enjoyments around. Resurrection was everything to Him. It made Him a perfect pattern of that fine principle of the Spirit of God: "Let him that weepeth be as if he wept not, and he that rejoiceth as though he rejoiced not."

Oh for a little more of the same mind in in us, beloved!—a little more of this eleva-

tion above the passing conditions and circumstances of life !

May the faith and hope of the Gospel, through the working of the indwelling Spirit, form the happiness and prospects of our hearts !



THE REDEMPTION OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION.

Ephesians i. 14.

The earth is the subject of redemption as well as man. It is already purchased, and by-and-by, in due season, it shall be rescued or delivered. That is, it is the subject of the twofold redemption known in Scripture, redemption by *price*, and redemption by *power*.

The blood of the cross has already reconciled or purchased it. As we read, "And having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven." (Col. i.)

This gives the inheritance the title of "the purchased possession."

But though purchased, it is not yet delivered. It is still under "the bondage of corruption." (Rom. viii.) It is redeemed by purchase, but not as yet by power. We therefore wait for the "redemption" of that

which is already a "purchased possession."

This bright and happy truth, this mystery found among the mysteries of God, has had its pledges and foreshadowings, as well as others.

The ordinance of the Jubilee seems to set forth this twofold redemption—by price and by power. (See Lev. xxv.) For that chapter teaches us that at any time during forty-nine years, the alienated possession of an Israelite might have been purchased by the kinsman of the heir, and thus redeemed or brought back to the family to which, under God, it had belonged; but if that were not done, it would return to the heir in the fiftieth year, or the Jubilee, without purchase.

These two ordinances, again, I say, seem to set forth the mystery I am speaking of—redemption by money and redemption by power. The kinsman might redeem with money, the Jubilee would redeem without money, by virtue of its own title, by virtue of that force or authority imparted to it by Him who was the God of Israel and the Lord of the soil.*

Again, Jeremiah the prophet was commanded to purchase the field of Hanameel, his uncle's son. He did so, in the spirit and

* We ourselves wait to be redeemed by power Resurrection will do that.

obedience of faith, though at that moment the Chaldean army was in the land, and was under commission from the Lord to tread it down, and waste it, or possess themselves of it. But when Jeremiah made inquiry respecting this strange thing, that he should be asked to lay out his money upon a piece of land thus devoted to the sword of an invader, the Lord tells him that a day of *power* was to come, and that in that land there should be redemption, and that the Lord's own people should possess it again, brought back out of the hand of every spoiler. This was the Lord's answer to His servant. And thus Jeremiah had reason to know that the purchase now made by good money of the merchant, should be made good in a coming day of power. (See Jer. xxxii.)

And let me add one other notice of this distinguished case, the purchase of Hanameel's field, for it has interested me. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" is the Lord's challenge of Jeremiah on this occasion, as it is of Sarah in Gen. xviii. Sarah did not know how she, whose body was then dead, could have a child, for *she knew not the resurrection-strength of God*. Jeremiah did not know how he, who was laying out his money on a piece of ground which was then in the hand of the enemy, could get its

value back again ; for, like Sarah, *he knew not the resurrection-strength of God.*

That strength makes all simple. The victory of Christ, the resurrection of Jesus, gives us to our inheritance sure rights under the seal of a title-deed easy to be read.



REMARKS ON THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE CHRISTIAN.

I desire to make a few remarks of a practical tendency and of deep interest, on the effects of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Christian.

The Spirit of God, as dwelling in us, may be considered in two aspects : for He unites us to the Lord Jesus, so that His presence is intimately connected with *life*, that life which is in Jesus. (John xiv. 19, 20 ; Gal. ii. 20.) “He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit ;” and further, His presence is that of God in the soul. The Scripture, speaking of Him in the first of these characters (which is sometimes linked to the second), says (Rom. viii. 2, 9, 10), that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus frees us from the law of sin ; so that the Spirit is *life* because of righteousness. It is, however, also said (ver. 9), “if so be that the *Spirit of God* dwell in you ;” and then His indwelling and action are blended, since (inasmuch as both

are manifested by the formation of the character of Christ in the soul) "the Spirit of God" becomes "the Spirit of Christ." The "Christ in you" of verse 10, expresses the idea more clearly, especially as the apostle adds, if Christ be in you, the Spirit is *life*." But in verse 16 the Holy Ghost is carefully distinguished from the Christian, for "He beareth witness *with* our spirit." In verses 26 and 27 the two characters of the presence of the Spirit are there remarkably shown out in their mutual connections: for "the mind of the Spirit," known to God, who searches the heart, is the life of the Spirit in the saint. But, on the other hand, "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities," and "maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God." The reason of all this is simple. On the one hand, the Spirit is there and acts with power according to the mind of Christ; on the other hand, and in consequence of this operation, the affections, thoughts, and works, are produced, which are those of the Spirit; but yet they are also ours, because we are partakers of them with Christ, "our life" (Col. iii. 2, 3), for "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John v. 11, 12).

But the effect of the second aspect of the presence of the Holy Ghost is yet more im-

portant. The Spirit is the Spirit of God ; He is God, and is, therefore, the revelation of the presence and power of God in the soul—a revelation known *through* and *in* a new nature which is of Him. Consequently, that which is in the nature and character of God is developed where God dwells, i. e., in the soul of the saint ; not only is it produced in the new man, the creation of God, but it fills the soul, because God is there, and there is communion with Him. For instance, the new nature loves, and this love is a proof that one is “born of God,” and knows God. But this is not all ; there is, moreover, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost—that is to say, the presence of God who communicates this new nature to us. Therefore we read (Rom. v. 5) “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.” We are loved—we know it, and have the proof of it in the gift of the precious Saviour, and in His death for us (ver. 6-8). But there is something more ; the perfect and infinite love shed abroad in our hearts (poor vessels as they are), and the Holy Spirit, who is God, is there (and is free to be there, because we are purified by the blood of Christ)—He is there to fill these vessels with that which is divine—the love of God. It is also added (ver. 11) that we joy in God. Therefore, looking at the presence

of the Spirit as demonstration of power in the soul, the apostle John affirms that "hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." (1 John iii. 24.) But, as this might be applied merely to the varied energy of the Spirit in the soul, it is stated, further on, that "love is made perfect in us," namely, the love of God to us. Here it is no longer a question of us, of our affections, of our thoughts; but the soul is filled with the fulness of God, which leaves no room for anything else; there is no discord in the heart, to spoil the essential character of divine love. God, complete in Himself, excludes all that is contrary to Himself, otherwise He would be no longer Himself.

To avoid *mysticism* (the enemy's corruption of these truths) the Holy Ghost adds by the same pen, "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (1 John iv. 10); and the proof of this is based on that which is above all human thought and knowledge, namely, on the acts of God Himself in Christ. On the other hand, the presence of the Spirit is not given him as the proof of God's dwelling in us, two things which are identical, but it is written, "hereby know we that *we dwell in Him*, and He in us, because He hath given us *of His Spirit*." This presence of God in love not

only fills our narrow souls, but places us *in Him* who is infinite in love. United to Christ by the Holy Ghost, one in life with Him, and the Spirit acting in us, "we dwell in God, and God in us." Therefore it is said that "God has given us of His Spirit; that is to say, God, in virtue of His presence and of His power, makes us morally partakers of His nature and character, by the Holy Ghost in us, whilst giving us the enjoyment of communion with Himself, and at the same time introducing us into His fulness.

I would here just point out the distinctive characters of the Epistles of Paul, Peter, and John. Paul was raised up in an extraordinary manner for the especial purpose of communicating to the Church the order, method, and sovereignty of the divine operations; and to reveal the place which the Church holds in the midst of this, inasmuch as she is united to Christ, and is the marvellous object of the counsels of God in grace; as the apostle says (Eph. ii. 7), "that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus," or by His dealings with regard to the Church: the wisdom of God, the righteousness of His ways, and the counsels of His grace on this subject, are largely and (as all revelation) perfectly set forth in the writings of Paul. John takes

up another point, that of the communication of the divine nature, what that nature is, and consequently, what God is, whether in His living manifestations in Christ, or in the life which he communicates to others. Without this community of nature communion were impossible; for darkness can have no fellowship with light. But, as we have already seen, the apostle goes still further: we dwell in God, and God in us, by the Holy Ghost; and thus, as far as we are capable of it, we enjoy what God is in Himself, and become the manifestation of Him (the limit to this manifestation being only in the vessel in which God has taken up His abode). How great are the varied riches of the goodness of God! This communion with Him, which raises us as far as possible towards the fulness of Him who reveals Himself in us, is certainly something very sweet and precious; but the tenderness of God towards us, poor pilgrims on the earth, and His faithful love, so needed in our weakness to carry us onward to the goal, are not less so.

The testimony of Peter, in his first epistle, treats of that which God is for the pilgrim, and of what the latter should be for God. The resurrection of the Messiah has set the pilgrim on his road, and thereon are presented the faithfulness of God, and the

encouragement which His power gives to our hope by this resurrection of Christ, the Son of the living God, though rejected of men; and lastly, the apostle speaks of the walk, the worship and the service that flows from it.

John presents to us that which is most exalted in communion, or rather in the nature of communion; consequently, he does not touch on the subject of the Church, as an object of divine counsels, but of the divine nature.

Paul treats of that which is perfect, not in respect of communion, but of counsel. In his writings God is glorified more especially as the object of faith, though he speaks of communion too. ((Romans v. 5.) Where, in the same chapter (ver. 11), he speaks of God as the One in whom the Christian is to glory, he places Him before and not as in us—as the Object for faith to lay hold of, and not as dwelling in the heart.

This divine and infinite blessing—this love perfected in us, communicated by the presence of the Holy Ghost, and realized by our dwelling in God and He in us—has led some to think that, when this point is attained, the flesh can exist in us no longer; but this is to confound the vessel with the treasure placed in it, and of which it has the enjoyment. We are in the body which still awaits

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its redemption; only, God can dwell in it, because of the sprinkling of the blood by faith. This sprinkling does not correct the flesh, but only renders testimony both to the perfection of the expected redemption and to the love to which we owe it.

When in real enjoyment of God, we may for a moment lose sight of the existence of the flesh, because then the soul (which is finite) is filled with that which is infinite. But even in these moments of blessedness one cannot doubt but that the flesh is an obstacle to the larger and more intelligent action of love. Paul, caught up into the third heaven (a privilege which the flesh would have used to puff him up with, and which made a thorn needful), is a proof to us that grace does not change the flesh. Alas! even the joy of which we are speaking, without watchful dependence upon Christ, gives dangerous occasions of action to the flesh, because there is so much littleness in us, that, forgetting who gives the joy, we lean on the feeling of the joy, instead of dwelling in Christ, the Fountain-head of it. Nevertheless, it is certain that the love of God, made perfect in us, is a reality, and the Christian is called to know God, and to enjoy Him as dwelling in Him.

I have but one more remark to make.

When we are full of the love of God, we

enjoy it with a power that hinders our seeing anything, especially the objects of the goodness of God, save with the eye of divine love. But where there is a real knowledge of the existence and nature of this love of God, the walk will also be characterized by faith in that love, even though the heart may not realize the whole power of it; and, thus, we shall dwell in God and He in us. But since this fulness of joy can only be realized by the action of the Spirit, it is easy to understand that, if grieved, He will become a Spirit of reproof, judging the ingratitude with which such love, as the love of God, is requited, instead of filling the heart with that love; though it is impossible for Him to cast a doubt upon it. It is evident that the love made perfect in us is the work of God; and this it is which forms the joy—the whole of the state. That which the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in our hearts is the love of God; and this love, powerful in our hearts, cannot but show itself externally.

May God bless these few remarks to the reader! May it please Him to realize in us the things of which I speak on the subject of revelation, and may He so bless as that the truth may have its full weight on the soul; so that we may know, with all the beloved Church of Christ, what it is to have the Holy Ghost dwelling in us according to the power of the love of God!

"THE TRUTH."

Is it the Truth of God we seek ?
 Well may we listen. Let Him speak ;
 For God Himself, in Persons Three,
 Reveals Himself, that we may see
 How Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
 Can make in Him, the Truth, their boast,
 Though needing nothing, owing all
 Redemption's glory from the fall
 To Him, who in Man's lowly guise,
 Could make the mighty sacrifice.
 The Father, from His blest abode,
 Sends forth the Son, the Lamb of God ;
 The Son, He lays His glory by,
 Becomes a Man, and comes to die.
 The Lord the Spirit, Mighty God,
 One in Counsel and in Word,
 Deigns here to dwell, and so to be
 The One by whom we live and see.
 Thus, so may well the glory be,
 Shared by the Wondrous Trinity ;
 God in One, and God all Three,
 Creature's ken is lost in Thee.
 Oh ! Jesus Christ, " The Truth " art Thou,
 At Thy blest Name each knee must bow.
 Eternal was Thy life and fame,
 As One with God, ever " The Same."
 " The Truth " must take a lowlier name,
 By JESUS " grace and truth " both came ;

Or else the great I AM must be
 As "Absolute," e'er far from me.
 But Th' "Absolute" was pleased to bear
 Relations blest to creatures fair ;
 The creature sinned, all truth was marred,
 And only One, with visage scarred,
 Could fill the place the creature owed,
 And bring us back to truth, to God.
 Jesus on earth, "The Truth," could say,
 I am the Life, "The Truth," the Way.
 True things might well be said, and were,
 But He alone could truth declare.
 Without Him all must ruin see,
 Nor truth had been, nor truth could be ;
 Jesus ! the Christ, "The Truth," the Word,
 God speaks but once, yet still is heard ;
 The Word made flesh, with us to dwell,
 Thrice Holy Spirit sent to tell.
 The wondrous mystery now we see,
 Thou art "The Truth," "The Truth" is
 Thee ;
 The God of Love and Light can shine
 In all His Light on Thee and Thine.



FRAGMENT.—It is almost equally wonderful that Man is gone up on high into the presence of God, and that God came down into the misery, sorrow, sin, and death of man. But both these marvellous things are true ! What a place man, seen in this light, holds in the counsels of God !!

“MY DELIGHTS WERE WITH THE SONS OF MEN.”

Familiar as we are with the thought, beloved friends, it is after all a wonderful thing that the Son of God should *come into* this world of sinners, and still more wonderful that He should die for them. Into this world the Son of God came, fully bringing out what *we are* by the way in which He was received; but at the same time His coming was full of joy and blessing for us. *He* was the immediate object of the express delight of the Father; then He died and rose again, and so brought those who believe on Him into the same place—into light and blessing with Himself.

It is a wonderful thing, in the first place, to have *God* come into the world, *grace* and *truth* in the world; and that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a question of our duties, or of future judgment; but it is into the midst of this world of defilement, violence, corruption, evil, and enmity against God—*into the midst of it He came*. What makes it so especially wonderful is, that He came as a babe, (though miraculously born), as one of ourselves, a real true man in this world of woe. Still there was more: for it is a totally different thing for God to deal with men as children of Adam, as to what they are, and what they can bring to God, and what their righteousness is—there is a great difference between looking at a man as responsible to God—and God dealing with him according to His own thoughts. This is the *truth*, when *grace* is

rejected. It is not that God overlooks our responsibility; but it is a totally distinct thing for God to *reveal and fulfil the thoughts of His own heart*, and for Him to *investigate those of ours*. Dealing with man on the ground of what he *is* and what he has done, goes on to *judgment*. In Christ He is revealing the *thoughts* of His heart.

Thus we get His own intentions before ever the world was; the purposes and counsels of God which were not in the first Adam at all, but in the last. That runs through the whole of Scripture from the very beginning. As soon as ever man had sinned, grace opens the door to reveal it: there was the seed of the woman that was to bruise the serpent's head. Adam was not the seed of the woman. The promise did not refer to the first man at all, nor was it a promise *to him*; but it was a revelation that there was One coming, the Seed of the woman, who should bruise the serpent's head and destroy his power. Therefore there was ground for faith to lay hold upon. Promises and prophets were always referring to the same thing. "*In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed:*" "*To Him give all the prophets witness.*" Prophets had to deal with men and bring the law to their consciences; but here is One in whom all the thoughts and counsels of God rest, and in grace to poor sinners—"All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. i. 20). "All things are for your sakes" (2 Cor. iv. 15), though all surely for God's glory.

Another thing in connection with it is, that it is only when we come to *Christ*, that we can reconcile the purposes of God in the full blessing of life, and man's responsibility. Heathens and Christians have disputed over it. In the garden of Eden there was the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: life on the one side, responsibility on the other. Man failed, ate of the tree of knowledge, and could not get to the tree of life. Now the law took up the same principle—here again you have responsibility and life—and said, "*do this and live.*" The Lord Jesus Christ, the second Man comes, does His Father's will in everything, and in sovereign grace takes up our responsibilities; He takes the consequences of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and He is the life. He bears the consequences of responsibility in His own body on the tree. It perfectly meets all our need and a great deal more—*God is perfectly glorified*; and we get eternal life in Him, and the joy and blessing of it all in the full result of all these counsels of God, to be conformed to the image of His Son: nothing short of this.

Though the responsibility is proved, yet to be like the Son of God in glory has nothing to do with my responsibility! No man could have dared to think of such a thing; but it was the mind and counsel of God in Christ. It did not come out till after the cross, for we could not have had any part in it but by the cross. Before ever the world was, it was the thought of God to have a saved and redeemed people brought

into the same place as, and associated with, Christ. Of course the pre-eminence is His. "Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness *above thy fellows.*" Who could pretend to be the "fellow" of the Son of God, if it were not the fruit of the *work* of the Son of God? The mind of God rested on Him in connection with man.

The first Adam is totally set aside, having been tested, tried, and proved, up to the cross; then the Second Man is brought in. God never would set up the last Adam along with the first: the first Adam was a fallen man, the last was the man of God's counsels, and He sets Him up instead, when we had failed in our responsibility. Titus lays down (Titus i. 1, 2, 3) the other principle. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised *before the world began.*" Then it was the *hope* of eternal life. 2 Tim. i. 9 gives the same truth: "Who hath saved us . . . not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus *before the world began.*" These thoughts and purposes of God were given us in Christ Jesus before ever the world was. Now if you look for a moment at Proverbs viii., you find a remarkable passage connected with this. There I see that before the world was created, Christ was there as Wisdom, daily the Father's delight, and having His delights in the sons of men ("delight," same thought as "good pleasure").

We have then man put on his responsibility, and the first thing he does is to fall—he *distrusts* God, and that before there was

a lust. He listens to Satan, he questions the love of God, he eats the fruit, and he falls. Then comes the law; man set up the golden calf and broke it. Last of all God sends His Son—"It may be they will reverence my Son;" but "now have they both seen and *hated* both *me* and my Father;" "they cast him out." That closed the history of responsibility.

It was when man was a sinner and had broken the law, that the Son of man came into this world in grace; "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." He calls it the "end of the world" because man's moral history is ended—*grace* is not ended. Man is not less intellectual than before; he can invent railroads, telegraphs, and I know not what; but what have these things to do with the moral character of God or man, or with heaven? *Death* has come in, and this is all over. There are no telegraphs in heaven! Men are blinding themselves; there is not one single link with God, of thought or feeling of heart, but plenty with this other world. Remarkable persons there are; but all belongs to the "fashion of this world" that passes away, and when man's breath goes forth his thoughts perish. You may put up a monument to him, but it speaks of *death*! God has put this world into man's power and he has invented much; but, are children more obedient, wives more faithful, servants more honest? And since we have had all these developments of intellectual capacity, taking it even on the lowest level, are

people happier—more to be trusted? A world in which people cannot trust each other is a *miserable* world! What is called progress, does not give more *confidence* from man to man, to say nothing of God. There is not a single thing in it connected with the soul.

Man's history was thus closed at the cross. First, lawlessness, then law-breaking, and then enmity to God; then comes that blessed perfect work of the last Adam, who met the need in His own Person, and brought in the full accomplishment of the purposes of God. He has brought man into an entirely new sphere by death and resurrection, and eventually glory, and has settled the whole question of responsibility.

But God speaks to our hearts, and says—and I desire that you should take this to your hearts—‘Now you must understand what I am doing: I want to get your hearts into perfect confidence with mine, by the testimony of what is in my heart, and as to your sins *I* have settled that!’ This is the blessed truth, that when God could not bear my sins, instead of putting *me* away, He has put my *sins* away, and I stand before Him according to the value of that which was done in putting them away. What I have on my heart to show you is, how God brings us into the consciousness that when this work is done, the bad tree is done with. Not only had I sinned, but I was a sinner, and the question of what I am is perfectly settled. It is not character, for there are no two alike; each one of us has a different character. I may say, that is a

humble trait in me ; so I may say of a crab tree, the flowers are more beautiful than those on an apple tree ; but what do I care for the pretty flowers when *the fruit is bad? I cut the whole thing down!* That is what God has done. When I have a spiritual judgment of the thing in my mind, I do not think of the pretty flowers on the wild tree, but of the fruit. So with man : God has sentenced the whole thing entirely ; it is all cut down and grafted with Christ, and then I expect fruit.

When I turn to look at the thoughts and counsels of God, I see His "delights were with the sons of men." His "good pleasure" was not in angels ; they are witnesses of His *keeping* a creature unfallen, but we are witnesses of His *redeeming* a creature who has fallen. There is no purpose about angels ; He did not take them up, but He became a *man*. Now we get the moral character of the world tested by Christ. He came in goodness, not requiring anything from men, but bringing goodness to them. If you look at His life, He came in a power which removed all the present effects of sin. Death disappeared before Him ; devils, disease, sickness, all fled away. He comes in a power sufficient to remove all the effects of Satan's power, and He does it in *grace*. That is the character of Christ's work : there was no miracle that was not the expression of meeting a need in man, or of setting aside Satan's power. The cursing of the fig tree is the only exception—there responsibility was in question ; He cursed the fig tree, and it is the judgment of man.

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Israel was under the culture of God. He looked for fruit, finds none, and says, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." The flesh is judged—set aside; and my heart is brought to own it—brought to the acknowledgement of its sentence at the cross.

Let us look at the Lord, the second Man, coming into the world. I see the place that He gets in this world; but when the angels begin to celebrate His praises they go much further. What is the sign of the Son of man coming into this world? First, of course (but on that I do not now dwell), the promises to Israel must be fulfilled; but this is the sign (Luke ii. 12), "Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." An inn is the place where a man is measured—it touches the pride of man. The first floor for the rich, the garret for the poor: there was no room for Him! No room in the great inn of this world! He could go into the manger when He was born, to the cross at the end, and meanwhile have not where to lay His head. Is that the way you estimate the blessed Lord Jesus Christ? We are accustomed from education to exalt Him; but that is the world's estimate still, there is no room for Him! The world is never changed till the heart is changed; it is just what it was then, with the addition since of the rejection of Christ.

Suppose the case of a man from China coming into this town and saying, "I want to see Christianity—epistles of grace and truth." He would say "Why, this we do in China—You are seeking pleasure, money, cultivating the fine arts, etc." Is your

moral estimate of the world this—that *the Son of God got no place in it?* That here He began with the manger and ended with the cross, with meanwhile, no place to lay His head? The Son of God comes in *grace*, and that is what sounds from heaven when the angels praise. It is beautiful to see them delighting in man's blessing though they themselves were passed by. They are celebrating *His* praise—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Do our hearts understand and estimate this, that God's heart was delighting in the sons of men, not by a general mercy, but by His being a man? There I have the Object, the Person, before God's eye. He has come down into such scenes as these, and God says—Sinner though you are, I want your heart to trust me; and that you may do so, there is my Son come down, and as a babe. God's love was beyond a human thought. Why do they say, "Glory to God in the *highest?*" It is because His Son has become a *man*! It was not in the fact of *angels'* glory, but when I get this lowly babe, that has not a place in the world, then the angels come out with this song.

There is nothing like this wonderful fact, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." I get the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, present with me, a poor sinful man, that I may know how God reached me first *where I was*. He has come down to me as a man, and to prove God's good pleasure in men. The result—"Peace on earth"—is not seen yet,

but you have "glory to God in the *highest*." I have now this blessed truth, I have learnt *where* and *how* God has met me. If a man was a leper, He touched him, when another would have been defiled: He used His holiness in grace to reach the most defiled.

At the end of Matthew iii., He takes up this wondrous place for us: Jesus comes to be baptized of John, and says, "Thus it becometh *us* to fulfil all righteousness." He takes this place the moment the word of God has met the heart of these poor sinners, and He says, I must go with them, because the Spirit of God was wrought in their hearts. It is that which defines the place of the Person. He takes His place amongst us; and mark, beloved friends, He was always the same Person from the manger, at twelve years old, and all along His path. But now He cannot let His people take one step, in what God had wrought in their hearts, without saying, I go before, I go with you. The Christ that could tell the woman all that ever she did was not there for judgment. If a person was convicted of sin, the Lord had been there. What for? To judge me? No, to bring me to Himself in grace. Now mark the wondrous bringing out of this place: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The heaven opened! There was never a person there before on whom

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heaven could be opened, and to whom a voice—the Father's voice—could say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (good pleasure). There was not a thing in Him, but what heaven could delight in. This is to me a wondrously blessed truth. In this world is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Man in whom is the Father's necessary, perfect, delight, and He owns Him as His beloved Son; and then the *Holy Ghost comes down* to seal and anoint Him. I have the *place* man must have according to the counsels of God, and heaven is opened on the world.

Another thing comes out, if possible, still more wonderful—*man* gets into this place, which is in the thoughts and counsels of God for him. It is then that Satan is fully manifested. And here I get the first revelation of the Trinity: but it is when man gets into this relationship, with the thoughts and actings of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all in connection with man, and heaven opened: and it is that all the counsels of God might not only be in counsel, but in fulfilment and manifestation. To think that Christ, the Son of God, should thus come, not for a judgment on sinners, but to open heaven for sons! It is the pattern place of the saints. When He had thus publicly taken His place in grace with us, then God says, I will own you as my Son, and the Holy Ghost comes down and seals and anoints Him. And "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts."

But whatever the grace, you will always

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find that the Person of Christ is maintained secure. Heaven is opened to Stephen, and he looks up and sees Christ there: he is full of the Holy Ghost, and he looks *up* to heaven; but heaven looks *down* on Christ. Stephen had an object, but Christ was the object of heaven. His person is always maintained and secured. We are brought, by redemption, into the same wondrous place as this wonderful One. We always find the person of Christ pre-eminent, but we find the saints brought into a place where He can take us, and call us the "fellows" of the Son of God, with whom we are brought into fellowship.

Take another example of this, the mount of transfiguration. Moses and Elias are shown in exactly the same glory as Christ, but the Person and place of the Son of God are most fully maintained. Peter thought it a great thing for his master to be like Moses and Elias, but when he says, "Let us make three tabernacles," the voice from the cloud says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: *hear ye him.*" Again, in the case of the tribute money, Jesus says to Peter, "Of whom do the kings of the earth take tribute: of their own children or strangers?" "Of strangers." He was the great King of the temple, and yet, lest He should offend them, He disposed of creation to find money to give, and says, "*for me and thee,*" thus bringing man into association with Himself. His Person is maintained, but this blessed Son of God cares to win the confidence of our hearts.

But though thus in association with man

He was there *alone*. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth *alone*" (John xii. 24). There are three glories that are His, brought out there. He is *Son of God*, chapter xi; in chapter xii., He is owned as *Son of David* riding upon an ass; then the Greeks come up, and the *Son of Man* must be glorified; that is the revelation of Psalm viii. But if He was to be the Son of Man, He was to be over all the works of God as man—"He left nothing that is not put under him, but now we see not yet all things put under him." As yet He is seated on His Father's throne, not on His own—He is Son and heir. What He is doing now is gathering out the joint-heirs. He is only waiting for that, and when they are all gathered He will come. There is nothing necessarily to happen before Christ comes to take us to Himself; we are to wait for God's Son from heaven. "I will come again and receive you unto myself," He says. The virgins that went to sleep allowed the thought of an interval. But some one may say, It happened 1800 years ago. "Where is the promise of his coming?" It is a moral expectancy for the soul—it is not a calculation of events—and meanwhile the "long suffering of our Lord is salvation." The thing that we are all waiting for is that He should come, then we shall be like Him, and with Him in glory. But He was alone until, as the corn of wheat, He fell into the ground and died. But the moment redemption is accomplished He can say, "Go to my *brethren*." And, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father."

Mary Magdalene was watching at the sepulchre. She was so near to the heart of Christ that all the world to her was but an empty tomb—Christ was not there. Her heart was right, though her intelligence and her place were wrong: she was seeking the living among the dead! The disciples went to their own home—sad work! So Mary gets the message, "Go to my brethren." He had called His own sheep by name—"Mary." Then she thought she had Him back again, but He says to her, "Touch me not."—You cannot have me back for the kingdom yet. He lets Thomas touch Him, but He was telling *far more* to Her. Now the moment that redemption is accomplished, that the work is done, He can say, according to Ps. xxii., "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." Having been heard from "the horns of the unicorns" (a figure of speech of course of impalement—of intense suffering), His first thought is, I must have my brethren in the same place. He was alone till He died, now He was risen into the new place, and He can say, My Father and your Father, My God and your God. "In the midst of the church will *I* sing praise unto thee." It is the song of perfect redemption, and *He* leads the praises. He puts them into the relationship, and when thus brought and gathered together, *He sings in their midst*. All this is fulfilled in John xx. Now if Christ is leading our praises, is redemption uncertain? I should be out of tune if I were not joining. Is He to sing one song of praise and I another? That would be discord, not

harmony. He has brought us into the same place as Himself, and triumphantly He leads our hearts to join in the song He sings.

Let us see the full and blessed perfectness of that work. We were under the power of sin and Satan, and God's wrath had come in. What do I see this blessed One doing? Displaying God. He puts Himself *alone* in our place, to finish and complete that work where God must be glorified on account of sin, and man brought to be saved. If God had passed over the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden, I should have been able to say, Sin is no matter, but when I look at the cross I cannot. There I see God perfectly glorified in every respect by a Man, and so much the more because sin was there. If God had cut off Adam and Eve, it would have been righteous, but no declaration of His love. So it was not possible for the cup to pass from Him; and at the cross I get God's full dealing with sin in righteousness, but with infinite love. It is *beyond our need*. God's majesty was maintained where all had been trampled in the dust, and now the Son of Man is gone into the glory of God, and is sitting on the Father's throne, the witness that love has had its way—that grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

I have the *pattern* then, when the Lord was upon earth, of my place with Him. I see the *work* done on the cross, that was needed to put me into it, and then I learn what the work is *worth*. It is *worth the glory of God in Heaven*. And now I have

the *place* before God, which is the consequence of that. I can "Rejoice in hope of the glory of God," and I have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby I cry, "Abba, Father." He has brought us into the place that the counsels of God required. We are in relationship to God as a Father, and Christ is the First-born among many brethren. He brings us into this in John xvii., "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them . . . that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." Then speaking of the present state, He says, "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them." The Holy Ghost thus conducts down the fulness of the Father's love to the Son into our hearts. It is perfect.

It is all unutterable grace, and therefore humbles us to the dust. But, beloved, has not God a right to have thoughts for Himself? Surely He has. He is going to show "The exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us by Jesus Christ," and if so, nothing is too good for me. Can you think that it is so? What else can I think? Shall I think my own thoughts when He has sent His Son to die for me? The poor prodigal thought, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," but never says it when he comes to his father. He confesses his sins of course, but when he has had the kiss and has been clothed, there are no more thoughts of the son. All is the effect of the thoughts of the Father, so that even the

servants are rejoicing that the son is brought back. What the *Father* thinks has come out. I can now say, with a purged conscience, I am nothing, but I am loved as Jesus is loved; not only saved *by* Him, but blest *with* Him; "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." Is this where our thoughts are? He passes on everything that was His to us, though it may be we are toiling along down here. If I walk in the Spirit, if my mind is full of Christ, I have no occasion to think of myself at all. If I have not to judge myself, I can think of Him; but if I fail, then I have to humble and judge myself. And the normal state of a Christian is to do *all* "in the name of the Lord Jesus." It may be the commonest affairs of daily life, buying and selling, furnishing my house, or dressing my body; but it is a very simple rule and cuts away a great deal.

Let me say one word on obedience. I say of my child who wants to go another way, but who yields to me, It is very pleasant to see such obedience: but it was not so with Christ. *He never had a will to wish to go the other way.* When the tempter came to Him, He said, "If thou be the Son of God, *command* that these stones be made bread." What was His answer? It was as though He said, Nay, I am a servant (see Phil. ii. 7), I cannot command, I *obey*; "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word of God.*" *That* is the obedience of Christ! The Father's will was His motive for everything. There are thousands of things we do from habit, and we say we must do them: there is no "must" for

me, but Christ's will ! I have to learn what His will is ; for we are made epistles of Christ, and the path we are to walk in is to manifest the life of Jesus in our bodies. *Everything I do should be the expression of the allegiance of my heart to Christ ; and the manifestation of Him to others.* The standard of walk is, "walk worthy of the Lord," not of man. Sometimes it is very difficult to be peaceful, patient, gentle, when a man wrongs and insults one ; but were you not the enemy of God, and did not God forgive you when you were His enemy ? Well, you forgive your enemy.

I quite understand the difficulties, but we have the blessed privilege of walking as He walked. If you want to do this, go and study Christ, learn what His path was down here (after you have learned your place in Him on high). It is a great comfort that, in looking at Christ, I not only *see* the thing I ought to be, but I *get* the thing I ought to be, "grace for grace." "We all with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory." There is real growth there, not in fitness and acceptance, but in likeness to Christ, and it ought to be growth every instant.

We are in this place of Christ then before God ; and what I would press upon you is to *study Christ*, so that we may be like Him here. There is nothing that so fills the soul with blessing and encouragement, or that so sanctifies : nothing which so gives the living sense of divine love, that gives us courage.

The Lord give us this courage, and enable us to study Him. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (*Lecture on Luke ii.*)

ON WORSHIP.

Love seeks worshippers, but it seeks them under the gentle name of "Father." It places them in a position of freedom before Him as the children of His love. The Spirit, who acts in them and produces worship, is "the spirit of adoption," which cries, "Abba, Father." It is not that God has lost His majesty, but that He, whose majesty is far better known, is known also under the more tender and loving character of Father. The Spirit, who leads to worship the Father, leads us also into the knowledge and enjoyment of all the love of God, who would have us to worship Him as His children.

The enjoyment of this love and of these privileges, God be thanked, belongs to the most simple and the most ignorant among Christians. The Christian, when once He has understood what the grace of God is, and has received the spirit of adoption, is entitled to enjoy them without any reasoning; as a child knows and loves and enjoys his father before he can give any account of that which he enjoys. "I write these things unto you," says the apostle John, addressing himself to the babes in Christ, "because ye have known the Father" (1 John ii. 13). The feeblest Christian is therefore perfectly competent for worship. At the same time, it is sweet to be able to estimate and explain this relationship with God. The more we think of it, the more we examine the word on the subject, the more shall we see the import, the deep blessedness, of it. The simple fact that God is our Father, and that

we possess the enjoyment of such a relationship with Him by the Spirit, is in itself an immeasurable privilege for creatures such as we are. Every child of God has this privilege in unquestioned right; but it is in Christ, and with Christ, that we possess it. He is "the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29). He is gone to His Father, and our Father, to His God and our God. What a sweet and blessed relationship! what a family is that into which we are introduced! And how are we, who were formerly strangers to these affections and to this love—how are we to learn these things? How are we to learn what the Father is, the knowledge of whom gives birth to these affections in our hearts? It is the only-begotten Son, the Firstborn in this new relationship, who reveals Him unto us. Eternal Son of the Father, enjoying the infinite love of Him in whose bosom He dwelt, it is He who reveals Him as He Himself has known Him.

Become man upon this earth, Jesus ceased not to be the Object of the same affection—affection which, when challenged, could not remain silent. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Nor did Christ, in anything, put Himself at a distance from this love. Upon earth, from the cradle to the cross, He was the Object of it in all its fulness, and He revealed Him in whom it was found. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him;" (John i. 18). Jesus, a man, but also the Son of God, in the enjoyment

of the fulness of this affection, dwells, even whilst upon earth, in the bosom of the Father, to originate and make known, here below, all the beauty—all the force—of that affection. As man, He was the object of this infinite love, in order that we might understand it in its application to men. So He associates us with Himself in the joy of this love, and He reveals it to us as He Himself knows it.

What grace in Him! and what a position for us! How does Jesus Himself, who by His death and resurrection has planted us in this blessedness, become to us an Object of love, of adoration, of devotedness of heart! The very glory which is given to us is presented to us by the Saviour as a proof of this love. "The glory," said He, in John xvii., "which thou hast given unto me, I have given unto them . . . that the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." Such is His affection towards us, that He desires that we may enjoy the Father's love. So He renders us capable of this enjoyment by revealing to us the Father's name. "I have declared," says He in the same chapter, "*thy name* unto the men thou gavest me out of the world; and I will declare it, in order that the love, wherewith thou lovest me, may be in them, and I in them." Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus. This fellowship expresses itself in adoration towards Him who is revealed, and towards Him who reveals.

It will be easily seen how the work of Christ is the foundation of all this blessed-

ness, whether in order to introduce us without spot and without fear into the presence of the God whom we adore, or in order to place us in the relationship of children towards the Father. It was after His resurrection that Christ could say, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God." Then it was that He could say, "Go to my brethren." Now the Spirit which He gives from on high answers to this blessing. He is "the Spirit of adoption (or 'sonship' Rom. viii. 15, see also Gal. iv. 5; Ephes, i. 5)," as He is the Spirit of liberty; because we are "accepted in the beloved," and we enjoy a redemption which has made us "the righteousness of God in him," and therefore placed us in God's presence without a spot or stain of defilement.

Thus we have reviewed, at least in principle, the great foundation truths of christian worship. Perfect in Christ, united to Him, brought into the presence of God, whose love and holiness are manifest without a veil; as children beloved of the Father, and objects of the same love with Christ the First-born, we worship together, according to the power and affections which the Spirit, who has been given to us, inspires. We worship the God of Glory, whose presence is the stay, instead of being the terror, of our souls. We worship the God of love, whose will it is that we should be perfectly happy in Him, that He Himself might enjoy our happiness, Himself finding more joy in it than even we ourselves. We

adore our Father with endearing confidence in His kindness, which blesses us with all spiritual blessings, and counts the very hairs of our head, while thoughtful of all our present need. We adore Him for that which He is in Himself. We adore Him for that which He is to us, the children of His house for eternity. We thus present ourselves in sweet communion before the same Father—our common Father—as His beloved children; so that brotherly affections are developed, and, the joy of each being reciprocally the joy of all, multiplied praises ascend to God. Hence we see in the New Testament, that, while indeed the consciousness of this relationship must necessarily be individually realized, in order that we may enjoy it together; yet, at the same time, the Spirit constantly associates us, and uses the words “we” and “us,” when speaking of christian affections and feelings. The Holy Spirit shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, it could not be otherwise.

But the effect of the presence of this “one Spirit” goes yet much further. Not only does He give us the consciousness of being in Christ—of being perfect before God, according to the efficacy of the redemption which Christ has accomplished; not only does He witness with our spirits that we are the adopted children of the Father, but He gives us also the consciousness of being but “one body”—the “body of Christ,” and “members one of another.” The Church, which God has newly-created in Christ—that “one new man”—the redeemed who have been “all baptized into one body,”

offering worship in "the unity of the Spirit," necessarily offer it as but "one body," and that "with all the saints." They are the "habitation of God through the Spirit;" and, that Spirit uniting them all in the unity of the body of Christ, adoration ascends on high towards God, who formed them to be but "one new man" in Christ. If Israel, as a whole, was represented by the priests who officiated in the tabernacle, the faithful now, who render direct worship to God, do it in the unity in which they are all "one body in Christ." In this worship there is more than brotherhood. There is unity, not of nation, and not only of family, but of the members of one body formed as such, and indwelt by one Spirit. This is the endowment, privilege, and position of the Church, which is baptized into "one body in Christ," the Head being ascended up on high, in order that the members of the body may render worship freely and with joy before God, by that unction which descends from Him.

Let us state some of the practical effects which flow from these truths:—

First, it is evident that worship is the privilege only of the children of God. Being offered "in spirit and in truth," and being offered to Him who cannot admit sin into His presence, they, and they alone, who are washed in the blood of the Lamb, and who have received the Spirit, can draw near to God to adore Him. That a man who is not converted should render worship to God is simply impossible; for "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6). Such

an one may be blessed in temporal things. He may, perhaps, ask such a blessing and be heard. God may have tender compassion for him, as a poor sinner; but as yet he knows not God, as yet he has not the Spirit, as yet he is not washed in the blood of Christ; and therefore it is utterly impossible for him to worship God. That he thinks he can draw nigh to God is but the proof that he is ignorant of what he is in himself, and of what the God is whom he thinks to serve. Who can enter into the sanctuary, save he who is sanctified? Who can address himself to a father, as such, save as a child? Worship, moreover, being offered in the unity of the body of Christ, and by the Spirit who has formed this unity, and who dwells in the body as in a temple, he who is not of the body is necessarily excluded. To suppose that a person who has not the Spirit can be a member of this body is to deny its existence, its end, and its nature; for, if a man who is not converted can enter into the presence of God, and worship there, there is no need that there should be either a body in which God dwells as in a temple, nor is there need of redemption, which is the basis of everything. Why should there be a redeemed people, if the worldling can serve God in His presence? Wherefore adore God by the Spirit, if he who has not the Spirit can adore just as well? Worshipping in common supposes persons united in one body by the same Spirit, and that each can say, "We," in sincerity, when addressing God. A hypocrite may be present; he will be a hindrance

in the worship ; but its validity will not be thereby destroyed, when the worshipper says, " We," in truth, in the name of all. It is believers who worship God.

To render true worship to God supposes that a soul is set at liberty, and is free to draw near to God, in virtue of the efficacy of the work of Christ. If a person who loves God, and who has no other hope than the work of Christ, is timid in drawing near, it is right to encourage him ; but if such a one has no real knowledge of the efficacy of the work of Christ, he will be ill at ease even in drawing near to God, because God's presence will communicate to him rather the conscience of sins, than of the joy which that presence inspires to him who enjoys it in the peace which Christ confers. Nevertheless, in such cases of doubting and trembling, right affections often precede the being set free, and are more true to Christ than the reasoning of the mind ; but this state of soul is not the normal state of worship. To be consciously in the presence of God, purified from all sin by the blood of Christ—in the light as He is in the light—such is the true worshipper. This is the standing of the believer in Christ : and, in order to worship truly, this standing must be known and enjoyed. Sometimes bad teaching neutralizes this liberty, although the soul all the while, in its secret communings with God, cries, " Abba, Father !" As a principle, however, whatever allowance be made by charity for these cases of ignorance, true worship supposes that we can draw near to God without fear. This freedom of access

is a necessary and absolute effect of the complete and triumphant work of Christ, of which every true believer has the benefit; but it is the presence of the Spirit which enables us to realize it.

How delightful to be able thus to adore God! What a source of joy is He whom we adore! How great the blessedness of finding oneself in His presence, no cloud between Him and us, no tinge of fear, because no vestige of sin! Being made "the righteousness of God in Christ," the presence of God becomes but an inexhaustible spring of happiness for that new nature which He has given us, and which finds its enjoyment in Himself. What joy to be able to express one's acknowledgments, to render to Him one's thanksgivings, knowing that they are acceptable to Him! What a blessing to have His very Spirit, the Spirit of liberty and of adoption, as our power of worship, as the Inspirer of praise, of confidence, and of adoration! What joy thus to worship in unity, as members of the same family and of the same body, sensible that this joy is a joy common to all; knowing that those whom we love are infinitely precious and acceptable to the Lord, and that they all find their pleasure in praising Him who is worthy—the God who is the source of all our happiness—the Lord who gave Himself for us, in order that He might be our eternal portion!

God of love, our souls adore Thee!
 We would still Thy grace proclaim,
 Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
 And in glory praise Thy name;
 Praise and worship
 Be to God and to the Lamb!

JESUS CHRIST THE SAME, *TO-DAY*.

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

There are many of God's beloved children who know little—comparatively nothing—of their portion in Jesus Christ for *to-day*.

In the blessed Lord Jesus they have found forgiveness of their sins. They have received the message of His love towards them. They have owned a crucified Jesus—the Saviour who put away their guilt “by the sacrifice of Himself.” They know that the one, perfect, atoning, sacrifice of Christ *has* put away sin, and that “life and immortality are brought to light” by the gospel of the grace of God. In the sure and certain knowledge of peace with God, the purged conscience rests, while a song of praise flows forth for the wondrous redemption wrought out for them. As “children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” with adoring hearts they thank God for a settled *yesterday*.

Then, from that wondrous scene at Calvary, they can by faith look forward to a glorious future, which the perfect work of the holy, spotless Victim, the God-man, Christ Jesus *has* secured for them—the “inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, laid up in heaven” for them—“the city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.” Should they have to pass through death, with joyful triumph they can say, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me.” Neither time nor place can cast a shadow on the brightness of their

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“to-morrow.” In sweet anticipation they joyfully sing:—

“We expect a bright to-morrow,
All will be well!”

Yes, they have learnt that the Jesus of the cross is the Lord of the glory: “Jesus Christ the same *yesterday*, and *for ever*.”

But let each of us ask ourselves, How much do we know and enter into our blessed portion of “Jesus Christ, the same *to-day*”? Between the cross and the glory lie the sands of the desert—the wilderness through which we pass to “the rest that remaineth for the people of God.” Around us we cannot fail to see the combined forces of evil. The enemy of our souls would fain worry, perplex, and distract us. And perhaps in no form are we so little prepared for his subtle workings as when they meet us in the wear and tear of our daily life. It is in the *to-day* of our history that Satan would rob us of that blessed portion which is ours fully to enjoy—even the consciousness of the constant, never-changing interest and sympathy of Christ with us *on the way*. Yet this is exactly what the Lord Himself seeks to make known to His own. There is not a trouble or a care which crosses our pathway, but which He has destined for our blessing. But occupied with the danger or difficulty of the hour, do we not often miss the blessing, and grow disheartened and dismayed with the perils of the way! Our hearts are not slow to answer that such is too often the case, and that the cause of this is nothing less than our lack

of knowing more of "Jesus Christ the same *to-day*," in His ever present sympathy. Shall not our hearts yearn then to know Him better, and shall we not at once give Him the place He longs for in the "to-day" of our history? What are obstacles and hindrances with Him? Let the Lord's own words reply: He says, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John iv. 4); and, again, "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear" (Heb. xiii. 5, 6). Lovingly and tenderly He watches us from on high, delighting to make known to us His all-sufficiency for every hour of need; His sustaining grace for every exercise through which we are called to pass. Let us avail ourselves of this rich provision for our daily need—the treasures made ours through faith in Christ Jesus. God's wondrous dealings with us in the *past*, and His assured blessings in the *future*, will but become more truly marvellous in our eyes, as we learn, in the power of the Holy Ghost, the efficacy and fulness of our present portion in "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, TO-DAY, and for ever."

What fills my heart with gladness?

'Tis Thine abounding grace!

Where can I look, in sadness,

But, JESUS, on Thy face?

My all is Thy providing, —

Thy love can ne'er grow cold;

In Thee, my Refuge, hiding,

No good wilt Thou withhold.

ARE YOU INSURED AGAINST "JUDGMENT" AND "THE SECOND DEATH?"

Recently on leaving a street car a person, to whom I had handed a gospel magazine, handed me a paper in return. It was nicely got up in small newspaper form. On looking over it I found that, whilst it contained stories, anecdotes, &c., it had been issued by a leading life insurance company, and its real object was the advertising of the said company, and also trying to induce people to insure their lives, by sundry specious arguments with which most are pretty familiar, so I will not repeat them here. My thoughts, however, took a different channel from that contemplated by the person who had handed me the paper, or who had compiled it. I thought of how man can speak of the uncertainty of life, and how death may invade a family at any time, &c, and use these arguments to try and persuade people to insure their lives, and bring before them the merits of the company of which they are agents. But what is it all at best? Merely a question of this life, or, at farthest, death. But there they stop. But, dear reader, let us go a little further. WHAT, AFTER DEATH?

The word of God tells us that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this* THE JUDGMENT" (Heb. ix. 27). It also tells us that there is a "*second death*" (Rev. ii., 11; xx., 6-14). The last verse quoted tells us that "the second death is the lake of fire." Now I will ask you, in true love for your soul, have you a policy of insurance

that will be a positive guarantee against those two, viz., "judgment" and the "second death"? If not, may God arouse you to a true sense of the danger that lies before you. Do you say no man can know it—there is no such thing as being certain as to that? Stay, friend, God says in His word, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; (are *you* doing that?), because he believeth not the record (same word as 'witness' above) that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John v., 9-12). If you turn to the gospel by John, 5th chapter, you will see that the Lord there speaks of every soul having to take life or judgment from Him. In verse 24 he says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath* everlasting life, and *shall not come* into condemnation," (or "judgment," the same word as in Heb. ix., 27, above quoted.) But if you take your place (and it is your true place) before God as a poor lost sinner and believe in your heart what God says about the work of His Son, you will have the solid foundation of God's word to rest on. Heaven and earth may pass away but His word will never fail. Now what does God say about His Son?

He tells us that "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). That "the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purges the conscience (of him who believes) from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. ix. 14). That "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). That Jesus "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification; therefore, being justified by faith, we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 25, v. 1).

See to it, dear reader, see to it ere it be too late and the door be shut. "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

If, in your heart, you are resting, and resting only, on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross for acceptance before God, when Jesus comes for His own, as He has said He will (John xiv. 3), then you will be one of those who meet Him in the air (see 1 Thes. iv. 13-17), which is the first resurrection and you will be one of those of whom it is written, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power" (Rev. xx. 6).

Dear reader, is not that a policy of insurance worth having, and how miserable are all human policies of insurance alongside of it?

Have you such a policy? If you have, remember what it cost that blessed One that

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you might have it, without money and without price. Its perfect certainty and security resting on Him. "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19).

Our sins were laid on His sacred head,
The curse by our Lord was borne ;
For us a Victim our Saviour bled,
And endured that death of scorn ;
HIMSELF He gave our poor hearts to win—
(Was ever love, Lord, like Thine !)
From the paths of folly and shame and sin,
And fill them with joys divine.



"I'M NEARING HOME."

(Recently an old Christian fell asleep in a chair. On waking, the words "I'm nearing Home" came from his lips. These few verses were the outcome).

I'm nearing Home, that blest place
Where, in His beauty, I shall see
JESUS, Who in matchless grace
Suffered, bled and died for me.

Yes, no longer "through a glass
Darkly" at best, nor "know in part"
But see Himself "face to face"
Who, down here, hath won my heart.

And "know as known," wondrous words !
Feebly understood by any here,
But, my soul, they are the Lord's,
And how they do our spirits cheer.

Then come Lord Jesus, quickly come,
Take us away from this poor scene
To Thyself in that bright home,
Where clouds can never intervene.

Meanwhile we hear Thee saying,
"Occupy until I come,"
"Not your own," and "In praying
Persevere" till—Thou tak'st us home.