

Food for the Flock.

* * *

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

* * *

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P R E F A C E.

IN offering a new publication to the Church of God, as the Lord may help, I pray that what appears in its pages from God's gifted servants may be used of Him in blessing to His people. He has given "gifts for the perfecting of the saints"; may it be ours to hear and to profit. "Let us go on unto perfection," not being unskilled in the word of righteousness," but, knowing what it is to partake of that "solid food," which belongs to those that are of full age, may we truly have our "senses exercised to discern good and evil" in these last perilous times. Blessed are they, who though they have but a little strength, keep His word, and do not deny His name.

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ERRATA.

Page	79,	line	23,	for "Me,"	read "me."
,,	80,	,,	20,	for "Me,"	read "me."
,,	140,	,,	6,	for "him,"	read "Him."
,,	146,	,,	26,	for "things,"	read "thing."
,,	147,	,,	28,	omit "it."	
,,	168,	,,		for "G.V.W.,"	read "J.N.D."
,,	172,	,,	31,	for "He,"	read "he."
,,	173,	,,	8,	read "wilt, And."	
,,	173,	,,	9,	read "there :	He."
,,	182,	,,	1,	for "Lion "	read "lion."
,,	182,	,,	3,	for "His,"	read "his."
,,	183,	,,	18,	full stop after	" gives."

GOD, NOT THE CHURCH, THE TEACHER BY HIS WORD ;

OR, REMARKS ON DR. MANNING'S SERMON AT
BELMONT, HEREFORD.

NOVI LIGURIA, FEBRUARY, 1874.

PREFACE.—Dr. Manning having corrected and published his sermon delivered at Belmont, the following notice of it is added as a second part to the reply already published to what appeared in the newspapers. The immediate occasion is now somewhat remote ; but the principles are of abiding importance, and Dr. Manning's sermon is a suitable occasion to bring them under the eye of Christians.

SINCE the previous tract was written, Dr. Manning has revised the report of his sermon and had it published, so that there can be no question as to the authenticity of the statements contained in the pamphlet given out under his name. The principle is of course the same, the assertions equally unfounded, the reasoning equally inconclusive. The desperate error of putting the church in the place of Christ is Dr. Manning's error ; the unbelief hidden under his statements is the unbelief of the Roman system as of Dr. Manning himself ; the contemptible arguments throw back their contemptibleness on their author.

Dr. Manning begins by telling us that in the middle ages mass would have been said in the cathedral of Hereford, and lights burning in the Ladye Chapel, and this because persons believed in the teaching of the church, that is, of the Roman clergy.

Of this there is no doubt. In the middle ages the worship of the mass existed, a flagrant denial

of the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice once offered, and of the authority of the word of God, which declares there is no more offering for sin, when Christ had been offered once for all. The Roman clergy were, with all the rest of the priesthood, eminently responsible for this blasphemous and vain pretension of renewing Christ's sacrifice, in which, to be of any avail, Christ (as is taught in Heb. ix. 25, 26) must often suffer. This horrible wickedness did exist, and the clergy are answerable for it. This much I admit: there would have been degradations of Christ's sacrifice as to its efficacy, and there would have been superstitious idolatrous worship of the Virgin Mary. Thus far I agree with Dr. Manning.

But what are the principles on which Dr. Manning would restore this? Let us see. What I affirm is this, he says, that the letter of the Scripture without the voice of the church, through the perverseness of men, killeth; and that the letter of the Scripture, with the living voice of that church, quickeneth—that is, giveth life.

Now I remark first here, that the sermon and the Roman system put the church instead of Christ as the object of faith. What Christ was in the synagogue the church is according to Dr. Manning; and he puts the church instead of the Spirit as the author and power of faith. The teaching of Dr. Manning in the first two pages (and it is the substance of the sermon's teaching) sets aside Christ and the Holy Ghost for the church. The word of God says, Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; Dr. Manning that the church is (page 15); that as Christ stood in the synagogue with the Scriptures, so the

church stands now. The word of God says it is the Spirit that quickeneth, and that Christ's words are spirit and life; Dr. Manning, that the letter of Scripture without the church kills, but that with the living voice of the church it quickens. It is a frightful denial of Scripture truth and Christianity to set up his church on their ruin. Such is the main thesis of Dr. Manning's tract. As proof, let us examine his arguments.

He says: "It is a self-evident fact," "true, admitted by everyone, and impossible to deny, that the whole revelation of Christianity was preached and believed throughout the world before the New Testament was written." "This is a fact so certain, so self-evident, that no calm, honest man, who gives himself time to consider it, can for a moment doubt it."

Now to call it self-evident is simply nonsense. No such fact can be self-evident. Why, or how, is it so? It is a matter of history and testimony. The testimony of the ancient historians and fathers of the church in some respects contradict it. They state that Matthew wrote his Gospel to leave it in Palestine before he went out to preach in the world. So far from being self-evident, the writings prove that most of them were written by their authors in the course of their service. For example, the Epistle to the Romans was written professedly before ever the apostle had been there; the Corinthians also, before he had been at Rome, but after he had been at Corinth; the Thessalonians, when he had just left Thessalonica, before he had begun his work at Corinth or Rome. Matthew's Gospel, if we are to believe the authority of the fathers, was written very early

indeed, before there had been any preaching perhaps out of Palestine ; John's, very late indeed. It is not really the question to be settled. The question is, What place do the Scriptures hold now? But the statement of Dr. Manning is neither certain nor admitted, and to say it is "self-evident" is impudent nonsense. Hard words, it may be said ; but it is well to speak the truth sometimes.

But there is another point which makes the whole statement utterly irrelevant, and that as Dr. Manning's own statement shows.

The revelation was made to the apostles and prophets. The former especially went to the Jews and heathen, and preached the Gospel to them. The church had nothing to say to it. If the church had pretended to have authority over the idolatrous heathen, or the unconverted Jews, they would have laughed at them, or perhaps put them in prison for their pains. It is "self-evident" that the church had no kind of authority, real or pretended, over the heathen or over the Jews. Those sent of God went and preached to them, and when the Spirit of God, wholly apart from the church, which in such case was not formed there, and had no authority over the unbelievers if it had begun to be formed, wrought through grace in the hearts of the hearers, there was faith produced, and the foundations of the church laid by the testimony being received. Dr. Manning's real meaning is that the clergy should have power in the church when it is formed, which is quite another point. We have known them too well.

But the baptized, he tells us, "received the full illumination of Christianity from the living voice of the apostles."

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This is equally unfounded. It is confounding conversion to Christ with teaching and building up. When by preaching, not by the church or its authority, heathens had been converted, then the apostles and others, as Apollos, etc., proceeded to build them up in the truth and godliness of walk ; and to this especially served the epistles, as they do for believers now. That Christianity was preached and believed throughout the world before the New Testament was written is a mere fable, for it is not done yet. If in saying so it is merely meant that the gospel was no longer confined to Palestine, but had gone out among the Gentiles before the New Testament was written, no one denies it ; but it was no interpretation of the church, no work of the church, no authority of the church, which did the work or gave power to do it.

First, the church had no authority with Pagans ; they recognized it in no way. Individuals sent by God carried the revelation God had given them by the Holy Ghost, and carried the revelation of Christ where it had never been, where there was no church. And Paul boasts of this, that he did carry it where it was not known, and that he had what he preached, not from the church at Jerusalem, but from the Lord Himself. In every respect he boasts of the contrary of what Dr. Manning says—Rom. xv., 20 ; 2 Cor. x., 14, 15 ; Gal. i. and ii. And even as to the Jews, when he had preached at Berea the Jews there searched the Scriptures to see if these things were so ; therefore many of them believed, and they are called “ noble ” for doing so. But the church is nowhere referred to ; the church had no authority ; the

church interpreted nothing ; there was no church to do it. The church came into existence in each place by the labours of the apostles and others employed by God, who carried the revelation of His grace, and wholly without the church, by the word of God and by the operations of the Spirit of God. Grace wrought with the testimony of God, and by it the church came into existence. But it is "self-evident" that the church could not interpret among the heathen, for it was not then in existence ; and, according to Dr. Manning's own statement, the Scriptures were not there to be interpreted, so that his whole argument is not worth one straw. In the case of the Jews at Berea, who had the Scriptures, they studied them to see if the apostles were founded in what they said ; but their church, if church it is to be called, rejected the Lord utterly, and would have hindered every one receiving Him if they could ; but they searched the word for themselves, and by grace believed.

It is impossible to have anything more directly opposed to the facts and the truth than the statements of Dr. Manning. Dr. Milner, in his "End of Controversy," is obliged to own there was special grace for the heathen, as of course the Church was nothing for them. I suppose he would have us believe that there is none for Christians, or that blessing came by grace and the Holy Ghost for heathens, but does not do so for Christians.

But it is not true that the whole revelation of God was communicated to Christians on their conversion ; not that anything was concealed, but they were not able to bear it ; they were babes in

Christ, and the apostles were "to give them meat in due season." It is not even true that the apostles received it all at once. Paul had revelations and communications from heaven all along his course. He tells the Corinthians that he could only feed them with milk, not with solid food, because of their carnal condition (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2). The Hebrews were blamed because there was still need to teach them the first elements (Heb. v). All Dr. Manning's statements are mis-statements. But I repeat, because it is the main point, that nobody denies that the apostles and others went preaching the gospel to the heathen; but this is just the proof that the church, which the heathen did not acknowledge, and which did not exist where the messengers of Christ preached, had nothing whatever to do with the matter—interpreted nothing—for there was nothing yet to interpret. Dr. Manning insists that the New Testament did not exist yet. How then could the church interpret it? What is proved by this fact is, that the word is brought home to the heart by the power of the Spirit of God, and by this they are drawn into the place of blessing so as, when gathered, to become the church. But the work is done without the church.

Am I not right in saying that Dr. Manning's argumentation is contemptible? The Scriptures did come after the first work as they may now as to individual souls. The preached word works in them, and they turn to the written word for "the certainty of the things" they believed, as stated in Luke's Gospel, "that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." Thus the written word

gave the certainty when the instruction of the living voice had been there. It was *not* the instructor interpreting and giving living power to the word, but the word giving certainty as to what they had been instructed in.

Dr. Mannings says (p. 8), "the Divine teacher from whom the Scriptures come is always in the midst of us (Christians). They love Him and interpret His writings in His presence and by His word." There is confusion of Christ and the Spirit here, but let that pass.

We have now to deal with the question of Christians and not of heathens. Did the church stand and interpret the Scriptures when they *were* written to the faithful? And here I must beg my reader to note the ambiguity of this word "church," and the false meaning hidden under it by all Romanists, and those who follow their principles. The church is the assembly of God upon the earth, united to its Head, and the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. This, though he would add a head on earth and a hierarchy uniting it, Dr. Manning would himself admit: at any rate it is true. How does this universal body on earth teach itself? Dr. Manning blasphemously says (p. 9), "the church is the interpretation of that Book, just as Jesus Christ in the synagogue of Nazareth was the interpretation of the book of the Prophet Esaias in His own person." He adds (p. 10), that Christ "claimed also to be the interpreter of the same—so now the church." To say that the church is the interpretation of the Scriptures is blasphemous nonsense, when it is put instead, and taking the place, of Christ as it is here, and

distinct from being the interpreter. It is one subject spoken of there, but the revelation of the Father in Christ, redemption, salvation, the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost are primary objects of the New Testament, and to put the church in the place of Christ, *as is expressly done here*, is, I repeat, blasphemous nonsense.

But my subject now is the interpreter. Now does this whole, if you please, organized body (though I should deny historically Dr. Manning's statements as to this) interpret to and for itself? That is not what is either meant or said when Romanist teachers explain themselves. They mean and say the teaching part of the church, the clergy, which teaches all the rest. "The church" sounds very fine, teaches, &c. ; but it is all claptrap. It means the clergy teach the church ; and all are to submit to them.

Well now, what was the fact as to the Scriptures? Dr. Manning says, There they were like Isaiah in the hand of the blessed Lord, and the church is now, instead of Him, the interpretation and the interpreter. What was the fact? The Gospels were written for the faithful—one, immediately, for a certain Theophilus, that he might know the certainty of the things he had been instructed in. He had the instruction, and this was to make all quite certain to him. There is simply no interpreting church at all.

But the case of the epistles is if possible clearer. The apostles wrote to churches and Christians, and these persons were to receive and abide by what they wrote—receive them as "the commandments of the Lord ;" those who did not heed the words of the apostles were to be noted and avoided.

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That is, the Scriptures were the things addressed authoritatively and immediately to the body of ordinary Christians, and they were bound to receive, and believe, and obey, and act upon them, without any interpreter or any one who might pretend to come in between the authority of that written word and their souls. The Scriptures bound them by apostolic authority, bound them directly, were the addresses of authority to the Christian people, who were bound to obey them and bow to them. In one place it is charged to be read to all the holy brethren. Any one coming in between these Scriptures and the conscience of the Christian people, they receiving them, bowing to them; acting on them because they so came, would have been coming in between the apostles' (that is, divine) authority and the people who were bound to bow to them, and to receive their writings as addressed to *them* by that authority.

Such a case is recorded in the Third Epistle of John. This apostle wrote to the assembly, and Diotrephes stepped in to hinder the people from receiving and *bowing* to the epistle. John declares he will remember him and his prating words if he comes. If I send a letter of orders to my servants, he who steps in and takes the letter and does not allow it to reach directly, and as my orders *to* them and *addressed* to them, is meddling not merely with the servants' rights (though, as regards the meddler, the servants being under the obligation to follow their master's orders, they had both a right and were bound to have them themselves because they were responsible to act on them as so sent *to them*), but he is meddling with the master's right and wisdom in sending it.

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It was sent to the servants, not to the meddler, and the servants are bound to take it; it was sent to them, and they are responsible. Now this is the place an interpreting clergy take. They meddle with God's rights, and impugn God's wisdom in sending these Scriptures to the Christian people. They cannot take away the responsibility of these servants; they cannot deny that the Scriptures, all save a very small part, were addressed to the Christian (of old to the Jewish) *people* by the inspired persons ordained of God.

It is important to see this clearly, Speaking of the epistles, there was no church to explain; they were addressed directly to the church, no Scriptures existing already as to which the church had to exercise such an office. The Scriptures are the writings themselves, sent by inspired persons, that is, by God, to the persons who were to use them, exactly what they wanted, and these persons were bound to use and submit to them, and responsible for not doing so if they did not. The epistles were the communication and divine wisdom of inspired teachers, the apostles, whom God had sent, addressed directly to the heart and conscience of the Christian people. In their very nature they were immediate addresses, or treatises so to speak, for all, and what concerned all. Three small epistles alone are an exception; though in these there is abundant instruction for all too. But then this is an additional proof of what I insist on. For the special servants of the Lord the apostle wrote to those servants themselves, for the people he wrote directly to the people; He had in no case the idea of putting his epistles in the hands of one set of people to be used by them for another set,

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This is Dr. Manning's theory, putting to this end the church in the place of Christ in the synagogue.

Now Romanism and the clerical system has done this. These have taken the scriptures out of the hands of the Christian people, and given them what they liked ; a deadly offence against God and His authority who sent them to the Christian people—heinous wickedness. And what has been the consequence? The dark ages—a state of things in what was called the church, which no horrors of heathenism ever equalled.

Let this be clearly understood—that nothing ever equalled the wickedness of what is called the church ; the proofs are easily to be had in history, and that from churchmen. Ignorance of this truth is now used as a plea by these same clergy for not giving the Scriptures to *those to whom God sent them*. If it be alleged that the fallen and corrupt state of the church make it now undesirable so to give it, the answer is, God has graciously provided for us in this also ; has told us when the church was become utterly corrupt, as He declared it would do, we were to turn away from all this corruption and those who were in it, and turn to the scriptures which are “able to make the man of God wise unto salvation.” In the case they now insist on, brought about by their own wickedness, those who have *God's word* know they are to turn from them and to the Scriptures.

What is now the result of these facts as to this part of our subject, in reply to this wicked pretension of the church, that is, the clergy, holding the Scriptures in their hand as authorized interpreters, according to the system of Dr. Manning?

First, as regards the heathen, the apostles and others preached to them. The church had nothing to interpret, and the heathen owned no church. Dr. Manning's system can have no possible application. The grace and spirit of God did the work without any church.

As regards the Jews, there were the Old Testament Scriptures, and the apostles appealed to them; but there was no church to interpret them authentically. The Jews owned neither church nor apostles, but, when they were through grace well-disposed, searched the Scriptures to see if these things were so. And many believed and judged the apostles true, and became part of the church. But it is again the hearers in whom grace acts, and no thought of authoritative interpretation.

As regards Christians, so far from the church being an interpreter of the Scriptures for them, these Scriptures themselves are what are sent to *the Christians themselves* as the direct and authoritative expression of the Divine mind which they were to follow. When the church should have decayed, and have fallen into ungodly ways (as at present, when this system is urged), we are told to turn away from these ungodly formalists, and have recourse to the Scriptures.

And this last principle is most strikingly enforced in the churches of the Apocalypse, where when Christ is judging the state of the churches, the individual saint is called upon to hear, not what the church says, but what the Spirit says to the churches, the judgment passed upon them by the Lord. The church is the subject of the judgment and the individual Christian is to listen, IF HE

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HAVE EARS, individually, to what Christ judges of it—is bound to hear, for Christ speaks and calls him to hear. Every fact and every instruction that God has given is exactly the opposite of Dr. Manning's, which is not of God, but that corrupt work of the enemy, which has set aside the authority of what God has said.

No one denies that a more spiritual gifted person can help me in spiritual life and understanding, but he cannot take away my responsibility to God flowing from, and according to, the word which He has sent to me. The Spirit does dwell in the church. But it is even to babes in Christ that it is said, where designing false teachers sought to seduce them, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."—1 John ii. 20, 27, Dr. Manning tells us that the church declares itself to be the interpreter as Christ did. Christ I believe, but why am I to believe the church when it speaks thus of itself? Not he who commends himself is approved, but he whom God commendeth.

But this gives rise to a preliminary question. Where is this church? Can he point it out to me? He will say Rome. But is Rome the whole church of God? I will answer with Jerome, referring to Rome, *major orbis quam urbis*. He tells us of a living organization with two heads, Christ in heaven and the Pope on earth, the whole hierarchy of the church uniting it. But what does living mean? None of the hierarchy, they admit, are necessarily alive in Christ, neither is the Pope. Popes have been deposed for mortal sin; Popes have been heretics; Popes have been infidels; not one of this living organization is necessarily alive.

Besides, history makes known, nor are facts wanting now to confirm it, though not so glaring as before the Reformation—that this pretended living organization was the most vile, wicked, corrupt, immoral body that ever existed—sunk in profligacy of every and of the worst kind—cruel, persecuting, and ambitious, and notoriously worse than the heathen whom it supplanted. Is that the living organization of which Christ is the Head? It is impossible to defile one's pages with the habitual course of conduct of what Dr. Manning refers us to as taking the place of Christ, and as a living organization under Christ as its Head, and I speak on the authority of their own historians. Baronius, their great historian, a cardinal and a Jesuit, declares that for a century he cannot own those who filled the See of Rome as legitimate Popes—put in, as they were, by the mistresses of the Marquis of Tuscany, and not chosen by the clergy or even approved by them. It is well people should know that never was any body of people on earth so depraved as Dr. Manning's living organization, and the human head on earth, at the head of the depravity, often fighting for this seat of power, and, if one turned another out, declaring all the consecrations and ordinations null and void, so that a book had to be written to show there were still sacraments—all was in such confusion, and often two and even three Popes at a time, and Europe divided as to who was the true one, each excommunicating the other and all that owned him.

There is no such history in the world for iniquity and confusion as that of Rome. I dare Dr. Manning to deny it, or, if bold enough to do

it, to disprove it from history. Indeed the evil state of what is called the church began before Rome's supremacy, though it ripened under it. Let any one read Salvian "*De gubernatione Dei*," accounting for the judgment coming on the Roman empire, declaring that virtue was to be found among the heretics and heathen, and nowhere among Christians, Cyprian "*De Judicitia*," or Chrysostom's "*Two discourses on the virgins*," both shewing the extent of depravity already existing in what was afterwards matured in the Roman system, in the boasted holiness and real depravity of monks and nuns. The assistance of God the Holy Spirit is always with His church and people; but is that a reason for taking the chief leaders in debauchery and wickedness—and such were the Popes and clergy, I defy denial—as the vessels of that Spirit to interpret the Scriptures with authority as Christ did?

And now let us see, in passing, some of Dr. Manning's arguments. The New Testament was not the source whence Christianity was derived. (p. 7.) Fully admitted. It was derived from God through the revelation given to the apostles. But that is not the question. The question is: are the writings of the apostles and the inspired instruments of the Holy Ghost, addressed to the Christian people at large, the best means of knowing what they taught, or Dr. Manning's interpretation of them, and that of other such persons who set themselves up to preach themselves and call themselves the church? Specially when the apostle declares that the professing church would become as bad as possible, 2 Tim. iii., and that then the Scriptures were the resource of the man of God.

Again he tells us, (p. 9) "If we are compelled to depend upon the church for this knowledge that the Scripture was ever written, and that these Scriptures are the identical books which the apostle wrote—if we must depend for this upon the testimony of the church—where is the consistency of the man who says, I will take all this from you, but I refuse to accept from you the meaning of that book." Supposing my banker keeps my will safe, and that the witnesses to it testify to its being the true will of the testator, therefore the banker and the witnesses are the only interpreters of the will? Now I do not admit Dr. Manning's principle or fact; but his argument is nonsense.

But further he tells us that this living organization is also before the apostle's mind when he says that when Jesus ascended into heaven "He gave some apostles, etc., for edifying of the body of Christ," which last he justly speaks of as the church (p. 14). But this upsets all his reasoning, for it is not the church which teaches or interprets, but which is taught and edified—the very point I have insisted on. And this distinction is very important, because "the church" carries with it an amazing idea of solemnity, authority, divine competency to hold a special place of authority, which is a mere lie of the author of lies. The church is edified. God's word has authority. God employs instruments, and responsible instruments, of His choice to edify it. The inspired teachers, whose teaching we have in the Scriptures, had and have authority because they were inspired. Others are useful in the degree in which they hold fast to the word, and labour with the power of the Holy

Ghost working with them. But they may, we are expressly told, build wood, hay, and stubble, and their work will be burned ; as they have done, and worse, so that it will be burned. There may be those, as Popes and Romanist teachers, who labour to corrupt the church ; they shall be destroyed. But this house of God does not edify, but is edified. There is indeed a sense in which it edifies itself ; but then it is by every member in its place “ compacted together by that which every joint supplieth, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” But this more than ever destroys the false statements of Dr. Manning, because it is not the church which teaches.

Dr. Manning tells me that the church is the teacher and interpreter ; he tells me that the church declares she does as Jesus did. But why am I to believe him or her if she have spoken otherwise than by such as He ? That a corrupt body seeks and claims all power by her agents and ministers I know ; but why am I to admit her claims, or believe what she says to me ? As a Christian I believe Christ’s person and words to be divine ; I bow to them. But who is this excessively wicked body who claims the same attention and the same place ? Dr. Manning quotes Scriptures ; he is obliged to do so with Protestants ; but in these there is not a word of it, but the contrary. Inspired apostles and other ministers edify and teach the church, and teach the people themselves directly, and he produces no passage to show that the church teaches. He says the church says she does, and has authority to—I know her instruments and favourers say so. But

when some unknown body claims this authority over my soul, whose eternal interests are concerned in it, I must have some proof that they have such title, and know who and what they are. When I read the Scriptures which were addressed to the people, and which Dr. Manning admits, I find all the contrary. The apostles, by their very Scriptures, which he tells us are a dead letter without the church to interpret, were living power by grace to the church itself, who read them without any interpreting church at all.

The whole system is a denial of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Manning tells us he could not convert a Unitarian when he used the Scriptures. No, the work of the Holy Ghost was needed. His system sees infidelity growing up round it in a frightful way. Well, he has the church now, his living interpreter, why does he not stop it? He has got all he wants, but he cannot stop it. The church can, with all its pretensions, do no more than Dr. Manning could when young. It requires grace and the power of the Holy Ghost. History tells us that "the church" had another way of checking evil—burning people's bodies when they could not convert their souls. There was such a thing as the Inquisition, regretted perhaps still by many, and which will, if possible, doubtless be put in use again. It roots up some tares, it may be, but a great deal of wheat with them; but that is no matter if "the church" has power. Christ has forbidden it; He will do that work in harvest; but that is no matter: the authority of "the Church" is maintained. It was long before the Protestants unlearned what ages had accustomed man to; the heart of man loves the exercise of

power when he has got it ; but "it shall not be so among you." It is a falsehood that flies in the face of all the facts of Scripture and the history of Christianity that, without the interpretation of the Church, the Scripture is no longer the word of life. The preached word was such by the power of the Holy Ghost to heathens ; the written word was such by the Holy Ghost to Christians. In neither case had the church anything to do with it. In the latter case it was written to the church or Christian people. Woe be to them if they did not understand and bow ! Woe will be to the saints now who do not do so.

But little remains to add, unless I wrote a treatise on Romanism. When Dr. Manning says, bring the whole Catholic world to one interpretation of Scripture ; in the first place, the Catholic world has not got the Scripture, but only what the priest teaches. But, further, it is wholly untrue, unless by the brazen-faced pretension that Romanism is the whole Catholic world, whereas it is the smaller half of it ; and, even so, half the men in it, or more, are infidels, despising the priests from their heart, even if willing to go with the crowd, and a large body of conscientious men have recently quitted it because it flies in the face of history and truth. Why is the Pope so bitterly complaining of the evil days they are fallen on, if all is so smooth, and what he calls the one true interpretation of Scripture universally received ?

Dr. Manning tells us that the church is founded on Peter. His church may be, but not the church of God. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid," says Paul, "which is Jesus Christ." But again the testimony of Dr. Manning has to be

dealt with. He quotes "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," but leaves out that this is said when Peter had just confessed Christ to be the Son of the living God. And Dr. Manning knows the weightiest fathers apply the passage to Christ. Augustine refers to the question, and says he has used it as Dr. Manning does; but then says it is referred to Christ, and people may take it the other way. Dr. Manning also knows that rock and Peter do not agree. I know that it is said in Syriac the difficulty does not exist. But we have it—the church of Dr. Manning's phases has it—in Greek and not in Syriac, and in Greek it is impossible to apply it to Peter; and this Dr. Manning knows as well as I do, but does not say.

He refers to "this is my body," as all Romanists do. But literally it could not be Christ's body, for He was then in the body, and He did not hold His body in His own hand. He does not say will be, but "is." But, further, it was not, and could not be, His body, either as it was then or as it is now. Not as it was then, for He had not died—had not shed His blood, whereas in instituting the supper He speaks equally of His blood shed, and eating His flesh and drinking His blood refers necessarily to a Christ who has died, as the bread comes down from heaven does to a Christ incarnate. It is not, in the very essence and substance of its meaning, Christ as He was, for His death and blood-shedding are shown forth in it. It is not Christ as He is now, for He is in glory, not in death and blood-shedding. That is all finished and over. There is no such Christ in existence as that which is figured in the Lord's Supper. It is His body

GOD, NOT THE CHURCH,

when He is dead, His blood when it is shed. We *show forth His death* (1 Cor. xi. 26); and He says, "this is my blood which is shed for you," hence taken apart from the body. But He was not dead then, He is not dead now: a Christ in the state of death does not exist. If the Roman doctrine is held, there is no redemption, for, as an excuse for not giving the cup to the people, they allege what is called the doctrine of concomitancy; that the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ are all in each species (in this case the bread as we should say). Now if the blood be in the body not shed, there is no redemption accomplished. Such is the profit of "church" teaching.

But Scripture incessantly speaks as it does here: "This cup is the new testament in my blood," "I am the door," "I am the true vine," "I am the bread of life," "It is the Lord's passover." It is the common way of expressing the representation of a thing in the figure, and perfectly intelligible. A child would understand if another said to it in their play, "You are my horse." The "church" has corrupted this as all else, and made the blessed memorial of Christ's work of redemption and love a sacrament of non-redemption; for if the blood be in the body, it is not shed, redemption is not accomplished.

I have spoken in my previous tract of confession to a priest pretending to be inculcated in the words, "Whose sins ye forgive, they are forgiven," of which, or any confession, save to one another, they say not a word. In the case of Corinth we have an example of this forgiveness. The sin was notorious, judged by the apostle alone, and needed no confession, and he calls upon the assembly to

put the guilty person out. Afterwards the assembly having been faithful, the apostle in a second letter urges them to confirm their love to him again, and declares that what they forgive he forgives (2 Cor. ii., 5—10). The assembly, moreover, forgives as much as the apostle. Indeed the power of binding and loosing is continued in Matthew xviii., not to any personal successors of the apostles, for they had none, but to the assembly, two or three gathered together in Christ's name—an important fact to observe in these days.

I have an historical mistake to correct in my previous tract, where it is stated that Chrysostom suppressed the office of confessor which had been established at Constantinople. It was Nectarius, his predecessor, who did so. Chrysostom exhorts abundantly to confess to God only, but Nectarius had suppressed the office of general confessor. I can only repeat here that the statement of Dr. Manning he must know to be false; at least, I can hardly suppose him to be so ignorant of Church history as not to know it. The facts I have given in my former tract.

Dr. Manning refers to James v. 14 for extreme unction. It is really wearying to follow step by step the impudent way these doctors seek to impose on souls. The Roman doctrine is that extreme unction—“*abstergit reliquias peccatorum*,”—wipes away the remains of sin. What they go to burn in purgatory for after would be hard to tell; but that is the pretended effect; and if a man gets up again and eats and drinks, its efficacy is gone. If in a dying state again, he must be anointed again.

Now in James the prayer of faith saves the sick, the discipline is removed; and if sins have

been the occasion of the chastisement, they are forgiven in the holy government of God. In a word the anointing of James was connected with the recovery of the sick and taking off the afflictions by which they were chastened, and the extreme unction of Romanists is given *only* when this is supposed to be impossible, and, if he does recover and this discipline is removed, is worth nothing at all.

Nothing can be more sad than the rampant infidelity which prevails, and which Romanism and hollow clericalism have more than anything contributed to produce ; for when religious profession sinks below the level of common or natural conscience, it produces infidelity. As to that which is produced, neither the profession nor the infidelity has anything to do with real faith, faith in God's word, and by it in the Father and in the Son. But religions, as a profession, wear out. Old heathenism did, and infidelity supplanted it ; Brahmanism is wearing out in India, and again infidelity supplants it. What is truth? says Pilate. Romanism had done this for professing Christendom. At the Reformation God's word brought in faith in the word in large districts. Now all is worn out as a system, and infidelity believes nothing. Christianity met the case when Grecian and Roman heathenism had lost their hold. When Romanism had made Christian profession worse than heathenism, the Reformation partially met the case. Now judgment only and the coming of the Son of Man awaits professing Christendom.

But it is not true that Rome has not varied in saying this is inspired, this is not. Rome for three centuries and more did not receive the Epistle to

the Hebrews ; and Rome receives the Apocrypha now, books which her own doctors in former ages refuted as not inspired, and which are not found in the Hebrew.

Two great principles remain for the sincere Christian. It is positively revealed (2 Tim. iii), that the church would fail and become as bad as heathenism, and the Christian is directed to turn away from the evil and turn to the Scriptures, and Christ (Rev. ii. and iii.) is revealed as judging the state of the churches, and the individual is called to listen to what He says as to judging the churches ; so that the church cannot have authority over the Christian, for he is called to listen to Christ judging it.

Secondly, listening to the apostles *themselves* is made a test of the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. "He that is of God," says the apostle John, "heareth us, and he that is not of God heareth not us." Now it is admitted by all that we have what they have said in their epistles. I am bound therefore to listen to the Scriptures, or I am not of God. And this responsibility rests on the individual Christian and he cannot escape it. He that is of God listens to what the apostles have said.

Further, it is alleged that, in listening to what fathers and traditions say, we must be more likely to have the truth, as they were nearer to the source. But we have the source itself, that is, what the inspired teachers themselves have taught. It is not what as Tertullian says is *prius*, or earlier, must be truer. Paul says, that after his decease, grievous wolves and perverse men would arise. But the word of Scripture is express : "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard *from*

the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father." What we read in Scripture is certainly from the beginning; what we read or hear elsewhere certainly is not; it may or may not be conformed to it, but it is not from the beginning, so that I can judge by it. I have to judge if it is. He that is of God heareth us. And the reason is obvious. Those teachers and what they tell us is divinely inspired, what is said by other teachers is not.

Finally we do need the grace of the Holy Spirit to use the Scriptures; but it is said to the babes in Christ to guard them against the seductions of false doctrines, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things," and "the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." Not that there may not be teachers John was teaching them this. But when there is a question of seducing teachers, the weakest saint is referred to what was *from the beginning*, the apostle's own teaching, and assured that they, the weakest, had the Holy Spirit, and that thus by His grace and the Scriptures, or what was "from the beginning," the apostle's own and inspired teaching, they would be kept from error and seduction, and so only.

Such is the divine safeguard in the last days.

J. N. D.

REJOICING IN THE LORD. AND THE PEACE OF GOD.

PHIL. iii. and iv.

THE Epistle to the Philippians is to the saints in general what the Epistle to Timothy is to the servant. The apostle has not been delivered out of prison, and his voice from the prison tells us to "Rejoice in the Lord." There is nothing here on earth to rejoice in ; but that is what people are very slow to learn.

Now one of these chapters is in relation to yourselves ; the other in relation to things around you. Some may say, It is not my state that depresses me, it is the things around me. Well, the third chapter treats of your state ; the fourth of your circumstances.

There are three things I must notice in the first of these chapters. First, Christ is the *object*, second, He is the *mark*, and third, He is the *hope* of the saint.

The apostle begins with a warning, "Beware of the concision." The concision are those who try to correct themselves ; and they stand lower in the sight of God than even the self-indulgent. The apostle writes much more severely to the Galatians, who tried to mend the flesh, than to the Corinthians, who indulged it. The great attempt of the present day is to Christianize man ; but God's way in Scripture is to make man a Christian. The attempt to Christianize man is all wrong. A Christian is a man of an entirely new stock and a new lineage ; he is of Christ, who is "the *beginning*" of all. Hence, in the

third chapter of Revelation, He is spoken of as "The beginning of the creation of God." There was the Laodicean Church boasting itself that it was rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing, and knew not that it was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. And what was to come in to correct such a state of things? Why, "the Amen—the faithful and true Witness, the *beginning* of the creation of God."

Then he says, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and *boast* in Christ Jesus,"—not "*rejoice*," it is a stronger word than "*rejoice*,"—"and have no confidence in the flesh;" that is, the flesh is practically set aside. This is what you must start with. The thing that was insisted on as soon as ever the people of Israel got into the land,—the first thing, as you may remember,—was, that they were to be circumcised; and that was to set forth this fact, that in heaven we have no will of our own. Abraham brought in Ishmael by his own will; and the rite of circumcision was to show that he altogether ignored the flesh that had brought him in.

Now in the following verses (4-6), we have the good state of man,—human righteousness, everything that is good in itself,—and we find this: that man, not only in his bad state, but in his good state, has no sympathy with God; so that the apostle ends by taking God's side against himself, and saying, "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Christ is the object, and what I

seek is, "that I may have *Him* for my gain." The apostle says in the first chapter, "I long to depart and be with Christ, which is far better," and "to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." The gain would be to be with Christ: it would be gain to him if he were to die. But here, in the third chapter, he shows what it is that leads him to this,—even that *Christ* is his *object*.

Now it is a great moment to the soul when Christ first becomes your object; it is then that you can count all things but loss for His excellency, so that He may be your gain.

But many persons ask the question, How can I have Him in such a distinct way that I may know Him as my object? Well, there are two ways. When Jonathan saw David with the head of Goliath in his hand, and knew that he had delivered him—brought relief to him,—he loved him as his own soul. He stripped himself of his robe, and his garment, and his sword, and his bow, and his girdle, and put them on David. It might have been said, What an improper thing for the king's son to do! But Jonathan cared not for that. His heart was won by David because of what he had *done* for him, and he loved him as his own soul.

But there is another kind of devotedness, of which I will also give an example in the Old Testament which will make it clear to you. Ruth says to Naomi, "Where thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." This is a deeper thing. It sets forth one to whom the Lord becomes the object of the heart for what He *is*, not only for what He has *done*.

Now you will find that saints rarely arrive at the second of these, though every true-hearted saint knows something of the first. You may know Christ as your relief, but it is quite another thing to know Him as your resource. It is one thing to know Him as the One who has relieved you from every pressure ; it is another thing to know Him as the one attraction of your heart. If I know Him thus, I ascend as a balloon with not a string left to tie me to earth. All my links *were* to earth, but now I have Him, not only as my relief from the death on myself, but as my resource from the death and ruin on everything around me. I will try to explain the difference.

I might say to Jonathan, Do you know David? No, he says, I do not know him, but I love him ; he has relieved me from the dreadful pressure that was upon me. I love him as my own soul.

I say to Ruth, Do you know Naomi? Yes, she says, I *know* her, and I *love* her too. I say to her, "Where you go I will go, and where you dwell I will dwell ; your people shall be my people, and your God my God."

Now this is an example of a heart not only attracted by what a person has *done*, but by what he *is*.

There are four stages in a soul which is led to this happy, practical association with Christ. In the case of the widow of Sarepta there was first relief from the pressure that was upon her and her son ; the barrel of meal did not waste ; neither did the cruse of oil fail ; it supplied all their need for a whole year. But, though it did not waste, neither did it increase. Then, at the end

of the year, death comes in. The prophet takes the death upon himself,—bears the child up to his own room, and from thence delivers him alive to his mother, and he becomes the solitary witness that the power of death was broken. *Then* she says, and not till *then*, “*Now* I know that thou art a man of God.” She had learnt so far, even that there was power over death. *We* have more; we have eternal *life*, and the witnesses to us of it are the Spirit, and the water, and the blood. I have not only got power over death, but there are witnesses to me that I have eternal life. I have first relief from death, and secondly, I have eternal life.

The next thing I find is that there is death on all around me. Jonah finds, when he gets out of the depths of the sea, that there is death all around him; his gourd withers. Where then does the heart find comfort? Where did Mary of Bethany find comfort, when every light was, as it were, gone out? It was then, as she trod that solitary path to the grave, that she found that He walked beside her,—not only as a relief to her, but a resource. And, fourthly, in the next chapter, she takes the costly ointment, and anoints the Lord with it.

Is it thus with you, or have you a hundred other things to delight in beside Christ? Paul might have had attractions down here to bind him to earth. But would he stay here? Yes, he says, I would stay for the church, but not for myself. “To depart and be with Christ is far better” for me.

If I look at the Lord I ought to be able to say, “*Come*”; because I answer to the wish of His

heart, but, if I look at the earth, I have nothing to tie me down here, and then my wish is to *depart* to be with Him. How was it that Hezekiah, when he had to face death, said, "Like a crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter"? It was just because he had all his links to earth. The apostle was quite different; he had nothing to detain him here.

Christ is not only my relief, but He is my resource. If I have nothing down here but a dreary waste before my heart I can say, He has relieved my conscience, He has satisfied my heart.

If you have not Christ thus as your object, you cannot count all things but loss for the excellency of His knowledge; but if you have, when you get up in the morning, your thought is not, I hope I shall behave myself well to-day; but, I have to live Christ to-day. You ought to begin your day with this confidence that you have enough in Christ to meet every difficulty that may befall you, just as you know that you will have light enough to do your work by; you never think of wanting another sun; the day may be more or less bright or cloudy, but all you want is clearer light, not a new light.

If you do not know this you are not enjoying eternal life. I have a new condition altogether. I am in a region where I can enjoy God, and the proof of it is that death is not on me only, but it is also on all around me. Have you ever seen the world a bleak barren desert, and you yourself left alone in it like a solitary tree? And could you then say, Well, there is One who sits on the throne, and He is enough for me, though all else has withered? I make Him my

object ; and as I cannot yet depart to be with Him, I shall try so to win Him while I am on the earth that I may be as truly with Him in spirit, and as truly see Him by faith, as if I were gone to Him. When we see a man without an object in life we say he is an aimless man. Now here is a man with a purpose, with an object : "that I may *win Christ*," and "that I may *know Him* and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death."

And now comes another thing. It is not only that he has an object, but he has a mark. It is not only that I know what He has done and what He is, but I must be in association with Christ where Christ is. Then it is that I come to understand what the mark is.

The mark is what gives steadiness to the walk. If a man is a stranger he shows by his behaviour that he is strange *in* the place ; if he is a pilgrim he shows by his behaviour that he is going *to* a place. Now Paul says : I am going on my way to do a service ; I have started from a place, I am going on a circuit, and I shall come back to that same place again after I have done my work. I do not expect to grow old here ; if I look forward I see myself die as a martyr ; I see the stake before me. But when I think of what I have to comfort my own heart, I see *Him* before me. There is no steadiness in your heart unless you see Christ in glory. When my heart gets the sense of seeing Him where He is, it acquires a certain definiteness. It is vain to talk of a mark if you do not see it.

Now what people say in answer to all this is,—I

do not see what you say! Well, have you ever spent a night praying to God to show it to you? Have you ever been thoroughly in earnest about it?

The apostle brings these things before them so that they may be able to rejoice always. I find that if there is one thing that marks the saints in general, it is absence of joy in the Lord. How can you get joy in the Lord? By making use of Him. You will never know the value of Christ until you use Him. The Lord likes you to use Him. He says "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee," and "casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." I find when I sit down with people quietly to have a talk that they begin at once to speak of the trials of the way! And after that, if I say, Suppose we change the subject and talk of the things of God;—then I find that they can talk of nothing but the *mercies* of God to themselves, but it is all the *temporal* mercies of God they talk of. And they get no higher than this. How few can say, The Lord has shown me wonderful things lately about the Lord Jesus Christ!

Lastly as to our hope. "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." This is what we are looking for; we have no country but heaven, and we are looking for the Lord to come and take us to it. And when He comes forth the first thing He will do will be to raise the bodies of His sleeping saints; He will raise them in likeness to His glorious body; and as to us, He will also "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." That is our hope, and you see it is all connected with Himself.

And thus we are brought back again to the text that we started with, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice."

Well, so far, it is all about myself, but what about circumstances outside? Now we come to them; and the first thing is, "let your moderation be known unto all men." A man jostles you in the streets: let him. "The Lord is at hand." You can "be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, *with thanksgiving*"—do not forget past mercies. Is my child sick? I remember how one was before, and how God succoured me then. Keep up the recollection of His goodness; there is nothing so good for the soul as to keep up the remembrance of the goodness of God. "With thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." All your requests are to be made known. What! pray about *every* thing? Yes. I am sure the saints would not have half the foolish things they have in their houses if they made all their requests known to God. Make known *everything* to Him.

In public, as well as private, we are often troubled with the thought as to whether we are expressing God's will. Now the first question is, Have you been to God about it? And, having been, do you know that God's ear has taken in what you have requested? The moment that you have got the sense that He has heard you, you are satisfied; you want no more, and need not repeat it; just as a man says to his child,—You have talked to me about that before.

The great importance of prayer is, not that you

may get your request, but that you may have the sense that God has to do with your affairs. You have got a sense of what it is to go to Him and get an audience. I have taken, as it were, the whole of the contents of my heart, and poured them out before Him. I say, I know He has them ; I need not tell Him about them again. The fact is people lose their time saying a great many words to relieve their consciences, and not to ask for what they really need. When I ask anything according to His will I know that He hears me, and that I have the petition that I desired of Him.

The first great parable about praying is that in the eleventh of Luke. The man *would not* go away without his friend giving him the loaves, because he wanted them, and had no other way of getting them. Do not go to God if you have any back door ; do not have any plan of your own if you are going to pray to Him. That is the principle of real prayer. What makes people so often not gain in prayer is that they have some plan in the background. They go to some place for their health, and pray about it, but all the time they are thinking that if this place does not cure them they will go somewhere else and try another.

Well, how can you know when you have had an audience?—when you have gained God's ear? You can know at once ; I will tell you how. The most wonderful favour that ever was conferred upon man by God will be yours. You will have *the peace of God*. Have we any troubles at this present time? We have. And why do we go about troubled with them? Because we do not go to God with them. When I go to God with

AND THE PEACE OF GOD.

my troubles and get an audience of Him, He gives me *His own peace* about them. I am in the state that God is in. What a wonderful thing! Here is a man who was troubled this morning; he has gone to God and got an audience. And has he got his prayer answered? Perhaps not. But he has come out in *the state of God*.

Well, do your work like a horse in a mill, and go on. Circumstances are not to bear you down. We all fret and worry until we can go to God with it and say to Him, Settle it as you like; and then we can go out with the peace of God. The effect of it is, first, to bring us into a calm from a state of perturbation, and next, into the peace of God.

Now, if your own state is not right you cannot rejoice. Your own state which you find in the third chapter, must come first. You must have Christ as the one object of your heart to supplant everything else. Then as to the things around that try and afflict you, if you tell them all to God you get rid of them. The point is, Have you had an audience? What a solemn blessed sense it imparts! A man can go about in the world saying, I know I have the ear of God! And thus this most wonderful favour that ever God conferred on a man on earth is his. It is the most wonderful favour, because God might have given me all the world and not have given me *peace*.

And "the peace which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen.

GRACE.

THERE is nothing so hard for our hearts as to abide in the sense of grace. It is by grace that the heart is "established;" but there is nothing more difficult for us really to comprehend than the fulness of grace.

Grace supposes all the sin and evil in us, and is the blessed revelation that through Jesus all this sin and evil has been put away. A single sin is more horrible to God than a thousand sins, nay, than all the sins in the world, are to us; and yet, with the fullest consciousness of what we are, all that God is pleased to be towards us is LOVE! It is vain to look to any extent of evil—a person may be (speaking after the manner of men) a great sinner or a little sinner; but this is not the question at all. Grace has reference to what God is, and not to what we are, except indeed that the very greatness of our sins does but magnify the extent of the "grace of God."

I have got away from grace, if I have the slightest doubt or hesitation about God's love. I shall then be saying, "I am unhappy, because I am not what I should like to be." But this is not the question: the real question is, whether God is what we should like Him to be—whether Jesus is all we could wish. If the consciousness of what we are—of what we find in ourselves—has any other effect than, while it humbles us, to increase our adoration of what God is, we are off the ground of pure grace. The effect of such consciousness should surely be to humble us, but to make our hearts reach out to God and to His grace as abounding over it all.

J. N. D.

THE LORD'S HOST.

EPH. vi. 10—18.

It is a little strange that conflict has such a prominent position given to it in this epistle. We find here the fullest unfoldings of our position and we get the walk of the Christian drawn from these ; but here also it is that especially we are found to be in conflict, and are called upon to take on us "the whole armour of God." Indeed such a conflict as this is never got into until we know our privileges. In Galatians we have conflict, but not the privileges of the Church ; it is not the same thing as what we find here ; of course the flesh is not the same thing as wicked spirits. Take the saints out of the world, make them vessels meet for the Master's service, and that is the very reason they get into the conflict. If we stand in the place of privilege—every Christian *stands* in it of course—but if we have *got hold* of this place we must get into the conflict. In fact, as the apostle says, If you cross the Jordan you *must* meet the Canaanite and the Perizzite. Wilderness exercise—means of discovering what is in our hearts—all of us know something of ; but it is when we have got into the *land* that we get into the conflict.

We have "died with Him," which is just what Jordan is, and are "made to sit together in heavenly places with Christ." It is the place of every Christian, but many a one does not realize it. Many a one is thinking whether he is not yet in Egypt, and is looking at the blood. But in the Red Sea I get the death and resurrection of Jesus

Christ ; the judgment which has fallen upon the Egyptians has saved me ; I “believe in God by Him who has raised Him up from the dead and given Him glory.” Just as I was driven out of an earthly Paradise because of sin—of course by I, I mean every poor sinner in Adam—so I am raised up and put into an heavenly Paradise because of righteousness. Passing through the wilderness we have exercises of heart—we have the manna—Christ come down from heaven to feed us ; we have the water from the rock—all most useful, that He may do us good in our latter end. Well, then, we come to Jordan, and then we pass death, so to say, and the land is ours—we eat the old corn of the land.

You get the two places, the wilderness and the land, all through this epistle. He sets us there in our place—of course we are here in our bodies—but, you come to the *fact*, the *Canaanite* is here. We have our place in Him, but His enemies are not yet put under His feet. The effect is to put us into conflict. You will hear people talk of Jordan being death, and Canaan being heaven ; but it never strikes them when they thus talk of Canaan and death that what characterizes the land is *conflict*.

Now as to those who enter the land they are so completely the Lord's, that He uses them for conflict against His enemies. How can they fight the Lord's battles if they are in the flesh ? So if we are to have some one successful in these battles we must have some one who is *practically dead*. See how the Apostle fought them ; he kept all that was of Paul completely down, so that nothing of Paul appeared ; he always bore about in His body

the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in his mortal body. A man that is dead and risen again, what has he to do with this world? Associated with the Lord in those heavenly places we are the witness and testimony of what He is there.

Now if you are seeking to maintain the saints in this place, do you think Satan will let you alone? So we get this instruction about putting on the whole armour of God; the moment we get into this place He says to us, You will not get through this in the flesh; you will have to put on the whole armour of God, for you "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth."

In looking at these parts of the armour we may notice that we get first the *subjective* parts; that is to say, our *state* comes first, and then comes the *activity*. There is no divine activity until God has been divinely active with us. The loins must be girded up; the power of truth applied to everything in the heart. God has sent into the midst of this world all the thoughts that can bless man. Christ was the Light of the world, and he brought out everything that was in it. He comes and brings all that is divine and heavenly in a man right into contact with all that is wrong in man. Some people think now that the world is a very fine thing! People fancy that in the cross Satan has been done away with! Why he was never called

the prince of this world until after the cross. The truth came into the world, that is Christ Himself, the Truth of God now revealed in the Testament, is brought right into men's hearts. Well, when it is effectually applied I get the girdle of truth about my loins—my heart well tucked up. In this kind of conflict in order to be able to meet Satan, the first thing of all is, that my heart be entirely subject to a heavenly word. He has brought this heavenly truth to bear upon me, it says, Is this heavenly in your heart? I get in this revelation of Christ, my loins girt about with truth; I get my heart into a strengthened, steadfast state; and whenever I get into this state there is conflict. But the soul goes *naturally* on; the man's condition is the effect of truth; the affections are right; the heart is in the truth.

“And having on the breast-plate of righteousness.” Beloved friends, all this is *practical*. It is not righteousness with *God*. I do not want armour against *God*. But if I am going to preach Christ, and one can say of me, Why, here is a man preaching who is worse than his neighbours, Satan will take hold of it immediately. We must have on the breast-plate of righteousness, the soul and walk all right.

Next, my feet are to be “shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.” Selfishness will always be a *contending* thing; it says, I must maintain my rights. But the christian carries *peace*, because he has peace within; he carries through the world the spirit and character of Christ. *He* had his loins girt about with truth, of course, *perfectly*; He had on the breast-plate of righteousness *perfectly*; so He could walk through

this world, through every thing, passing on in *perfect peace*. A man can thus walk untouched through everything that they can bring against him ; his *feet* are shod.

Now that I have got all subjectively right, as they say, I can take up "the shield of faith." The existence of a sinful nature does not give a bad conscience, but it is when we yield to it that we get a bad conscience, and that is why we are told to confess our *sins*, not our *sin*. When the heart is right in the first three pieces we can take up the shield of faith. When we "walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." There is blessed confidence in God. Satan may do what he can ; he may lurk in secret places,—he cannot break through my shield of faith. He has done his best to seduce, his worst to dismay : a Man in His standing for us has completely overcome him. Therefore it is, "*resist the devil, and he will flee from you,*" not *overcome* him ; if he is once honestly resisted he has met Christ in us, and at once he runs away ; he never can get through confidence in God ; the shield of faith is up, and he can do *nothing*.

So, beloved friends, you find it is the defensive armour that comes first, and the *state* of the *soul*. Many a one has got into activity without knowing himself ; but with this "helmet of salvation" on he can hold his head up, he knows that salvation is his, and that on to the glory is his portion. He is a man in Christ,—all that is a settled thing,—and now he takes "the sword of the Spirit," he can set about the fight. The first great thing, if we are to be active in the service of the Lord, is

that we are to be perfectly right with the Lord. The apostle was always self-judging. It is the man who has the *secret* of the Lord in power in his own soul who can go out in service. He will not be amazed and distracted with half-a-dozen thoughts,—he has the secret of the Lord.

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” These two have been always running through together, ever since the time of Mary. She sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His words,—the word of God and prayer. The moment I get to apprehend that the conflict is against Satan and the wiles of Satan, I find that half the battle has to be carried on with God. Look at the Lord Himself. We find Him in Gethsemane earnestly praying, *earnestly praying*; and then, when it came, He was perfectly calm; whilst Peter, who was sleeping, cursed and swore he did not know Him, the Lord witnessed a good confession. This earnestness and supplication is from being in God’s interests in the world. People have a fancy that an apostle would go sailing over everything. When Paul was at Corinth he was there “in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.”

The blessed Lord went down to where we were,—made sin for ourselves in the lower parts of the earth,—all Satan’s power against him; then when He ascended up on high He led captivity captive. He takes us so entirely out of the hands of the enemy that He sets us in a place where we have the same interests as Christ,—*the same interests as Christ*,—a most blessed place, if we only have the power to hold it. But the more you

are in the fore-front of the battle, the more you are exposed to the fiery darts ; if anyone lags behind he will keep out of it. There is no place calls for more dependence on Christ than when we are in the fore-front of the battle. This leads us to this constant, unceasing dependance, when the apostle leaves figure altogether ; it is "praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Now let me ask you this, Do you find you can intercede much for all saints? I find nothing tests the state of my own soul more than this. Of course, I can pray for *myself* ; if not I shall have a fall. But am I so walking in fellowship with God that I can be in continued intercession for all saints? If I get into God's presence and find myself not right in the light, of course I begin to think about myself, and rightly too, and there is an end to intercession.

Well, beloved. it is so far this armour of God that I am to keep on while I am here ; when I have passed the Jordan, and the *reproach* of this world is rolled away, I can be *in the Lord's host*. It is the *wiles* of Satan that we have to fear ; it is not learning,—it is not human wisdom. Satan is a great deal more clever than that ; he will let a person be as orthodox as you like, but the moment *redemption* is believed in, the power of superstition is gone. When redemption is really known, all the ritualists in the world will not touch me. People often say, How can such learned and wise men as these give in to Ritualism, infidelity, and such like things? Why, they forget that Satan is behind it all. Men speak of the

incarnation,—of the person of the Lord very beautifully ; but it is never redemption,—never that Christ has gone before God and settled the question of sin for me. Hold fast, — beloved friends, — fast hold of that precious truth that Christ has *done* the work. Infidelity comes and says, Where is the proof of it? I say, I know Him ; I have got Him in my heart ; *that* will not do ! But the moment we get out of the conscious presence of God we are in danger.

The Lord keep us in this consciousness until the day that He shall come and take us to Himself, that where He is there we may be also.

If you complain of your foes either inwardly or from outside, your strength is less than theirs ; you are unwittingly making Christ inferior to them.

(J. B. S.)

In reasoning with unbelievers, answer their conscience not their questions, as the Lord did when one asked Him, “Are there many that be saved?” He said, “Strive to enter in *yourself*.” (J. N. D.)

The moment I see a man of great common sense in the Church of God I say, That man will never act with spiritual sense unless he crucifies his common sense. But a man without common sense, he turns to God, and then he acts with spiritual sense.

(J. B. S.)

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD.

ROMANS v. 1—11.

I ALWAYS think, beloved friends, that these few verses which we all know so well, — by heart, most of us, — beginning as they do at the very threshold of truth, yet lead us up to the very highest point. Of course there are other parts of the Word that take us into greater details in the deep things of God, but still everything is contained in this: if I get God as the very light and joy of my soul, I cannot get beyond that. It is sad, the tendency that is in us to stay at the threshold. There are such multitudes who are aiming at getting peace with God, and such other multitudes who, having got it, have all that they want, and who are, as they say, “perfectly clear as to their salvation”; but I do not think they are ever “clear” if they do not want to go on — if they think they have got everything. I do not think that soul has full and settled peace that stays at the threshold; mere knowledge of what the cross has done will not do if we stop there.

The first verse of this chapter is such a sweet one: “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” It introduces us at the first step on to this blessed ground of peace with God — everything now behind us that once we feared. But the Spirit of God does not stop there, though we often hear it quoted without the second: — “By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the

glory of God"; we have *access*. It is not enough, dear friends, to take the first-step—to say, Now I am secure, now I am happy; but I must go on to say, Now I have *access*. What a wonderful thing! The cross is the place where our sins were dealt with, and, if Christ bore them there, we shall never have to bear them ourselves; whatever else we may have to account for, we shall never have to give account for sins that Jesus bore. In the last chapter we see that "Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith." Nothing staggers faith, and we know that "the Lord has laid on Him the iniquities of us all," and our faith receives it, but we must not stay there. There is much more in God's heart for us than to be mere bare forgiven sinners here; it is an immense thing to be that, but it is not everything.

As David says, "He hath brought me forth into a large place." We are brought to *God*. Christ suffered not merely to make peace, to put away sin, but to bring us nigh; we "are made nigh by the blood of Christ;" and what we want to know more of is that which God sent His Son into this world to do; and that is—though we do not always know it—that is what the anxious soul really craves after, that is what every man really longs for,—of course I am not speaking of the poor empty worldling who has no desires at all.—And why is this? It is because nothing but God can really fill the heart of man; the heart of man is really the biggest thing in creation,—the whole world cannot fill it. This we are divinely told in the Book of Eccles-

iastes. There we read, "What can the man do that cometh after the king?" Solomon had tried everything in the world; he had tried what he could get out of it to satisfy himself; no one could have tried more than he had done, so he says, "What can the man do that cometh after the king?" And what had it all proved to him? Why, that not the whole world — *nothing* will give *rest*. The heart's capacity is immense, and nothing will fill it. Poor, weak, failing as we are, yet nothing but God can fill us. And God sent His Son into this world to meet this want. God sent Him down to where we were, with no possibility of approaching Him — down to this poor world in grace He sends the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, that He may declare God to man, that you may know God, and that you may know Him thoroughly.

And this is a great thing to say. We cannot know the secrets of each other's hearts; we cannot trust one another; but we can know and *may* know the eternal God; and it is in the knowing Him that is the fulness of peace, not in mere forgiveness. And it is through our Lord Jesus Christ, remember, that we get all this; it is through Him that "we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand"; it is by the knowledge of Him that we know and understand what a large place He has brought us into — a place where God Himself may be known. We are to walk down here where nothing is right — nothing right round us under the sun — everything wrong; but we in the midst of it all, with the full and perfect knowledge of God Himself. We get all this in the passage that I have read; we

get the soul fully established for everything ; from having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and access by faith through Him, He leads us on step by step into the knowledge of His counsels and His ways until we "joy in God."

I remember when I was first converted my one great desire was to be with the Lord; I wanted *Him*; either His coming, or for myself to die; anything, I thought, rather than run the danger of falling back into that world from which I had been delivered. God could take us away directly we are converted, if He would but He does not; He wants us here; He wants a people here living in the power of that new and eternal life He has given them as sons and daughters of God: otherwise He would take us out of the world. I often think what a wonderful thing it is that God should allow to go on all the dishonour that is done to His name, for the sake of the honour that is brought to Him by the few who are true to Him in the midst of it. And it will always be but a few, but a remnant. Even true believers have failed; but God will always have a few who are true to Himself; and He goes on with the world because He will have this witness to Himself in it. God loves to have a people here, so He does not take us out of the world: He wants us here for His own sake and for His Son's sake.

And He does not leave us here to do impossibilities; He does not leave us here without power. We know, alas! that the unbelief of some of His people is so great that they say the Bible is not to be believed literally; but there

is not a word in it that we cannot act upon. Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," and one case of being able to do proves all. If *one* man can say by the Lord Jesus that he can do all things, why, *another* man can say it too. And whilst, of course, we must own failure, yet we may never call black white to please anybody. I believe that is one of the ways of being true to God; it is hateful to God to "call evil good, and good evil; to put darkness for light, and light for darkness." He links us with Himself by faith, and faith can *judge*. Faith is true; it never says black is white; it always calls everything by its name; and to know a thing to be right is half way to doing it.

Well, at the beginning we are brought to the knowledge of God Himself; and then we have to get through this scene, and this passage teaches us how—how the soul that is justified by faith can get on. The first two verses, as we have seen, are easy, and then comes the next: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also." Suddenly brought from the heights of blessing to the depths of tribulation! I am going to learn something down here in this trouble which I cannot learn up there in His glory, because there will be no sorrow there. Now that is totally contrary to nature. You cannot find any person naturally rejoicing in trouble; you cannot find any person in nature as the apostle was in the Philippians: rejoicing in the Lord always, even though in a prison, and able to say, "I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." So here, "we glory in tribulations." Why?

Not because the tribulation is pleasant: sorrow *is* sorrow, and God knows it. The blessed Lord Jesus knew it; He could weep with those that wept; and more than any of us, because He had a perfect heart. There never was with Him, as there so often is with us, a smile upon His lips at what was wrong. I do not know anything more sad than that, even we who know God, instead of being ashamed at sin, we often smile at it. He knew what sorrow was; and, as I said, sorrow *is* sorrow, and yet we glory in it. I do not think that means that we glory *about* it, but that we glory whilst we are in it. *Naturally* we wish we were out of it; we hate difficulties; we hate pressure: yet grace teaches the soul to be patient under it because nothing comes except from God. I—we *all*—*say* that everything comes from God, but the thing is to *act* on it. If I know that the One who has blessed me with every blessing in Christ sees well to bring me under pressure—under trial of any kind—shall I seek to escape it? No; we shall bear it as coming from Him, and glory in it.

Nature can *endure*. One has heard of people bearing agony of body in the most wonderful way; that is endurance; but it is not the “patience” spoken of here, which comes through tribulation. Patience includes two things. I do not think we are truly patient unless we have the hope of deliverance—the certainty of deliverance in God’s own way. That is what I call divine patience; whilst we endure we do not try to get out of it, we do not try to escape the pressure, but we know that God will take it off when it is good to do so.

And patience, experience." Experience of what? I believe it is of *God*; not experience such as men talk of. When there is patience under these trials then experience of God comes in; we *learn God*. We learn what it is to reap what we have sown; but when the soul is right with God it does not shrink, it is satisfied, it says, This is just as it ought to be. God is with us in it all.

"And experience, hope," He may well hope who can say farther on, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Knowing God by the cross, by the gift of His Son, and holding this fast, the soul goes through happily, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." What a wonderful thing! What a wonderful succession the soul has passed through with God in all this, wherein the tribulation, patience, experience, hope, are all perfect, and the love of God shed abroad in our hearts!

And then this love is brought out again: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly"; we have got back again to that which gave us "peace with God." And then this love is measured: "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." It is very sweet, I think, dear friends, to see how all thus comes round in a circle; you are brought through a succession,

in which you can rejoice, not only in glory, but in tribulations also; not only what God will be to us in the future, but what He is to us in this present scene.

How God, as it were, delights in bringing back the soul to that perfect proof of Divine favour: "Christ died for us." However high we may get, we have to come back to this—to this thing "not done in a corner," but done down here in this very world where sin has been committed, and where the name of God has been dragged in the mire. In the place where the debt was made, the debt was paid. All that God gave to His blessed Son, all that He earned, the glory that God gave Him for His work done down here,—we shall never lose sight of it through all eternity. It is always a wonderful thing to me that in this world such a work as this was wrought out. He brings us to God Himself, and then leaves us here to prove what these things are worth.

Now, *do* we prove them day by day and hour by hour? Are they the things that strengthen and comfort our hearts? Faith's path is not meant to be an easy thing. There must be practice in the things of God: we must prove, not only whether these things are so, but whether they are as good to us as God means them to be. This is what I think this little passage puts before us; and I am sure, beloved friends, that it is a real thing. Do we do it? The Hebrews of old "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance." But there is a tendency in all of us to

get weary, as they did ; and yet if the soul is going on with God it is not so, for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The soul that is brought near to God, and walks with Him, becomes more and more intimate with Him as time goes on, loves Him more ; there is no weariness in it. We do not get tired of living with people that we love ; we find out all their beauties, and here people are failing, whereas with God it is all perfection ; so that instead of getting weary we are continually finding out new perfections. The place we are brought into is one of *access* ; access is *going on* step by step until we get to the perfect day.

"Much more then being now justified by His blood we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Beautiful that is, beloved ! What a thought it gives us of the blessedness of having a living Christ at God's right hand for our hearts ; not only a dead Christ on the cross for our sins, but a living One for us now in heaven. They were enemies, and a dead Christ reconciled them ; now they are children, and a living Christ sustains them. How *much more* ! You can see how His service now, follows that of the cross. We have got a living, loving, active Saviour at the right hand of God, and He is there now as a living Christ, having been first on the cross as a dead Christ for God's glory and for the putting away of our sins. And He will be with us every step of the way ; we are saved every step

of our path down here by His life up there. How *much more* ! As much more as life is better than death !

Thus we are brought *to God*; and just as He has brought us to Himself so we may bring Him into everything—have nothing, be nothing, do nothing without bringing God into it. It is our business, our privilege, our blessing, to have God with us—to have all that God is to fill our hearts in full perfect love casting out fear. We joy in God—in all that God is ; we joy in Christ; we say, There is the Almighty God manifested in flesh, perfect love, tenderness, beauty ; and that is the One we are called to please. We are to learn so to have Him before us, that we can bring Him into everything.

Can I say, I have got God to satisfy me ? I have got this High, this Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity ; He has brought me into the light to love Him, to know Him, to be with Him, as a child with a father, with no reserves. May God give us to know it ! This is real peace—*real peace*—to know that we have *got God to fill the heart*. He is the only One who can do it—the only One who can fill these poor hearts, which, unless filled with Him, are always trying to satisfy themselves with the poor passing things of this world.

It is much harder to believe that I am “without strength,” than that I am “ungodly ;” conscience tells me that I am a *sinner*, but I must have my *will* broken before I know that I have no strength.

(J. N. D.)

NO BREAD.

MATTHEW xvi. 1—23.

THE two great subjects which come out at the end of the chapter I have read are, the one, the rock on which Christ builds the Church—that is His own person; and, the other, the cross. These two things must go together, and I desire to dwell upon what will prepare you to understand them; looking however at the cross, not as connected with our sins, but as that which separates us from the man that is here, and from the things that are here.

You will never understand that wonderful scene in which the Lord presents Himself to Saul of Tarsus unless you see that He there recognizes no other man besides Himself: He has done with man. That blessed One, who is the Son of the living God, brought man—the first Adam—to an end in the cross; so that my hope is not in a dying man but in a risen Man. Now I wish to show you how we are taught this.

You have to learn the cross as that which has separated you from things here; you have to find out what Jesus is when there is nothing else but Jesus, or, as this scripture teaches it in figure, when there is "*no bread.*" The Lord says, Do not look for a sign. The leaven of the Pharisees was looking for a sign; but Jesus is to be sufficient for you when there is nothing but Himself, when there is nothing to supply you naturally. The natural is what man looks for; but what Christ would here teach His disciples is that it is not

for what is natural they are to look, but for Himself.

You will never really understand the church of God until you understand this lesson. And why do not saints understand it? Because they have not learned Jesus as the resource of their heart, though they may have learned Him as their *Saviour*, as a relief for their conscience.

Bread is what suits nature. After forty years' wandering in the wilderness Israel learned, "man doth not live by bread only." God's purpose is to teach me this lesson, and He does so in various ways: not only by leading me through sorrow; He gives me bright days as well as dark ones. But though there are dark ones, I wish to correct an idea that often troubles people, namely, that God always wants to bring us *down* when He chastens us. When He corrects a man it is not that He may bring him down, but that He may lift him *up*. He says, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may *exalt* you in due time." I discipline my child in order that I may exalt him morally.

The Lord says, "Man shall not live by bread only." That is what I have to start with. Here is the blessed Son of God led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and when He has fasted forty days and forty nights He is an hungred. He has no bread. Is it wrong to be hungry? Of course it is not. But what does the Lord say when the devil comes and says to Him, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." He says, I have got no instruction from God to make bread. What a marvellous sight! There is the Son of God, that made the

heavens and the earth—there He is, hungry, in the very nature and make that He Himself created; He is hungry, and He will not stir His hand to provide bread for Himself!

I just turn to that passage in Peter to which I referred. He says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." Then, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." That is the proof that you are humble; a man who is really humble casts His care upon God. As a man here I must have care, but when I am humble I cast it on God.

But besides this there is the devil. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Here I get a double character of evil: care inside and the devil outside. As to the care, you are relieved from it when you can say, I am so little that I cannot help myself, so I just cast it upon One who can help me, as in the case of the widow with the adversary. I am then a humble person, because I cast my care upon One who can care for me. But this lowly weak person has besides a most terrible enemy; and where does this enemy show himself? Perhaps in your next-door neighbour, who will try to carry you off to a flower show; perhaps in another, who will come in to talk to a mother about her children, or to a man about his business. "Whom resist, stedfast in the faith"; and the more sense you have of your own weakness as you resist him, the greater the sense you will have of the power of God. You never learn power but in weakness, and the measure of the strait you go

through with God is the measure of your strength.

Oh! it is the distraction of the soul that so hinders,—the looking for something else to relieve it in the strait instead of Jesus; so that it is unprepared for a place where there is only Himself. Our place is in the holiest, and what is there there save Jesus? What does Paul find when he gets into the third heaven? Not one bit of “bread” there; nothing to keep up nature. He did not even know whether he was in the body or not, so little was there to minister to it there.

Now there are three powers in the world: the power of Satan, the power that God gave man, and the power of the Holy Ghost. And since the cross, there is, as it were, a subterranean passage between the power of man and that of Satan. There was a coalition between them when they put Christ to death, so you cannot now use the power given to man; for Satan is connected with it. The moment you use it the Holy Ghost retires. I do not stay to dwell upon this now, but pass on to the power of God with which you really have to do; for the Spirit of God is my only power, and the only bond that I have to Christ. When have I the greatest sense of His power? My adversary the devil is going about as a roaring lion outside me, and inside, it is weakness and cares; but it is when I am most conscious of the power outside and the weakness inside that I have the greatest sense of the power of Christ.

What strait have you passed through with God? I do not doubt you have had troubles; but it is not passing through troubles that makes you strong,

but passing through them *with God*. It is "the trying of your faith that worketh patience"; the *trying*, not *trial*. Putting a horse at a fence that he can go over is a *trying* of him, but it is no *trial*; on the contrary, he enjoys going over it if he can clear it. You say, I have gone through plenty of trials. But how has it been with you in them? You have been looking for *bread*, and often the bread has come in, and you have lost the blessing of the lesson which you might have learned. If God is going to teach it you, He will not let you have any relief until you have learned it; He will not give you relief until you are fit for it. When Peter was going to be relieved what was he doing? He was *sleeping*: he had no care; he had cast it upon the One who cared for him. But instead of this, people are shrinking from distress, whereas it is in distress that you learn what God is to you. In favours you learn what the *kindness* of God is; but it is in distress that you learn what God is *Himself*.

Let me say a word upon enjoyment, for I think people confuse in their minds the difference between enjoyment and strength, and thus after a season of enjoyment are much surprised to find that they want strength. Paul found this. After being in the third heavens he had to say, "When I am weak then am I strong," and to learn, "My strength is made perfect in weakness," so that he could say, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak then am I strong." No man in life could make sense of this unless he knew that it is in straits that you learn what Christ is.

Do you like to get into a strait to learn something of Christ? We are glad enough when it is over to see what we have learned in it; but do I say when going into it, Well, now I shall learn in this sorrow what a resource Christ is? I hear people talk in a very loose way of their "being on the Rock," when they have very little idea of what they mean. To say that you are on the Rock is to say that you are connected with Christ, and, if so, you are prepared to find that Christ is sufficient for you in any circumstances in which you may be placed.

Now I want you, beloved friends, to see how what I have been saying is established in the third chapter of Joshua; namely, That it is the measure of the strait you go through with God that is the measure of your strength. This great truth is brought out in the bed of Jordan—in death. Here is a type of death!—every bit of "bread" gone, not a thing left to support nature. What can be weaker than death? Well, "Hereby shall ye know that the living God is among you"! See it in the death of Christ; God, the living God Himself came down—the mighty power of God—and raised Him from the dead. I have not got a bit of power; there is nothing left; well, then "man's extremity is God's opportunity."

If you have thus gone through death you will never lose the mark of it. Do you think you could forget what God is, when He is thus known to the soul and thus learned? And how did you learn this? Was it in His favours? When did Jonah learn it? He learned it when the gourd withered; when he had no one but

God; when he was in extremity. I tremble for the saints who look for favours upon earth. Favours will teach you God's kindness; but if Noah had been in a desert where there was only a little stream of water, he would never have got drunk. It is not that I want you to *look* for trial; I think a person who could do that has self-confidence: but I want you to say, Jesus is enough for me, and if trial comes, it but brings out the preciousness of Christ.

Look at David at Ziklag. He was in the greatest and most terrible strait; everything seemed to bear down upon him; his own conscience could not be happy because he was in a wrong place; and his friends, who had adhered to him through thick and thin, now spake of stoning him. What did he do? "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God"! He cast all his care upon Him. And what was he brought through such straits for? It was all to prepare him for the elevation to which God was going to raise him.

As to myself, practically speaking, I may feel that I am not fit to be put through much suffering; that I should go to pieces if I were. But when I have the mind of God, I know that the highest portion I can have is, not favours, but suffering. In that wonderful chapter where the Lord sends out His disciples, He tells them that they are going out as "sheep in the midst of wolves," and that "he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." You cannot complain of any suffering when you see that the greatest possible suffering,—the cross,—is only your normal state. But the Lord some-

times cannot put you through suffering ; because you would be discontented, and He does not want you to be that. It is marvellous to see one like Stephen superior to everything, and to think,—Why, a tooth-ache or any trifle of that sort would put *me* out at once ! The Lord says, I have given you an opportunity of learning, and you will not take it ; you prefer the bread, so I let you have it. If you will not learn of Him, He will not force you ; He will not subject you to suffering if you cannot bear it. But I believe the saint *ought* to be subjected to suffering. If he is not, he is to me like a horse turned out to grass ; it may be all very fine for the horse, but I would rather have it said of me, I cannot do without that horse, and find myself kept at work, than be the horse turned out to grass because I was not wanted.

The more I suffer, the more deeply I feel a trial, the more I know Him with me in it. As He walked beside Mary to the grave, the Lord could not suppress the sensibility of His heart. Lazarus was dead ; He knew what it was ; and He walked beside her to bring her heart into acquaintance with His own.

Now you never understand a truth until you practise it. You do not *preach* to a child to walk ; he must be set on his feet if he is ever to know how. It is in your greatest weakness that you learn the power of God, and you never know what God's power can do until He has done it in yourself. If He has done it in you, then you have proved it, and you will be able to use it yourself. If you compare the nineteenth verse of the first of Ephesians with the tenth

verse of the sixth, you will find the same word used. I have only to take that same "power" that He used to quicken me, and use it against my adversary. I have learnt it in my weakest point, in death. No one ever yet got a right sense of dependence on God who did not learn it through death. This is the practical difference between a nun and a widow. A nun is a person trying to retire from things; a widow is one who has lost them all through death. We can learn this lesson in the death of Christ, and we ought to. I often think in connection with the death of those I love, how I have passed through a greater death before—the death of Christ. But there is this in sorrow, that you never get used to it; every new sorrow revives all the old ones, while every new joy eclipses all the old ones. And not all the nunneries in the world will teach you this; it must be *death*. A nun dare not look out of the window for fear of what she will see; but a widow says, However much I look out I can see nothing to engage me, for I have lost all. And when I have learned death I have learned what the sufficiency of Christ is.

Now I turn to two miracles in Matthew to show how they meet these two points, and whilst I do so I would say that it is not in *our* power to apply truth; *God* applies it according to the condition of the soul.

In the fourteenth chapter the Lord is cut off from the earth. Death has come in; death is a thing that I am now prepared for; it has come in like a wave, and, if it has done its worst in the death of Christ, I cannot fear anything else; it

cannot now take me by surprise. "When the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, then shall they fast." That does not mean that I am to deny myself this thing or that thing, but that the Friend who lent a charm to everything has departed. Do you say, I want to learn the Lord in this way? Well, then, you must go into the desert to learn Him thus; this world must be a desert place to you; you are to be fasting here and feasting with Him.

Now the Lord finds in the desert the multitude that has followed Him; and He is moved with compassion towards them. In both the fourteenth and the fifteenth chapters of Matthew He gives us a miracle and an illustration; in one case the illustration is given before the miracle, in the other it is given after. As we have seen, there is the evil working in myself, and there is the adversary outside; weakness and care within, Satan without. In this fourteenth chapter we get the outside evil. He goes out to the multitudes and feeds them with five loaves and two fishes, and they take up twelve baskets full of fragments—twelve being the number of earthly administration of government. Where there is no resource He is my resource.

Then He sends His disciples over the sea; the ship is in the midst of the sea, tossed 'with waves, and the wind is contrary. And now we find Jesus walking on the water to go to them. He is acting throughout like a rejected One. He begins with feeding His people in spite of all the dearth, and then He shows Himself in power above all the evil. If the Church had held firm to the Holy Ghost it would have been kept

from the inundation of the world. Nothing but the Holy Ghost can keep me from the world. Christendom has entirely lost sight of Him as the One who is standing for Christ in the presence of the world, and He is here not only to comfort me but to witness for Him. I feel at times that I would do anything if I could persuade brethren to say, Not one single natural thing will I allow to come in to help me in the testimony.

Well, the Lord finds them in these trying circumstances. The waters are men, and the winds are Satan; He is above them all. Where will you be? The ship was made for water; the ship was "bread." Peter will not have anything to do with it. He says, I will have faith; I walk on the water to go to Jesus; I have done with bread. Is not a ship *made* for water? Of course it is; and if you *have* not faith you had better stay in it. But a ship is not *faith*; Jesus is not there; *He* is walking on the *water*. Do you think a man would try to walk on the water if he had not faith? I hear people say, But I cannot do as Christ did! *Peter had the same power*. There is no mediocrity in Christ. In any act of faith, I either have the power of Christ or I have no power at all. It may be only a thread of gold in a rope of cotton, but if there is gold there at all, it is as good gold as in Christ Himself, because it is the same gold; there is no mixture. If it is of faith, it is of Christ.

Faith leaves the ship which is made for water to walk upon the water because Jesus is on it; and the power to do it is to keep looking at Him, to keep the eye on Him. I find if I begin planning, and say, I will go to such a place and do

so and so there, that it is sure to be all wrong, and nothing to happen at all as I expected; another time, when, instead of planning, I say, "I will just go looking to the Lord, everything will turn out right. Why? Because "I set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved." How did Peter fail? He looked at Satan's power, and he began to sink. However, I had sooner be near the Lord and sink in the water and have Him save me than I would be in the ship.

I turn now to the next chapter. Here we have the illustration before the miracle. It is the inside thing now. "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man." There is weakness, evil within you that you cannot get rid of. In the last chapter we found Christ taking His place in the desert and saying, I feed my people in spite of all that is against them; but if you will walk with me I will make you superior to the bread altogether. I often ask myself, Why was one put before the other? Well, I believe it is that I often find that Christ has the power over things all round me, before I find that He has got practical power over the evil inside me. Stephen gives us an example of the one, Paul of the other. Stephen was superior to everything that was around him; Paul to all that was within him: he had the messenger of Satan to buffet him that he might know the power of Christ resting upon him.

In this fifteenth chapter we get the evil in ourselves. The Syro-Phœnician woman comes to Him, and He answers and says, "It is not

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meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Here we get the illustration. She has no claim. She says, I quite admit I have no claim; I am the lowest of the low. If I have gone so low as to be a dog I certainly have not a particle of claim on the Lord. When I accept the lowest place the trying is over—the strait is passed. What is the use of keeping Paul and Silas in prison when they are singing? They are just as comfortable as if they were at their own fireside, so what is the use of keeping them there any longer? They are morally over the fence. And David is over it when he says, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about."

You will often hear a person say, I am so worried by the evil thoughts that are in me. Then, I say, you have never yet taken the place of being a *dog*—of abhorring yourself; that is repentance. You would soon come down if you got into the presence of Christ. This woman is there, and she says, I am a dog. And at once He answers, The devil is gone out of your daughter.

Then come to Him great multitudes of lame, blind, dumb, maimed—all weakness finds in Christ a complete resource. And next we find the seven loaves to feed the multitude and the seven baskets full taken up; that is completeness again—a complete resource. And thus we get back to what He is teaching His disciples: to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. He prepares them to know the Rock, the Son of God, and then shows them that in the cross, the man that is here is set aside.

• Well, what is the good of it all? What is the good of an hour's recital of the truth? The soul must be exercised if there is to be any real good. Am I in straits? Then I am to learn what Jesus is in my strait. That is what measures every one of you here to-night. People go through trial, and think God has dealt very hardly with them. The fact is they have never gone through a strait with God; it has been a *trial* to them, not a *trying*. It is a wonderful thing to think that each of us has a history that will come out at the judgment seat of Christ; all that He makes us pass through will come out there. Is it that He likes to see us suffer? It is not! And this is why He spares a person who He sees will not learn in it.

What a blessed thing it would be if you were to start now and say, Well, whether it be a strait from outside or inside, I must from this night learn Christ in it and His sufficiency. I have to do with the Son of God, and in this same Son of God the history of the man that ruined me has been ended. God says, I have broken the bond that united you to him, and have brought in a new bond: I unite you to my Son. You are of the Church, which is founded on the Rock.

The Lord lead our hearts, every one of us, to know what is the wonderful way in which He would lead us—the wide place into which He has brought us, even to have to do with the Son of God. May the Lord bless us. But to be blessed we must be content to walk with Him through straits to learn in them what Christ is, and how He can make Himself known as a sufficient resource when there is nothing but Himself.

Very often then the strait is over; but the fence does not fall until you have passed it, and what matter if it fall or not when you are over it? Our place with Him is that of those who have passed into a scene where the natural man is at an end, to have to do with Christ Himself.

The great thing to take hold of is that I have got a totally new *state*; not only that *life* has been given to me, but that I am raised with Christ altogether out of the place that I was in. I am not united to Christ by faith, but by the Holy Ghost. And here we get two things: "the body"—union to Christ in heaven: "the habitation,"—the dwelling-place of God on earth. There is no dwelling of God with man, except upon the ground of redemption: He only *visited* Adam; but He *dwelt* with Israel. (Exod. 29.) (J. N. D.)

The history of man placed under responsibility teaches the solemn truth, indispensable to all enduring blessing, that the moment the creature (no matter who) is subjected to responsibility (no matter what) he fails, because he is a creature. I speak of the creature left to himself. There is no power, no stability, save in God. The creature, as such, tends to destruction. In Christ we see a man who never failed; but He was God manifested in flesh. (W. K.)

The world is an immense system kept up by Satan to blind the eyes of men, and to keep them away from God. (J. N. D.)

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ROMANS vi.

THE Epistle to the Romans, beloved friends, takes up the Christian, if we compare one aspect of his condition with another, on the lowest ground. If for instance we take the Ephesians, there we find the Christian spoken of as "raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"; but you never get him there in the Epistle to the Romans. Though in the end of the eighth chapter it is stated that he is predestinated in God's original purpose for the glory, yet we never get him as risen and in the heavenly places, but looked at as on this earth, and of course he is. We will see now a little, with the Lord's help, how He does look at a Christian on this earth.

Now thus looked at, though not sitting with Christ, yet Christ is his life. Here am I, a sinner in myself, and my flesh has got no good in it. The whole epistle develops very fully what the Christian is, looked at in this world, and the chapter I have read treats one special part of it, and that is his positive state and standing, not his guilt; as to his guilt has been treated very fully up to the middle of the previous chapter.

To begin with, the apostle says he is "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed." And then he goes on to show why

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it must be God's righteousness that is revealed,—simply because man has none. God's law had come and required righteousness in man, which it could not find; but the Gospel comes and reveals God's righteousness, and he is not ashamed of it because it is revealed in it. He shows us the Jews under law and the Gentiles without law, and proves "every mouth stopped, and all the world guilty before God." Instead of the law making it any better for the Jews it only proved their guilt; and as to the Gentiles, that which might have been known of God in creation, left them without excuse when they went to idolatry.

He next shows us how "God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in His blood," and applies that death to the past and the present, saying that it declared "God's righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." God had been forbearing with them, but there had been no proof of righteousness in His forgiving them one more than another; but now on the cross it is explained. And not only this, but He is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." There I get the present time; it is now revealed, and we stand upon the ground of this righteousness that has been revealed.

The place where it has been shown and manifested is in setting Christ at God's right hand. This is a demonstration of the sin of the whole world, because it did not believe in Christ; also a demonstration of righteousness, "because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more": the Saviour they had rejected they would see no

more till He came again as Judge. Thus the Gospel comes and shows us that He is seated there (besides being the Son of God) in virtue of the work of the cross. There is where God's righteousness is displayed for faith to look at. I see thus the perfect love of God which sought us in this way. I had sins, but no righteousness; I have nothing but Christ to look to, and my eye rests through faith where God's eye rests; God is satisfied and so am I through grace. I get the sins put away through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that there is no more question of sin, because my righteousness is Christ; He is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." All is perfectly settled once and for all, and I am made the righteousness of God through Christ—God's righteousness. What we rejected God accepted, and proved His righteousness thereby. All the fruit of the old man is done away, and we are in Christ accepted.

But now comes another question; not that of our sins being put away, but of our deliverance from the principle of sin. As we read, "As He is, so are we in this world." On the ground of what we are by faith all our sins are put away; but then comes the power of sin—this evil nature—what is *in* me, not what I have *done*. But can I in this world say that I am delivered from sin? that I am made free from sin?

Now this word "free" is often abused in English; it has two meanings. It is not here used in the sense that there is none there, as I would say, "That horse is 'free' from vice"; but it is in contrast to the word captive. It

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means we are not captive to sin. He takes up the question of law as he took up the question of righteousness. Man had not made out righteousness either with law or without it; then God gave him Christ to be his righteousness. Now the question is whether thus having got *righteousness* the law can *deliver* us.

Well, in the eighth chapter it says, "What the law could *not* do." It is not *guilt* now, but the flesh is not subject, neither can be. He means it has a will of its own. We know we have a will of our own. Well, a will of our own is the principle of sin; whenever I have got a will of my own there is sin—self-will, just the same as Eve when she would go and eat the fruit. The law thwarted the acting of will, of course; it was "holy, and just, and good," so it must; but it did not take it away; it did not alter it; but "what the law could *not* do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh"; the law of course had nothing to do with that.

There are three things the law could not do: it could not give *life*, and, even supposing we got life, it does not give *strength*; and another thing it does not give, beloved friends, it does not give an *object*. But in Christ I get my life, my strength, and my object. "They that are after the spirit do mind the things of the Spirit"; they have got an object; I get in Christ an object that is sufficient to delight God Himself.

But the *fact* of life will not do; we must have it, of course, but that is not sufficient. The old man is here yet: there are lusts; the flesh

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lusts against the Spirit, and "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"; therefore the law instead of delivering me brings me into captivity. It is just what we get in the seventh of Romans. Suppose a man quickened in this world, what will be the effect of the law upon him? It just gives him the knowledge of sin; "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." Yet "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good," but it did not give anything of what we want; it was only the rule outside it, and gave us nothing to enable us to walk up to it. Here was a man in a kind of sleepy, indefinite way going on quite comfortably, a man with a good conscience; "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." When the law came, it said, "Thou shalt not covet"; but it did not take away the lust, and he found at once another law warring against the law of his mind and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin; there was no deliverance. God allowed him to use every kind of effort to get the victory, but it all only went to prove not simply that he was guilty, and that he had an evil nature, but that besides this he had no strength; and that is an exceedingly miserable condition.

If we were to tell the world that they had no strength, they would say, Why, there is an end to all morality! Even a child has faith in its own

powers; it says, Oh, I will be good *to-morrow!*—But I say, I am going to punish you *to-day!*—for what you are *now!* And this lesson of no strength is a great deal a more humbling one to learn than that of the fact that certain sins have been done in some past time of my life. It raises the question, not of what I was before I knew Christ, but of what I am now that I do. “They that are in the flesh cannot please God”; but the effort made to do so is very useful in this way, that it brings us to the discovery of what we are. If you have found that out you have found out what Paul did: “*to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.*”

But now, is there no deliverance? Of course there is!—*positive deliverance!*

As I have been saying, the apostle shows us besides the question of guilt the question of state. I have been seeing what the state of bondage is of a renewed man under law in contrast to the state of a renewed man knowing what it is to be risen with Christ. We are united to Christ risen, and being thus, He brings in, not the death of the *law*, but *our* death. So that I have not got to hunt up things in my heart to see whether evil is present with me; this would be law, and the law cannot help me at all; but I have got Christ as my life, Christ risen and glorified too; and I am past death and raised up, though I do not go on to glory here, because it is a man here walking on the earth. I have got Christ to be my life, not Adam; I am not alive to God at all as born of Adam; we are “not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us.” When I stood as a

child of Adam before God, the law was applied to me on that footing. I have not got what meets it. As long therefore as I am in the flesh I cannot meet God or please God, and I never can get free or happy with God. So much the better that I may find it out.

Now the flesh never *changes*: "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." When man fell, the world got so awfully bad that God had to destroy it; when God gave the law to it, it was not subject to it; when God's Son came into the world they crucified Him; when the Spirit came the flesh lusted against it; and when it has gone into the third heavens it puffs a man up—if there were a fourth heaven it would only puff him up more; that is the end of it!

But there *is* deliverance! If there were not, I would not speak of it. Then where is it? In *death*! It is when Christ *has* died and *has* risen He becomes the power of life in me; but in itself that does not put away the flesh. There is nothing for it but what is added: "God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh"; there is no pardon, no taking it away, nothing but absolute condemning it. If I take the cross, the highest act of grace, I find that there God condemned sin in the flesh.

But then, beloved friends, this condemnation of sin in the flesh, what was it in? I cannot get away from this evil nature, and Satan too is against me. But Satan is nothing to the new man! Just "resist the devil, and he will flee from you"; but he is *everything* for the flesh, of

course! The world is just a great system that the devil has built up round man to keep him easy without God. It began at once with Cain; he goes out from the presence of the Lord, and what is he to do? He builds himself a city in the land of the vagabond. God never made the world as we see it; *this* world Satan is the prince of. Cain built his city so as to be comfortable in the world; and there were the artificers of brass and iron, and there he gets Jubal with his music, and he calls the city by the name of his son, and there you get all the conveniences of life, and harps, and organs, and then people ask, What is the harm of brass or iron or harps or organs? None! I do not say there is any harm in music and instruments; but this I say, there was a great deal of harm in his making himself comfortable in them without God. We have got capacities for music and art and so on, and people take such pains to amuse themselves with them because there is a famine in the land.

I find in the cross of Christ "the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world"; I find sin and the flesh condemned there. Condemned in what? *In death!* If the law condemned sin in the flesh it only got to the lust; it was the ministration of death, and ministers condemnation. But what I get in Christ is death—the death of the old man. In that sacrifice I get *death*: He has not only been crucified for my sins, but I have been crucified with Him. Whilst He has become my life, His death is as available for the old man as His life is for the new. He died not for our sins only, but He died unto *sin* once; "in that He died, He died unto sin once;" not

that He had any for Himself, but that He put Himself there for us; and then "likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord"; I get the full power of life.

"God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." I find sin a grief to my heart. Well, God condemned it in Christ on the cross; I have got death to sin just as much as I have got condemnation for sins all gone. "He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Well, now, that is where it comes out!—I cannot get the victory! But God is teaching you the whole thing is settled; it is, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It is not simply that the old man is not there—that is not deliverance; nor that the combat is not there: but do you think it is the same thing if I am struggling with a man and I get him down with my knee on his chest, or if the man gets me down with his knee on mine? If I combat with Christ for me, I get my knee on him. Of course there must be combat, but meanwhile I am not saying I am *captive* to the law of sin; whereas what you get in the seventh of Romans is a man who is; his soul is all right, but he cannot *do* it.

I get in the death of Christ this testimony: "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God"; and as to ourselves, we are to be "always carrying about in the body the dying of

the Lord Jesus." I am thus set free. It is not that flesh is not there; it was in Paul, but he had the thorn in the flesh to buffet him; he got it to keep something down. Well, that proved it was there; the thorn kept it down so it did not show itself, but still it was *there*. If you fancy it is not there you lower your standard; but there is no reason why you should ever for one single instant let the flesh stir or show itself. And what has brought you to this is death; of course, you must have *life* for it, or else you would be dead to everything.

Now, you are never called to die to sin, because the old man *has* died in Christ and the new man can *not* die. Have not you been baptized to death? Then how can you live on in sin if you are dead to it? Are you dead? And where? In the death of Christ. It is always a *past* thing; there is no such thought in Scripture as our dying; it is we "*are* dead." You have never any death for the old man but that of Christ on the cross. What faith gets hold of is this: I have died in Christ; then I am free. Therefore mark, beloved friends, what he says: "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" He brings in death instead of the law; he puts the flesh to death, to faith, of course; he does not look for fruit from it; but he comes and kills the tree and puts another in its place, and that is *Christ*, and says, "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace"; I am now free!

Well, you are free ; and what are you going to do? Are you going to give yourself back to sin again? Why, "yield yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead." Of course He does not come and say this to unconverted men; but, the moment a man calls himself a Christian, I say, Now you are alive and free; who are you going to give yourself to?

One word more. It is of great importance to grasp this complete redemption—the death and resurrection of Christ Himself become the power of life to us, so that we *can* reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God. "What fruit had you in those things?" But now, he says, you *have* got fruit—fruit to *holiness* down here ; you walk in a path that you know has beauties—positive fruit of holiness in this world, and "the end, everlasting life."

But, I repeat, in this epistle you are perfectly in the world, and how are you to get power? Through death. Suppose for a moment that I always held myself dead, there would not be a movement—not a lust ; therefore, John, speaking of it in an abstract way, says, "He that is born of God doth not commit sin." It is just as if all sorts of evil things were outside in my passage, and the danger lay in my opening the door and letting them creep in ; you will find all these evil things in your room if you do not watch. What we are called upon to do is, not to *die*, but to *put to death* ; "Mortify your members that are upon the earth" ; that is, I have *power* to do it, so I am to put them to death. Christ is my power, of course.

But, now, are you content to be dead? Or

would you like to spare some of your flesh? Are you content to have no more of the world than a dead man has? Constantly we shall find we have little chambers in our hearts that we do not like to open to God; we go on in our prayers until we come to that, and then we stop, and then God has to break the door open in some rude way. Practically you are saying, I would sooner have this idol than God; not in your soul, of course, or you would not be a Christian. But now, supposing you have not anything kept back from God, have you taken this ground with Him that you are practically dead? It is not perfection, because I know no perfection but Christ glorified; the only perfection that is before a Christian is conformity to Him in glory, and I am never satisfied until I am with Him in that glory. But are you free? Have you got real deliverance? "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The first thing we want to get is forgiveness; but the second thing we want is deliverance, and it is there for us. I have got my eye on that Man in the glory; I am going to be like Him; it is there I get the object that is before my soul.

The unjust steward was generous with his master's goods. That is the way! Treat what you have as your master's goods, and be as generous as you like with them, and by-and-by you shall get your own. Our shrewdness consists in looking out for eternity.

(W. K.)

“GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM.”

MAT. xxv. 1—13; and REV. xxii. 16, 17, 20.

I HAVE read these two passages, the one as the closing testimony of the Church on earth, the other as the state of the heart of the believer towards the Lord—the affections of the Bride. The public testimony in keeping with the state of heart in Rev. xxii. 16 is that of Matt. xxv. 1—13, when at a certain time the kingdom of heaven, which was being spoken of, became like ten virgins, etc.

Now for what brought about this state of things we must refer to the preceding chapter. There we read, “The evil servant said in his *heart*, My Lord delayeth His coming;” and as the consequence, “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened to ten virgins, who went forth to meet the Bridegroom, and whilst the Bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept.” This is the sad state into which the Church has fallen; but to explain it I must refer to its *normal* state. And before doing so I will say that the expression, “the kingdom of heaven,” means the character of God’s rule at a certain time, whilst the other rule—that of the earth—is going on at the same time; just as we say “The British rule in India.” The rule is of a heavenly character; it is the kingdom of *heaven*.

If you look at the 13th of Matthew, you find what it was like at the beginning; this in the 25th is what it was to *become* like. The normal state of the saints is also pointed out to us in the 12th of Luke. There we find that the saints were to

express Christ whilst He is not here. Their lights were to be burning ; they were to be His glory, set forth in the scene where He was not, without expecting anything from the earth ; just as we see the moon soaring through the sky on a dark night, not receiving anything from the earth, but shedding forth to it the light of the sun that is not there. The true character for the kingdom was that of expecting nothing—quite a new state of things for the Jew. They were to sell that they had, and give alms ; to provide themselves bags which waxed not old, a treasure in the heavens that would not fail. This is to the Jew ; the Gentile had nothing to sell ; he had no rights to claim ; and the Jew who is entitled to the earth is to forego his rights as to it. He says to him, You are now to look for another thing. And if the one who had title has to surrender his title, what about him who had none ? This is how it touches the Gentile. Then, as you have nothing here, you do not fear them that kill the body ; you have no care without, no fear within. And the effect is, as you do not fear anything, that you can bear witness, you can confess Him before men ; and as you take no thought for yourself, you can seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Well, all this failed. “While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.” And then there comes a change. How does the alteration occur ? A cry goes forth. “Behold, the Bridegroom !” The Lord counts upon the affection in the hearts of His people to respond to it. The word “cometh” is not there. It is just the statement, “Behold the Bridegroom,” and He counts that that announcement will awake them. If it

were “cometh,” He might be still at a distance. It is not cometh. He is *there*—go to meet Him! How interesting it is that the Lord counts on the effect of this cry! Yet, though the cry is now preached, many have not been awakened by it. But the *fact* is the same, There is the Lord. And when He comes, in a moment all else passes away from you; it is not like death, when you leave those you love behind you; but all is absorbed by this One who calls you out to Himself. And we are called now to the meeting; we “wait for His Son from heaven;” we are “like unto men that wait for their lord.” That is the testimony, the thing that has been made known.

But as to the kingdom all is a failure. We turn to Revelation, and find that the church, the candlesticks, have all failed. But before looking at it there, I turn to the 21st of John, to read two verses: “Peter, seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” Now, in connection with this, John gets, in the book of Revelation, this coming of the Lord, that which closes the history, and therefore I turn to it, and read in the first chapter—“I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His

countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.” Mark how changed everything is. Just look at the 20th of John for a moment ; for if you do not see how things were at first, you will not see how changed they are now. At the 19th verse you read : “ The same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you : as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” That is as it was at the beginning. Here was the opening of everything ; a Man risen from the dead, who for the first time takes His place in the midst of His own, speaks peace to them, and breathes on them. That was the normal state.

Now when I turn to the book of Revelation, I find a change. I see Him in the midst of the seven churches, His eyes like a flame of fire, His feet like fine brass, His voice as the sound of many waters, and a sharp two-edged sword going out of His mouth. There is the aspect, the terrific aspect, of the Lord. How can you account for the change ? It is that ecclesiastical corruption has come in, and He is indignant. Nothing makes any one so indignant as slighted affection. In the 20th of John He was in all the delight of reciprocated affection. What is He now in the

midst of the seven churches? He is there with such an aspect that John even cannot recognize Him. His eyes are like a *flame of fire*! I never talk to people about ecclesiastical corruption; I try to bring them near the Lord. You cannot keep mixed up with ecclesiastical corruption when you see the Lord's eyes;—all bright and beautiful at first, but what now? “His eyes like a flame of fire!” Who can look at them? And why this change? Because He is indignant; His affection has been slighted.

The first church brought before us is the church of Ephesus; the one of all others which had been before us as that to which the full favour of God was shown. And now it has given up the very thing that God first looks for; it has lost its first love. We cannot stay now to look at each of the churches; but when it comes to the very worst state of things (I suppose all here know that Thyatira brings before us Roman Catholicism), when the church had got to the lowest depths of darkness, then it is you get the precious promise of the morning star: “I will give him the morning star.” The night is wearing on its dreary length; its long dark hours are passing slowly by. You know how in travelling by coach, as the tedious hours drag on, how eagerly the weary traveller looks out for the morning star, the promise of the coming day. And that is just what the Lord gives us here when all is at the darkest; He gives us the morning star, His own coming.

Of course this is not all, but I just pass on to mark how the Lord completes His dealings with the church. Though He finds no love of theirs to speak of, yet His own has never failed; at the

very last it is, “As many as I *love* I rebuke and chasten.” And what does He say to them? “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” He says, I do not give up my love, though you give up yours; all the dreary night I stand at the door and knock.

All this I think plainly shows you that, looked at as an ecclesiastical testimony, the church is a failure. And when I turn to the last chapter of the book, I say, Is there then nothing for the Lord in the whole earth?

Well, here I find something new. The testimony *was* that of the wise virgins going forth to meet the Bridegroom; but now I find a little word of great importance—“the *Bride*.” In the midst of all this ruin, then, there will be a Bride. When the Lord comes, He will find a Bride here. That “bright and morning star” will so gain the affections of the saints, that they, in company with the Holy Ghost, will invite Him to come. The cry has gone forth, “Behold, the Bridegroom.” The Lord says, “Surely I come quickly;” and the saints, awakened up by the approach of Himself, answer, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

I will explain now what the Bride is in character, and also show what is the effect upon the saint of being in that position.

The importance of the Bride’s hope is, that practically, that affection is awakened in my heart which invites Him to come, and this makes me fit for Him to come. His coming is the only thing that answers to the affections of my heart. Now what would prepare a heart—what would make

a heart fit to say these words, “Come, Lord Jesus?”

I turn again to the 20th of John, because there that which characterizes the Bride begins. Mary in heart is representative of the Bride. Now there are four different things that characterize the Bride. First, the heart must be won ; second, it must be satisfied ; third, it must be made suitable ; and lastly, comes service.

But first, you must be *won*. Mary’s heart here is wholly won ; I need not show that to you, for it is evident. She is inconsolable without Him. She, like the bride of Canticles, seeks Him whom her soul loves. That is the effect in the saint of the heart being won and not satisfied. A heart won and not satisfied is a miserable heart ; it does not possess the object of its affections. And many are in that state ; the affections His, but no sense of being united to Him ; they are bright one day and cast down another, just like the bride in Canticles. There is no sense of union, for affection is not union. You may love the Lord in the deepest, fullest way, and yet it may only make you miserable because you are not with Him, because you do not know union. The very fact of my heart being won makes it dissatisfied ; I am inconsolable without the One I love ; nothing but His company satisfies me. A heart fully won knows the Lord in a two-fold way : as a relief, like the widow of Sarepta when her son is dead ; and as a resource, like Jonah, when the gourd is gone—when all that was a shelter and a delight is gone—there is but one to turn to, and that is the Lord.

The next thing to having the heart won is to

have it satisfied ; and that is what Mary also is in this 20th of John. He says to her : “Touch me not ; for I am not yet ascended to my Father ; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father ; and to my God, and your God.” She goes, no longer inconsolable, but satisfied, to tell her message. She is satisfied through knowing Him where He is ; it is “*My Father, your Father ; my God, your God.*” *Association with Christ where Christ is alone satisfies my heart.*

And as I know Him up there, I find that the One who has gone down into judgment for me, that same blessed One who is now set down on the Father’s throne is the One who bears me company on my path down here ; He has won my heart, and the affection increases as we go along. He is there as the Priest to sustain me, and the Advocate to restore me. I have an Advocate when I sin ; and because of this I confess ; and God is faithful and just to forgive me my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. The man who sins and does not confess loses the sense of divine favour. The one who confesses goes in and condemns himself, and God says, I come and forgive you all unrighteousness ; and thus the heart is kept up fresh in the knowledge of His love. He will sustain me in all that bright scene. The Spirit carries me into it all—into the holiest—and He is the One who sustains me when I am in.

So the heart is satisfied, which it never will be but by knowing Christ in the glory. He wins my heart in humiliation, but He satisfies it in glory. And that is union. “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.”

Let me ask you, beloved friends, do you think any person like the Lord? Can you—now that He has won your heart, and it is devoted to Him—can you be happy apart from Him? Well Paul says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” It is “*in heavenly places in Christ.*” I see many a person longing to get the Lord here, to get Him in *their* place; but they do not care to get Him in *His* place. What could delight your heart more than to be in company with Him? That is what satisfies the heart. It is thus that it is made “*suitable*,” and for this I turn to the forty-fifth Psalm.

I only use the word “suitable” so as better to convey my meaning, because words get so hackneyed that they fail to convey anything to the mind; it is hard to get words to bring truth home to hearts. *Sanctified* is the word that is generally used. Of course, in this Psalm it is the earthly bride that needs adorning for Christ; how much more the heavenly Bride? “Kings’ daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. Harken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty.” Now that is suitable, or, if you prefer the word, that is sanctification; I do not object, if you only know what I mean. In the 17th of John you get the character of this sanctification. “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” And if you ask me, What is the measure of it? I

reply,—to be as separate from the things of earth as He is in heaven. “*Forget* thine own people, and thy father’s house.” Not only is it that I do not go near them, but I have *forgotten* them. He absorbs me with His company.

You never can learn what suits a person, except in his own company. There was nothing *wrong* in Martha. She judged by her own feelings that a wearied traveller would like refreshment, and so set about preparing supper for the Lord ; she studied her own feelings instead of His. People often think that because they like a thing themselves their friends will like it. Now Mary, on the other hand, studied the Lord’s mind. She sat at His feet ; and that is the only place where you will ever learn His mind ; you cannot possibly know it otherwise ; it is preposterous to think that I can out of my own mind find out what He would like ; He is so infinitely above me. Thus I must be with Him to be satisfied, and, being with Him, I grow suitable to Him ; and that is what sanctification is.

“So shall He greatly desire thy beauty.” When I read Canticles, the whole thing that I find is the Bride’s feelings towards the Lord. But in Revelation, as the Bride comes down from heaven, I do not find a word about affections : affection has done its work ; now it is “*adorned*” that she is.

I now turn to the 31st of Proverbs to show you what service is. There we find the wise woman taking care of her lord’s house. Now the lower the state of things, the less work there should be done. In Laodicea there is no exhortation to work. Is there anything more marked in this present day than how much work there is done,

and at the same time how little souls are in company with the Lord? I do not mean that there should be a great amount of *reading* got through, but how little there is of sitting before Him to wait for His counsel.

"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." That is the place for a saint. Christ's heart can trust him. If he is only coming down the street, Christ can say of him, 'That is a friend of mine.'

The public side of service is giving one's life for the brethren; the private side is washing the saints' feet. The public thing is to die. You ought to be known as a man who would give his life for the saints. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends." Now how can a man be the friend of Christ, who does not know any of His ways or His likings? Why, Enoch *walked* with God! That was how he came to please Him.

I think people too often confound sympathy with communion. Do you understand communion? a *common mind* with the Lord? My child may be in the same room with me, but he may be thinking about the fire; I about the gas. There is no communion between us. But if he is thinking about the gas, though he may understand very little about it compared with what I do, yet our thoughts are on the same object; we have communion with each other. I believe that the one thing we have to seek is to be in communion with the Lord; and when I have got to His side, when

I have begun from above, I am able to face anything here. “The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her.” That is the principle of real service; but I think service has lost its solemn place.

Thus what really characterizes the Bride is, first, the heart *won*; then, being in company with Him where He is, the heart is *satisfied*; then, being satisfied with Him, I learn to be *suitable* to Him; and this suitability becomes my beauty; I am “*adorned*.” Then comes service. The person whose heart is most set upon the coming of the Lord is the one who can go out in service to others. And notice that the coming of the Lord is not ecclesiastical; to the very last it is evangelical.

There is nothing here to delight me but that one thing that is expressed in that word “Come.” The testimony now, when everything has failed, is that of the wise virgin going forth with but one purpose—one object—and that *to meet Him*.

Doctrine is a more serious point than practice; Paul is more afraid of the Galatians than of the Corinthians. Discipline is setting things right in the church; separation is setting *myself* right when I cannot set the assembly right. (W. K.)

People think that they will get rid of their besetment by being occupied with their besetment. Never was a greater mistake! Be occupied with *Christ*, and you will be surprised to see how attenuated your besetment is become. (J. B. S.)

Th chief thing in a trial is submission; at the time of trial I may not understand it, but when I become spiritual I rejoice. (J. N. D.)

The purpose of the Serpent in the garden was to withdraw Eve from the condition in which the Lord God had put her. She was to sacrifice that, and get advancement from him. She consented; and at once as a "chaste virgin" she was ruined.

The church, like the Eve of Genesis ii., should be what the hand of God has made her. The cross has brought her nigh to God, but estranged her from the world. And when the principles of the world propose to cultivate and advance the church, and such proposal is listened to, we see again, what of old we saw in Genesis iii., the mystic Eve has lost her virgin purity.

The Serpent would fain give man a garden again. And a happier garden it shall be than God once gave him. He shall have *every* tree in it. The world shall be a wise world, a religious world, a cultivated world, a delightful place, and still advancing. The man of benevolence, the man of morals, the religious and the intellectual man, the man of refined pleasures, all will find their home in it. And this shall be the world's oneness. And all who desire their fellow-creatures' happiness, and the common rest, after so many centuries of confusion and trouble, will surely not refuse to join this honourable and happy confederacy.

Nothing will withstand all this but "the love of the truth"—nothing but faith in that word which gathers a sinner to Jesus and His blood, and the hopes of a poor world-wearied believer to Jesus and his kingdom. Come what may to you, beloved, though it be moral or refined or religious in its bearing, it is "unrighteousness," if it be not of "the truth." (2 Thes. ii.) (J. G. B.)

EVANGELISTS.

MY DEAR —,

I am induced to send you a few remarks on evangelization. I see there are three classes of evangelists, and there will be great misunderstanding about them, unless we can distinguish each from the other.

To be of the first class you must see that evangelization is the only mode appointed by God for making known the Gospel. No servant can be called to a higher work than that of evangelizing in the true sense of the word; he is entrusted with the most blessed tidings ever communicated by God to man. He is the missionary of the heart of God to man. Never was there such a message; and this great and all-important message constitutes the messenger the most honoured and highly favoured of God's servants, if he truly fulfil it.

If it were the most wonderful work of the first creation when God said: "Let there be light: and there was light"—when the sun was introduced to rule the day—how much more when Jesus, the light of God, appeared on the earth! To them that sat in darkness and the shadow of death, a great light has sprung up. This light still shines, though the god of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them.

Now the evangelist is appointed by the Lord to be the herald and expression of this light. It is to shine out from him. One cannot conceive any

position more responsible, or of higher privilege. He is a Lucifer, the son of the morning, entering on the earth to dissipate the darkness upon it. He introduces not only what is necessary for safety, but something so new, so distinct from everything here ; it is Christ, and Adam eclipsed. He is so in the power of what he represents, that the hearts enlightened by his words not only see a great light, but are irresistibly attracted to it. From him they first, and most surely, learn Christ, because he first presents Christ to them, as Paul at midnight to the Philippian jailor. As the message is great and unequalled, so is the messenger required to be in every way great and unequalled, in order competently to represent Him whose messenger he is. It is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace!" The manner and every movement expressed by the "feet" are *beautiful*. The evangelist is sent by the Lord, gifted by Him to rescue souls from death and judgment ; and then, in separation from the world, as members of His body, to bear witness to Him in the scene of His rejection.

The evangelist, therefore, who is true to his calling, not only preaches the Gospel earnestly and faithfully, but, as he is the first specimen of Christ presented to the unconverted, he is like the sun at dawn, a gentle, and at the same time a full, expression of Him in every way ; he thus would magnify his office. A father cannot expect to have children beyond himself, and converts seldom are, unless, like orphans, they are adopted and nursed by better hands.

Now an evangelist of this type would be most attractive spiritually, most unworldly, and most

ecclesiastical, because the church is the only true nursery, and God's only place. Others might teach you more, but, as to single-eyed devotedness, none would surpass him on earth. The term "the low evangelical level" could never be applied to any of this class.

Now the second class is composed of many zealous and true-hearted men of God. They are very laborious and earnest in seeking after souls, and they are ostensibly more blessed than the first class; but, while they are glad that the converts should find their places in the assembly of God, they do not in their own minds make it more than a believers' meeting; nor do they feel that their responsibility goes beyond truly and earnestly seeking to save the lost; yet they never shrink from laying before them, as far as they know it, the claim that Christ has on them here. Their tendency is to form a congregation, and hence to confine the converts too much to themselves and what they can teach.

Now it is an unhealthy sign when a saint cares not to hear the Gospel; but it is a sign of little heart for Christ when one is indifferent to other teaching besides the Gospel. The danger with this class of evangelists is, that they are not interested enough in advanced truth, and, though they approve of separation from the world, and seek it for themselves, yet they are not weighed down with the sense that the plants are like the planter; they do not consider themselves responsible witnesses of the church, bound to "gather the good into vessels" as much as to "cast in the net." They do not labour to be as much specimens of church light as they are heralds of the Gospel

light; they verily approve of church light, but they do not regard it as included in their mission.

Doubtless, as I have shown, the messenger of Christ's gospel is of unequalled dignity and importance; but, if he confine his labours and desires for souls to rescuing them from eternal judgment, though the greatest thing, he overlooks the positive side—the Father's house—in not associating the rescued ones in the most inconceivable happiness with their Saviour.

Of the third class I need say little: they are very laborious, and really, as to numbers, can count more converts than the other two classes put together. They admit, without reserve, that they do not gather into vessels—nay, that they are not sure of the correctness of any church position; and their converts never, until they are placed in other hands, are in any way separate from the world, or consciously charged with the testimony of Christ on the earth. The evangelists themselves never break with the world; they confine their mission merely to rescuing souls from the dark dungeon of eternal judgment; and if they can furnish light enough to do this they are satisfied. They have truly the light of the sun, but it is more as the moon has it than as the vessels illuminated by Christ, directly in communion with Him, and then coming forth to lead souls into the glories of His day.

The Lord awaken the evangelists to the greatness and dignity of their calling, and grant that a good start may be vouchsafed to many souls because the evangelists are beautiful representatives of the grace which they preach.

Yours affectionately, J. B. S.

THE BOOK OF EXPERIENCE.

PHILIPPIANS I.

IN the Epistle to the Ephesians, and even in that to the Colossians, we see our place with Christ; but in Philippians the believer is seen passing through the world—as a Christian walking in it. There is no doctrine in the epistle; the believer is seen pressing towards the mark. And another thing: he looks at this course as run in the power of the Spirit of God; this is what characterizes the Christian, that he is entirely running the race in that power. So there is no sin in this epistle—not the word sin even—and no conflict, in the proper sense of the word. Not that he has attained, but he is never doing anything but one thing—running in the power of the Spirit of God towards the goal. He had not attained, but he was doing nothing but running to attain. He was raised above all in himself, and in the world—entirely above all circumstances.

It is the epistle of *experience*, but according to the power of the Spirit of God. We learn this lesson, that though we fail, yet there is the possibility of running on in the power of the Spirit of God. Not that flesh is changed, or the thought of having attained admissible (there is no perfection down here); but the possibility of always acting consistently with the calling to get to Christ in glory. There is no looking for points of progress in the world; it sets him above every kind of circumstance, or contradiction, or difficulty, for he sees the path of the Christian entirely above them all.

To have a *path* shows that we had got out of God's place where He had set man. The moment we have a way it shows that we are not at home. It is blessed to have a way in the wilderness (of course, Christ is the way). Adam wanted no way: he would have stayed in the garden in quietness if he had obeyed God. But we have set out from Egypt, and we are not in Canaan; we go towards the goal. Numbers of things come out on the way, but all we have got to do is to run. We get a great deal more of Christ every step; like a lamp at the end of a passage, we get more and more of it as we go on; we have not got the lamp yet, though we get more of the light of it every step we take. But there is entire deliverance from self as governing us, and a motive above circumstances, so that, though not insensible to them, they exert no influence over us.

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel, from the first day until now." The Philippians had taken a zealous part in the gospel, and had shown a loving spirit. How constant the intercession of the apostle was for them! Every time he prayed he was making mention of them. Mark how he carries the church of God on his heart; and it was the same way with individuals. He was thinking of all the good in them, and thanking God for it. See the kind of interest he had for the saints; he was always thinking of them. Even to the Corinthians he says, "I thank my God always on your behalf."

What Christ thinks of we should think of. If Christ is my life, and by the Spirit the spring of

my thoughts, I shall have His thoughts in everything, for *there is* that which is right according to Christ. I have to be in the midst of circumstances as Christ would be, and that is Christian life. It is never necessary we should do anything wrong—never necessary we should act in the flesh; though it is there, why am I to think by it? I shall not, if I am full of Christ, for it is He who suggests the thoughts to me.

If I get into Christ's mind and thoughts, I shall not bear to see evil in saints. I want them like Christ. He is doing the work now in the heart of the saints—"that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word"—and I must be going along with Him in the same Spirit; and I must be all right myself, or I cannot do that. Christ gives Himself first for His people, and then He sets about to cleanse them, and make them what He would have them; and that should be our heart's desire to do in intercession.

There is plenty of power for this, though we are dreadfully low. He can suit His grace now just as in the brightest days of the apostle. There was much more to delight in when David was hunted as a partridge on the mountains, than in all the glory of Solomon, for then there was the power of faith. It is with *all* saints that we are to "comprehend" (Eph. iii. 18). We shorten our own blessing if we do not take them all in. There is competency with Christ, and if I go on with Him I must have peace about them.

Praying for saints gives a person the power of seeing all the good in them. We see this in the epistles, with one exception, that to the Galatians, where the apostle does not speak of what he could

commend, but goes plump into all the evil, for they were turning away from the foundation. If we prayed more for the saints we should have more joy in them, and more courage about them. It is always wrong to lose courage about the saints, though it is possible it might come to be like Jeremiah: "Pray no more for this people." The Lord is always there, and love cannot fail; so we can reckon on it with joy, and comfort, and courage. Even when Paul had said to the Galatians, "I am afraid of you," he adds, soon looking to Christ, "I have confidence in you, through the Lord." He had the saints under Christ's eye for a blessing. How much are we looking with Christ's heart at all the saints, with comfort and courage that there is grace enough for them? "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"; and, as he says further on, "that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke."

"Both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace." We are little aware how real the unity of the Spirit is; we have greatly lost the reality of it, though it is owned as a truth. It is a unity by a living power which is in every saint, so that the thing must be "if one member suffer," not all *ought*, but all *do* "suffer with it." The body may be in such a mortified state as to have little feeling left; but, supposing there were a work of the Spirit in India, do you think it would not revive the saints here? So those people who were praying for Paul, when God strengthened him, praise returned to God from them all. The

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working of the Spirit of God tells in blessing on all who hear. But when he had to say, "All have forsaken *me*" (they had not forsaken Christ, but they had no courage to go into danger), Paul went on alone. It is plain if I have a pain in my body all my nerves are hurt by it ; I cannot read or work so well. There may be a deadening of the spiritual nerves so that there is very little feeling, but it cannot be destroyed.

At the eighth verse we get into the tone of the epistle. The apostle was no forgetful person ; he remembers every little trait of kindness done to him, and he prays that they might have all kinds of knowledge and spiritual judgment, so that they might do things just fit to be done—that they might know in what one thing differs from another—that they might be *connoisseurs* in the Christian path ; not only not fall into sin, but have the knowledge of just the right thing to do in the circumstances ; for the standard is the *satisfying the heart of Christ*, not "Where is the harm?" The apostle desires that they might discern things now as they will be when brought into the light in that day of Christ. It is as if he said, I want you to think of the Lord Jesus, and know what will please the heart of Christ. There is the delight of pleasing Christ, and the delighting in the thing that pleases Him as well, by the active energy of the Spirit of God.

Then see how he rises above all the trials of his four years of imprisonment, two at Cæsarea and two at Rome. "I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." He might have reasoned : If I had not

gone up to Jerusalem, and there listened to these Jews persuading me to things, I might still be at liberty, preaching the gospel. He does not do that ;—and let me say, beloved friends, there is nothing more foolish than to be looking at second causes. Perhaps we may not have been wise, but the man who lives above things here knows that every one of them works together for good. All would turn to his salvation, he says, “through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” And we see here that there is the increased activity and energy of the Spirit of God—“the supply,” as the apostle speaks; so that, though we cannot look to Him to come (as He has come), we can and ought to be looking for the “supply,” and His ministering grace through the Word.

“Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.” We see here that perfection in the flesh is all nonsense, for Paul was looking to be like Christ in glory. The heart is always upright when it says, “For me to live is *Christ*.” He had no object but Christ, and he walked day by day by that—Christ as source, Christ as object, Christ as character ; all the way through, Christ was his life, by the power of the Spirit of God ; so that the rage of man and Satan had no power over him. Self was practically gone. When he looked at himself he did not know what to choose—whether to go and rest with Christ, or to remain and serve Him. To be with Him was better, but then he could no longer labour for Him. Thus self was gone as a motive, and he counts on Christ for the church, and the moment he sees “it is necessary for *you* that I

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remain," he says, "I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith." He decides his own trial before Nero. When thinking of himself he did not know which to choose, but when he thinks of those dear to Christ needing his presence he says, "I know I shall abide."

The Lord grant, beloved brethren, that He should be our only object, and that we should not let ourselves be distracted from it, so that we may say, "This one thing I do." The Lord give us grace to be the true epistles of Christ till He come. What a bright and blessed witness the Church of God would then be!

If we have less fighting and fears than Paul, it is because we have less energy.

PHILIPPIANS ii.

I DESIRE first to say a little word on the closing verses of the first chapter: "In nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for His sake." It is not merely that he wants to guard them against this, but he assures them that conflict is the natural state of the Christian—"Having the same conflict which ye saw in me." Here it was positive trial that they were in; but the whole of the Christian life is one of conflict with Satan; not that we need to be always thinking of it, if we have on the whole

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armour of God ; but if we are not in the consciousness of Christ's victory, we are in danger of being terrified ; and though we know little of this conflict, yet in a small degree we do. When Satan is resisted, Christ is then in the conflict, and we know that Christ has bound him, and he has been completely overcome ; so it is "resist the devil, and he will flee from you." If we are walking with Christ, the apparent power is much greater with Satan and the world than with us ; but it is all *nothing* ; it is all a mistake to be terrified by it. What does it matter if the cities are walled up to heaven, if they tumble down, and you walk in over them ?

You see, beloved friends, it is not a question of the difficulties, as we see in the case of Peter walking on the sea. He walked on the water to go to Jesus ; but when he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid. But if the water had been calm as a mill-pond he could not have walked on it ; you never heard of a man able to walk on water of any kind. It was all a mistake in what he was looking at. What we want to remember is that Christ has bound Satan, so now He can spoil his goods. He allows Satan to cast some into prison to be tried, but Satan gains nothing by that ; when he meets a person walking with Christ he has no power against him at all. We may have suffering, but that is what God has "*given* ;" as we see in Moses, "*esteeming*"—he does not say reproach, but—"the *reproach of Christ* greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." So that rough seas or smooth seas are all the same ; we sink if Christ is not with us there, and we walk on them if He is.

To turn to the second chapter. It is astonishing the grace which associates us with Christ; we are called to have the same mind as Christ. Here we get the lowliness of the Christian life, as in the next chapter we have the energy of the Christian life. Here it is in following the pattern of Christ, a lowliness shown in esteem of others, and in perfect consideration for others, and in gracious gentleness of demeanour in connection with the things of everyday life. Thus he tells them he would keep Timotheus, and send him to them as soon as he should know how it would go with him—reckoning on their true interest in all that regarded him; but he would not keep Epaphroditus, but send him, for he had been ill, and the Philippians had heard it, and were full of anxiety about him; like a child might say, My mother will be in a terrible way when she hears I am so ill. So Paul would send him that they might see him. In little things this considerateness is seen in Paul, this thorough thoughtfulness for others. Even the world can see it is lovely; their very selfishness delights in it.

The Philippians had shown these things he speaks of in their thoughtfulness for Paul, yet they were not quite united in Christ. But he does not like to come with a rebuke in the midst of all their love for him. He says, I see how you care for me, but, if you want to make me thoroughly happy, be of one mind, “fulfil ye my joy.” It is in the most delicate way that he rebukes them,—a gentle hint; but they needed the exhortation.

Then he goes on to show the principles on which it is founded. “In lowliness of mind let

each esteem other better than themselves." It is a kind of impossibility, if you look at it in one way; for, if you are better than I, it is evident I cannot be better than you. But when the heart is thoroughly lowly, walking with Christ, and delighting in Christ, he thinks himself a poor creature with nothing but the grace of Christ to think of, and never sees anything but defects in himself; all the graces he sees in Christ; and, seeing this grace, even if he is using it, he feels what a poor instrument he is, the flesh hindering and spoiling the vessel, and not letting the light shine out.

But when he looks at his brother he sees all the grace Christ has poured into him. What the Christian sees is Christ in his brother, and all the good qualities in him. Paul could say even to the Corinthians, who were going on shockingly, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ." He begins by recognising all the good. Love took hold of all the good it could, and thus he got their hearts to listen to the rebukes. I detect the grace in my brother, and I do not see the evil at work in his heart; but I do see it in my own. When Moses came down from the mount he wist not that his face shone. What made it shine was not looking at his own face,—of course we know he could not do that,—but looking at the glory; and it shines forth from us in the measure in which we look simply and purely at it. I see in my brother all the gentleness, graciousness, courage, faithfulness; and in myself all the defects. As I said, of course if you are better than I, I cannot be better than you; but it is a question of the spirit

in which the Christian walks ; vain glory is gone ; and it cannot be otherwise if the heart is on Christ. It is not giving me a false estimate of myself ; but when I look at the grace it is Christ. Of course I must look at myself sometimes, and judge myself ; but the best thing is not to have to look at myself at all. "Look not every man on his own things."

Then he turns to the principle on which this is founded: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Here we get the path of Christ from the glory of the Godhead to the cross ; he never did anything but go down—the exact opposite of the first Adam. "Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God ;" not only He bore everything patiently ; that is true ; but another side of the truth: "He made himself of no reputation." He laid aside the form of Godhead, and was found as a man ; and, being a man, He took upon Him the form of a servant. True, even coming in the form of a man, there was soon seen in word, and work, and spirit, and way, all moral glory shining out ; but He, having laid glory aside, was always going down in lowliness till there was no lower place. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

There is the double step in His descent. The first was laying aside the form of God ; the second, that, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient. There is nothing so humble as obedience, for then we have no will at all. And not only obedient, but obedi-

ent unto death ; self given up altogether, not only the will. And not only to death, but the death of the cross—the gibbet, as it would be in our day ; then for slaves and malefactors only. From the form of God right down to death ; obedience and humiliation all the way, the opposite in everything of the first Adam. He was not in the form of God, but set up to be as gods, and was *disobedient* unto death ; the exact opposite in the spirit and character of his ways.

And as God says, “ He that exalteth himself shall be abased,” Adam was humbled because he exalted himself. Christ waited till God exalted Him ; He humbled Himself, wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him. He sets Him as Man over all the works of God’s hands. Hence we read, “ There is one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ.” This is not a question of His nature, but of the place in which He is set. He has put all things under His feet *as man*. All things were created by Him, and for Him, but He will have it all as man, and thus it is He takes joint-heirs. He is heir of all things as man, and has all believers as joint-heirs with Him. In Colossians we get Him as Creator, as Son of God, as Son of Man, and as Redeemer ; the fourth tells us His title—Redeemer—that which has given Him a right over everything. All things are to be reconciled by Him ; I do not say *justified*, because the things had not sinned ; but they were all defiled ; and, having reconciled all things, He takes us as joint-heirs. Just as Eve was not one of the different animals that Adam gave names to, neither was she lord as Adam, nor was she that over which he was lord ; but she

was a help-meet or companion with him over the things. And it is under the fourth title, though all remain united in His person, that He brings in creation unto undefiled blessedness. It never can fail, and we know the redemption already: "you *hath* he reconciled"; the redemption is accomplished, though the results are not yet produced, as it is said, "that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures."

Then he tells us that the same mind is to be in us as was in Christ. He had "a body prepared," or "ears dug," as it is in another place. He had taken the place of a servant as man. He comes, the fulness of the Godhead, in this body, and exhibits perfect obedience in it; and God has exalted Him to His right hand. He has gone before. We are not there yet; we are left to walk like Him here. It is a blessed thing to see the place He has taken; His path coming always down, and that to be the mind in us. So God says, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" too; that is, infernal things will have to own His title in glory. In that character, that He is exalted, they will have to bow to Him.

The first Adam did not become head of a race till he had sinned; and Christ did not become Head of a new race till He had accomplished redemption, and was Head of righteousness. As man entered Paradise, so He entered the world; each began a race. Sin complete, and the race ended on the one hand; and righteousness complete, and the race begun on the other.

When *we* talk of coming down, we mean the

getting rid of pride in us. It is just the thing the Christian learns, and just the thing the flesh dislikes. Moses killed the Egyptian through the remains of court pride. Satan says, I cannot allow this ; you must take the place out and out, or you cannot have it. The world's weapons will not do to fight God's battles with ; Moses runs away, and is forty years keeping sheep instead of fighting. Then when God sends him he cannot go ; the extreme of one side and the extreme of the other. Our part in detail is always to wait till God puts us up higher, like the man who took the low place, to whom it was said, "Go up higher." If we are content with the low place, we shall miss ten thousand rebuffs we should otherwise have.

Now there comes a passage which often troubles people, but needlessly, as we shall see. "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 good pleasure." The mistake people make is putting God's working and our working in contrast. It is not so. The contrast is between Paul and themselves. In losing Paul they had not lost God, who was working. He says, Do it, now that I am absent, for yourselves. Paul had been doing for them. He had met the wiles of Satan for them in apostolic blessing ; his spirit of wisdom had told them what to do. Now he says, My absence does not alter the present power of grace ; God works in you Himself. "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 with fear and trembling." They were now to meet the

enemy without Paul in the front to lead them on. Never mind, he says; "work out your own salvation." I go always down, Himself working in me.

The second chapter is the pattern of Christ's lowly walk, the Lord coming down, and always so to the end. The third, the power and energy of life with Christ, and glory its object. The effect is to produce exactly the character of Christ: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." That is exactly the description of Christ Himself. Take every member of that sentence, and you will see it is Christ. He was all that, and that is just what you are to be. How completely self is put down, God graciously working in us; and the effect is exactly what Christ was—constant self-humiliation—and so blameless and harmless, the Son of God without rebuke, the expression of Divine grace when there was no will or human exaltation, but the contrary. We see the perfect beauty and blessedness of it. It is not the energy, as in the next chapter; it is the character of the obedience. Wherever the path of obedience led He went. Having taken the form of a servant, His perfection was to obey.

Look what the effect was produced on a creature doing his own will as Adam. What an awful spectacle for angels—the ruin and destruction of God's glory in the world! But, when we had destroyed God's glory, Christ comes, and God is a debtor to man for His glory—not to us, I need not say—just as He had been a debtor to man for His

dishonour; for by the cross God was glorified in His very nature. Christ comes, and we see what sin was—deliberate enmity against God's goodness; but all that God is was glorified; His majesty maintained, and all His truth comes out; His righteousness against sin; His perfect love. But the putting away of our sins was a small part of the glory of the cross; it is the foundation of eternal glory and blessedness.

Not only does Christ take the form of a servant, but He will never give it up. As never the place of man will be given up, so He will never give up its true place before God. He took upon Him the form of a man, and served His time on earth, as we have in the figure of the Hebrew servant in the twenty-first of Exodus, and could have gone out free as man—could have had twelve legions of angels to deliver Him. But He did not. The ear of the servant was bored with an awl to the door when he would not go out free, because he loved his master, his wife, and his children, and he became a servant *for ever*. And that is what Christ is. In the thirteenth of John, when the blessed Lord was going to glory, we should have said, there is an end of service. It is not so. He gets up from where He was sitting among them as a companion, He gets up and washes their feet; and that is what He is doing now. He says, I cannot stay with you here, but I will not give you up; you must now have part with me where I am going. If I do not make you clean enough for heaven, you cannot have part with me there. So this He does by keeping our feet clean. In the twelfth of Luke we learn that He still continues the service in glory—"He shall gird Himself, and

make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." There we get His service in glory. It is His glory in love, though in the form of service. Not only heaven's table for us, but Christ Himself ministering it to us. He never gives up the service. Selfishness likes to be served, but love likes to serve ; so Christ never gives up the service, for He never gives up the love. It is His love expressed in ministering that makes everything doubly blessed to us.

When I am brought to God, in the spirit of my mind, I can go down like Christ.

Working out your own salvation with fear and trembling is not justification, and our place with God. Salvation in Philippians is always the final result in glory. What was the effect of redemption on Israel? Not to put them in Canaan, but to make them enter on a road through the wilderness. And where were they to get food? and there were enemies in the way, too.—I am to make good my way, maintaining God's name and character, and the devil is trying to hinder me ; that is why there is fear and trembling. An Israelite in the wilderness never doubted as to whether he were in Egypt or not. If I find a doubting Christian, he does not yet know that he is redeemed. An Israelite might not gather manna, and would have nothing to eat that day, but he had no thought of being in Egypt. It was only eleven days' journey from Egypt to Canaan, as we get in the first of Deuteronomy ; but they were forty years journeying before they got to the plains of Moab, except the year they were at Sinai, for they had no courage or faith to take hold.

And so Satan seeks to hinder now. You will not get to your homes to-night without the devil trying to take away the blessing you may have got here. The devil will try to get up pride in you, and thus not let you show out this character of Christ. If you knew that you were charged to carry this character of Christ through the world, and that Satan was trying to hinder you, you would count it a very serious thing. So Peter says, "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning *here in fear.*" Satan is trying to dirty your feet, or to get you to dishonour Christ in the most awful way. I am in conflict with Satan, the world, and self, but I am in perfect peace with God. It is totally false to confound this working out our salvation with our relationship with God. That is all settled, and my confidence in God enables me to go on working.

Beloved brethren, how far are we doing that? Redemption is complete. How far are our souls making nothing of ourselves, and looking to manifest what Christ was here? It flows out naturally if I am full of Christ. I am not saying I must do this or that like Christ, though that sometimes, too, but, "he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

You will find the spirit of this graciousness and considerateness running all through the chapter in its details ; it all comes out most beautifully.

I would make one remark more : that it is exceedingly blessed to see all this going on when the Church was already sunk away into ruin. "All seek their own," he says in this very epistle, and

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that already. How little we realize its real state when we speak of the primitive church ! There it is, all seeking their own ; and it was a great deal worse after. I refer to it as a matter of comfort, for he exhorts them to this path in spite of the condition around. As it was when Elijah went up to heaven, without dying, at the very time when he could find none but himself who had not bowed the knee to Baal, though God knew where to find them. There were brighter things, too, in David than there ever were in Solomon. He goes to Gibeon to sacrifice where the ark was not, not teaching to sing at the ark on Sion "His mercy endureth for ever," and had never a heart which God could string to play such tunes about Christ as He did in David.

It tells us never be discouraged ; rejoice in all good. If we find that all seek their own we must only be the more like Christ ourselves. It is a comfort the Head cannot fail though the members do ; you cannot put me in a place in which Christ is not sufficient in full power and grace. All we want is to find ourselves lowly at His feet, He the counsellor of our hearts. If we are with God in light we know our own nothingness ; and if all seek their own, His grace and blessedness come out the more.

The Lord give us to look to Him as our life and strength.

PHILIPPIANS iii. 1—14.

WE saw the apostle in the last chapter bringing our hearts in contact with the Lord Jesus, giving

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up His Divine glory on high, taking the form of a servant, and going down ; and then as man highly exalted. That is exactly what we are to do ; we are to have the same mind.

He has closed then, in the last chapter, the state and condition of soul we are to be in, and he now looks before—onward to the glory. The things before will keep the soul from being hindered—Christ set before the soul so as to take complete possession of it. It is not the character of graciousness in the life here, and considerateness for others, as in the last chapter, which looked at Christ emptying Himself of glory and humbling Himself ; but the energy of Divine life which presses forward to the goal. Sometimes we see a want of energy where there is loveliness of character ; or a great deal of energy, on the other hand, when there is a want of softness and considerateness for others. But in the things of God you must get the whole that any part may be right. Satan imitates part, but you never get the whole in what he imitates. When you get both—when Christ is everything—it delivers from selfishness, and shows itself in seeking the good of others ; but it will not give way when giving up Christ is in question ; I do not mean giving Him up as to the soul's salvation, but in our path here. So the apostle says, "add to brotherly kindness charity," for if God is not brought in we have not power to walk according to *Him* in graciousness. Christ has gone up and is everything to us ; He is before us as an object, and we cannot give Him up to please the flesh ; but we can look for power to press on. •

He then gives the starting point in rejoicing in

the Lord. "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice." The effect of the ending of self is that I rejoice always; and, if I rejoice always, it is in the Lord that I rejoice. Nothing separates from the love, we know; but there is danger when we are in the enjoyment of present blessing; we are apt to rest in the blessing, and not feel dependent on the Blessor. David said, "I shall never be moved. Lord, by Thy favour Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled." When his mountain was gone he found he had been trusting in his mountain, and not in the Lord. When he says, "The Lord is my Shepherd," there was no being moved, for he was resting in the Lord Himself. If the heart is emptied of self it does rest in the Lord; but the heart is so treacherous that a person experiencing great joy as a Christian often gets a fall after it, because of having got away from the place of dependence. He is restored again, we know, as in that Psalm: "He restoreth my soul."

Here Paul was just going to be tried for his life. He had been in prison four years, two of them chained to heathen soldiers, and he says he knew how to be full and to be hungry, how to abound and to suffer need. Pains, and sorrows, and joys and comforts—he had gone through all; and he was not discouraged as a man might be who was obliged to be with brutal, uncultivated men, and in constant suffering chained to a soldier, and four years in prison. And that was not all; he might have said, I am in prison and cannot do the Lord's work. No, he is with the Lord, and he says, all will "turn to my salvation." Even

when Christ was preached of contention, he could say, "I herein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." When we are weaned from everything we are cast on the Lord, and able to rejoice in the Lord, and that is when He leads us.

But what an object, what an energy-producing object there was in the Lord before him! He looks at everything beyond the wilderness—he a traveller across it, and on the way, always rejoicing in the Lord. Whether he was preaching in public, or quietly in his lodging receiving those who came in, he was rejoicing. It is a great setting aside of self to be always rejoicing in the Lord. He had hoped to go on into Spain after being somewhat filled with the saints' company; but there was now no more about Spain, or being filled with their company either, yet he was still rejoicing. You can never get inside the defences of the one whose joy is in the Lord. "Nay, in all these things," he says, "we are more than conquerors." All these things are creatures—"angels, principalities, and powers;" but He dwells in us; He is near the heart, and that is the great secret; we get Christ between us and the troubles; we understand how unbelief hinders, but this is the secret that makes everything work for good. The love of God is reckoned upon; His love is shed abroad in the heart. The great starting-point is, "Finally, my brethren, *rejoice* in the Lord."

We see, too, the simplicity of looking to Christ. The religion of descent, of ordinances, and of works—the moment I get these three, morally speaking, I get a Jew. It was all works, ordinances, and descent. I could boast of all this just the same if Christ had not come. But where does

it all end? "Beware of *dogs*." Dogs is a name for a perfectly shameless thing.

I must get the conscience *with* God, and Christ *from* God, or I have got nothing. A Jew could bow his head like a bulrush and do all that without his soul being with God, and therefore God puts perfect contempt upon it all. He says, "My son, give me thy *heart*." "The cattle upon a thousand hills" is mine. "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee." It is no use your bringing offerings; I want *you*, not your offerings. Cain had much more trouble in tilling the ground than Abel had about the lamb; but Cain's conscience had never been with God, nor seen the ruin that had come in; we see the hardness of his heart as to sin, and his ignorance as to the holiness of God. He brings what was the sign of the curse—what he had got by the sweat of his brow. Abel brought a lamb, and was accepted. If we have got the real knowledge of the work of atonement and acceptance in Him, we are like Abel. The testimony as to righteousness refers to the person of Abel. What it was founded on was his offering, which was a type of Christ. God cannot refuse me when I present Christ to Him; He accepts me according to the pass I bring. I cannot think of going through a process to make my soul up in some way. In coming to God I must come in God's way, which is Christ and nothing else, and with my own conscience; not with ordinances, which are all outward things.

It is remarkable the way in which he treats the subject in this chapter. It is not the conscience with sin on it, but the worthlessness of all ordinances; so he calls it the "*concision*." Have

your hearts circumcised—that is the true ordinance. “We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit.” Even as Jeremiah says, “Circumcise your hearts.” It must be the flesh totally put down. The flesh has a religion as well as lusts; but the flesh must have a religion that will not kill the flesh; satisfying the flesh in mortifying the body—a voluntary humility, not sparing the body—that is easy work; but it is not easy work to be *done with the flesh*.

Suppose I could say, “An Hebrew of the Hebrews,” “touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless,” perfectly religious—who would be accredited by that? Paul; not God or Christ. It is not worth a farthing, this righteousness. It is giving *me* a good place. It is *I* all the while, not *Christ*. And it is in this that it is detected—the moment it accredits the flesh; it may be costly and painful; it may be things by which I punish myself, but it is utterly worthless. I have seen a person irritated to the last degree when told it was not worth anything.

It is striking the way in which Paul takes it up. It is not as sin, but as something perfectly worthless—legal righteousness, and the true religion as man can see it. “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.” He was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, and after the strictest sect he lived a Pharisee; that was gain to him. Then he says, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” There was no question of sin; when he speaks of righteousness, it is not as

meeting sins, but as contrasted with righteousness according to the law. We can always detect it ; all it does is to accredit self—that is the mischief and the evil ; for who would have filthy rags (that is what our righteousnesses are called) when he could have Christ for his righteousness ? He had such a perception of the excellency of what Christ is in God's sight—what God delights in—that he says, I am not going to keep this wretched righteousness, or add it to that which is of God. The deceitful lusts are bad enough, but this religious flesh is worse. It was not real righteousness ; it was self puffed up, not self judged ; it was self eked out, and painted over. Now he wants to get rid of self, and have Christ instead of it.

That is the place, and now he unfolds it. Remark it is not when I was converted I counted all things loss. We find when a person is converted Christ is everything ; the world is a vain show, vanity, nothing. It has passed from the mind, and things unseen fill the heart. But afterwards as the man goes on with his duties and intercourse with his friends, though Christ is still precious, he does not continue to count all things loss ; often it is only that he *counted*. But Paul says, I *do* count, not *did*. It is a great thing to be able to say it. Christ should hold always such a place as He did when salvation was first revealed to our hearts.

Allow me to add a thing which comes into my mind. Of course if a man has not Christ at the bottom he is no Christian at all ; but I mean even where Christ is in a man, and you may find him walking blamelessly, yet, if you speak to him of Christ, there is not an echo in his heart, though his

life goes on smoothly. Christ at the bottom, and a fair Christian walk at the top, and, between these two, a hundred and fifty things that Christ has nothing to do with at all. His life is practically passed without Christ. This will not do. It is the terrible levity of the heart that goes on without Christ, until it becomes the highway of whatever the world pours into it.

He now tells us what is the power for this. He wants to win Christ, and it looks like a terrible sacrifice to give up everything for this. But it is just like a baby with a plaything. Try to take the plaything from it, it will hold it the faster; put a prettier before it, and it will let the other drop. He counted everything loss and dung; the things were gone. I shall have temptations, I know; but nine-tenths of the temptations that beset and hinder would not exist if Christ had His place. Things would not tempt and beset us, as gold, and silver, and pretty things, if "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" had its place in the heart; that kind of conflict would be gone. We should then know the snares of Satan, and suffer for others; it would not be the struggle to keep my own head above water, but to keep others from being drowned.

Christ having got this place, other things have lost their value. His eye is single, and the whole body is full of light. He *had* suffered the loss of all things; but he says, "I *do* count them but dung." He was looking at Christ as such a blessed object that everything was given up for Him. And he kept this place for Him, so that he goes on to *win* Christ. He had not got Christ yet, but Christ had got hold of him; and he was

running the race to get there, and looking at the end of the journey. No matter what the road is ; it may be rough, but I am looking to the end.

There are these two things here ; first, that I may win Christ ; and second, that I may not have my own righteousness. A man with a threadbare coat, if he gets a right good one, is ashamed of the old one. Paul would not thank you for the kind of righteousness he had before. I cannot have my own and God's ; I would not have my own if I could. This is blessedly brought out in the first of Corinthians : " Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." What we are in life of God ; Christ is *of* God towards me.

He then goes to the next thing : " That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection."

The first thing was winning Christ ; the second, knowing Christ. There is the victory over the whole power of evil—death, and everything else. I want to know Him—His perfect love and life ; to have Him as the object before the soul—occupying soul, and mind, and heart, and so grow up into Him ; and to know the power of His resurrection, for then the whole power of Satan was set aside. He had spoken of the righteousness as that which he sought in Christ, not in himself and the law ; and now he wanted to know the power of the life expressed in the resurrection of Christ. When he has known Christ as a person, and victory over death, he can take up the service of love as Christ did, and can know " the fellowship of his sufferings." How different to fearing, and dreading, and creeping on as the apostles did when told

of His death, in the tenth of Mark: "They were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid," instead of rejoicing because death was before them. But, if I know the power of resurrection, death is behind me, all its power is broken. So, when He rose, He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;" "preach the gospel to every creature;" "be not afraid of them that kill the body;" they have killed *my* body.

When I have got the power of resurrection I can serve in love. Paul was looking death in the face, and not speaking lightly. Satan says, You want to follow Christ?—Yes.—There is death in your way.—Very well; I shall be all the more like Christ for going through it.

"The fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Paul so came into this, that he uses words Christ Himself might use: "I endure all things for the elect's sake." It was all of grace—a totally new place—all pretension to righteousness gone, and what I am as man too, and Christ substituted as righteousness for me. And then Himself—to know *Him*. That is where progress goes on to; the affections are now engaged. When I see suffering before me I get the power of His resurrection, and then the privilege of the fellowship of His sufferings. Paul had a large share of this; we have a little. He says, "If by any means I might attain;" that is, Cost what it will, if death is on the road, all right, I shall attain what He did—resurrection from among the dead.

This is a special word, and very seldom found but here in the New Testament. When we look

at the resurrection from the dead, we find it to be a matter of all possible importance. Christ was the first-fruits, not of the wicked dead, of course. What was Christ's resurrection? God raised Him from the dead, because His delight was in Him, because of His perfect righteousness and glorifying Him. And it is the same with us. Resurrection is the expression of God's satisfaction in those raised; it is His seal on Christ's work. Christ was the Son He delighted in, and now it is the same with us because of Christ. In Him it was His own perfectness; with us it is because of Him. He comes in in power to take His own out, while the rest are left behind.

"*From among*:"—in that lies the whole force of the expression. So at the transfiguration; He charged them not to speak of it "till the Son of man were risen from the dead;" they questioned among themselves "what the rising from the dead should mean." What astonished them? It was "*the rising from among the dead.*" It was this very thing. God stepped in in power, and raised Him up, and set Him at His own right hand; and when the time is come He will raise His saints too. It is an immense act of divine power, for divine righteousness is there. In the fifteenth of the first of Corinthians there is no reference but to saints; it is not a general resurrection, for the wicked are not raised in glory. I do not know anything that has done more harm to the church than the notion of a general resurrection. If all are raised together, the question of righteousness is not settled; but it is, "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the

dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." The whole character, and nature, and meaning, and purpose of this resurrection is entirely distinct. "From among" is the expression of divine delight in the person raised, and we are all raised because of it; else there would be no sense in the expression "attained."

He says, "if by any means"—if it cost me my life it is all nothing. "That I may win Christ" is the first thing. But, in *winning* Him at the close of the race, it is also as a present thing "that I may *know* Him." It has been asked whether this refers to the present effect, or to the future glory? I say it is present effect *by* future glory.

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling." The high calling is the *calling above*. We see the immediate connection of the object with the present effect. He wanted to be like Christ now, not only when he should be dead in his grave and his spirit in Paradise. If he were to die he would be then like Him; but that was not what he was looking for, namely, to be conformed to the image of the Son of God in glory. That he would be of course, but that I never shall be till Christ comes and raises the dead; that I wait for. I am conscious of never attaining, but I wait for it, and every day I am more like Him, suffering in the power of the love in which He served the Father; and there is a continual growing likeness to Christ inwardly from looking at Him in the glory. The only thing I care for is to be like Him in glory, and with Him.

The whole of Paul's life was founded on that, and completely formed by that. The Son of God

was forming his soul day by day, and he was always running towards Him, and never doing anything else. It was not merely as an apostle that he entered into the fellowship of His sufferings, and conformity to His death, but every Christian ought to be doing the same. A person may say he has forgiveness of sins, but I say, What is governing your heart now? Is your eye resting on Christ in glory? Is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus so before your soul as to govern everything else, and make you count everything loss that is in the way? Is that where you are? Has this excellent knowledge put out all other things? not only an outwardly blameless walk, and able to say you love Christ; but has the thought of Christ in glory put out all other things? If it were so, you would not be governed by every-day nothings.

If a labouring man has a family, he does not forget the affections of his children because of his work. On the contrary, when his labour is done, his tools are thrown down, and he returns home with all the more joy because he has been absent from it. His labour did not hinder or enfeeble the affections of his heart.

To be in our daily occupations as to Christ, we have also to watch against another danger; when there are not other objects, there are distractions. We must watch the distractions as well as the objects, and have habits of jealousy of heart for Christ, else there is immediate weakness. And then when we go into God's presence, instead of rejoicing in the Lord, the conscience has to be talked to. It is sad indeed when the walk in the world has been such, that, on going back

to Christ, we find He had not been thought of in it.

Could you say, as Paul to Agrippa, Would to God you were not almost, but altogether such as I am? Are you happy enough to say that? Can you say, I am so rejoicing in Christ, and see such excellency in the knowledge of Him, that I would to God you were like me? What we have to look for in hearts is, not I *have* counted, but I *do* count. Do your hearts count, as a *present* thing, all things loss? Two things we have to watch against, having another object, and, what is even more subtle, distractions.

The Lord give us to have our eyes so anointed with eye-salve, so to see Him, as to detach our hearts from other things; to have no other object than Himself before them. Perhaps we shall have the cross to take up; but mark, then it is not merely suffering, nor always exactly *for* Him either, but it is always *with* Him. The Lord give us (for we have to pass through a place where people do not care about Christ,) to have the eye thus fixed on Him, having Him as a sanctuary, as the power and energy which carries us through. The Lord give us—and it is in His heart to give us—to say, “This one thing I do.” The Lord give us truth of heart, and diligence of heart too.

PHILIPPIANS iii. 15—21, iv. 1—7.

WE were seeing, beloved brethren, the way in which Christ being before the eye gives earnestness of purpose in running towards the glory.

Christ had laid hold on Paul for it, and he wanted to lay hold on Christ in glory. We were seeing too that this epistle looks at the Christian as travelling across the wilderness with everything at the end, but remember this, that, all through, the power of Christ's resurrection being in him, he had already the power in life, and wanted it in glory; and the practical effect was to make him run as a person who had only the glory in view. One single object—winning Him—and being raised up himself into the glory.

That is what we are predestinated—to “to be conformed to the image of His Son;” not looking forward to being like Him when our bodies are in the grave and we in Paradise. True, “when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;” “but our conversation” is now “in heaven;” our citizenship, though I do not much like the word. It means *all our living relationships*; as we say, He is an Englishman; that is what distinguishes him. What distinguishes us is, we are of heaven. So he says, “this one thing I do,” running towards the place; it has determined my whole life; “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling.” The high calling means the calling above. We can have no notion of perfection but as in that glory.

The moment I have seen Christ come down, obedient to death for me, there is nothing too great to expect as the answer to it, for all is the fruit of the travail of His soul.

The “earnest of His love” is nowhere in Scripture; it has been taken I think out of a hymn. The earnest of the glory we have—“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.” Paul felt the

power of the glory on his spirit ; and that is how we are to run, but all Christians do not know it. If a man is a Christian at all he must know the cross as that through which he is redeemed ; but he does not know that he is going to be with Christ in glory. The "little children" know that their sins are forgiven. This is the common knowledge of all. And the children know the Father—have the spirit of adoption. But the perfect in Christ, as they are here called, know the evil of their own hearts far better, and at the same time see the perfect love of God in giving Christ on the cross—love come down to the sinner in his sins. They see not only that they are forgiven, but that we are all done with as children of Adam. The little children have not that. They do not know that they are entirely set aside as to their Adam nature. The old nature is dead to faith, and "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory ;" and faith has got the place now, "Herein is love with us made perfect," "because as he is, so are we in this world." There is the man perfect.

He says, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded : and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." He may be at the beginning, and you further on ; if so, you ought only to show him the more grace ; however, Christ has laid hold on him, and forgiven him his sins, and he will yet know another thing, even that he has died with Christ—that not only sins are forgiven, but that sin is put away by faith—that he himself is put away,—that self which troubled him a great deal more than his sins. They are to be likeminded, as those who

know that they are associated with the second Adam. Even if this is not seen by all, they are yet to go thoroughly together ; God will reveal it to the others.

He then turns to the contrast, and, in doing so, puts himself forward in a remarkable way as their example. There are those whose " conversation is in heaven," and there are those who " mind earthly things ;" the end of the latter is destruction ; they are contrary to Christianity. It is now not a question of not seeing clear, but of having the mind on earthly things. That is not Christ in glory ; I cannot mind earthly things and Christ too. " The friendship of the world is enmity with God." " All that is in the world is not of the Father." The children are of the Father. When I was first awakened, I was astonished to find so much about the world in God's word ; but I soon saw, when I had to do with Christians, how it dragged them back, always soliciting their hearts.

He says those who mind earthly things are the enemies of the cross of Christ. What was the cross ? It had judged all this. I find the Son of God—the spring, and root, and plant, for all glory to grow on. The cross was all He got in this world. And what is the world ? The world would not have Christ on any terms, so I have done with it. " The world seeth me no more ;" the Holy Ghost is not come to be seen ; " whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." That is how we know the Holy Ghost.

Evil and good came to an issue at the cross. It was the turning-point ; it was where the two met.

And now the whole question is, Am I with the world that turned Christ out, or with Christ whom the world turned out? There is nothing like the cross. It is both the righteousness of God *against* sin, and the righteousness of God in *pardon*ing sin. It is the end of the world of judgment, and the beginning of the world of life. It is the work that put away sin, and yet it is the greatest sin that ever was committed. The more we think of it, the more we see it is the turning-point of everything. So if a person follows the world he is an enemy of the cross of Christ. As Christians we have to look into it, how far this vain show puts a spider film over our hearts, so as to hinder us from seeing. If I take the glory of the world that crucified Christ, I am glorying in my shame. Where is a man at home? In his Father's house, not in the dreary desert, he has to cross in going there.

The meekness of the path we saw in the second chapter; here we have the power and energy that deliver from the world that would hinder our being like Him.

"Who shall change our vile body"—the body of our humiliation, not vile morally. I have Adam's body now, I shall have Christ's then. All our living associations are where He is. As Saviour He will come and accomplish all in changing our body, and conforming it to His glorious body. The price has been paid, but the final deliverance of what has been paid for is not yet come. "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God," but we have not yet got it. We are waiting till He comes to get it.

Ah! beloved brethren, if our hearts really felt

that God is going to make us like Christ, if we practically believed that He is going to bring us as brethren to be with and like Christ—well, we should have altogether another thought about the world, we should be perfect then, pressing towards the mark.

If I die meanwhile I am always confident. I do not want to die ; I want mortality to be swallowed up of life ; but if death comes it does not touch my confidence ; “absent from the body, present with the Lord.”

He first speaks of the hope ; that is what I want. Then he looks at the two things that are man's portion : “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” As to death it is gain to me, for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. But what about the judgment? It is a solemn thing. It is “the terror of the Lord.” I think of the poor things not converted, and I “persuade men.” It makes him think not of himself but of other people, though he says, “we must *all* appear”—that is, be manifested,—“before the judgment seat of Christ. We persuade men, and are made manifest to God. The day of judgment had its effect on him ; it made him feel now the effect of the presence of God, as he will do in the day of judgment. It keeps my conscience awake and alive ; it is a sanctifying power, not a terrifying one. Divine power will take us ; as Adam had Eve presented to him, Christ, being God, presents His Eve—His Church—to Himself, as second Adam.

Persons have asked if this is present or future, —“that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.” It is the present power of looking

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at it objectively. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." It is the present effect of having the eye fixed on Him and waiting for Him. Final redemption will come, and make good, as to the body, what is true now of the soul. He will make us like Him in the Father's house ; and, what I feel is so blessed, He will have us there without even the need of a conscience. Here I must always have my conscience on the *qui vive*, if not I am at once caught in a snare of Satan. There I shall not want it, where all around will be blessedness. We shall have the Holy Ghost then too, and His whole power spent in enabling us to enjoy the glory. Now "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," but much of the power is spent in making the ship go.

As a matter of fact a number of us have cares, and trials, and temptations ; God has thought of all that ; He has counted the very hairs of our heads, and given us something that takes us out of them all. He thinks of the weather for us even : "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter." Nay, even a sparrow falls not to the ground without your Father. God thinks of everything, and gives us complete superiority over everything.

It is blessed to see that the apostle goes from the most exalted thoughts of the revelation of God to the commonest things a saint has to push through. From things so exalted he turns to two women who were not getting on well together. So it is to-day. There is no forgetfulness in grace. It takes up to the third heaven, but goes down to the smallest things. Even when a runaway slave is in

question, the delicacy with which Paul deals with it has been admired in all ages.

What was Christ's comfort on the cross? He could not tell the poor thief that he was going to Paradise without telling him that He was going there too: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." So Paul, when thinking of the women who laboured with him, says, "whose names are in the book of life." God being there there were divine affections; we are put in the place of divine affections.

There is nothing I feel more in going out to visit, than the desire that Christ should be so there, that the thing should come out that would come out of Christ—not my own thoughts. We do not know half how blessed it is to have the mind of Christ; but the mind of Christ was to go down to the cross.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway." Who was a fit person to say that? The man who had been in the third heaven? No. The man a prisoner at Rome. That was rejoicing *always*; as we have in the Psalms, "I will bless the Lord at all times." When I get the Lord as the object of my heart, there is more of heaven in the prison than out of it. It is not the green pastures and waters of quietness that make him glad. "*The Lord* is my Shepherd," not the green pastures, though green pastures are very nice. And even if I wander from them, it is "*He* restoreth my soul." And if death is in the way, I am not afraid for "*Thou* art with me." And though there are dreadful enemies, there is a table spread in their presence. Now he says, "My cup runs over." He carries him through all the difficulties and trials of his own

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feebleness. Ah! he says, "surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

The man who trusted in the Lord, the more trouble he was in, the more he proved that all was right. Paul says, I know Him free, and I know Him in prison. He was sufficient when he was in want, and sufficient when he abounded. So he says, "Rejoice in the Lord *always*."

What could they do with such a man? If they kill him they only send him to heaven; if they let him live, he is all devoted to lead people to the Christ they would destroy.

It is more difficult to rejoice in the Lord in prosperity than in trials, for trials cast me on the Lord. There is more danger for us when there are no trials. But delight in the Lord delivers us altogether from the power of present things. We are not aware, until they are taken away, how much the most spiritual of us lean on props. I mean we lean on things around us. But if we are rejoicing in the Lord *always* that strength can never be taken away, nor can we lose the joy of it.

"Let your moderation be known unto all men." Do you think people will think your conversation, is in heaven if you are eager about things of earth? They will only think so if there is the testimony that the heart does not stick up for itself. "The Lord is at hand." All will be set right soon. If you pass on in meekness, and subduedness, and unresistingness, how it acts in keeping the heart and affections right; and the world can see when the mind and spirit is not set on it. So he says, let it be "known unto *all* men."

"Be careful for nothing." I have found that

word so often a thorough comfort. Even if it be a great trial, still "be careful for *nothing*." Oh! you say, it is not my petty circumstances—it is a question of saints going wrong. Well, "be careful for *nothing*." It is not that you are to be careless, but you are trying to carry the burden, and so you are racking your heart with it. How often a burden possesses a person's mind, and when he tries in vain to cast it off it comes back and worries him! But "be careful for *nothing*" is a command, and it is blessed to have such a command.

What shall I do then? Go to God. "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Then in the midst of all the care you can give thanks. And we see the exceeding grace of God in this. It is not that you are to wait till you find out if what you want is the will of God. No. "Let your requests be made known." Have you a burden on your heart? Now go with your request to God. He does not say that you will get it. Paul, when he prayed, had for answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee." But peace will keep your heart and mind—not you will keep this peace. Is *He* ever troubled by the little things that trouble us? Do they shake *His* throne? He thinks of us, we know, but He is not troubled; and the peace that is in God's heart is to keep ours. I go and carry it all to Him, and I find Him all quiet about it. It is all settled. He knows quite well what He is going to do. I have laid the burden on the throne that never shakes, with the perfect certainty that God takes an interest in me, and the peace He is in keeps my heart, and I can thank Him even before the trouble has passed. I can say

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Thank God, He takes an interest in me. It is a blessed thing that I can have this peace, and thus go and make my request—perhaps a very foolish one—and instead of brooding over trials that I can be with God about them.

It is sweet to me to see that, while He carries us up to heaven, He comes down and occupies Himself with everything of ours here. While our affections are occupied with heavenly things we can trust God for earthly things. He comes down to everything. As Paul says, “without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us.” It was worth being cast down to get that kind of comfort. Is He a God afar off, and not a God nigh at hand? He does not give us to see before us, for then the heart would not be exercised; but, though we see not Him, He sees us, and comes down to give us all that kind of comfort in the trouble.

PHILIPPIANS iv. 8—23.

THE first two verses I have read are the last of the exhortation in this epistle.

We have already seen the way in which, in entire superiority to all circumstances, the Christian is to go on. All through the epistle that character of the power of the Spirit of God is brought out. In the eighth verse we get the effect of what we were speaking of last time: “Rejoice in the Lord alway;” “let your moderation be known unto all men;” “be careful for

nothing ; let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus ;" the heart is set free, for the peace of God, which is immutable, keeps the heart and mind. There is nothing new or strange to God. He is always in peace, working all things after the counsel of His own will. It is thus that the heart is to be at rest, and then it is free to be occupied with what is lovely and blessed.

It is a great thing for the Christian to have the habit of living in what is good in this world, where we necessarily have to do with what is evil. We were evil ourselves once, and nothing else was in heart, thoughts, and mind ; and there is still evil not only in the world, but in our hearts, and we have to judge it where it is allowed. But it will not do to be always occupied with it. It defiles even when we judge it ; just as when the man had to do with the ashes of the red heifer, in the nineteenth of Numbers ; he was really doing a service in gathering them up, and laying them up without the camp, yet he was unclean until even, and the same as to him who applied them. It is soiling to our minds, even to be judging evil. There is in some hearts a tendency to be busy about evil, but it will not do to live in. Of course I am not now speaking of living in it actually, but of even in thought judging it.

It is a great thing to have the heart toned and tuned to take delight in the things God delights in. Even in the sense of judging evil as evil, it is not happy. I am to be living now as with God in heaven, and has God to be judging evil in heaven ?

We know He has not ; and it is a great thing for our souls to be above with the Lord, not only doing the things that please Him, but being also in the state of mind in which He can delight. Take one day only and ask yourself, has your mind been living in the things that are lovely and of good report? It is that the apostle speaks of here. Is it the habit of your mind to be dwelling on what is good? Evil forces itself on us in these days, but it will not do to be dwelling on it. It weakens the mind ; the mind gets no strength from thinking of it. It may awaken disgust where the mind is in a spiritual state, but, even judging it, we are not doing it rightly unless the heart is dwelling on what is good. We might be bringing down fire from heaven, when Christ would merely go to another village.

He walked in the full power of communion in what was good in the midst of evil, though He had to do with it ; He had to say, "woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees ;" and we may have to do with it too, but it is never done rightly unless we are living in what is good. There would never be softness, and by this I do not mean softness towards evil—we have to judge that peremptorily—but there would be no gracious softness. Paul had to say, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." There is no softness here ; but still even this comes out in love. Supposing we have to judge evil, we have to do it in the power of the good that is in us. Here is the path in which our souls have to walk : "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good

report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." The Lord give us, beloved brethren, to remember them. God may have to judge, but He dwells in what is good.

We then get,—and what a blessed thing it is for a man to be able to say it,—“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen *in me*, do.” Mark here, that is the way of having the God of peace with us. When our cares are cast on God, he says, “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus ;” but this is more. Paul stood in a special, peculiar place, filled by the Spirit of God, though the chief of sinners, as he says, yet “always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus ;” “death worketh in us—life in you.” It was a great deal to say. He had to have a thorn in the flesh to enable him to carry it out ; it was not that his flesh was naturally any better than yours. He did not only say, I am dead, but he carried about *death in the flesh*, so that it did not stir. He was a chosen vessel, we know, and it was through the grace and power of Christ that he did it. But he *was* doing it, and so, as we remarked in beginning, there is never sin mentioned in this epistle, because it is the proper experience of Christian life ; doctrine is scarcely alluded to either. Paul speaks throughout in the consciousness of his experience.

If I look to walk after Christ, I must reckon myself dead. I never say I must die, because that would be supposing the flesh there working ; of course it is there, but I say it is *dead*. I quite understand a person passing through a state by which he learns what flesh is, and such processes

are more or less long. But when brought thoroughly down to say, "In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing," then God can say, Reckon yourself dead ; do not let it have dominion over you. The spring from which all power flows is that you have *died*. That is the fundamental truth as to deliverance. Deliverance comes when by the power of the Spirit of God we reckon ourselves *dead*. It is not so but to faith. Christ is there in power, and I reckon myself dead, and then I can deal in power.

"This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." But is that all? No. For supposing life is there, and that the old nature is still alive, there is nothing but conflict between the two, and, unless I have the power of the Spirit of God, no settled freedom from sin ; and supposing I have, still there is conflict. Only if I say I am dead really, my deliverance from the working of the flesh is fully realized. The apostle says, in the power and being of this life, I am dead ; and when he comes to carry it out it is, "always bearing about in the body the *dying* of the Lord Jesus." I have received Christ as righteousness before God, and as life in me, and I treat the old thing as dead. It is not only that I have life, but I have died, so it is not an even chance between the two which shall have the upper hand. It is the way till I am brought to the discovery that there is no good in the flesh, and that I have died in Christ. Then I learn that not only I have done bad things, but that the tree itself is bad, and that Christ, who is our life, has died to sin, as well as for sins ; and, when I reckon the old thing dead, I find liberty.

I do not say forgiveness, but deliverance. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me *free*." Of course I may fail, and may be brought under the power of sin for a moment, but I am not a debtor to it any more. How has He condemned the flesh? *In death*. Then I am free—in the fact of life treating the old thing as dead. We are always to manifest this life of Jesus. Keeping in faith this dying of Christ, I have got the cross for the flesh. The apostle says, The death of Christ works in me, old Paul, and so nothing but the life of Christ flows out for you; and he says, Go you and do like me; "those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." He Himself will be then present with you.

What a wonderful thing it is, beloved brethren! The life of Christ given—the flesh reckoned dead—and we walking accordingly. Is God then going to keep Himself separate from you? No. "The God of peace shall be with you."

It is wonderful how often He is called "the God of peace," while He is never called the God of joy. Joy is an uneven thing. Joy gives us the thought of hearing good news, and sorrow may be there too. There is joy indeed in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, for that is good news there; but it is not God's nature like peace. It is an emotion of the heart. Man is a poor, weak creature. He hears good news, and he has joy; he hears sad news, and he has sorrow. It is the ups and downs of a creature nature. But He is "*the God of peace*." It is a deeper thing. Look at the world and the human heart; do you ever see peace

there? Joy we do see in the animal nature even; as in a beast let loose. And we may see a kind of joy in the world, but there is no peace; the heart of man is "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest." Incessant harassment for amusement, and they call that joy. The world is a restless world, and if it cannot be restless in activity to get what it wants, it is restless because it cannot. We never find peace in this world except when God gives it.

If we are walking in the power of the life of Christ, the God of peace is with us. We have the consciousness of His presence. The heart is at rest; there is no craving after something we have not got. Even among Christians we see persons who have no peace because they are craving after what they have not got. That is not peace. But enjoying what is in Him, though surely craving to know Him better, is blessed rest of heart;—it is peace. It is a blessed thing to have such a sanctuary in this world—"the God of peace" with us. »

We then see how Paul is superior to all circumstances. He had been in want, though in a kind of free prison, and his heart felt it. "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again." He says, "now at the last," as if they had been a little bit careless. But there is a gracious delicacy towards them; he at once withdraws what he had said, by adding, "but ye lacked opportunity." There is never insensibility in the Christian's superiority, else it is no superiority. In all circumstances the heart is free to act according to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He was never insensible. We steel ourselves against circumstances; our poor selfish hearts like to get away from suffering. But He was always

Himself in the circumstances. So, as has been said, there was no character in Christ. He was always Himself. Perfectly sensitive to all things, but never governed by them; always in them in the strength of His own grace. We never find Him unmoved. When He saw the crowd He was "moved with compassion towards them;" and when He saw the bier which carried out the only son of the widow He had pity on her; and at the grave of Lazarus "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled"—a strong expression, it is, He troubled Himself inwardly. The power of death in the people around Him pressed on His spirit. No matter where he was, He was never insensible, but was Himself in grace for that He was sensible of. On the cross, He had the right word for the thief. Even when He had to say, "How long shall I be with you, and suffer you?" He immediately adds, "Bring thy son hither." He was perfectly sensitive, as we are not, with His grace always ready to be called out. What shows itself in Christ is what we should seek to be; being perfectly sensitive to all circumstances, but that they should meet Christ in us, so as to draw Him out.

We have seen how Paul corrects what he had said, "at the last your care of me hath flourished again," by adding, "ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity." We never find the Lord correcting Himself. Paul was a man of like passions as we are. At Troas he could not stop, though a great door was opened to him for preaching the gospel; he had no rest in his spirit because he did not find Titus. In Macedonia too his flesh had no rest. And he says of that epistle, which gives us inspired directions for the assembly,

(we could not do without it,) that he was not sorry he had written it, though he had been sorry; and yet he had been inspired to write it. His heart had sunk below the place he was in, when he thought all the Corinthians had turned against him. It is blessed in one sense to see that, though he was an apostle, he was so like us; but we would not see it in the blessed Lord. Perfect sensitiveness, but perfection in it, is what we see in Him; while we see the apostle was a man, though it is interesting to see him feeling in that way.

He then goes on to show, that he was superior to all these circumstances. "Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Power has come in for us, beloved friends. People say, Oh! we can do all things through Christ, as a kind of absolute truth. I say, Can you? *You* cannot. Oh! you say, a person can. And that is perfectly true as an absolute statement, but that is not what the apostle meant. He meant that *he* could do all things. He had learned it. It was a real state for him, not an abstract proposition. "I am *instructed* both to be full and to be hungry." If full, He keeps me from being careless, and indifferent, and self-satisfied; if hungry, He keeps me from being cast down and dissatisfied. With him it was not a *man* can, but *I* have found Christ so sufficient in every circumstance that I am under the power of none. He had been beaten of rods; five times he had received of the Jews forty stripes, save one; he had been stoned, and he had gone through all sorts of things; but he had found Christ sufficient in them all,

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And do not say, Ah! that was when he was a mature Christian; it was very well to say it at the end of his life. If he had not found Christ thus sufficient from the beginning right through to the end, he could not have said what he did at the end. It is that faith reckons on Christ from the starting-point of Christian life. It is the principle I was referring to in the twenty-third Psalm. When the Psalmist had gone through everything, he says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Full or hungry I shall always find that He is enough. But to be able to experience this at the end it must be experienced by the way.

Do not say, Oh! he was an apostle! he was a wonderful, blessed man, far above the evil that is torturing me!—No such thing! He had a thorn in the flesh while he was writing; and though that was not power, it put him into nothingness where the power could come in. The Lord would not take it away when Paul besought Him. "My grace is sufficient for thee," was His answer. It seemed a hindrance; but, when he preached, Christ's power was seen, not Paul's. I refer to it so that you should not say that he was free from the difficulties and snares of the flesh. God had put him in danger of being exalted above measure by taking him up to the third heaven, and He sent him a thorn to make nothing of him, and then His strength was made perfect in weakness. Divine strength cannot be where human strength is. If it had been human strength, Paul's converts would have been worth nothing; but God's converts were worth eternal life. It is a great thing that

we should be made nothing of. If we do not know how to be nothing, God must make us nothing. A humble person does not need to be humbled.

Paul was dependent upon Christ—absolutely dependent on Christ—and we find the infallible faithfulness of Christ to him. But, I repeat it, he could not have said it at the end, if he had not experienced it by the way. It is a blessed testimony. He is sufficient for us where we are ; but He must bring us to the point of uprightness. The soul must be in the truth of its state before God. Till the conscience gets into the place where I really am—till it gets the consciousness of distance from God, and unfaithfulness to Him—it is not upright. But, when it gets there, Now, says God, I have got you right ; I can help you. Job said, “When the ear heard me, then it blessed me, and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me ; because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help.” I did this, I did that.—That will not do, says God ; that is all me, me, me. So he lets the devil loose upon him till Job curses the day in which he was born, and till he says, “Now mine eye seeth Thee ; wherefore I abhor myself.” That will do, says God ; now I can bless you. And He did bless him.

God would have us not merely holding our heads above water, but going on in the strength of His grace.

“Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again

unto my necessity." Love is never forgetful ; it treasures up acts of service. And the apostle treasured up in memory the things, wherein he had been cared for. God delights in service done to His saints ; even what is done to the world He delights in too.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Mark the intimacy there is in "*my God*." It is emphatic. It is saying, I know Him ; I can answer for Him ; I have come through all kinds of things, and I can answer for it that He never failed me. I know the way He acts even in the small things of every day life.

It is a great thing to trust God daily and hourly ; not thinking we can provide for ourselves, and secure ourselves against the power of evil, but to trust God thoroughly. And what is the measure of the supply ? Nothing short of "his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." He must glorify Himself—even in the falling of a sparrow—for there is nothing great and nothing small with God. He thinks of what His love must glorify itself in.

"My God shall supply all your need." How could Paul tell that ? He knew Him. Not that he had not been in a condition of want, but he had felt the preciousness of being met in it by God. Things may look very dark, but we have always found that, if He led us by the wilderness where there was no water, He brought water out of the stony rock for us there. He always exercises faith, but He always meets it. Their coats even did not grow old for forty years. This is a blessed result.

“My God shall supply all *your* need.” He was counting on blessing for others. What a comfort! Instead of walking by sight, to be passing through this world in the blessed consciousness of what God is for oneself, and so able to count on Him for others. We find ourselves sometimes almost dreading to press a person into the path of faith; but we should not dread, but count on grace for them. Faith is always triumphant.

The Lord give us to count on Him always, and we shall then say, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

“JESUS saith unto her, Touch me not.” She would have kept Him here; but He says, That would be good enough for *you*, but it would not be good enough for *me*: you are not going to have me *here*, but I am going to have you *there*; less would not be enough for me to give. H. H. M.

THE doctrine of the non-eternity of punishment is a thrust of Satan's against the Son of God. If he can make out that the punishment of sin is a thing that can wear itself out—a finite thing—then the work that has met it is a finite work, and the person who wrought the work is a finite person. But an eternity of misery can never measure the extent of the work of Christ on the cross, or bridge the distance that lies between the lowest hell due to my sin and the throne of God, where He has seated Him who now measures my nearness to Himself, even as He measured my distance when on the cross. H. H. M.

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LUKE xiv. 15—33.

THE parable we have read was spoken in reply to one of the company who said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Then the Lord set forth, under the figure of a great supper, the greatness of what God has provided. It is a great thing for us to get hold of and understand, in some measure at least, the goodness of God, and that which His heart has provided for us.

What is here put before us by the Lord is not a *purpose* in God's heart ; it is what He has already *accomplished*, and accomplished by the one who alone could accomplish it ; and therefore, all that remains for us, is to take possession of it and to enjoy it. But in order to enjoy a thing there is something more needed than the mere possession of it. Many a man has property who has not health, and of what avail is his property to him then ? You need health in order to enjoy what is given you.

Now it is most important that I should know the things that are in the heart of God for me. He had a purpose to bring me into a wondrous place, and that purpose He has accomplished in His Son. Just as in the case of the children of Israel, He says to Moses, Bring my people out of Egypt into the land of Canaan. His purpose was to bring them into the land, and that purpose was *accomplished*. There were difficulties and dangers by the way, and failures too, but God's purpose was accomplished. We have not only to get out

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of Egypt, there is a land for us to enter and to take possession of ; a house prepared by the Father to which He calls us ; a feast to which He has bidden us.

Have you understood anything of the love that is in His heart? The Lord sets it forth in this chapter as a feast ; in the next chapter He shows how the guest is fitted for the feast. He tells us out the Father's heart—how He feels about us. It is not the prodigal's feelings ; it is the Father's feelings about the prodigal coming home. God there says, I am a Father who will receive you when you come back to me, and whose heart will rejoice to welcome you. There is one Man who has told us of the Father's heart. He was the only one who could, for He was the only one who knew it—the Son of God. And He was the only one who ever knew the enormity of my offence against God—the sin that had put me at such a distance from God—and He bore it. I do not know the measure of my sin, and therefore I cannot pay the penalty it incurred ; but that One knew it, and He paid it ; and He also knew what none other man ever knew, even the love that is in the Father's heart ; and that love He declares.

Thus the first thing that comes out is the purpose of God : God makes a feast. The Lord introduces you here to the Father's thoughts and counsels for you. One of the company says, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." That was nothing in comparison to what the Lord had to tell, and He answers, "There was a certain man who made a *great supper*."

But, before speaking of this supper, I should

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like to say a word about the guest. In the next chapter you get three things about him. He is first kissed ; next robed ; and then feasted. Now without this revelation of the Father's heart we never could have known what the Father's love is. Could philosophy teach it to us? The present race of philosophers are the most contemptible because they borrow from this Book and deny the Author of it. The old philosophers never got beyond benevolence because they had not this Book to reveal love to them. Love delights in the one it serves. This I get in the fifteenth of Luke in the wonderful way in which it unfolds the Father. The prodigal is first kissed by Him ; next robed ; and then feasted. A kiss is the intimation of affection on the part of him who gives it. The heart of God, which was denied by Satan and doubted by man in the garden of Eden, is the first thing He brings out. The first impression of having to do *with* God is what Scripture calls a kiss, though grace had already worked in him. The second thing is the robe ; "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." And notice that, as soon as the robe is on, he is in the Father's house, though he was "a great way off" when it was brought to him. This robe is what fits him to enter the house ; it is the new nature. The moment you have the nature you are qualified to enter. The word is, "*Bring forth* the best robe." You do not say bring *forth* a thing when you are inside a house ; you must be outside if anything is to be brought *forth* to you. But now that they are *inside*, it is "Bring *hither* the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry." When they were outside it was "bring forth ;" now that they

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are inside it is "bring hither." He has brought us inside. He has made us "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." There is not a saint on earth who is not fit for heaven; but there is not one who is perfectly fit for earth. The only one who was fit for earth was the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the Son of man who is in heaven. You are left here *heavenly* men upon the earth; there is no provision made for your being *earthly* ones. That is the marvellous place you are put in; you cannot understand what it is to be fit for earth until you have been to heaven.

Now this great supper is not a *future* entertainment, any more than the Father's house in chapter fifteen is a *future* heaven. It introduces you into that wonderful scene which is typified in the Old Testament Scriptures by "the holiest." You cannot worship anywhere else, and that is what we are brought to now. Mark! *now*—not by-and-bye. We are brought *now* by God into a position which is altogether beyond nature.

In the second of the first of Corinthians we read, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." The point here is to show the Corinthians that they were *above nature*. A man that acts *below nature* is a

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monster. But here you are *above* nature. You are on a higher level than that which is naturally your own, just as a man on horseback is above his own level and power. Do you say to me, See what lovely things ! How the eye rejoices in them ! —Well, I say, so it does, and there is nothing wrong in an eye ; but still “Eye hath not seen.”—Do you say, Listen to those sweet sounds ! did you ever hear anything more lovely ? How the ear rejoices in them !—I say, so it does, and there is nothing wrong in an ear ; but still “Ear hath not heard.”—Do you say, Look at the wonderful feelings of the heart ? What sensitiveness ! what refinement ! what delicacy !—I say, so it has ; the heart does feel wonderfully ; but still it has “not entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for those that love him.” This is what we find in Isaiah ; he says it is a hidden thing ; man has not seen it, heard it, or conceived it.

Well now, what is heaven ? Oh ! you say, we do not know. We believe it is something very grand, but we **do not** know what it is like. Then you have not got beyond Isaiah if you do not know what heaven is like ; “what God has prepared” is not a hidden thing to us. “God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” That is the Great Supper ; but none of our natural powers can enter into it.

It is an immense thing for the heart to get into this place. The Lord, speaking of the children of Israel, said, that He was “come to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, to bring them unto a good land, and a large.” And, speaking of His people now, He says that He has revealed all these good things unto us by

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His Spirit. If you say, We believe we shall have it all by-and-bye, that implies you have not got it *now*. The *first* thing the sinner meets with now is the mercy-seat. It was the first thing that Moses was told to make, but the Jew never could get to it ; it was hidden in the holiest. But, “we have *boldness to enter into the holiest* by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.”

Have you ever entered the holiest ? Has your heart ever entered that wondrous scene ? “By a new and living way through the veil, that is to say, his flesh”—that is what you are to pass through. And, having entered, there you eat of “the old corn of the land—” there feed on Christ at the Father’s right hand in glory. Is that what you are doing ? or is all that only future to you ? Is that union with Him there to be by-and-bye ? Oh, it is an immense thing to know that it is *now* ! It makes you superior to everything ! See the seventy-third Psalm. There the prophet was cast down, troubled, perplexed ; he could not understand God’s dealings. But when once he gets into that scene how differently he views everything ; there is no more perplexity for him now, no more dissatisfaction ; he says, “When I went into the sanctuary, *then* understood I.”

Even in natural things what a different effect is produced upon us by an object according to the level from which we look at it—whether we see it from above or from beneath. And you cannot be on both at the same time ; you must keep either to one level or the other. The apostle says, “What man knoweth the things of a man, *save*

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the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we *have received the Spirit which is of God*, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Thus what God has done is, He has brought in another power. He has revealed these things to me, and given me the power to understand them. He says, By the Spirit of God I can unite you to the One who sits at my right hand ; I can bring you into association with Him up there. Do you say, I do not think I ever have enjoyed what you speak of? Well, if you have not, it is a good thing to be awakened to find it out. All that I say is that "*all things are ready ; come to the supper.*" It is not you that have to *make* them ready.

Now Satan has a device to hinder souls getting to this supper. And I would say he will let you go through the world pretty fairly if you do not aim at the *top* of the ladder ; he brings all his guns to bear on the top, if he finds you are set for that. It is not at the first round of the ladder that he aims ; it is at your *hands* that he strikes, not at your *feet*. If he struck away the round you are standing on, you might hang on by your hands, but if he strikes away what you are holding to with your hands, you can make no progress. It is the highest point of truth you have that he aims at. It is the most advanced bit of truth that any person in this room holds that he will let go the first when he begins to let anything go. We find throughout Scripture that Satan has always aimed at the highest truth that was held at any given time.

The device that is now current in Christendom to hinder souls getting to the supper is the thought

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that they will *get* heaven when they die. Now, this is not true. I shall *be* in heaven when I die, that is true enough ; but, as to position, I *am* in heaven now. But if you say I shall *get* heaven when I die, then you imply that you have not *got* it *now* ; and that it is the *earth* you have got now. That is Satan's device. He puts heaven in the future, and presents earth to you now. The wine is red, and, as you look upon it, it deceives you.

Tell me is there any Spirit of God ? And, if there is, what does He reveal to you ? Where is Jesus ? In heaven, you say. And do you never get there ? do you never get to Him ? Surely I am made acquainted by the Spirit of God with Christ where He is *now*. By the Spirit I am brought into heavenly places. Our translators have made it "*heavenly things*," but it is really "*heavenly places*." And from these heavenly places I am to come down and act on earth as a heavenly man ; Christ imparts power to me from above so that I may thus walk, and my heavenly walk sets forth God's own glory. I am a heavenly man on earth. Is it a question what I am to do ? I am responsible for nothing but to come in as Christ was upon the scene, and not as a mere man.

If you say we shall get heaven by-and-bye, that puts off heaven till you die. Are you never there now ? People confuse going to heaven with eternal life. Eternal life is that I have the capacity *now* to enjoy the things of God, and, because I have it, I pass into a scene where I can eat the old corn of the land ; where I find perfection, quietness, satisfaction, Christ Himself. I dwell where I can enjoy

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Him, where, by "beholding the glory of the Lord," I am "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Do not let any one here say it is too much. God, in His grace, has come in and ended the history of man in the flesh, in the cross, and now by the Spirit I am brought into association with His Son at His own right hand in heaven. Christ wins my heart in humiliation ; He satisfies it in glory. A won heart is not necessarily a *satisfied* heart. But I believe if a heart is truly won by Christ it never will be satisfied without Him. No heart that is won is ever satisfied but in the company of the one who won it. Absence does not "make the heart grow fonder !" You only discover in absence what you have gained in presence.

God's thought is to bring me into the best—into the highest—place. Paul was taken up into heaven on purpose that he might come down and show us into it, just like a servant to show us through the different rooms of a house. Look at the queen of Sheba ; "there was no more spirit in her ;" she was lost in the surroundings of king Solomon. Were you ever lost in the things of Christ? Were you ever in an ecstasy? Do you think if people were in an ecstasy to God they would be so taken up with things down here? It is true I have to be occupied here, but is it as one who *comes out* from heaven to do duty for Christ? There is a great difference between a man working in an office and that same man at home. Have you ever seen one glimpse of heaven? If you have it will have thrown earth into the shade. The more you look closely at man's things the more you will find out their defects ; take a microscope

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and see what the finest things of man's manufacture will look under it. But the more you subject to examination anything of God's, the more beautiful, the more wonderful, and the more symmetrical it will appear. Now God has brought man into His own heavenly scene, but man could never take it in. To begin, there are numbers of saints who have not got hold of the power that can keep them separate from the world. It is not a question of thus merely coming out of Egypt : we are to "go in and possess the land."

I will just turn for a moment to the tenth chapter, that we may look at the earthly side of this. Here we find the parable of the man who fell among thieves. We are upon earth evidently ; here there is a "neighbour ;" you do not want a neighbour in heaven. Now there are three things connected with this neighbour. First, he pours in oil and wine. We are poor, helpless things, full of wounds, half dead ; that is the only attraction we have. But misery is an attractive thing to grace ; that is a great comfort to a poor soul. Man meets a miserable creature in the street, and he shrinks from him ; but never did a poor creature meet Christ in the street that He was not attracted to him.

The second thing in the parable is something entirely new to man—something he never had before. "He set him on his own beast." This is a very difficult thing for man to accept ; there is nothing so difficult as to induce a man to leave his own legs for the power of Christ. Everyone likes to have wine and oil poured into his wounds, but the many do not like to go farther than that. Not so Paul. He had a power outside of himself ;

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he says, "I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me, for when I am weak, then am I strong." No one minds a difficulty, when there is power to meet it. You see a woman standing by the side of a street, wanting to cross, but not daring to do it. A policeman comes and takes hold of her arm, and at once she goes straight across without any fear ; and yet there is just as much difficulty as there was before ; the difficulty is there just as much when the policeman is with her as it was before he came. What then is the difference ? She is trusting in his power to take her across. A difficulty is no difficulty when there is power to meet it. "He set him on his own beast." But, that is not what saints want. They would like the Lord to make them prosperous on the earth—to help them along on their own legs. But that is not what He does. "He set him on his own beast."

Then thirdly, "He brought him to an inn." Now an inn is a place for strangers. People *try* to be strangers, which just proves they are *not* strangers. For instance, John the Baptist had to eat peculiar food, and dress in a strange way to show the Jews that he was a stranger amongst them ; and this showed that he was not really a stranger. The Lord has put me on His own beast, and brought me to an inn, and that is my place on earth, I have no other. That is the earthly side : "strangers and pilgrims." The fifteenth chapter is the heavenly side ; and in the fourteenth, we get it as the feast.

Oh, you say, but none of us would refuse the Great Supper ! The Lord says "*They all with one consent began to make excuse.*"

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Now mark! It is not *sin* that refuses the supper—it is *nature*. Nature has got something that satisfies itself. There is no sin in any of the reasons given as excuses for refusing the invitation. There is nothing wrong in a person buying a piece of ground; on the contrary, it is one of the strongest instincts in our nature to own land. “The earth hath he given to the children of men;” there is nothing more attractive to man; you never knew a man yet that did not like a bit of land. There is no sin in it; but it is nature; and nature cannot rise to the Great Supper.

The next buys “a yoke of oxen.” You see this is in advance; he has the land, and now he wants to cultivate it. And the third marries a wife, and therefore he cannot come. He wants to settle down and make himself happy in his own home. Is there anything *wrong* in that? No, nothing. But they refused the supper.

Then the Lord turns round to the multitudes and says, Nature will not do; every relation in life must be taken up in a new way if you are going to follow me. The tree, *i.e.* yourself, will be in the same place that it was before; the leaves of it withered often, and the sap was often not there; but now there is a new nature put into it, and the leaves may never wither, and the sap should be ever flowing in its branches. Such is the wonderful elevation to which I am brought, that in all my earthly relationships I derive grace from Christ, and am in them to His glory. God sets me in every relation in keeping with this place which He has given me in Christ.

Love in nature is not the point: it is sure to fail when put to the test. A mother loves her

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child, and yet when it is peevish and cross, she may get cross too. The Lord says, If you do not take up these relationships in grace, you will never be able to finish the tower, or to meet the enemy. The tower is defensive to *arrest* an attack ; the army is aggressive, to *make* an attack ; you will not be equal for either, unless you have a power outside nature. If you are not superior to all natural ties—"If any man come to me, and hate not father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he *cannot be my disciple*."

I am in the same place that I was, but I am only used there now by Christ. Christ's cross sets me free as I bear it and go after Him, a slave to Him on the earth. Saints often think that unless they are doing something very great, that they are not serving the Lord at all. It is often said, "Mary has chosen the *better* part," as if there were *two* parts. There never was but one part, and Mary chose "the *good* part ;" the other part was the invention of Martha's own heart, and not from Christ. She judged from her own feelings that a tired traveller would like refreshment ; she had studied her own thoughts more than the Lord's. But Mary knew His heart, so she sat at His feet and heard His word. This is what is lacking in service now ; this is where lies our real difficulty as to pleasing Christ ; we need His mind to know what He would have us do, so as not to be going after our own thoughts. What we labour for is, that "whether present or absent, we may be well pleasing to Him."

In conclusion, I would say that the higher you go, the more is man exposed to you. No amount

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of actual conversance with the things of God will do ; but once get into the holiest, into the presence of God Himself, and you will get a sight of man's moral state that will almost shock you. The Lord grant that each beloved child of God may be encouraged to press forward ; as the Lord said to Paul, " Be of good courage," and to Joshua, " Go in and possess the land."

" MY GROANING IS NOT HID FROM THEE."—
A groan to *God*, however deep the misery, however prostrate the spirit, however unconscious that we are heard, is always received above as the intercession of the Spirit, and answered according to the perfectness of God's purpose concerning us in Christ ; therefore the charge is, " Ye have not cried unto *Me* when ye howled upon your beds : " and there is no consequence of sin which is beyond the reach of this groaning to God, nothing indeed but the self-will which will not groan to Him at all.

This is a blessed thought ! Such is our intercourse with God in joy and in sorrow ; and I doubt not that in us poor blessed creatures, that the truest, the most blessed (what will shine most when all things shine before God), are these groans to Him ; they cannot, indeed, be in their fulness, but where the knowledge of the glory of blessing is. I can see them precede the greatest works and words of Jesus. The sense of the wilderness, taken into His heart, made but the streams which could refresh it flow forth in the sympathy of the Spirit which it called forth ; and now the Spirit is in us. (Ex. ii. 24. Acts vii. 34. John xi. 33—38. Rom. viii. 22, 23, 26. 2 Cor. v. 4.) J. N. D.

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By submitting to the Word, our consciences being seized by it, and our hearts running in the same current as God's through His lines of truth, it is marvellous the place our souls get into.

There are two lines which go straight through the cross. One is the consequence of the cruelty and wickedness of man, actuated by Satan ; the other, of the wrath of God.

The Jews reject their own Messiah, but He does not give them up because they do so ; on the contrary, He takes in grace, (voluntarily on His part of course) the very place which they are in, in consequence of their rejection of Him. And thus, God's governmental wrath, due to them, is entered into and felt by Him. It is not substitutional : for others can be with Him in it, as scriptures declare. (Ps. xc. 7—9 ; Isaiah lxiii. 9.) This governmental anger of God goes on right through the cross, even whilst atonement is made ; but atonement is another thing altogether, and in that, as we know, He must stand alone.

Before entering further into this most wonderful and solemn subject, I would say that there must be no curiosity in looking at it. Fifty thousand and seventy of the men of Bethshemesh were smitten because they had looked into the ark of the Lord—a type of Christ. The shoes must be off the feet. When there is curiosity the brain is at work. It is intellect, and not the Spirit of God which is guiding, and if we yield to it, we shall bring sorrow upon ourselves. The shoes must be off when we come to the things of God, especially upon such a subject as this, where it is

Himself and the full revelation of what He is when evil had come in, that is in question.

In order to combat God's enemies successfully I must know Himself, and Himself in the beloved Son, who has gotten the victory over mine. We see in Joshua that it requires the same holiness to fight the Lord's battles as was needed in the working out of redemption. He had to stand as much unshod before the Captain of the Lord's host, as Moses had to do in the presence of the burning bush, where God was revealing Himself as a God of grace without setting aside His holiness in doing so: for grace never contradicts righteousness; and, as has been said, "God never belies His nature to carry out His purposes." It is the knowledge of what He is that gives boldness in the presence of His enemies. May the Lord deliver us from every element that savours of insubjection to His blessed word! For *it* is sufficient for us, let men say what they like.

We find then from Scripture (Heb. ii. 18), that Christ acquired a capacity down here which enables Him, in a special way, to sympathise with His people now, and there is not a sorrow you may be called to pass through for His sake which has not got an echo in His blessed heart. Moreover, the experiences into which He entered here, will enable Him in a very special manner to sympathise with the suffering remnant of the Jews in their day of unparalleled trial. And it is only as we now learn, by faith in the Word, to understand this, that we ourselves shall have capacity to enter into it with Him then.

It has been often noticed, that wherever others are associated with Christ in His sufferings there

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is no atonement. A child can understand this. In the sixty-ninth Psalm we read: "They talk to the grief of *those* whom thou hast wounded;" this makes it evident that atonement is not in question, for others never could have been associated with Him in that. He said to Peter: "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards:" which means, when Christ had exhausted the waters of judgment then Peter should follow Him dry-shod. Christ has put death as divine judgment and the wrath of God behind Himself for us; therefore death as judgment, and the wrath of God, are as much behind us as they are behind Him.

But there is another kind of agony which, clearly, He had not entered into until His "hour" had come—an agony produced by Satan's coming to press upon Him the cross with all its deep meaning, and by His entering into a place where His people were, and in which they could be associated with Him, according to their measure—a measure, of course, which could not be compared with His. For instance: "Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." The thought in Heb. v. 7, synchronises with this: "Who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him out of death," &c. From death is not a correct translation. It is *through*, or *out of* death. God could not save both Him *and* us *from* death. Indeed, personally, He needed no salvation from it, not being liable to it; but it was only by His going *through* it that we could escape from it.

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I know it has been said, that others could not be associated with Him in the sorrows we are now contemplating. But I ask : Do not undelivered souls fear judgment? Will not the Jewish saints in a future day fear judgment and escape it, because He did not? Are not saints said to be under the wrath of God in the ninetyeth Psalm, seventh and ninth verses. Are they making atonement? Why the thought were monstrous.

But let us turn to the garden. Satan having departed from Him for a season now returns. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." He presses the cup upon Him—the cup of death as the judgment of God, which he held in his power (Heb. ii. 14) by God's original sentence : for, if God had deprived Satan of the power of death, He would have annulled His own sentence. But Christ endures. He refuses the attractions in the wilderness : He endures the terrors in the garden.

Moreover He will receive it from no second cause. He rises up to His Father's purpose and says : "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done." His being put to the test only brings out His dependence more and more. He takes the cup from His Father's hand, and never gets under the power of Satan—no, not at any time—either throughout His life or on the cross. He was always superior to the enemy ; the more he presses the cup upon Him, the more closely he presses Him to His Father.

But shrink before it He did ; His blessed heart quivered before the thought of the wrath of God. Not to fear it would have been insensibility. "He

was heard in that he feared." He was "sore amazed," or "affrighted," as the word is translated elsewhere. (Mark xvi. 5.) He deprecated that awful cup. In Mark's gospel, where He is the servant, He does not qualify His request. He prays, "Take away this cup from me." But then He adds: "Nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." And the power that He can exercise in subjection to God is always there: He touched the servant's ear and healed it; but He will only use His power the more to show His perfect subjection and obedience. This sorrow of His soul was not inflicted judgment. It was the place into which His people had brought themselves through rejecting Jehovah Messiah, and into which He, their King, entered with them instead of giving them up.

We read in Zechariah; "Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." The smiting of God, though exclusively confined to the cross, as to the literal act, was felt by the Lord Jesus before He came to it. The actual smiting had not taken place, but the sense of it was present to Him; and for Scripture language it was there. He felt it so keenly that, in a sense, it was to Him as though it had been done. He says it is as good as done, for I am going on to it; and He quotes the Scripture which affirms it. The blessed Lord Jesus was no hero. A brave man amongst men would go up to the cannon's mouth, just because of his folly: it would be mere animal courage—want of capacity to appreciate the results—want of forethought. The blessed Lord Jesus knew all that He was going into, and "He feared;" He was "affrighted." Think of Him

prostrate on the ground, His sweat as it were great drops of blood. An angel was sent from heaven to strengthen Him; but only for another conflict.

Now whom am I learning in that weak Man? The God upon whose love I rest!

Look at the heart of the Lord Jesus in the midst of such agony. Does He forget one of His own? Not one. See His love to them. "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations." There is not one single thing which He can record in our favour that He will forget to do. If you could only go behind your own back so to speak, and hear your blessed Saviour speak of you—even of a cup of cold water given in His name—your heart would be so broken that you never would say another word in your own favour again. It was when Peter meant his best he found out what a wretched heart he had; it was only when he did his worst he found out what a blessed heart Christ had. If I do something discreditable to Him, and I get a look into His heart through the cross, and His eye looks into mine by the Word, how it breaks to pieces! I am not to make excuses for myself; only leave Him to intercede; and let me take the place of hating self. If ever I find an idle thought seeking to get in, a bit of self importance—a thought of getting a place beyond another—and I run to God to take refuge from self, what a safe place I am in! How blessed it is for me if I thus learn sin in communion with Himself which stops it from acting, instead of letting it come out and having to learn it in company with the devil, as Peter had to do.

If sorrow comes in and gets between me and

Him—for we are but poor things—well, He will feel *for* me in the sorrow, and sympathise *with* me when in a right mind about it ; and the very fact of my counting upon His sympathy will prevent the sorrow from getting between me and Himself.

Now turn to the hundred and second Psalm. The commentary which the Holy Ghost gives on this psalm lets us into a wonderful understanding of the sufferings of Him to whom it refers. The first chapter of the Hebrews tells us that the speakers there are the Father and the Son. In the tenth verse of this chapter the Father is said to speak to the Son, as well also as in the eighth verse, which is quoted from the forty fifth psalm. Let us look at the circumstances into which the Son had entered, and which gave occasion for the Father thus to reply and speak, and we shall find this brings us to the garden again.

From the first to the eighth verse of this psalm we find the Lord in the circumstances of a peculiarly solitary man. In the eighth verse the enemies are alluded to ; in the tenth verse we find that He who had been raised up as Messiah was now cast down ; that is, He will take no casting down from any other hand than His Father's, although done by His enemies : and thus Satan failed to get any power over Him. In absolute self-surrender to the will of His Father He gives up everything Himself. If He had said, you are Satan and I am God, which would have been quite true, and had cast him into the abyss, you and I were lost. If you put your foot on a viper, or crush a wasp, that is no conflict. Instead of destroying the enemy on that occasion, He gave

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Himself as the victim, that a victory might be for us, in the value of which God could come out in perfect righteousness, and take us for His own peculiar treasure according to the eternal purpose of His blessed heart.

From the twelfth verse to the end of the twenty-second verse forms a parenthesis, a prophecy of events to take place because Jehovah abides for ever, and because His promises cannot fail, although Messiah be cut off. He who was entitled to everything by birth as a man, born King of the Jews—a nation that ought to have governed the world—has now to face the most shameful gibbet. He meets indignation and wrath, “Because of thine indignation and thy wrath.” Lifted up as Messiah He is now cast down. He prays, is in conflict; He deprecates death; His only resource is prayer.

And now we get the answer. “Of old thou hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art thyself” (or the same) “and thy years shall have no end.” The Father says you are the Creator; you are Jehovah yourself; “Thy throne, O God.”

There is the Father's answer to the Son. Is there any difficulty in that? None whatever. Faith receives it; faith believes it; just as faith receives atonement. It requires faith as much for the former as it does for the latter; and that is where people go astray, because they dream of an imaginary brain-competency to fathom this

divine mystery. But oh! when the heart looks at this revelation, it is arrested; it worships without effort; and it adores Him now not only for what He has done, but for what He is in Himself.

We now turn to the cross, in the twenty-second Psalm. Let me point out a characteristic of this psalm before entering into it. Our blessed Lord now stands alone. He is neither heard nor answered. It is not a question here of His entering into a place where others were; but of His bearing and exhausting the inflicted wrath of God where none could be associated with Him, and from under which no one but the Man—God's fellow—could ever come.

The first verses prove Him to be the Son of God. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night-season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

As we contemplate this great sight, let us never forget that it was you and I who brought the Son of God into that furnace of judgment heated seventy times seven.

There was nothing evil that was not there. Sin, death in its horrors, the judgment of God in its terrors, the hatred of devils, the malice and wickedness of man, and our sins also were all there; yes, all, *all*, were there. The judgment of God was lending its force to all the accumulated sorrows which man and devils heaped upon that holy Victim. There was nothing which

man's cruelty and Satan's power could do, that was not done: nothing that God could do in judgment to express His abhorrence of sin that was not done. What a sight! Was it you and I that cost our blessed Master all that? Yes, it was; it was you and I. As a loved saint once said, "There is not a sin of mine which was not a nail in the Person, or a thorn in the brow of the Son of God."

But what else was there? Everything that is good was there. Mercy to sinners; love to the lost; perfect grace; the triumph of good over evil, of light over darkness, of God over Satan were all there. All that God is, His unfolded heart, and the holiness of His nature, were revealed in a *Man* whose perfect obedience rose higher than divine judgment.

Can you form any idea of God's estimate of that obedience? Indeed, you cannot. Well, that is the measure of your acceptance by God.

But further, when our blessed Lord was forsaken of God, did God cease to inhabit the praises of Israel? And who was God's Israel on that occasion? The language of Scripture in giving the expression of Christ's heart at that fearful moment is: "O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." Now the nation was in apostacy; the disciples had all forsaken Him and fled. Who then was this Israel, the praises of whom God was inhabiting? The forty-ninth of Isaiah tells me who God's true Israel was. There we read of Christ: "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

People think that One forsaken of God could not serve in subjection, suffer in subjection, and

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vindicate God in manifesting all that He is when evil had come in. That is just the thought of their foolish mind. But it only and clearly proves who He was; for there is no place where Christ so conspicuously showed Himself to be a divine Person as on the Cross. If He had been less, He must have succumbed. A mere creature forsaken of God would be nothing but a demon. How could a mere man stand alone at such a time by His own power? But *He* was abandoned by God, and who then sustained *Him*?

There is a beautiful scripture which always answers this question for me: "No man knoweth who the Son is but the Father." Here we get the inscrutability of Godhead and manhood in one Person, which must necessarily be beyond the capacity of a creature, else he would be more than a creature; he would be the Creator. But the verse continues: "and who the Father is but the Son, *and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.*" May He never have to say to us as He had to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father!"

As saints of God, we must be on a certain standpoint to get right views of the cross, the like of which there is nothing elsewhere, not even in the glory, save the heart of Him who bled on it. Now this standpoint is looking back in communion with the Father about that Son, in conscious identity with Christ as to acceptance. There we learn to adore Him, and to hate self which caused that agony *unknown*, save to Himself. That hymn, "The half has not been told us," means that I have not intelligence to

understand the half; but it has all been told us. Yes, *all, all*, has been told.

What do you think of that little spot Calvary? What of this little world, which when compared with the universe is as a drop of water to the ocean? People have not eyes to see that on that cross the heart of God has been revealed; the triumph of good over evil has been established; and the whole strength of the enemy has been broken. The extent of that which is material bears no comparison to the solution of all moral principles. The village of Waterloo was amongst the smallest on the continent of Europe; but at that village the fate of Europe was decided, and it became the most important of any. At the cross all that God Himself is has been revealed when evil had come in: all that Satan is has been unmasked; and all that rebel man is has been brought out, and put away for the believer. It is there I see my judicial end. Woe be to him that refuses it! for the Lord has said, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

One glance more at the twenty-second Psalm. The first half is subdivided into seven. From the first verse to the sixth, expresses the Lord's feelings when forsaken. From the sixth to the eleventh, the reproach of men, and His dependence from His birth up to that time. Twelfth and thirteenth verses, bulls beset Him; that is, the religious nation—the religion of the first man. Fourteenth and fifteenth verses, you get His extreme weakness. There was none ever felt weakness like the Son of God—"poured out like water, all my bones out of joint."

Take a weak child that never knew strength; such does not know what it is to feel weakness. Take a strong man who has all his life been able to do feats of strength, and lay him low. He will know something, at least, of what weakness is. But what about *Him* who never was less than the One who humbled himself to become a man? I ask what must it have been for Him, by whom the whole universe is upheld to say, "My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels?"—"He was crucified through *weakness*."

Do I understand it—God and man in one Person? If the finite could reach the infinite there would be neither the one nor the other. Do I doubt it? No. And, as to our fathoming such a mystery, it is our highest delight that it is beyond and above us; for a confiding loving heart always delights to see in the Lord Jesus what we are not.

"*Thou* has brought me into the dust of death." He will take nothing from any other hand than God's. I know nothing more simple—nothing more soul absorbing—than that Christ will bear everything without a murmur, but receive nothing from any second cause. "Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above."—From the sixteenth to the twentieth verse we get the gentile dogs. Here you and I come in; but thank God we are delivered. Roman soldiers combine against Him. Now they are gambling; that is man. In presence of the deepest agony ever known, they are gambling for His clothes. Will He move one finger for Himself? Not one.

In the twenty-first verse, we get the lion's mouth; that is Satan himself—the adversary in all his hatred to God, and his ability to express it against His beloved Son. Lastly, you get the horns of the unicorns, the agonies of death itself, from which He is heard having made atonement, and glorified God about sin.

He bows His head, and says, "Father"; He never said Father during the three hours of darkness. He then addressed Him as God, which we never read of his doing all through His life. What a sight for angels to behold, but specially for men!

There never was a time when the Father's complacency in the Son was greater than when the obedience of Jesus rose higher than the wrath of God. And I do believe the happiest moment of our blessed Lord's course was when He said, "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit." He had put death as judgment and the wrath of God behind Himself for His beloved sheep, and therefore as much behind us, as they are behind Him. And the same righteousness which put Him in the glory will put you and me there too; and not until then, will He see the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

But having suffered alone, will He praise alone? Indeed He will not, He must have you and me with Him *now*. In the twenty-second verse He says, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren," which is historically fulfilled in John xx. 17. "Go to my brethren." I want them to know we stand in a like relationship to the Father, now that the corn of wheat has fallen into the ground and died, and no longer abides alone.

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It is thus *I see God!* And we shall go and “declare that he hath done this.” That is what we shall do; and if there is anything that will make us ashamed of self-seeking it is *this*.

TELL me that this poor world hinders me, that the flesh hinders me, that Satan hinders me, I admit it; but that ought not to blind my eyes to what His mind and purpose ever was, and is: that He will bring us into this glory of Christ, and that He has wrought us for it already. Do not suppose for a moment that God does not mean you to have the joy of it. The moment I believe that Christ the Son of God has died for me on the cross, nothing is too great for me. The question is, What is *that* worth? People talk of presumption! There is nothing too great for me to expect in *Christ*. Do not let yourselves be persuaded that you cannot have the sense of what God gives. He would have us have “a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”

(J. N. D.)

ARISE, AND TAKE UP THY BED, AND WALK.

MARK ii. 1—12.

You will find there is a moral order in the miracles of the Lord as recorded in the opening of the Gospel by Mark. He meets man here according to his need, and therefore the first miracle spoken of is that in which He casts out an unclean spirit. The second is the fever ; that is the excitement of nature ; and the third is the leprosy—man's state by nature. He heals the leper. Of course *God* always had power over Satan, but here is a *Man* who has power over him ; He shows that He is able to meet every kind of evil from which man suffers at the hand of Satan. Leprosy is external defilement ; if a man speaks a bad word, it is leprosy ; it not only does himself harm, but it contaminates others. And next we come to the fourth—the palsy—the perfect helplessness of man ; and the man that is thoroughly helpless draws the most from God, for the great attraction for the grace of God is my need of that grace. So what is it that attracts the heart of Christ ? What was it that was attractive in the widow of Sarepta ? It was her sorrow. A poor widow gathering a few sticks to dress a last meal for herself and her son, and then going to die ! Christ ever desires to find a home in the widowed heart—in the desolate heart. Do you want to attract Christ to you ? What is there in you to attract Him ? Is it that you are great or beautiful ? No, but that you are powerless. See how the Syrophenician came to the Lord.

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She takes the lowest place to get a claim on Him ; she says, I am content to be a dog if only I may have a crumb. Then, He says, you have got a claim, and more than one ; *great* is thy faith !

Here we get a case of utter powerlessness ; a palsied man ; so a new principle comes in that is not mentioned in the previous miracles, and that is faith. Where one can do nothing—where there is least power,—there there is most faith. “It is of grace that it might be by faith.” The thief on the cross is a wonderful sample of faith to us ; he recovers what was lost in the garden of Eden ; he is the first man who turned the corner in that way, so to speak ; he gained the power of God where the power of man had been lost.

So here with the palsied man. He has not a particle of power ; he cannot come to Christ himself, and the moment others attempt to bring him, they are hindered by the press ; but “when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was : and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.” There is nothing that will really stop faith ; faith wants to reach its object—an object outside itself. They want to get to a Person, and they find obstacles in the way, but faith is not hindered by obstacles ; it is like a river that is dammed ; it swells until it gets over the barrier.

There are two things I would now bring before you : first, what Christ does for a soul, and next, what a soul does for Christ : what is done *for* me, and what is done *in* me ; and I must not confound the two.

What is done *for* me is the first thing. The

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palsied man is laid before the Lord ; but He does not say a word about his palsy ; He says, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Why is this ? Because He comes out to meet the greatest enemies first ; it is not the palsy He is looking at ; and as to his sins, it is not one or two of them, nor three or four, but *all* ; when He accomplished the work He removed them *all*. If he had only removed twenty out of twenty-one, I should be lost for the one ; but it is "the forgiveness of *sins*," of *all* of them. And not for past sins only : as has been said by another, there is not a sin of ours, but has been committed since Christ died, so that we are in a poor position if He has not died for them all. I must see that He is the Person who has done away with *all* my sins ; He has not to die for my sin every time I commit one ; if He did not die for them before I committed them who is to die for them ?

God says, I will meet the case. It is plain we could not meet it ourselves. I may say to one of my children, You have broken this beautiful pane of glass, and you cannot mend it ; but I will repair it myself in a perfect way. It is just so between ourselves and God. We cannot meet our sins, but He has met them in a perfect way. Suppose a man owes me money and cannot pay it, and I say, You can never pay me this, so I will pay it myself ! It is thus that God has dealt with us. He has "laid help upon One that is mighty ;" He has taken away through Him the thing that offended His holy eye, so that He might have me in His presence for ever. And He cannot lose sight of the efficacy of what He has done ; I may lose sight of it, but *He* never can. God comes

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forth of His own self, and says he loves the world; Jesus says He takes away the sin of the world. "He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." I look to Him as I walk, and I say, The man on that side of the road ruined me; I belong to the Man on this side; so I turn my back upon the one, and I turn my face to the other—I turn my eyes to Him. One man is the man that ruined me; the other is the Man that has wrought deliverance, and therefore He says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." The lamb in the Levitical order only showed what God required; so Christ, as the Lamb of God, takes away the sin of the world; and, the moment a man has faith in Him, He rises to the height of grace, and says, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

Well but, says some one, I have committed a great many sins since I have been converted, and I do not doubt you have; but you have now to regard your sin as a child, and not as before, as a vagrant. As a child of God I say, when I sin, I have no right to have done such a thing as this—I repudiate it; I confess my sins, and then "He is faithful and just to forgive me my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness." "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins," and, "your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." Do you believe that God really ever spoke those words? God cannot impute sin to a believer. You may have a sense of having *committed* sin, but God will never lay it to your charge. When I sin what do I find? Why, that the moment I go into God's presence I am humbled, and have to confess it; but, as I do so,

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I say that God did away with it all at the cross. God says, you must get rid of all this black that is upon you. Like a naughty child I have gone down into the cellar and got myself soiled; but God says, You must come up out of that place and be made clean again—be made fitting to the place I have set you in.

And what a place that is! I am now a brother of the risen Man! (See John xx.) And I love to think how that I am more distinctly a brother to Christ than I am a brother to the old nature—the Adam nature in which I was born; I am more distinctly by divine power in the new creation than I am in the old. A new and more wonderful creation has been wrought in me—poor creature though I am in myself—than has been in the making of this world, this sky, these stars, which we all admire so much. In the new creation I am a *brother to the glorified Christ!* I never was a brother to Christ on earth. It was not until He was risen from the dead that He could say, “Go to my *brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” I am a brother to a risen Christ, and though I have belonged to the old man, the cross has broken me off from him and united me to this risen Man.

What I pray of you is, to keep your eye upon Him, for that is everything. Do you say, How am I to keep my eye on Him? I reply, Keep your eye off everything else and you will soon see Him. All depends on the eye of faith being kept on Him. How simple it is!

So far for the first part.

Now they raise the question, “Why doth this

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man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" And Jesus says, "Why reason ye these things in your heart? whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." Now comes out the power in us. And what I want you to see, beloved friends, is that you have nothing to say, or to do, as to the first of these two things, whilst you have everything to say to the second. People are continually confounding the two. God does the first entirely for you, but having done it, He does not leave you there; it is said, "The same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost;" He imparts a new power to you.

How shall I know when I have a new power? I will tell you. Whatever you are most singularly defective in in nature, there you will be most singularly superior in grace; in other words, *you will carry your bed*. In everything it is so. Here is a poor weak man who says he cannot do without his bed. Well then, that is the very thing he is to carry. Whatever you are notorious for in nature that is the very thing you will be the reverse of in grace. A man is covetous: he will become the very opposite in grace; he will be generous.

Christ is now in the place of power; He is at God's right hand, and He says, I am going to give you a power that shall enable you to show me forth in spite of all that is around you and within you to hinder it. But, you say, I am in the old

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creation!—I know you are ; but remember that the Head of the new creation is the Lord of the old. And if you have this power it will manifest itself most where there has been most carnality—most of the old man; there it will express itself most distinctly.

How do I learn my besetting sin? By seeing how the Lord watches me, by seeing how the Word touches me, and by seeing how the Lord exercises me. There is not a person who walks with the Lord but he finds out what is his bed—what is his weak point.

What does Christ want to do with you, beloved friends? what does He want to do with you upon earth? He wants that He Himself—Christ—may be seen in you. But there is that in you which hinders the expression of His grace. Now what will He do to get rid of this hindrance? He will bring in a power that will entirely overcome it—to such a degree that that man's body here upon the earth, which was the very soil in which all the seeds of Satan were sown to his cost—that body is to be the garden of the Lord ; it is to bring forth fruit for the Lord ; so that people may well say, "We never saw it on this fashion." It is a new point set forth in Christianity—that the body is the Lord's.

Look at the history of any saint walking with God, and you will see how, in grace, he becomes superior to what distinguished him in nature. If he be in nature an ambitious man then that is the very thing he will *not* be now, because that was what ministered to his infirmity—that is his bed. People say, I cannot do without reading light books, newspapers, and so on. I answer, that

is the very thing that ministers to your selfishness—to your nature—; and when you get power you will carry it. It is the very thing that you were most notorious for in nature as a man, that in grace you will be made most superior to; for now, instead of being under its power, you rise above it; instead of letting yourself down to it, you are superior to it—you carry your bed.

Just turn to Ephesians iv. 28. “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”

Now here is a case that is very remarkable. You see it is a very bad case. “Let him that stole steal *no more*”—that is where most people stop; and, in doing so, they make it only the law, and nothing more. But what will this divine power make of a thief? A thief is a *taker*; but grace makes him a *donor*. “Let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he”—may be able to support his family and take care of himself? Not a bit! but, “that he may have to give to him that needeth.”

I can bring you instances enough to show you that saints have been distinguished for the very thing in which by nature they failed. Take Peter. He was so active—always foremost in everything. He ends by being carried, and that too where in nature he would not like to go.

In Hebrews we have another example of grace making strong the very spot that was weak. We all know what Jacob was, a most grasping man, always looking out for the present, always thinking of himself. God took him up as the most

perverse of men just to show what grace can do. Here at the end of his life he is found leaning on his staff, a worshipper.—Now a worshipper is one whose heart is detained by the object that controls it—adoringly occupied with that one object. And he was not only worshipping—occupied with another instead of himself; but he was also blessing the sons of Joseph—thinking of things future instead of planning for the present. And thirdly, to complete the picture, we find in Genesis what we do not get in Hebrews, that, when he looks at himself, all that he can say is: “As for me, *Rachel died* by me in the way.” He says, I can bless *you* as to the future, but, as for me, the whole scene is a blank here; death has cast its pall upon it.

He is brought out at the close of his life to show how grace has turned him right round, and made him the very opposite of all for which he was notorious as a man. He was thinking of others; he was not moping, though all was a blank; *Rachel died* by the way. All is the very reverse of what it was. Is this the Jacob we used to know? Yes, indeed! he is carrying his bed!

We make so little of divine power. People often indeed go on just the same after they are in Christ as they used to do before. But a *Christian* is a man who is exemplifying a Man who is in heaven, whilst he himself is on earth. And I cannot do this—I cannot learn Christ here upon earth, but as I know Him where He is. As the apostle says: “To me to live is *Christ*.” That is not a man of whom men can say, Oh, that is a very nice man; Christianity has improved him—lent a burnish to him—a polish to him. It

is not that at all. But Christianity has turned him right round—made a new man of him altogether. That is what divine power is: not to make him a good man, but to make him like Christ. People are all for humanizing Christ, and Christianizing men, and there is nothing I fear more for saints than that. To humanize Christ is to bring Him down to man's level; and to Christianize a man is to make a good man of him.

I am sure I say it humbly, that I often do not know how Christ would do a certain thing. I often think and know how a man—and how a *nice* man would do something; but the thing is how would *Christ* do it? It is easy to find out how a man would like a thing done? If I say, How would *people* like this to be done? I am going wrong. *That* is not the way to do it. The question is, How would Christ like it done? It is another order of things altogether. I feel for my own part how ignorant I am about it, but I am glad to say I *think* about it, and am *exercised* about it.

If I am to have power, I must know a glorified Christ seated in heaven at the right hand of God. What would that make me? Why it would make me *like Christ*. It is as plain as can be to me; I am carrying it out very little, but the fact is plain, that divine power would give me that divine shape, that divine attitude, that divine conduct, that would be His if He were standing in the very place in which I now am. Therefore the apostle says: "Christ shall be magnified in my *body*."

There are two parts in Christianity. First

there is the Deliverer; He brings you to God through His own work on the cross. And second, being delivered, you are to be like the Person who delivered you; you are to be the expositor of the One you belong to. You are to express nothing of yourself; you are a thorn in the hedge, but a thorn that is to bear a rose. I am in myself but a briar in a hedge, but I have been engrafted; and the consequence is I bear what is not natural to me, a rose; and thus, though my stem is but a briar, the fragrance that I shed around, is that of a rose of Sharon.

Divine power is to be manifested in the one who is absolved from his sins—in the one to whom it has been said: “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” The man that is naturally avaricious, when grace works in him, will cease to amass for himself, and will end by being a giver. The man who is ambitious will be brought down in every direction. The Lord will *not* let a man glory in flesh.

May the Lord in His grace make it plain to your hearts, first, that Christ’s bloodshedding washes you completely before a holy God, from everything that could rise up against you;—and God has never lost His satisfaction in Christ, and never can lose it, and therefore He can never lose His satisfaction in me who am in Christ. And secondly, that divine power has come in to make me much more marked with the power of Christ, than was even that man who carried his bed in Jerusalem. There is not one of you but has a bed; and the work of God is just hindered in you because *you will not carry it*.

This man was not to carry it about the streets

either ; he was to take it to his *house*. A Christian husband is to be a peculiarly good husband ; a Christian wife, to be a peculiarly good wife ; a Christian child, to be a peculiarly good child. It is at home that people always fail—it is in the inner circle that failure first comes in—because there they are off their guard.

As I have said, what I want the Lord in His mercy to keep before our hearts are these two things. One, what Christ has done for me—that He has removed everything by his own work that stood between God and me, so that nothing can ever come between Him and me again. And the other, that there is a power which can make you superior to everything in yourself.

I do not know what your bed is ; I know very well what mine is ; and God says, I will crush it, snap it, do *anything* to it to put it down ; because it is every bit of it, the flesh in me, that hinders Christ from shining forth in me. The thing here is not to get Christ *in* to me, though that must of course come first, but to get Christ *out* of me. *That* is the thing !

And “they were all amazed !” It *does* make people amazed to see Christ come out of such poor creatures—to see divine power act through such weakness. Christ says : The body is mine ; and now it is to grow beautiful flowers for me. Your very countenance is to shine ! Is it to be sorrowful ? No ! “ always rejoicing.”

The Lord lead you to see what this grace of God is—what this divine power. That is all that I desire. The power that wrought in Christ Himself is the very power that is working in me to bring me now to His image, to which I shall be conformed entirely when He appears.

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD.

WE are passing through a period which is very distinctly delineated in Scripture as "perilous times" of "the last days," and for which special instruction is vouchsafed. The rocks and shoals, with which the troubled waters of our time abound, are all divinely marked out for us in that epistle which faith recognizes as its special chart in days like these. The fulness and explicit nature of that revelation is most blessed; nothing is overlooked; the difficulties are neither magnified nor diminished; and the power and presence of God are held out to faith as its sufficiency when the darkness is at its height.

We find, in the second epistle of Timothy, most full and minute directions as to how the saints are to carry themselves. The path of the true hearted is through persecution, pressure, and trial; evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. One principle of immense importance is found in chap. ii, 19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having the seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.

Another is, that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be

perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works." chap. iii. 16.

Thus, while there is nothing but failure around, and confusion and evil are on the increase, the resources and provisional care of God are unfolded with a divine precision and accuracy not to be found outside the book of God.

Now it is plain that the servant of the Lord stands in need of peculiar qualities at all times; indeed nothing that has ever been written or conceived by man could over-rate, or magnify beyond its importance, the servant's place and path. And there never were times in which it was more needful to press that than the present, surrounded as we are by a double fallacy: on the one hand, men taking upon themselves, without any divine right or authority, to make others servants, thereby constituting them servants of men instead of ministers of God. On the other hand, those who in mercy have escaped this delusion, are themselves as ready to fall into another, and to suppose that everyone who is a saint is *ipso facto* a servant or minister of Jesus Christ.

Now it cannot be denied that, if saints are walking with God, He will give them something to do for Him, whereby, in communion with Himself, and by the power of His Spirit, they can serve Him; but this in no wise interferes with, or sets aside, the fact, that Christ, ascended on high into glory, gave *distinct* and *special* gifts to His church, enumerated in Ephesians iv. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, into the measure of the stature of the

fulness of Christ."

Now it is the qualities of the one who is called to be a servant that I am occupied with at this time. I suppose the nature of the day will very greatly indicate the needed graces ; and hence it is, I conclude, that, after the Spirit of God had foretold the storm that was then raging, and would rage with greater fury after the apostle's departure, He also specifies in *detail* certain qualities which would be indispensable in the servant of the Lord, who would in respect to these be tested to the uttermost.

Now this world has been the scene and platform of the perfect service of One who was *the* perfect Servant; the gospels, and especially that of Mark, record it. There we follow Him, and track His *patient* blessed footprints, passing through the earth a stranger, unnoticed and unknown ; but, more than that, despised and rejected by Israel, whose Messiah He was, and scorned and hated by poor man whom He came to serve. If we look at Him as Jehovah's servant, how the heart bows down and adores Him: "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen ; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased ; I will put my Spirit upon him ; he shall not strive, nor cry ; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets." Matt. xii. 18-19. Oh, what unobtrusive lowliness and meek retirement thus mark Him !

Again, when we consider Him amid the scenes of sorrow, scorn, and hatred, through which His love led Him ; His patience, His meekness, His gentleness, silent when accused, and unchanged even when denied by His own, breaking the heart of Peter by the tender look He cast upon

him; do you not wonder and adore in the presence of such qualities, with such drafts made upon them both by foes and friends? and is it not a satisfaction to your heart to retire from all else, and allow such a Servant as Jesus to fill the vision of your soul?

There is nothing that more marks everyone else but Himself, than *unevenness*; He, and He alone, was a stranger to such, not only in His manhood, but in that which is specially before us, His *service*. Who was *faithful* as He? and yet withal *tender* and *patient*. The combination of these qualities in Christ are most blessed; the fine flour mingled with oil shewed itself in His service, as in His nature. With us, alas! observe the contrast. Some are faithful and others are tender. But what God is looking for in these last times is a servant in his measure after the pattern of His own Son; and hence note that the qualities, or graces, by which the servant of the Lord is to be characterized, according to 2 Tim. ii., are those exactly which shone in perfection in Him who was the perfect Servant in the perfect Man; God, God over all, blessed for ever.

Now observe the qualities which are needed by a servant of the Lord. First of all, full and unhesitating courage and faithfulness. He was to be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." If everything has gone, and all have turned away, Christ remains unchanged. What a resource He is at all times, blessed be His name! And what force and power there is in an exhortation of this nature from one who himself could speak of how the Lord stood with

him, and strengthened him, when he was abandoned and forsaken by all.

Also he was to “endure *hardness*,” and not to “*entangle* himself with the affairs of this life.” That is to say, on the one hand he was to accept, in all its parts, the path through the storm and tempest; and, not only that, but he was to be inured to it. On the other hand, he was to shun and avoid everything of the nature of entanglement. So that we have these three things expected from the servant of the Lord and the minister of Jesus Christ.

First: patient endurance. Second: distinct separation from all that would be incompatible with his service. Third: an ardent desire to answer to the wishes of his Master.

Again: “If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.” That is, he cannot obtain the prize unless he complies with the regulations. Now these regulations insisted upon systematic discipline and training as indispensable qualifications for entering the lists; history furnishes us with the particulars of the training which the competitors in the Greek athletic sports underwent; the diet, exercise, fixed hours, and hard life which were endured in order to obtain a corruptible crown. So the servant of the Lord in these days of ease, affluence, and self indulgence, is to practise the very contrary on himself, in order that, according to the will of his Lord, he may exercise his ministry and service.

He was also to be as the husbandman “labouring first,” that he might have the first claim to the profits of the produce of his farm.

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD.

Then the first part of the exhortation is closed by that magnificent eighth verse: "Remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David, raised from among the dead, according to my glad tidings." How blessed this is to have the heart and thoughts, by the Holy Ghost, thus fixed on that blessed One, that perfect Servant, who, from the manger to the cross, served through suffering, sorrow, shame, contempt, and is now presented to the adoring gaze of faith as "raised from among the dead!"

"By Thine empty grave we worship,
By Thy cross our hearts we bow;
All the memories which pursue us
Waken our affections now.

Lord we follow—Thou constrainest,
Step by step, and hour by hour;
Object of our hearts in glory;
On the way, our strength and power."

So far we have looked at the qualities—the indispensable requirements—of the servant of the Lord in perilous times. As yet we have not touched upon the spirit in which these qualities are to be exercised, the tone and the temper in which the faithful servant is to address himself to his work. But it will be readily granted, that, in proportion to a man's courage and faithfulness in a time of general declension and spiritual decay, will be the pressure brought to bear upon his spirit. *Endurance, tenderness, meekness*, will have large drafts made upon them; and standing faithful will expose the servant to those rude blasts which will only elicit, if there, the qualities I have spoken of.

It is not enough to be faithful in dealing with souls; the manner and method of its display

surely has its place. The *tone* and *temper* of the servant in the faithful exercise of his gift, surely are important. Very touching are the tones of the apostle on this head. Now I Paul myself, beseech you by the *meekness* and *gentleness* of Christ." Again: "But we were *gentle* among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children."

No doubt, in days of declension and unfaithfulness, the true servant must pass through many a sore exercise respecting those whom he seeks to serve, and many a trial and many an anxiety will his heart endure in connection with such; but, while that is all fully admitted and felt to the utmost, it cannot but be felt, that a little more of the tone and temper of 2 Tim. ii. would secure the absence of many a pang which true and faithful hearts have inflicted upon themselves; and some we may have thought to drive, instead of leading and instructing, might have been *won*, when they could not be *co-erced*. Alas there are too many instances of hearts sad and broken amid the corruptions of the age, retarded on their way, whilst they groped about to find a clean path for their weary feet, as well as grieved and stumbled as they sought to walk therein, by the ungracious and unwise methods adopted towards them. "*Feed my lambs;*" "*Shepherd my sheep;*" "*Feed my sheep;*" are the terms of the blessed Lord's commission to restored Peter. The *shepherd* and the *nurse*, are the similitudes employed by the Holy Ghost, when he would set forth the manner of a servant's fulfilment of his work. "*Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the over-sight thereof.*"

If any who read this paper turn away in their mind from what they most likely will regard as common-place truisms, I can only plead as my excuse for introducing the subject here, the great danger of its being *over-looked*.

No doubt the peculiar character of these days makes large demands on the servant; but be the trials ever so many, and disappointments ever so great, nothing can compensate for the absence of such a spirit as is implied in these words: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."

I might have urged the patient, gracious dealing of the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls Himself, as the type and pattern for those whom He has gifted with a view to the leading and helping of His sheep. Or I might have urged the same blessed tender care of Him who is Head of the church, His body, towards His poor members here. "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but *nourisheth* it, and *cherisheth* it, even as the Lord the church"—but I forbear.

One other scripture only will I refer to, namely, Ezekial xxxiv. 2-6. "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but

with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: Yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them."

And now, beloved reader, ere we part company, may I ask you what place has the church of God and the servants of Christ in your thoughts? in what light do you regard them? Do you think of them in reference to Christ or yourself? Do you pray for them? The Lord make His beloved saints and servants more wise, more gracious, more patient in all things, more self-denying and devoted, more uncompromising and whole hearted in these last evil days.

(W. T. T.)

It is not only pretty morality that you want: there is the question of your responsibility to God. It is not only a matter of mending your manners, but of getting your guilt put away. We are both guilty and responsible, and at the same time enemies to God. What we are has been brought out; our enmity has been proved; and that we *can* hate God, shows that there is some relation between us and God.

(J. N. D.)

THE MAN OF POWER.*

ACTS vii. 54—60.

My thought in coming to a meeting like this, is to hear something from the Lord that will help me on in relation to this present time; call it a conference if you like—we *do* come together to confer with each other—to hear each other speak. It is that I may know His mind, which is a distinct thing: “I call you not servants but *friends* ;” the servant does not know what his Lord doeth.

Now no amount of valour will give you the mind of the Lord. The ten thousand who followed Gideon did not know his mind; it was only the three hundred who did; it was not until the nine thousand and seven hundred had gone back that he said: “As I do so shall ye do.” The order of battle is only given to those who prove that they prefer the glory of the Lord to any favor or mercies that can be granted to them here on earth. Many a valiant man I have seen turned aside by a favour given to him here: in Luke it was those who had received favours who begged to be excused from the supper.

What I have on my mind at this present moment to bring out is, the support that we derive from One in heaven; we do not get support from anything here, we only get it from the One there.

Now not only have you *title* to heaven, but you are in *possession* of heaven now whilst you are on

* This, and the six following addresses, delivered at Quemerford, 22 and 23 May, 1873.

earth. I make a distinction between possession in life and practical possession. You have possession in life, but you are only true to your life when you have *practical* possession of it. And let me tell you there are many in possession in life who know nothing of this. It is not a question whether my life really *be* there, but it is quite another thing whether I am *living* there. And, it is the person who has apprehended most of the portion given to him of God in Christ, who has the most trembling anxiety as to how much he is really practically in possession of that of which he is actually in possession in life. It is no light matter to me to have the transcending power of an eternal God to do with.

In connection with Stephen we have three distinct subjects brought out, the first being what I will now speak upon; that is: what is our true spring and fountain of support while we are upon this earth. It does not always begin with this, but Scripture has opened it out to us thus here—there are other ways of looking at it of course.

The first thing we start with, and that is the practical difficulty, is that we learn that we are united to Christ, and that he introduces us into a scene where there is no cloud at all—into a sphere where there is no disturbance; a new day is inaugurated. The new creation of God has commenced. In the old creation God began with making the heavens and the earth—the earth, the trees, the animals, and ended with the man. The new creation has begun in the reverse direction; it begins with a Man, the Son of the Father—He is the beginning of the creation of

God—and it will wind up with the new heavens and the new earth. And what the church will give up is this beginning of the creation of God; it will be spued out of His mouth because it does not maintain it. Laodicea would be very glad to have the *virtues* of Christ, but it will not have the author of them; in fact that is what *infidelity* even would have—the apples without the apple tree.

I speak now of all of us as being introduced into this new thing, and He coming in and saying to us: "Peace be unto you." This ought not to require to be repeated; if He does repeat it, it is but to say the very same words again—there are no others—it is: "Peace be unto you." True there is another peace connected with going through this scene, but *here* you have to do with this risen Man. It is like a body in an exhausted cylinder; it goes up, and up, and up; you get right away up without a single check!—I say that is practically the difference between this peace and the peace on the way; it is not "a *rugged hill* that reaches up to God;" it is a *rugged race* down here. There are not any clouds—not if you know what it is to be connected with Christ there; union with Christ connects you with a new order of things, where there is not a cloud—where all is perfectly bright!

He comes into their midst to proclaim that character of thing. Therefore it says: "The *Lord* hath triumphed gloriously"—not *I*; for *He* fought the battle, and *His* victory is mine. How high do you see Christ?—At the right hand of God.—I place that point before you again, because there is no going on until you have it. I

must have to do with that blessed One risen out of everything. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above." There is the importance of it. I say to any soul here who has a cloud: You have never yet seen Christ as the One who has cleared off everything, as the One who has risen out of it all. He is out of it so I am out of it. Like the island that rose out of the Mediterranean years ago, just so have I risen out of everything. However high up you see Christ, I am there, for His victory is my victory. You have to connect yourself with the One who loved you, and who gave Himself for you, and who says: "Peace be unto you."

Stephen already knew what it was to have possession of heaven in life; we find he is looking up into heaven. The fact of the place was not brought in yet, for in the first chapter of Acts, they were told *not* to gaze into heaven. But now we know that the One who was refused life here, died for us that we might have life there. Man refused Him life here, and God, in His grace, turned man's rejection into his blessing. We partake of His life; man refused Him a place here; and God has given Him a place in heaven; and we are raised up with Him, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. We have not only got *life* in His Son but we have got a *place*.

This ~~the~~ Lord is putting before us in the fourteenth of John. He deals with our conscience in the thirteenth, with our heart in the fourteenth.

He says : Now do not let your hearts be troubled ; you must follow Me by faith.—What is faith ?—Close you eye to everything visible, and open your ear to God. That is faith. I now by faith see that which is invisible ; I have to do with that blessed One gone to the Father to prepare a place for me.

What is brought out in Stephen is that he is practically one who realizes this. Though he was not like Paul seated in heaven, yet he knew the support that we derive on earth from One in heaven ; he had no support here. The Bridegroom being taken away, there is nothing to engage the heart, so you may fast. I am bold to say every one who knows Christ really as the One up there, however much he may love the communion of saints, would far sooner have a time alone with the Lord.

Now it is not only that all the *bad* is against you, but that the *good* is against you. Pull up your blind in the morning and say : Well, I know that there is not a single thing in this world for me ; it is all against me—even all that claims to be commendable to the human eye.—I often think what an insignificant person I should appear on the platform of Exeter Hall, if I came in after all the wonderful accounts of what such a missionary society is doing in one place, and such another in some other, if I stood up and said : He sups with me, and I with Him. What Stephen finds all round him is the wickedness of the religious world. He takes the place for God on earth ; he stands before those religious functionaries coming out in all their enmity against God's servant. And what does he say ?—Why, I

get nothing here.

This world is just going on to its consummation, and heaven is opened to me. It never was opened till now, but now it is opened by the Holy Ghost. You are united to Christ even before you know your property, so to say. One side is that I am sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise; and the other is, that He is the earnest of the inheritance.

Here Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven. The Lord when going away from His disciples had told them in the fourteenth of John: "I go to prepare a place for you." Now I am not here gone into heaven, but I am looking at the One in heaven. Some have a physical fear of death. If you have, be sure you are occupied with death, and not with the person of Christ; you are look at the water instead of at the ark of the covenant. In Jordan there is not a single thing to pass through; there is not a drop of water to be seen at all—not a single thing to bar my entrance into the land. True, I have practically to pass through a tunnel here; I do not want to hide it from you; you have to throw all this scene into darkness that you may have the light on the other side. I am as confident about it as of anything, through His grace, that you never can find Christ but through death. He was refused life here; the sun must go down then. He was known to them in the breaking of bread—the figure of death. Christ will not appear but at night. I must find it all a scene in which the light has gone out; and then what brings in its beautiful light to me? The morning star!

Well, it is night. The sun *has* gone down. So many people think they can have Christ in the enjoyment of circumstances here, but I do not believe it. Many think He will give them happy circumstances here. I used to; and then I used to be thoroughly disappointed at the way in which God refused to do things for me that I expected He would do. But I never am disappointed now; indeed I am now perfectly surprised that He ever should do *anything* for me, instead of being disappointed that He does not do more. True, there is nothing in this world which He would not do for me. He would give me a fine day: "He that spared not His own Son, shall He not with Him also freely give us *all* things?" But then look at the other side: "For thy sake we are killed all the day long;" that is *your* side; the fellowship of His sufferings. There is no end to his love, but where do I find it? *In the scene where He is Himself.*

"For thy sake we are killed all the day long." That is where Stephen is, and that is my proper place. But I cannot take it, I cannot bear it, unless I know what it is to have a bright scene outside it all. I have to do with a Person who is not here, and thus I am in the wilderness. And I would just say that the wilderness is not a *place*; it is a *bridge*, and not a "bridge of sighs," but a bridge of hope, over which I pass from Egypt into Canaan. I go on to possess the land; but possession in practice implies immense suffering.

There are two things that mark the wilderness: the one, to acquire the Man who is *not* here; the other, to resist the man who *is* here,

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There is the daily picking up of the manna, the stooping for it; you must make yourself small if you want to pick up Christ. The food of the wilderness comes down from heaven, but you must be little enough to pick it up. It had to be gathered every morning before the sun was up. Now let no one reduce that to mere prayer, and the reading of a chapter the first thing in the morning. Manna is the wonderful sense of the sufficiency of Christ for every exigency of the day that I may be called to go through. I have to do with Him where He is, as I go on here day by day.

Stephen looks up steadfastly into heaven and sees the glory of God and Jesus; and, now that all is settled there, he comes back to his place here, but he changes the words. He says: "I see the *Son of Man* standing on the right hand of God;" He does not say *Jesus*. Jesus is that peculiar familiar name—that name of endearment—which ought never to be spoken but from heart to heart, and not breathed to the common ear.

And now they cry out with a loud voice, and stop their ears, and run upon him, and he derives power from Christ to act like Him. I believe you derive power from Christ suited to the circumstances you are in, when you are occupied with Him. People are occupied with the thing before them, instead of with the One who can deliver them out of it. I often bring forward as an illustration of this the story of a woman ~~in~~ a ship in a storm; she was asked what she was thinking of in the storm, and she answered that she was thinking of how Jesus

acted when He was in the storm. Now, if she had been thinking of Him where He is, it would have made her act like Him when he was in the storm.

The man who is making an effort to go over a fence certainly is not over it. No man ever lost his temper yet but from impotence ; a man who loses his temper, proves that his ardour is greater than his ability. If he can say, Oh ! I am quite up to that, he will never lose his temper over it. If your ability is up to your ardour you will be quiet.

Now here we get a man entirely superior to himself ; and this is the character of the Holy Ghost's acting. Stephen has come back to this scene, and I get this wonderful fact in connection with him : that when everything had come to its climax, when they set themselves to refuse the One whom he offered to them, Stephen was not only superior to it all, but able to act for others in the midst of it ; and this is the place of God's people upon the earth. What do you find in him ? He is calm. Is it that he is able to resist it all as the rock resists the dashing of the waves ? Not at all ! He is not only calm, he is active. And, not as one has said, to "Wake and find him gone ;"—not as in the Canticles the Bride awakes to realize the stupendous sense of what it is to be without the companion of her heart. But what says the Psalmist ? "I laid me down and slept ; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me." So Stephen was able to come out in divine activity to the very men who caused his death ; he comes out as intercessor for them ; and, for my own part, I believe that

Saul of Tarsus was the answer to his prayers. He came out and showed what a man could be *from* heaven, not only what a man was going to heaven.

I read it, and I am abashed when I do. Why should my spirit be put out by such a little trifle? In the power of the Holy Ghost I can be superior to every character of violence—to every order of suffering. I look to it the day is coming when we shall be tested. I do not look for outside persecution, but I look for internal persecution. Why, if I were only walking faithfully, I should be tabooed by my brethren. There never was such a marvelous thing! While such a trifle as a hot room will sometimes quite upset me, and put me all astray, here is a man who is superior to everything. He says, I give my spirit to that Man there, for the man here is taking my life away.

There is nothing for me to enjoy but heaven. Well then, I say, I ought to enjoy it. I have to run a race, but my Gideon is before me in it, and He says: "As I do, so shall ye do." I have the most unbounded scene that ever could be known to the heart; I am to God in an ecstasy; I am in unqualified possession of it as to life, and would to God I knew more of it practically. I am going to run a race but there can be no novelty in it; that is, to my mind, the first chapter of the first epistle of John: "The life has been manifested;" He is in the race before me. Stephen looks up steadfastly at the One who has gone before; and how does this man now come out?—Why, *very* like the Lord! He says: "Lord Jesus receive my spirit, and lay not this sin to their charge."

This man here takes my life from me ; I give my spirit to that Man there.

There are only two things you have to learn, and how many do not accept them ! One is, you are *not* to have the man here and the place, where *he* is ; the other is, you *are* to have another Man, and the place where *He* is.—What am I not to have a little bit of earth ?—No, not a bit ! That is just what you get in the fourteenth of Luke. Those who had the blessings of the earth all with one consent began to make excuse ; it is : “ I pray thee, have me excused.”

Stephen says to them : The Lord Jesus Christ in glory has come down and offers Himself to take a throne here ; do you refuse that Man who has come down from above ?—But they stopped their ears and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city and stoned him. And he knelt down and prayed for them ; I do not believe he prayed for himself ; it was : “ Lay not this sin to their charge ; and when he had said this he fell asleep.”

Thus you see what a thing it is to bring Christ into real daily life. The general thought of every believer is to get the Lord to help him on in the things here where he is ; he wants the human side of it. But you must begin upon an entirely new basis. I am the same tree that I was before my conversion, but there is a new kind of sap in the tree, and that sap refuses to work in wrong connections ; all the wrong connections must be withered. I take you upon the ground of being dead ; timber is of no use until it is dead. Are you a father ?—Well, says the Lord, I sanction that branch ; the sap may flow into that.—Are

you a husband?—I sanction that branch; the sap may flow in there.—Are you in a club?—Oh I cannot sanction that! there is no sap for that!—You are the same kind of tree that you were, but now “the leaf shall not wither.” Many a one gets on pretty well in the summer time, but in the winter their leaf withers; but, of this tree, “the leaf shall not wither.” It is the same tree that it was before, but I find a new order of sap comes into it, and that divine sap supports every branch and leaf that it sanctions. It says: I will spare whatever was appointed of God as fit for man upon earth, but I will spare nothing else.

The Lord grant to us, beloved friends, to understand what has been before us. May he lead our hearts to understand how practical and how blessed a thing it is to know, that, though “this world is a wilderness wide,” I have got a Man in heaven above it all, whose resources flow down to me here. The action of the Holy Ghost leads me to Him; that is His upward action; it is: “Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” I find a great many saints will go in a measure as far as Stephen, but they will not go any farther; they will look up to heaven, but they will not go in. The grand difficulty for the heart is to change the place. *This* is only a place to have a tomb in. As Abraham says, I have no place here but a tomb. As a baptized person I take the ground of being a buried man; and, as in some countries they raise cairns over the graves, so with me; every man who goes by and throws a stone upon me is only raising the cairn! I am a gone man.

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But I am not a gone man for activity for Christ here. I have come back from the One who is up there to express Him here, and I find His own power to sustain me in it: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

The Lord lead us to have our eye simply turned to Him as the One who is in heaven, and then I shall be bold to walk down here for Him, while seeking to maintain what is due to Christ in this scene where He is not.

Men will take the water of the gospel to purify Adam's children, and leave the blood on one side. But He came "Not by water only, but by water and blood;" and the blood comes out of a dead Christ—the witness of the judgment of Adam and his children, and a total breach with God.

J. N. D.

"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." *Except ye own that flesh is judged;* and so it is His flesh and blood separate, for that is death.

J. N. D.

THE NEW ORDER.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 5—17.

I HAVE read this Scripture, beloved friends, because it describes the new order of manhood which distinguishes Christianity: that He who “thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death.” I am struck with the thought, that we do not get on the real ground, until we lay hold of the fact, that God has brought in an entirely new order of things with the second Man.

If, as it is brought out in John’s gospel, we say that “the Word was made flesh,” everyone will accept it; but mere acceptance of the fact of the incarnation is not all. As I look at the widespread ruin, what is the sweetest thought I have got about the God with whom I have to do? It is, that not only Christ has gone to the cross, but that he has made the ruin his own care; that He has met the ruin of this world, and redeemed us to God by His blood. And our proper path, as being one with Christ, is to walk with God in this new order of creation, in the power of resurrection, by the Holy Ghost, with a single eye, and a body full of light, as *new* creatures.

Before the fall, God walked with Adam in the garden in the cool of the day. Before the flood, Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God had taken him. The intercourse may have

varied, and the path too ; but God would not be alone, nor leave himself without a witness in the midst of men upon the earth. Noah, as “ a preacher of righteousness,” was brought out into it with his ark, when that world was at its worst.

And, in the world that now is, God has even come closer to men, and called one and another out to “ walk before Him,” as a proof that He had neither given up the creature nor the creation ; but that He might tell them in various ways how He would connect Himself with them in their ruin, and finally establish them in full and abiding blessing, when “ the fullness of the time should come ” for Him to send forth His own Son.

If I look through the little “ hole in the wall,” at Sodom, there was an extraordinary man upon the earth at that time—Abraham. If you turn to the eighteenth of Genesis, you read : “ I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me ; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went towards Sodom ; but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. And Abraham drew near and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked ? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city : wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein ? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked : and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee : shall not the Judge of all the earth, do right ? And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then

I will spare all the place for their sakes."

I refer to this, that we may see that God had to deal with sin on the earth; any other dealing than this, as "the Judge of the earth" in righteous government, will not do. He does not come down to go through the length and breadth of the earth, but He says, I take a sample of it; I just look through a hole in the wall to see what the state of things is in the cities which men have built.

It is important to notice here how Abraham speaks of God as "the Judge of the whole earth." Who appeared to Abraham? Stephen says "The God of *glory*." Abraham recognises the God of *glory*, to be also the *Judge* of the earth—of that out of which he himself had been delivered by grace and calling, in hope of the coming glory of God.

Will that do for you and me? this Sodom and Gomorrah character of the world, and the man of faith and friend of God outside it? How God loved to have then a man outside—a beautiful link for us to the Man *now* outside it, sitting on the Father's throne, and Head of the new creation.

The intercession of Abraham, the friend of God, failed to deliver Sodom from the impending judgment. How could *he* connect the Judge of the earth, in delivering mercy, with sin and wickedness? Where was the "Day's-man," as an adequate basis? Abraham could see the missing link, and by faith look on to Christ's day; but all the world could not supply the righteous man. However in the record of Stephen, in the seventh of Acts, he can easily connect the glory

of God and the Judge of the earth together, as he looked through the opened heavens, and saw the Lamb slain, and the Intercessor, in the person of "the Son of man, standing on the right hand of God."

I leave Abraham and look at Moses, letting the record of God's ways with man on earth light up the world through which I am passing; just as the rainbow in Genesis took its colour from the heavens. It is a blessed thing to know that this earth is going to be for God yet. Well, if I turn to Moses, I find that when God called him to be forty days up in the mount with Himself, He told him that it was what he brought down from *heaven* that he was to set up upon earth. There was to be a wonderful thing constructed upon this desert earth—"A Sanctuary."

Then when he came down, and looked at that wretched calf, after which the people had turned aside, what could Moses do but the finest thing that ever man did? He says: I break the tables in the presence of that which broke the law; and he takes the tent and pitches it "outside the camp." Then he goes up again into the mount and says, There is the want of propitiation now. Where did he get that thought but from above? He says: "*Blot me out of thy book.*" But that would never do! The holiness of God is in contrast now with the calf, just as before the righteousness of God had been outraged by the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. But neither the intercession of the friend of God, nor the proposals of Moses on behalf of Israel can avail. Abraham failed to find ten righteous persons; and "the peradventure" of Moses, "I shall

make an atonement for your sin," was as useless.

So the Word that was with God, and was God, has come down and says, *I* connect myself with the ruin. And, as I trace his path on the earth and on the cross, and hear Him say, "It is finished," I sing, "Victory! His be the Victor's name!"

And what has this blessed One done for God? —the God who looked through the heavens down into the dark places of this earth. Did Christ join Himself to the ruin? Not only that, but "*God* so loved the world that *He* gave His only begotten Son." What I seek is, that we may see how God *waited*; how he came down to see the state of things, first at Babel, then at Sodom; how he followed man on until it came to the time when the Son of His own bosom had to come out, unless God must be known only as the God of judgment—the "Judge of the whole earth." Give the fact its place, and, if you do give it its place, you will see what a mighty place it is—that God has in this way, made the ruin of this world His own concern. If it were not so I could not preach the gospel that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world, unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

Now, if you turn to the first of Matthew, you will see that Christ not only connected Himself with the ruin of creation, but also with the race of man. The man, the woman, and the ground—all of them were under the curse, and at a distance from God. And the grave and condemnation, they never can be set aside unless "the Man who is my Fellow," can come in to be death's destruction. But God has connected

Himself through grace in Christ with the ruin, in all the extent of it. Just look how the Son of God, by His birth, joins Himself to the human race. These are things that angels desire to look into, and yet we just give a glance at them, and think no more about them.

We read: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." We get here the two most remarkable persons upon earth, Abraham and David; and the Son of God made flesh. As Son of Abraham he linked Himself with the descendants of Abraham; and as Son of David He linked Himself with the descendants of David—that David whose "house was not right with God," and which waits for the return of David's Lord to put it right, according to the "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure."

Is it nothing to us to see this blessed One thus coming down to be linked with Abraham and the promises, and, as the Word made flesh, to charge Himself with all the ruin of the nation, or the throne and the kingdom? There is not a thing, and there must not be a thing omitted or left, now that that blessed One has come in, as the provided Lamb of God. He has not only taken all hindrances away, but He has established blessing in doing so. The One whose thoughts are from everlasting to everlasting says: It has not entered into your hearts to conceive the blessing that I have prepared for you with the Man yonder. Have you looked at that Man in glory yonder? Nature is beggared, and it ought to be in such a presence!

Thus God connects Himself with the race by

the incarnation of His Son, and Christ connects Himself with the ruin by the shedding of His blood. God cannot join Himself to us in delivering power except through the Son of His love. I cannot do without the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost on my behalf for eternal life and glory.

And now, if I come to look at Him, and see what He was as He walked in the gospel of John as the light of the world, it is not "a hole in the wall" by which we look through at the evil in man's city as in Abraham's day, or at "the chambers of imagery" in the times of Ezekiel. It is the heavens which have folded themselves back as a curtain to look down upon the only begotten of the Father, and what a sight that is for us! "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." We get in the gospels the glory of God in the person of Jesus the Christ, in all the ways by which He displayed Himself to the eyes and hearts of men, as He acquainted Himself with their wretchedness and guilt in a ruined world, till He exceeded Himself by going to the cross, that He might bear it all in righteous judgment, and roll it away for ever by His death.

As He rises from the grave, and ascends to the right hand of God, He carries up what? A record of our sins? No, but His own blood. It is another order of man that God brings in now, and therefore another order of creation too, for He must have a creation worthy of Himself: *He* is the beginning of the new creation of God. I get the history too of the man who fell, and the creation which went after him. Who then is to deliver that creation? Who is it who will bring

it back to God without so much as a stain upon it? And if there be a tear, only that God may wipe it away!—Are there tears *here*? Oh think of what it is to have a tear in His bottle—tears the result of suffering for Him in the world which has rejected Him.

And now I come to the third point. I cannot get all this “passing out of death into life” in the risen One, without a new revelation from God by the Holy Ghost. As sure as ever the Son goes up, the Spirit comes down to carry out this new testimony of our Lord. God raises Him up, and seats Him at His own right hand, and immediately the Spirit of His Son is sent down as the witness. What for? To join Himself to *you* as new creatures in Christ. It is not any longer joining Himself to the *ruin*; but it is God dwelling in those whom He has already brought out of it to Himself, though the cross of His Son. He must put His seal upon the fact; He must send down the Holy Ghost to seal those who are His through Christ. Now God joins Himself to men in Christ; and, thus joining us to His Son by the Holy Ghost, He brings us into oneness with Himself; “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” “We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.”

In conclusion let me say, that we have in Philipians the new order of man upon earth, and there is no order now for you or for me, other than this beginning of the new creation of God. The Holy Ghost comes down and joins Himself to the ruin? Not at all! But: I will be the power of the mighty God in you who believe, so that all you have to do is “to work out your own

salvation " *here* where you are ; for Philippians especially recognizes us down here.

Now how does power prove itself ? If I take the figure of a steamship, how will the power of the engines prove itself ? There must be a storm ; and, as she makes her way through the waves and the winds, power displays itself ; on she goes, and, as I see the spray over her funnel, I say : She is working out her salvation ; she goes through the storm, and she gets to the port and runs up her flag

In Philippians we get the mind of Christ coming out in a man on earth ; " my God " supplying all his need. If He says He will supply " all my need," it is that I may prove " the riches of His glory " as the unfailing source. And if He says we must have the sufferings of this little while—why, what if flesh and blood *do* fail ? and they *will*—thank God, nothing else will fail : Christ has joined Himself to the vessel in the storm, " according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

" At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

POSSESSION.

DEUTERONOMY xxvi. 1--15.

THIS chapter describes the action that was to take place consequent upon the people reaching what was the purpose of God. I turn back to the third of Exodus to see what that purpose was, and read at the seventh verse: "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land into a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." That is the purpose of God.

Now this purpose, beloved friends, we cannot keep it too simply before our hearts. I find that He has a purpose about me, and that it is this: to bring me out of one place into another place.—The prodigal's place is in the Father's house though, as to himself, he may not have come upstairs yet; and that is the case with many saints. I may not have reached it yet, but I know the desire in my Father's heart about me.

Saints make their necessity the measure of God's action for them. It is true that my necessity is met; but it is never the measure of God's action for me. If we make our necessity the measure, we never get beyond it. God never gives us anything that we do not value. Everyone in this room has what he values. He may

think that he has not; he may think that he values more than he has; but the fact that he does not is shown by his not possessing it. God says you do not value more, therefore I do not give you more. He does not cast His pearls before swine; it is according to the amount of interest that you take in it that you have it; according to your appreciation of the truth is the measure of it that you have; "unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly."

Nothing is more manifest than that God's purpose is to have me in this spot. Your Father in heaven has a spot for you; a spot that it is His desire you should occupy; and your occupying it will alone satisfy His heart. Your Father wishes you to be there: the love of the parent wants the child to be brought into the sphere where he himself is. You may occupy it or not, but, if you do not, you have never fulfilled His purpose.

The idea is beyond all human conception! My Father desires that I should occupy this place of nearness to Him. That such a thing as this should be made known to a poor heart like mine, is to me the climax of everything! it is irresistible! I may be below the mark, I may lose the idea, but that is what is in His heart; it is His ideal; and I wonder at myself, that I am so little moved by it. My Father has a spot for me, and the only question is whether I will occupy it.

Well, beloved, there is only One who ever could occupy the place of standing between God and me. Only One knew what the extent of my

offence was, and only One knew what the love of the Father's heart was to me a poor prodigal. Only One knew the extent of my offence against God, for I must be equal to a person to know how he feels about a thing; and none knows the love of the Father to me but that One; and He says, I bear the one, I declare the other; from sin and Satan I bear them every one, and I declare thy name unto my brethren. He encounters everything in the twenty-second Psalm, and comes in after it all like the sun shining in his glory upon the scene.

It is not only that there is a purpose in my Father's heart about me, but His only beloved Son has accomplished that purpose for me. He has come forth to do all God's will, and, having done it, He has returned up there, and is set down at God's right hand, far above all principality, and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, and has been made Head over all things to the church. It is not, as people often put it, a ladder that goes up to heaven, but a ladder that comes down from heaven; therefore the moment I put my foot upon it I am connected with heaven. The One who measures my distance is the One who is the measure of my nearness.

Yes, says the Lord Jesus, I have prepared it for you; there is a spot in the Father's house that is yours; you have title—indefeasible title to it; and, if you do not occupy it, nobody will; it will be unoccupied, that is all.

You are not true to your life if you are not in the place where your life is. The "great supper," is not *salvation*, as the commentators say. Ask

any child what a supper is ; and he will tell you it is an entertainment. But no one knows anything about *entertainment* ; they have no sense of anything of the kind. People talk of *deliverance*, but that is not *riches*. John's gospel comes in to supply that. There He talks about "the gift." He says, I will tell your poor heart what will satisfy you. He brings in the fourth chapter as a contrast to the second, and the saint who is not in the fourth has gone back to the second—to earthly joys, and earthly religion. In the second the wine is out, but in the fourth the Spirit is in. In the third, He died because of me that I might have life because of Him ; and in the fourth there is a sufficiency of everything ; you will never thirst, the Spirit is *in* you ; you need never go outside yourself, for the Spirit of God in you springs up into everlasting life, and leads the heart practically into the knowledge of a scene where there is perfectness of blessing outside of everything here.

I have spoken of the purpose of God, and I will just recall for a moment what I have said. God has a place, a spot for me. "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." It is *vague*, says Isaiah. Now that is the idea of many souls. I have often appealed to souls, and said, Have you any idea of what heaven will be ? They have perhaps had some vague thoughts about it, and I have said, You have not got beyond Isaiah. In Corinthians we get the contrast to this : "God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit ;" there is the accomplishment of the purpose. One has done

it, and He says, I bring you into a new condition which entirely eclipses the old one. In the fourth chapter you are superior to the man who could not get on without wine; and you have yet another thing: you have not only that which is superior to the man, but in the seventh chapter, that which is superior to the earth; rivers of living water flow from you; you minister to the earth instead of its ministering to you. How am I made superior to all here? By the Holy Ghost.

All that I am stating now is in order to show that there is a spot in God's own mind for us; that He has a purpose that He has accomplished for us. In Isaiah we get that purpose, and in Corinthians the Spirit of God shows us that it is secured to us. So that first there is the purpose; second the accomplishment; and third what remains for us but to enjoy it? He says: "The Son of man must be lifted up;" and faith is simple when I turn away from my ruin, and when my eye is occupied with Himself. I want to give you the connection of the Spirit of God. If, as a believer, you are not walking in that new condition which the Spirit of God has opened up to you, you are going back to man and earth. What we have to learn is, that we have to do with a Man in heaven, and that we have to do with *the place where He is*. For, though we are united by the Spirit to that Man that is in heaven, yet you have to go to heaven to enjoy the Man that is in heaven. I say that because I see practically how it works.

It is the purpose of God first that He has that place for me, chosen by His love. I cannot tell

how it draws me, that love! The Lord says: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." I used to read it, "finish *her* work," but it was *His* work. He says I have answered to the heart of the living God in what I have communicated to that poor woman. I heard a benefactor say once: "It is a nice thing to make anyone happy by giving them two-pence!" Now that is a *benefactor* and nothing more. Christ was happy because He had done *God's* work.

The third thing is the enjoyment of this purpose, which can only be by the Spirit of God.—Now I notice that people practice all sorts of deceptions upon themselves. I will just mention one of them. I hear a person say: "I have such sweet communion with Jesus;" and I am quite astonished when I come to talk with him, and inquire a little closer into what this sweet communion is, I find it is his sense of the compassion and interest that the Lord has shown to him in the trial he has been passing through. In fact it is Jesus sympathizing with him—coming down in grace into his circumstances—it is sympathy, not communion. I do not know anything more injurious than calling low things by high names. For instance, people call prayer meetings worship meetings. A person coming to a meeting and getting his feet washed at it, will say, Oh what a blessed season we have had! Well, it is a blessed season when you have the Lord dealing with you, but, if you have really met Himself, you will scarcely speak of it in that way. We use too many figurative expressions about our

experiences, and lose an immense deal by not allowing the truth to come out in its reality to us.

Though united to Christ in heaven, there as your Head, yet you must also know what it is to be in the *place* where He is. What many want is to get the Lord down into their own circumstances; but you *must* find the Lord in the place where He is. Many want Him down here; and he does minister to my wants; He came down here purposely to meet death in a double way, therefore all the sympathy that I need I meet with from Him in my circumstances here. But besides that He says: "I go to prepare a *place* for you." The only thing that will satisfy my heart is being in company with the One who has won my heart; in order to enjoy a person you must be in the place where that person is. Now that is what this chapter in Deuteronomy is. You are come into the place, you are dwelling in it, and then you find out what a wonderful thing it is to be occupied with the Person who dwells there.

Now let me turn for a moment to the epistle to the Ephesians. In this epistle the whole thing turns upon the fact, that Christ Himself has gone up; therefore the first chapter opens at what I will call the oracle. Everything is accomplished, we are in unqualified possession. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." The apostle is not expecting anything; he is expressing what comes out in this chapter in Deuteronomy: worship—the out-flow of a heart that is fully satisfied with the portion it has got. What is

worship? Why a heart that you can not put any more in. A person in a certain sense is ecstatic when he is in worship, though he may have only just been converted; worship comes out; he is occupied with the One from whom he has received the blessing; he says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;" that is worship. Worship is not occupation with the gift, it is occupation with the Giver. Worship is the heart detained by the object that controls it. A heart looking for blessing is not really worshipping.

So here you get, as I say, the oracle. Now in olden times if you had gone to consult an oracle, as people were in the habit of doing, you would have had nothing to say, you would have only had to listen. Thus here it goes into our portion, telling us seven blessed things that God has given us in Christ; our calling comes out. But, at the seventeenth verse, there is a change; the oracle turns round and takes part with the listeners; the apostle turns round and begins to pray. This servant, who has been so wonderfully used of God to open up to us our calling, turns to pray—joins, as it were, us who were the listeners, and says: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your heart being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." The moment I get the prayer, I get the divine energy; and I must have this divine energy, to carry me into the thing that is already mine.

I feel as I read this prayer that I must say

Amen to it; and, according as I say Amen, so is my heart rising up in intelligence as to the fact of the place that is already mine. Really, I *am* there through grace; I am quickened together with Christ; that is my possession in life. But, mind you, I have another thing; now comes my possession in practice. I am rising up to what, as I say Amen? I am rising up to the place where God has put me in Christ, and God has set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places. It is just as much the grace of God to put me into heaven as to take me out of hell.

People think that because they have this place in gift that they therefore have it in practice; but many a man has a property who does not know how to use it; it is not the fact of having possession of it that ensures your enjoyment of it. Scripture warns us against this; "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting."—Oh, but he has it! say you; and has he not had a great deal of trouble in hunting it?—Yes, but he has not used it; he has not turned it to account. Everybody knows an artizan of first rate energy and ability by the way in which he finishes his work; he shows his want of energy when he cannot give a thing the right finish. The finishing is most important; and, I say it with grief in my heart, that where I find a great deal of intelligence about the truth brought out in the Ephesians, there is often very little heart about it.

I have sometimes said to people: Did you ever lose a night's rest trying to get hold of your heavenly place?—There is nothing to me more

sad than the way in which people will allow that they have not got it, and yet the little earnestness they show in seeking to get it. The saying of a man who had travelled all over the world often comes to my mind; he said: "The people who care least about their religion, and are least interested in it, are the Christians." I am sure we ought to lie upon the ground and ask our God to do with us what He will, so that only we may be in the spot our Father has chosen for us. Can you not say: Oh, I know what I am! but take that thing out of me that hinders me from rising up to that only spot that will ever satisfy my heart.

I often wonder whether I am ever in an agony about those I know. Here the apostle is for those he had never seen. He does not mind losing an hour's rest that he may pray for them that they may reach that spot. Yet that poor creature there will not stir a finger, would not lose an hour's rest himself, that he might get it. The apostle was in an agony about people whose faces he had never seen in the flesh.—What for? That they might live correct lives? No, but that their hearts might be comforted by being brought into the consciousness of their being united to a heavenly Christ. I am united to Christ. You are brought into association with Him in the spot where He is, and then you are made acquainted with the fulness that is in Him. If you do not know that sphere where He is, you cannot come down and be connected with what is of Him here.

Now just another point to show you how it is that things begin to decline among us. It is

the way in which people hold the truth of the unity of the body. I will tell you how this truth was revived ; it was in this way. A brother well known among us awoke up one morning with the thought : I have a Head in heaven, and, if so, there are many others on earth who have got a Head in heaven ; and therefore we are members of one another.—You are united to Christ as Head over His body, and you are brought into association with each other because of your union to Himself. It is a question of *holding the Head*. I must have to do with the One who is the *source* of it all. I have to do with *Him*. I have to do with the *Head*, and not with the *members*.

In one moment we may be introduced into a region of unspeakable delights, as the apostle Paul was when he was caught up into the third heavens, but it takes a long time before we are fit to live that out down here—before we are fit to be instruments of the truth we have learned. I am sure I was fourteen years after I knew what the heavenly calling was before I was able to match it in my life. We have to be put in circumstances to test us. Instead of Paul finding that he was going to be something wonderfully great when he came down from being in such a region, he found that he had a thorn in the flesh to buffet him. If I get up higher in heaven I am only all the lower on earth ; higher in the new order, but lower in the old. But I am content to be nothing if only the power of Christ may rest upon me. It was a terrible thing that Satan could thus take hold of Paul and make a lodgment in the man. But so it was ; and Paul

found himself a crippled thing—not able to turn his talents to any use at all. I am made conscious of my own cripplement, so that it may be a new power altogether that is working in me. I have to do with that blessed One where He is; and I believe, when you are a few minutes there, you cannot but get a sense of what a contrast this place is to everything else.

But have I to come down into this rude world again?—Yes, like an exotic from the equator in a northern clime, by some unseen power I am maintained here in a scene that is contrary to me—I am sustained here by the divine energy of the Spirit of God. Christ's body is here, and it is as we draw upon the Head, we find what it is to represent Him here. Angels look on at the wonderful fact, that the Man the world refused is now represented by His people on the earth. As we draw from the Head we become useful members. It is not that Christ's body is only forming now, but that it is here to represent Him; and we drop into Christ's first interest here in the measure in which we come from Him in heaven. My first interest here becomes His body.

An evangelist perhaps will say: My business is to go out to preach the gospel to the world.—Yes, so it is; but your business is to go out *from the church* to gather sinners, and to bring them in as a recruiting sergeant brings his men to the doctor to pass; otherwise you are a detached person. The Lord always keeps up the complement of the body; you have to recruit the ranks, and, if you do not go out from the body, you do not know your business at all. Every member

is necessary, but every member is not acting. The evangelist says: There are empty places in the heart of Christ, and I am going from the heart of Christ to bring those in who will fill them.

Well, to go on with our chapter. As I have been saying, I make this distinction between possession in life and possession in practice. In the first chapter of Ephesians I am in possession of life of the place; and the apostle's first prayer is that I may practically get hold of that place, where, he winds up with telling me, Christ is seated as Head over the body. And now I go on to the second prayer which is the fulfilment of the twenty-sixth of Deuteronomy. I am in possession, and what is going to occupy my heart? Why the Person who brought me there. When I reach heaven what will occupy my heart but the Christ who has brought me there? As one has said, the apostle, having got his first prayer answered makes the second—that your heart may be a basket for Christ. Christ is to dwell in your hearts by faith—for what purpose? It is that you “may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and depth, and length, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” You have come now to ecstasy.

I will seek to explain what I mean by ecstasy. The apostle uses the word, and I cannot find a better; he says that to God he is *beside himself*. It is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, and you cannot take it in; it is like trying to put an ostrich egg into a small egg cup; it

cannot get in. You are ecstatic, and the result is you worship. You cannot but say, "unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end." You are entranced—in the glory will be the climax of it—but even *now* you are entranced with the blessedness like the Queen of Sheba.

People think it will make them so melancholy; they talk of the things they will have to give up. Why do they talk of being melancholy? It is because they have not taken in what is the "great supper"—that wonderful entertainment—that wonderful scene of divine festivity—"the riches of his glory." And the heart gets the full blessing of it by looking at the thing?—No, but by looking at the accomplisher of it.

And now it is: "That Christ may dwell in my heart by faith." I grow in the knowledge, in the certainty of it all. "That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." It is the cube—the whole area. I feel one is feeble in speaking of it, and I know why; in one way I am thankful of it—for one cannot take a person farther than one has been oneself.

Christ wins my heart in humiliation; He satisfies it in glory. My heart is first won; second, united; third, I am in ecstasy; fourth, I worship; fifth, I am made suitable; sixth, I go out in service. It is the heart that has been made suitable to Himself of which alone it can be said: "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." Service comes in after the rest; the tithing

comes in after the worship. I lay my basket down before the Lord, and then I go out in service for Him.

But how can I be the servant of a heavenly Christ if I have not been in company with a heavenly Christ? It is in *glory* that He satisfies my heart. He has won my heart by the way in which He has extricated me from the things in which I had involved myself down here, but it is up there that He satisfies it. Often in your service you have allowed things here to dictate to you. One's friends often study themselves, not you, when they wish to minister to you. That is not real manners. Most heavenly people have learned their manners from *books*. Now "book manners" never count for anything; it is only *company* that teaches manners. You must be in company with a heavenly Christ if you want to learn heavenly manners.

Tell me what your difficulty in service is. My difficulty is to know what I ought to say. Sometimes in going to a place to speak, I have such difficulty to know what the Lord would have me say. It would be easy enough to choose a chapter and to speak on it, but the question is, is it the one the Lord would have? I really do not know sometimes what I am to say; that is my difficulty; it is not what the people would like, it is what the Lord would like. All I can do is to look to the Lord and rest in His selection.

Well, I must end where I began. It is a thing that should stir your heart, the knowledge that there is a spot that your Father in heaven has assigned for you. You cannot say: Well, now I am filled with all the fulness of God by being in

Christ ; there is nothing farther than that. You cannot bring your basket and lay it down before the Lord until you are practically in all the blessing and glory of that place—that wonderful place that throws everything else into the shade.

There were things that I thought I never *could* give up. Sometimes even now I almost wish I could take interest in some of them. When I sit in a corner of a railway carriage and hear people talking about politics, and know that I could talk as well as any of them, and sit by silent ; or when they offer me a newspaper and I refuse it—a fool for Christ's sake. I have got more than communion about these things ; I have got taste—divine *taste*. One look at that wonderful light has made me give them all up ; I have got taste. And what now ? I feel this scene irksome.

I cannot understand how people who do not take a heavenly place ever can get on here. I wonder people do not break their hearts at the oppression that goes on all around them, at the cruelty to animals that they see. I am sure would if I did not know what it was to belong to another scene. If I did not know what it was to belong to heaven I could never go past a man beating a horse, or see any injustice done ; I should have broken my heart, and spent my life in trying to set things to rights, if I did not know that I do not belong to this scene at all.

Well, may the Lord lead your hearts into that bright scene. Let it be the place that you seek for—seek as hid treasure. May it be a real thing both to your hearts and mine. Will you not be ashamed that a little thing here should so occupy your heart, when you have such a wonder-

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ful portion up there ? My heart *must* get into it ! I do not put your own benefit before you, because that is not the thing ; but I say, nothing should satisfy *your* heart, because nothing will satisfy your *Father's* heart, but your being able to come in before the Lord as in this twenty-sixth of Deuteronomy, and saying : I *am* come into the place which the Lord my God has given me ; the Lord Jesus Christ is the One who has brought me in ; I delight in the One who has brought me in ; I lay my basket down before *Him*, and worship the Lord my God.

LEAVING EGYPT.

Exodus xii. 1—14.

It may appear strange to some that, after having spoken of the climax of the work, I should come back to the foundation. But, if there is some defect in the foundation, it keeps us from travelling into the place which is now as much ours in title as it ever will be; it prevents our working out our salvation—that salvation which is ours already. You see if we have not left Egypt we cannot be in Canaan. Now I want to turn your attention to the way in which you come out of Egypt.

There are two parts in this coming out. One is the perfect way in which God provides the sacrifice. I was in the place where judgment was; I was exposed to judgment; nothing that I could do could shield me from it. So God sent His own Son to bear the penalty, and says: “When *I* see the blood I will pass over you.” God makes a provision that suits Himself.

As to my state, it is one of death in trespasses and sins; so that if I were to set about meeting the account, about paying the debt, I should not know how; I have no power; it is the night of death. But now what God has done is to send His own Son, when man was quite dead, to answer to His mind. He is proclaimed as His beloved Son on the Mount of transfiguration, and that too, as a man. But from that point He descends—the man who is the example—He

descends to become a victim for us, because we were entirely away from God.

That is the first point, and I need not dwell upon it. But it is an immense thing for us to see that God has satisfied Himself, and now He wants me to look at the One who has satisfied Him. God has honored His own provision; He Himself has done it. "You have destroyed yourselves, but in me is your help found." God has satisfied Himself, and now what He presents to me, is a look at the One who has satisfied Him. I know that He is satisfied, and that is my satisfaction. If it is a question of your own satisfaction, you will lose it; if you make the satisfying of your own conscience the measure of your satisfaction, you will lose it. For me it is not the mere fact that the debt is paid, but that *He* has done it, and that *He* is satisfied. If I once get this truth written upon my heart there will be no effacing it.

There is a difference between rubbing out a truth and covering it over; you may cover over a truth that has been written on your heart, but you will never rub it out. Just as in the old times the Roman consuls' names used to be cut upon the buildings they had erected; but the mason had cut his own name on the stone, and put the consul's only on a layer of plaster over it; so in time the plaster dropped off, and only the mason's name remained. In the same way you may cover over truth written on your heart, but, when the covering has been taken off, there it is again. I have known people who have covered over truth for twenty years, but it will come out in the end, for you cannot get rid of

what God has written.

I am looking at the One who has satisfied God, and I am not thinking whether I am satisfied myself or not. The point is that He is satisfied with the sacrifice that He has provided, and that He says: "When *I* see the blood I will pass over you."

Well, now I come to the second point, and it is this that I really want to speak to you about. There are two sides to the work. One is: "With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness;" the other is: "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."—Now confession has a double character; it is private to the Lord, it is public to the world. The woman in the seventh of Luke believes the report, and she says: That is my Saviour. There is a wonderful correspondence between a Saviour and a sinner; there is the same correspondence that there is between a person in a burning house, and a ladder put to the window. When the woman hears of Him she says at once: That is my Saviour.

But the next point is, I must have to say to Him; and that is where I believe so many souls are defective. You have to go and tell the Lord what He has done for you. When the ten lepers were cleansed there were not found that returned to give glory to God but the one. It was not that they were not all cleansed, but that only one returned to give glory to God. That one got out of all system; he overleaped the priest, and said: No, I will go back to the fountain head. His heart was carried by the Spirit of God back to the One from whom the blessing came.

The importance of the confession is, that the

heart, in making it, has to do with the Person that wrought the work. I know many a person waiting, not satisfied in his own soul, through never having thus had to do with the Lord.

She stood "*behind* Him weeping."—No eye could see it; it happened between the Lord and herself. But, when I have thus had to do with Him, I get up with the conviction that I must go now and serve Him. "With the mouth, confession is made unto salvation."—What do you mean by "mouth?"—Why I mean that it is a private and public testimony. It is just the difference between the sinner and the saint. I say to all: Here is my Saviour. Jonathan makes his confession before all the army; he says: I make a double confession; I make a covenant with David in private; and in public he took off all his garments and put them on the shepherd's son, "even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." So she stands weeping behind Him, washes His feet with her tears, and anoints them with the ointment.

But when I come to the second alabaster box it is not any longer what He has *done* but what He *is*. The second alabaster box is buried in the tomb of Jesus. No person will ever use that alabaster box for Christ except those who have gone through death with Christ. The first has learned Christ in the judgment of death; the second has learned Christ in the calamity of death. You will never know what it is to give up position here till you know what it is to have Christ with you in the calamity of death.

Look at what is said in the Scripture; you are to go inside and eat the lamb. "They shall take

of the blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover." What was the eating of the apostle Paul during those three days when He neither ate nor drank? after them he went straightway into the synagogues and preached Jesus that He is the *Son of God*. I am done with everything here; Jesus is the Son of God; my loins are girded, my shoes on my feet, and my staff in my hand.—Where are you going?—Oh, I am not going to stop here any longer! it is all under judgment; I have been feeding on the Lamb; I have ate of Him as the One with bitter herbs; my soul has entered into it, and what now? I am not going to stay *here* any longer.

There is a mistake in the way in which the figure of the life boat is generally used which makes it defective as an illustration. Did you ever know a man who was in a life boat who did not wish to get out of it as fast as he could? He says: It is all very well to be saved by this boat, but Oh, put me on dry land! I have had enough of the water; only put me safe on dry land!

Now you do not get a bit of truth that does not add to the foundation. I could not explain it to a builder, but so it is; edification increases the foundation. It gives me a deeper sense of what that blessed One went into for me, the more

I rise up to the heights of what He is in Himself. The moment I get thoroughly satisfied with Christ I do not dwell upon anything here; I get the great principle of separating from everything in this scene.

The great loss to souls in this present day is the little they leave the world; with the glory gospel clearer than ever it was, there is less leaving of the world than there was thirty-five years ago; everything goes on just the same as before they professed to be Christ's; not a bit of change, even as to dress. It is a remarkable thing that the persons who have gone into the greatest crimes are the people who are always talking of their sins. A person always talking of his sins has not got clear hold of his Saviour. You are not really clear about your sins, and so you try to make them less by talking of them, whereas you ought to be exulting in your Saviour. The purer the light, the better and the truer the judgment of sin.

I have not been speaking of conscience of sin, but of conscience of the benefit I have received. I believe there are hundreds and thousands of people all over the world who, if they were to go down on their knees, and tell the Lord that He was their Saviour, would rise up perfectly happy. They know the value of the blood, but they have never told the Lord what it is to them, so they have never heard Him say to them as He did to the woman in Luke, and to other women, Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace; and He speaks in just the same way to the leper who returned.

And, besides this, there is not only the necessity of telling the Lord, but there is the benefit of

acting up to your own impressions. When you act in accordance with your impressions you always strengthen your impressions ; if you do not act in accordance with them you make an infidel of yourself. There may be any length of time between the faith and the act, but it is always the act which proves the measure of the faith. There is forty years difference between James and Paul ; between the works that proved the faith, and the faith that brought forth the works.

The Lord lead our hearts to understand what the foundation is. The Lord give us to understand His own sovereign grace thus coming in to meet us in all our ruin. I can look up to Him and say, there is not a cloud between us. And as I feed upon that blessed One I leave the place where my Saviour died.

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2 TIMOTHY i.

THE Epistle to the Philippians was the voice from the prison to the people of God of the apostle now in the hands of the Roman power. His only word to them is, "Rejoice in the Lord." There was nothing else for them to do. Power had laid its hand upon the apostle, and he was in prison, so, in Philippians, he writes a catholic epistle to the *church*, to the congregation in general; here it is to the *servant*, and written much about the same time.

Paul does not touch upon what John does. Everything continues now as it was when John wrote; there is no actual new phase; the Book of the Revelation closes the whole history; John was subsequent to Paul.—But this is Paul—the last words of Paul to the servant Timothy; and it involves a great deal, for it gives us a picture, not only of things inside but of things outside. It is not the question so much of things outside in the hands of the Roman power. The Roman power had done its worst; that is an important thing to get hold of. Man has used this power, not only to crucify God's own Son, but now to suppress the apostle to the Gentiles. *I* could not use this power, or have anything to do with it.

There are two crimes of which the world is guilty; every one admits the one, but the other people are slow to admit. The first man was turned out of the garden of Eden for sinning

against God, and we all admit that. But we have committed another crime: the first man has turned Christ out of the world. We were turned ourselves out of Eden, and then we turned Him out of the world. People say the Jews did it. No, it was the Roman soldiers did it; the cross makes it very evident that the Gentiles did it. Practically souls are very slow to admit this second crime.

I state it first in this broad way: that we have sinned against God, that we have been turned out of the garden of Eden—turned out of God's presence—and that He has sent His Son to bring us back into His presence. You have not got into God's thought unless you know that His Son was sent to bring us back into His presence. As Christ is apart from judgment so are we in this world; I am as much out of judgment as Christ is on the throne of God, otherwise He has not brought us back to the presence of God. As the consequence of sin man is driven out of the garden, and then man drives Christ off the earth. That is the second thing that man has done; it is not only that man's sin is there, but now "they have no cloak for their sin." They handed over Christ to the Roman sword, and the apostle sent to testify to the Man, not on earth but in heaven—that man they have now in their hands, in the power of the Roman emperor; there is where we find him; that is what closes the Acts of the Apostles.

The Gospel of Luke was written to one who was already acquainted with Paul's doctrine; Luke confirms Paul. In it the Spirit of God comes in to open out the love of the Lord Jesus.

Christ, and he ends with a Man gone to heaven. That which the entitled one does not get, the unentitled one gets—the younger brother; that is the principle of Luke's Gospel. This truth runs in parallel lines all through the Gospel, and, at the end, the Lord says: "I leave Jerusalem; I go up from Bethany."

The Acts opens again with Jewish scenery—the Mount of Olives; and I go on through the book, gradually dropping one Jewish thing after another, until I leave Paul, the one born out of due time, in the prison at Rome. There the apostle writes Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Timothy, and Titus.

It is an arduous thing to me to speak to you as I would wish to, for it is impressed upon me—I cannot tell you *how* deeply I have it impressed upon my heart—so much so that I am continually in distress of mind about it—that one of the most blessed things, one of the most wonderful things that God has ever done for us, we are likely to lose. To think that He should have favoured me with the knowledge of what will suit my Lord on earth, and that *I should shrink from it!*

It is one of the most wonderful things that for eighteen hundred years Satan should have been able so to blind the eyes of men that they should not have had any idea as to what was the testimony of the Lord. And is there no danger now?

Well, first I would say, What is the testimony of the Lord? I will try to explain what it is.

Paul is here writing to the *servant*. Say what you will, congregations always take the color of the teacher. As an old brother once said: Do not tell me what you lecture upon, but show me

your pupils. In dissenting congregations, where they have only one-man-ministry, the people will be a caricature of the teacher if he has any mind. However, as to what the testimony of the Lord is.

There was always a testimony. Up to the cross, I need not explain to any here, that man was on trial. But man was not able to maintain the testimony. We are now on the same favoured earth on which Noah was placed; we are on the millennial earth. But Noah planted a vineyard; and what came out after his failure to keep the testimony was the tower of Babel, which brought out man's independence of God; they used the favours of God to enable them to do without Him; the true character of Babylon is elegance without God; everthing that delights the heart of man, but God left out.

Then, in the person of Abraham, God calls His people to come out, and that stands good to this present day. Well, was the testimony maintained? Did it fall? Isaac sends his own son Jacob back to Syria, and then Genesis closes with Israel in Egypt, and the servant of the Lord there.

Up to the cross every trial was made of man; and then at last God sent His Son, found in the fashion of a man. At what age of man did He send Him? At the best age of man? No, but when man was in ruin, at the very tail of everything. And not like the first man did He come, grown up to maturity, but He was found as a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in manger—a babe, as has been said, that never had a temper.

Thus He comes in, and for thirty years leads a life of which we have scarcely a mention. We get just a passing notice of what it must have been in John, where he says, that if every one of the things He did should have been written "the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." We get little touches showing us what the stupendous nature of that life must have been, until it culminates in the fact that He is found upon the Mount of transfiguration—as a man He is found there—and is declared to be the "beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Of David you hear such and such a thing recorded, perhaps one in a month that was worthy of mention; but every action, every word, every single movement of the Lord was so perfect, so full of grace, so expressive of what He was, that every single one of them is worthy of being recorded. I am speaking of Him only as a man in flesh now.

In the fourth of Matthew He says: As a servant of God, I am prepared to give up that which is necessary to life; I waive the claims of nature because I have a superior claim to govern me. And that is the God whom I serve. What we find here in Him is what is stated in the eighth of Deuteronomy to be the result of the forty years wandering in the wilderness. He humbled me and led me forty years, so that I might learn to be dependent on Himself, and learn to give up that which supports my natural existence, so that I may live by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord."

When God looked down from heaven He could not find a man to meet His mind until his own

Son stood before Him. There He stood within the legal limits, but He said, I do not confine myself to the limits of the law. He says, I will not only help my neighbour, but I will take care of him for ever. "Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee." Christianity is above law. There He went up to that Mount of transfiguration; He went up as having answered to the mind of God, and was seen transfigured, His face shining as the sun, His raiment white as the light; there He stood, a man in the flesh; and, as has been said, He might have passed away at once by rightful title straight up to the right hand of God.

But He came down again that He might take up those He was going to make His brethren. People often say, "Jesus is my brother." He never was my brother. We are His brethren now. "*He* is not ashamed to call *us* brethren." We are all a new type now. You have Him first as the unique One, but now it is: "Behold I and the children which God hath given me."

How God in wonderful grace has turned all that man did into blessing! The very soldier's spear is now turned round to bear evidence to the fact of what this One was. Such is God's grace that He has really turned man's sin into richest blessing. Man refused Christ life here; he took it away from Him; but God gave it to Him there, and to us in Him.

The order is, that first Christ has died; He gives up His life; next, He is raised from the dead on the third day; and then they saw Him go up into heaven. You have that distinctly be-

fore your minds, that man refused Him life here, and that God raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His own right hand, and gave Him glory; and, as to ourselves, if “we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

Now I have come to what I was leading to yesterday morning in the seventh of Acts, but there it is more intricate. We find Stephen, outside the apostles, offering Christ from the glory to come back again. He is the rightful King here, but He has been refused a place here. He had not yet sat down on the right hand of God, but we know from another place He is set down now. I turn on to the eighth chapter to see what the order is there. We have seen in the seventh, that the One whom God sent into the world they refused when surrounded with humiliation as Joseph’s son; and that now they will not have Him when He is offered to them in glory.

Now in the eighth you get another thing. We find the eunuch going in the opposite direction to the Queen of Sheba. She came from Ethiopia—“the uttermost parts of the earth,” as it is called—to hear the wisdom of Solomon. He has his back turned to Jerusalem, and as he is on his way to Gaza, the angel of the Lord says to Philip, you go down there; the Lord tells the evangelist to go to Him. He read Esaias the prophet: “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is *taken from the earth.*” See where he stops; it is at a most momentous

point. The real significance in the action of the eunuch is this, that, the moment he saw he had to deal with a Saviour who had not to do with the earth, he practically took the place in baptism of having nothing to do with it either. He says: If *His* life is taken from the earth I have nothing here; but I have that outside this whole scene which has contented and satisfied my heart; I am contented to be nothing—to be a slave, the servant of Queen Candace. *His* life is taken from the earth, and, as for me, I am satisfied to go to the *uttermost parts of it*.

And now see the progress in the ninth chapter, for the point I want to reach is “the testimony of the Lord.” In the fifth verse we get Saul of Tarsus saying: “Who art thou Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” The Lord now, as has been often said, connects Himself with the saints upon earth; it is not the saints in heaven. I see nothing but that one Man in all the saints on earth. The body is *Christ*. I do not understand anything about church militant and church triumphant. The distinction between the house and the body is this, that the Holy Ghost forms the body, and dwells in the house; and He dwells in the individuals that compose the body—in each member of it. The Lord says, That is me, that is me, each one that you are touching; I claim all that are mine to be connected with myself.

The character of the ninth of Acts is, that He walks into the scene, and says, *I am the only Man*. I walk into the scene and I claim to be *the Man*. I claim all to be mine.—He connects it with no previous dispensation. He is *Head of*

the creation in *type*, but in *fact* He is the *beginning* of the creation. I only see that one Man. I look round and I see but Him. As I look at every child of God I see but that one Man.

And for myself, is there any fear in my heart when I know that I have a Saviour in the glory? The nearer I am to my Saviour the safer I am. When I know that I have a Saviour in the brightest place, I am most at home in the brightest place.

Well now mark what the effect of this is upon the apostle. "Straightway he preached *Jesus* in the synagogues"—the *Man* whom he had seen. The word is *Jesus*—not *Christ* as we have it; it is *Jesus* as Son of God. One dwells on it with unutterable delight! God looked down here once to see a Man who met His mind. And now I look up unto glory, and I see there with delight that very Man who met it here seated at His own right hand, and I trace the blessing to the heart that sent the blessing.

So Saul goes into the synagogues and says, "Jesus is the *Son of God*." This is the first time it is preached. We cannot stay to dwell upon it, interesting as the subject is. We come to "the unity of the faith and the unity of the knowledge of the *Son of God*." "God dwells in him and he in God" is yours, if you believe that Jesus is the Son of God. I have got to the dignity of His person, and He leads me to the place where He is. This is "the rock" on which the church stands.

A great many people say they are "on the rock." I do not believe they know what the rock is. I say, Do you know that you are connected

with the Son of God? If you are, then why do you not give up all the trifles here? Trifles? Yes! *Everything* is a trifle here when you see what you are connected with. I am of that Man; He is my Head; everything falls into insignificance before such a thought.

Well now I turn to a chapter in the second of Corinthians—the twelfth—where we find: “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” Here the apostle is speaking of a fact. Here he has to do with a Man in heaven. It is not only that I have to do with a Saviour who is not here, but I know where the Saviour is; here the apostle is taken *into* heaven.

This place does not minister to the flesh at all; there is no place for it here. If the flesh comes in in singing a hymn, then you are not in the presence of the Lord; if you were in the presence of the Lord, flesh would be ignored. Here I do not know whether I am in the body or not; therefore the true character of ecstasy is that it has no sound. Joy has a sound. Ecstasy is the rapt sense of the soul detained in the presence of the One who delights it. Worship is delight in the Person who controls it.

In this twelfth of Corinthians I have got to do with Christ on an entirely new ground. A man in Christ is taken into a new sphere. He does not

know whether he is in the body or not; he is sustained there without knowing how. But when he comes back to consciousness he knows well enough that he is in the body. When he comes down, instead of finding that it is a higher thing for himself in humanity, he finds it is a lower thing. He has a deeper sense of how degraded he is as a man, because he has a more exalted sense of what he is in Christ.

All this was "fourteen years ago." He takes time to ripen before he can speak of it. I doubt not he had a great deal to be broken of during those fourteen years.

I would like to dwell a little on the epistle to the Ephesians, as perhaps it may help me. In it the apostle tells us what the calling is—the vocation, which I divide into seven heads. The first is the place: I bless "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"—those blessings in Christ which the apostle has got here in the twelfth of Corinthians. The second is individual relationship: He has "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." The third is the inheritance: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." The collective relationship of the body is the fourth: "He gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." The fifth is the new man: He has "abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to

make in himself of twain one new man." Now you have got the new place and the new Man; the earth is not our place, and the man here is not our man. Sixth, the Spirit: "Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." He is the only link and connection that we have with Christ. What is your connection with man? The flesh. What connects you with Christ? The Spirit. It is quite simple; all the feelings in the world would not connect you with Christ; it is the Spirit only. Then seventh: we "are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." That is the calling.

Now mark, you are to walk in all the power of this calling; you are to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called." Therefore there follows in the end of the epistle a code of practice suitable to the calling brought out in the beginning of it. Romans is the justified man, and the practice there is suitable to a justified man. Ephesians is the heavenly man, and you get practice suitable to a heavenly man. These are the only two codes of practice that I know of; all the rest of the epistles are corrective. Here, in Ephesians, we get the apostle in the prison in Rome, and the Lord says to him: Now you come and instruct the church about what it is to be connected with the Man in heaven.

Now let me try to sum up what I have been saying, and to make plain what this testimony of the Lord is that we are not to be ashamed of.

It is quite simple that, as you are united to a Man in heaven, and heaven is the place that you belong to, therefore, as His body upon earth, you are not in any wise connected with anything here.

I am united to a Man in heaven so that I may know that all my thoughts, and joys, and expectations are in another scene—a scene that is foreign to my birth and condition here; I am not without association with all that is here, but I must ignore the man that is here, and the place that he is in.

As I was saying, the epistles with the exception of Ephesians and Romans are corrective. The Corinthians wanted to give the man his place; and they did it licentiously. The Galatians said: No, we will keep the man in order. They tried to make a *religious* man of him; they said, we will make him a *teetotaller*. Thus the Galatians were worse than the Corinthians. We must be like the emigrants going out to the new country who burned their ships as soon as they landed, to preclude all possibility of return. A buried man has nothing to show.—In Colossians the apostle is in an agony about their not holding the Head; for the great point is that I am united to a Man in heaven; that is the great truth. Then the epistle to the Hebrews has to do with earth.

The great point is that I am united to a Man in heaven. And the way in which that truth woke up again in the church any one can see who likes to read a paper that came out in the first part of "The Witness;" you will there find an account of the effect the truth of being united to a Man in heaven had upon a brother well known to us. He awoke one day with the thought, I have a Head in heaven; and if I have, there are many others all over this earth who have a Head in heaven too, and therefore we are members of

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each other, and form one body.

Now what is the consequence of this? and why should people be ashamed of it?—Why the fact is, that if this truth were acted out it would make you just like the man in ninth of John; no one would have him! he was no man's man! he is no member of society; he is only a man from heaven!

If I have a Head in heaven I have the Holy Ghost on earth, so that I cannot have the man here; I am connected with the Man there. I have come from heaven to carry out heavenly things; I am not a member of society. People say to me, But is not that a nice society? I say, I do not know anything about it! I am a man from heaven.—Why if I were a man for earth, a citizen here, merely looking at things around me, my heart would be broken. I would not allow a bit of cruelty; I would not let a horse be overladen, or a donkey beaten. Why life would be unendurable to me on account of the oppression that goes on on every side, were it not that I know I am delivered from it all—that I am a heavenly man.

Now the apostle says: Do not be ashamed of it. You must refuse the man that is here, for that man will not do at all; neither will the place do where that man is.—The Hebrews wanted to go back to earth. Well then, he says, if you do you will lose your priest. Christendom says, You must get your priest to go to heaven. No, says Hebrews, if you do not go to heaven first, you will not get your priest at all, for He is *in* heaven.

There is another thing that comes out in this

chapter: "all they that are in Asia are turned away from me." Where the apostle had laboured most, there they had all turned away from him. Why? because they had all dropped into Peter. Protestants respect Paul. They have just got St. Paul's in London to correct St. Peter's in Rome; justification by faith was recovered by them, but not a bit more. But a mere *building* to say that we refuse St. Peter's is a very small thing! What is at the bottom of it? It is just simply getting rid of heavenly truth. There is nothing Satan is so pleased at as this. If you want to escape suffering from Satan do not touch this truth. He will allow you to do any amount of earnest work you like; he will let you be earnest preachers, he will even take away opposition to the gospel, so long as you do not touch this.

Now God's thoughts are towards man, but He comes in in His own divine way to carry them out. God never takes a suggestion from man; He has His own mind and purpose to carry out towards me, and it is not what I say that will alter Him a bit; He has a distinct mind as to what He is going to do; He is a wise Father.

You will find if you stand forth in any little measure and say, I ignore the man here, I reckon him to be a thing gone, that in a moment you will have every one against you. Why, you say, if you saw a poor person would you not help him? It is not a question of that at all, I would do what the Lord in my circumstances, if I am in right ones, would have done to that poor person, not what he himself suggests to me. The effort of Satan now-a-days is to occupy

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people with good works, seeing after the poor, and things of that kind. You may not be able to understand it, but, the more heavenly your work, the less man will be able to see it, the less recognizable it will be. I am as clear as I am about anything, that, if you will walk in this path, you must in a certain sense be prepared to go alone. So the apostle says of himself: Only the Lord "stood with me."

There is a Man—God has a Man, a heavenly Man—that will measure you all, and He is not here. So I refuse the man here, because I belong to the Man in heaven, and I maintain Him here. I say, and I do not want to offend any here, but the highest thing to do—above all gift—is to *maintain the testimony*.

Suppose a disorganised army—an army that has been thoroughly beaten by the enemy, and all the soldiers hiding away in one corner or another, their accoutrements thrown aside, their uniforms discarded. Now, if some few of these gather together to recover themselves, what will be the first thing their officer will say to them? Why, Appear in your uniform! What is the use of getting together without showing who you belong to?

They say, You will limit your opportunities of usefulness. So you will. You will be a marked man; you will be no man's man. But I cannot help that; I am prepared to limit my opportunities because I have a higher thing than any work to do, and that is to maintain the testimony of the Lord.—Well, but what will be the effect of your course?—That separation will be more marked, and that, in the end, it will bring out

the truth that really will affect souls. You will be a good soldier enduring hardness; a wrestler striving lawfully for the mastery; and a husbandman labouring, and waiting patiently for the fruit.

But I must say a word on the different kind of snares that you will meet with, for I do not propose you a path of ease; but I do propose you a path of power. God never proposes anything that there is not power to meet. If I have power I do not mind a difficulty. A man of power says, I have got a greater force than your's to bring against you, so that I can crush your power, though I do not underrate it at all. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power."

Now a word on the different snares.—Satan is set upon turning us aside from that which is the highest thing. I see, all through Scripture, the different ways in which Satan tries to turn the people of God aside from the testimony.

The moment the path of faith began, that moment there was two classes of saints on the earth; Lot and Abraham for instance. One class took the ground of faith and maintained it; the other lost it; when it came to the greatest testimony they could not carry it out. Lot was a sad case; he does not seem to carry out anything; he was in the land, but looking to the earth.

For my own part I never press any man to take the ground that I take. I am not saying it is not a blessed place; indeed the greatest favour God can do a man, next to his own conversion, is to bring him into the place we are in.

I find that without taking this place, there is no occasion for faith; people can walk on just godly, without in some cases meeting any opposition at all; but if people would take this place, they would be not tolerated.

The second instance I come to is Jacob. He is a recoverer; he has to recover lost ground. He has gone back to the world—gone back to Syria, but he recovers the lost ground. If you are going back to the world—looking over green fields—then I say you have lost your calling. Jacob, I think, is a very interesting type of our position. At the end of the thirty-third of Genesis he has come back to the true standing, after the night of wrestling in which he found the power to take it; he has bought a field, and settled down at Shalem to rest. And this is the special snare of the brethren: they have learned the true standing, and the true power to maintain them there, and then comes the danger; you are not safe; take care that you do not sit down to rest a bit, and cease to be a stranger and a pilgrim. I see a great many brethren settling themselves quietly down there, and satisfying themselves by saying, I have come to the right place, I am in the right standing. But I say, What is your worship like? It is your altar that shows me the nature of your standing. It is Jacob's altar that I judge, for it is that tells where he is. He recognizes the true standing, but in his altar he only recognizes God in connection with himself on the earth, as the centre of his own blessing. He makes *himself* the centre, it is El-elohe-Israel. The testimony was what he had got in the twenty-eighth chapter:

there he had seen the ladder going up into heaven—he had seen God Himself there. When he gets back to Bethel, the whole scene changes—*God* becomes the centre of his worship; he calls it El-Bethel.

The first altar is just looking for God to show His interest in you—in relation to where you are in the circumstances of this life. Most people are judging and praising God by the way that He deals with them in the circumstances of this life. They will tell you, God did this for me, and that for me. If I were to sit down to have a talk with them, and were to ask them to tell me something of what God has done for them, the only thing they would talk to me about would be the mercies they had received from Him here—not a word about what he has given them in Christ—nothing but temporal things. When you look at the altar at Shalem, you find the man has forgotten his calling. If you are looking at temporal things, then you have ignored the Man in heaven. Jacob forgot his calling.

Then he goes to Bethel. In connection with his going there he has two oaks; one where he buries the earrings—sometimes we see the earrings *not* buried!—and the other where he buries Deborah. And now when he comes up to the true point *God* engages him—it is El-Bethel; he is occupied with God, and that is true worship.

Well, only two points more. One is the two and a half tribes. I see there are some who will fight for me, but they will not go a step over Jordan themselves; they will not transport all they have—their family, their property—on to that ground. They will take in your periodicals, they will stand up for your truth, but they will

not go in themselves.

I will not say more about that, but just turn to the second point. In the prophecy of Haggai the children of Israel had been hindered from building the temple; there was a cessation of the work in the house of God, whilst they were evidently most assiduous in doing their own work. They were in the right standing, but God's work was not the thing most in their mind, but their own individual blessing. This is very difficult to deal with. I see bowed down souls seeking comfort, who say, Oh I am praying and reading, seeking the Lord!—No, I say, you are not seeking the Lord; you are seeking joy, blessing for yourselves—not the Lord. “Seek the *Lord*, and his strength, seek his face evermore.” You have left out the thing that is of interest to the Lord—the house of God. Seek *that*, “and from this day forth, I will bless you.” It is not worldliness, but it is seeking earthly blessing.

And now where is your heart, and what is your thought and purpose in this day? There is one thing that addresses itself with distinctness to our heart, and that is: “Be not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me his prisoner.”

THE SECRET OF POWER.

2 KINGS, xiii. 14—25.

ELIJAH going up in a chariot of fire is not a bit more wonderful as a testimony to Elijah, than the grave of Elisha is to him for a testimony, when the man they were burying was cast into the prophet's sepulchre. "And when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood upon his feet." The same power of the Spirit, which caught up Elijah without dying, now wrought to vivify and send back a dead man to the earth, as a witness that the God of Elijah was equally with Elisha's dead bones in the *grave*.

Elijah is wearied, as we see, under the juniper tree; so God takes him away, and the mantle drops on Elisha that he may go on with the testimony. You must take up these two ministries, of death and of resurrection life, if you would ever lay claim to keep the testimony of the Lord.

I think of the jealousy for God of that blessed One on the earth, whilst as perfect too in the grace that could place Him side by side of the woman by the well; perfect in righteousness, perfect in grace, for "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." If I think of the testimony of the Lord in His life and death—that perfect testimony which has now come in by the Holy Ghost—such a testimony as that of a Man gone up into the heavens when he had glorified God, and finished the work that was given Him to do—

what do I see? I look at the Man passed into the heavens, and I see Him there, "the faithful and true witness" who was *never weary*.

And then another thing too, blessed be God! not like Elijah. He is not gone there alone. What I mark is this, that, now He is ascended, He calls us out in righteous title into the place where He is, and God sends the Spirit down as witness that all is between Him and us as it should be. Let that "nail in a sure place" be that on which everything hangs. If I say a word about the other nail of which we read in Isaiah, I can afford to see it go down, with all that came in with it of the old Adam. Oh! what a thing to say, I know a nail in a sure place, on which God hangs all His own "glory, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons."

Next I say a word about the earth. Oh! the contrast that there must be between the earth and the heavens—that earth that rejected Him! What a world it has been that has cast out the Son of God! It has impoverished itself beyond recovery. It has refused to be *loved*. God has spent all He could, on trying to recover man to Himself; but the perfection of the love of the Father's heart, and of Christ's, has only brought out the iniquity of the human heart. The cross is the proof that man is irreclaimable; and, if he could add an insult to what he did then, he will send a message after Him, by the martyred Stephen, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." In principle it is always, "Not this man but Barabbas."

What must men be who could come back to such a world again, with a Barabbas instead of the Christ of God? but that is what has been done!

If I take a glance at what those are who have taken a place with Christ rejected at the right hand of God, I find that I have a new order of men. What are they? "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation." You must look at the work of Christ, and measure it by the glory of God. It is the "Fellow" of *God* that I have before me; the One who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." And if He raised up that Man and seated him at His own right hand, what is the first act of the Father of glory from that place where He sits? I see He sends down the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost comes and rests on that little company at Pentecost to claim them for the Father and the Son; and are they not a new creation?

I do not want to look back to Adam except to ask, What was I? Miserable clay, only fit to display the wisdom of the potter. I say, Look at *Christ*! and not merely for shelter either; He *is* that, but I do not want to be sheltered by the glory; I have not a bit of the bad thing left to be sheltered. What are you to do with a bit of flesh? If there were a sin left what are you to do with it? If I look at myself—why everything that is outside Christ, is Adam the sinner. I ask is there a bit of that flesh which you brought into the world with you left? It was my *nature*, but I have nothing to do with that nature. What power is there in a *man* to overcome his fallen nature? He *is* overcome already, He is "sold under sin" by that sinful nature!

But look what God has wrought in the person of Christ on the cross. Is there a sin left? I do not want shelter, but death. The extinguisher is put on the old man judicially by God, and I do not want to look at it; the mischief is where we take it up to have a look. Resurrection does not *make* us one in life with Christ; it is because we *are* one with Him in life and righteousness that we are raised up. Do not let any one say, we *shall* be a new order of men; we *are* so now.

I get the descending One, the Holy Ghost sent down by the blessed Son of God gone up. The revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is necessary for the new testimony; I cannot do without the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

What is it that I have further to put off? I have simply to put off the image of the first man; the reproach of Egypt is rolled from us, and away we go, caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and like Him. I do not want shelter, but manifestation in glory. The person who is one with Christ, must be secure enough. I need not dwell on that.

But I have been taken away from what I meant to speak on: of ourselves and the heavens now.

I would say the heavens and the earth are necessary to a new order of beings. *He* wants the heavens, and it is the place where *we* worship. Everything has been adapted to what suits the new order of man. Where is the place in which you worship? "Inside the veil," if you know what that is. There is not a worshipper but is inside the veil. Do not talk of having "happy thoughts!" I want to know what produces them.

THE SECRET OF POWER.

Is it being inside the veil, and the right ones supplied?

And we go in, in what relation to God? I go in to learn not about my sins, but to prove what it is to be accepted in the sweet savour of Christ. I am afraid not many of us are abiding there. I only speak of that to make it plain to any here to whom it may not be so, what the thought is that we have as to worship. I state that you *must* go to heaven to worship, in the Holiest where God dwells.

Then, when we come back to look at earth again, as surely as ever we get into understanding the true meaning of it all, we shall see that Paul is in his right place in prison. Paul is as exactly in *his* place below, as the Lord is in *His* place above. The height reaches, and characterizes, the depth. The height to which you take a thing, is the depth to which it will fall. When Paul wrote his epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians their scope corresponded precisely to what the Lord Himself was, in the glory above the sun, which He showed him when He opened to him heaven.

Now come back to the second of Kings, to this little pictorial representation of a great thing. I get here, in principle, what we have been saying. Was there virtue wherever Elisha was? It was life out of death. Would you take life out of anything else? Not I! Not if we are true to Christ.

But who is this that quotes Elisha's words to him? "My father, my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" One, Joash, the king of Israel, comes down in faith to Elisha;

there was but one man to whom he could go. It is a wonderful thing to get the eye single enough to cling to Christ only, and to no body else. Faith will follow God, look to God, and none else. I will not look at this man's faith; whether driven or drawn, he has come to the right person; and, when I am there, whatever my difficulties may be, I say, It is nothing! provided Elisha be the true prophet of Jehovah, and our Jesus be really the Son of the Father. It is nothing!—If I take my place in the fourteenth of John, I find: "If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it." We are brought together.

But in prayer the point is, not that you may get an answer; *that* will come in as a consequence; but, that the power of God may come out, and that He may be glorified in the Son. If we are in the right place, and asking the right thing, the cream of our answer—do not forget it—is that God may be glorified, and the Son in whose name we ask.

I get this man saying, "My father, my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" And Elisha rises, sick as he was, and says to him: "Take bow and arrows; and he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, put thine hand upon the bow, and he put his hand upon it; and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands." "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." He says, I charge myself with the whole thing; I take it out of your hands into mine. He loves to associate Himself with us. There is the secret; there is the power. "*Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.*"

And what else does he say? "Shoot: and he shot." And see what Elisha pledged himself to. "He said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance." This is, as I said, "that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Elisha had taken the matter into his own hands. As surely as Elijah said to Baal's worshippers, "If there is a God, call upon *your* god," so now Elisha looks up and calls upon *his* God. And to you who know what it is to have His hand upon your hand, the word is, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." We shall be sure in our turn to be put to the proof, and, when faith is put to the test, as to its measure and quality, the word is then, "according to your faith be it unto you." I get the pattern of the right thing when Elisha's hands are upon his hands, and the opened window.

"He smote thrice and stayed!" Why? That was the measure of his faith. Oh, what a lesson. We are straitened in ourselves; you may know that by the pattern thing here. It is "according to your faith be it unto you."

Let us seek to encourage one another in the Lord. You will be put to the proof by God, but in what a blessed way. "Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times." Our faith will never come up to the spring head, but, however short it falls of what it might be, there is no such thing now as the Man who stands for us being "wroth" with us, like Elisha.

What are your expectations in the scene where you are, where everything is to be measured by that Man at the right hand of God? Do we stop at *our* three times, and think what *we* have done?

or go on to the five or six times, and see what *God* will do ?

In the second of Timothy Paul is instructing his son in the faith by the bow and arrows, just as Elisha was guiding Joash. The apostle had learned his lesson with the Lord alone, and could say: "Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities that the *power* of Christ may rest upon me." He then opens the window, or writes this epistle to Timothy, and bids him to shoot and to smite on the ground, putting his hands upon his son's hands, for God, he says, "hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power." Paul was himself a prisoner in the mouth of the lion; but he says, I go into the mouth of the lion in order that I may know the arrow of the Lord's deliverance in it. So God delivered the faithful servant!

DEATH WORKS IN US.

GENESIS 22. 1—14.

It has been remarked before that the life of Abraham is properly divided into three parts. The first is the land; the second, the heir; and here we come to the last, which is the greatest; and, though consecutive historically, they are nearly parallel typically. It is not simply the place, neither is it the Lord in the place, but we are now brought in to learn what it is practically to have our "faith and hope in God."

In speaking of Abraham here, I will first recite the simple case, and then how it is doctrinally true, and lastly how it is practically true.

First, here is Abraham entitled to everything that God had given him, but he is called to put all the lights out, with his own hands. There is nothing wrong in what he has, but he is to throw himself into darkness on this side, that he may have the light on the other side. He offered up his son, counting upon "God who raiseth the dead." He threw himself into darkness in this present scene, so that he might have the light in that. You must accept the darkness on this side if you are to have the light on that. When I present the fact that we have to do with the Man in heaven, that involves your placing yourself in darkness as to the man here: that is a tunnel.

The more we are in the tunnel, the more we are leaving the darkness behind us, and coming

to the light on the other side. The darkness is connected with what we are passing through. I do not want you simply to take hold of the fact that you are united to a Man in heaven, but I want your soul to accept the tunnel. I begin with the fact that I have to do with One in glory who is the light, and joy, and undivided resource of my heart; but, on the other hand, what do I accept in this present scene, but that all goes into darkness here in order that I may more enjoy the brilliancy of the light that is on the other side. You will find that practically we are all brought into the tunnel on this side. That is what Abraham was called to do, and he finds that it is God, as Jehovah-Jireh, that he has to do with: it is that same word that he says to Isaac as they are going up the hill; when he has reached the point he can say, The Lord will see to it; God will provide Himself a lamb.

Now let me just note one or two matters connected with it. I suppose even the youngest child could not read this chapter without being struck with the thought that it was no easy matter, this man going up day after day to reach a point where, with his own hand, he was to put out all that was cheering to him on earth. What sustained him, as with measured tread he advance up the hill? He says: I count upon God as I pass into the tunnel; I have to find my way through this impenetrable darkness.—He does not run at the thing; he does not hastily accomplish it; but it was day after day, step by step, and he reached it with his heart deepening in the fact, I have to do with God.

Oh, it is a wonderful thing! And, believe me,

when you come to speak of practice, the measure of your strength is the measure of the strait you go through with God. You say, I have gone through deep sorrow; but the question is whether you have gone through it with *God*—as counting upon *Him*. The strait you have passed through with God is the real measure of your strength; that is what it is in every case. Therefore the scripture says: “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the *trying* of your faith worketh patience.” It is *trying*, not *trial*. It is no trial to a horse to jump over a fence; he only really makes manifest what is already there. And your faith will be put to the trial, if you use the word in that way, but it is only *trying*, not *trial*—it is putting it to the test.

Abraham had this faith forty years before it was tried. There is forty years between Paul and James. James says he was “justified by works,” when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar.

Have you faith about a certain thing? Do you say, I have seen it and know it? Well, I say, you will be tried certainly; it may be thirty or forty years before you are, but it will come out in the end; you will certainly be tried.—The children of Israel were accustomed to earthly blessings, and the Lord shewed them that they were learning more by trial in the wilderness, where for forty years He suffered them to hunger and fed them with manna, “that they might know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live;” they found out thus

what God was, the One who was to be their succour in it.

So with Abraham here; it was the faith that he had before, that is now being put to the test. He had seen the star-spangled sky, and had said, I believe that. And now, says God, here is the heir, and a great many years ago you said you believed me; now I am putting you to the test: put him to death.

Death is that for which we have no remedy; and, what is more, there is no law of nature about death. It takes anybody, young or old—anybody; it does not come after a certain number of years; it is arbitrary. It is not a question of a thing that is mendable; it is not a thing within the compass of man; that is the reason it brings in God with it. He was to put him to death; he was to offer him up; he expected God to raise him from the dead; but, as far as he himself was concerned, he was to put himself into complete darkness. When death comes in, there is no remedy; God says, *I stand there; death is a thing beyond you; you cannot touch it.* The reason I speak of it now is, that this was the thing that was called for in Abraham. When we come to practice we find it is darkness, but the moment our eye rests upon Christ we get light in it.

Abraham here went into the tunnel; indeed he was more like a contractor making a tunnel for himself. He found a way through it to God; the way that faith penetrated through to get to the light on the other side. He could say: Well, I can take the darkness, I can bring it in with my own hand, because I count upon God who raises

the dead.—How this was fulfilled in the Lord !

The heart is not sufficiently honest about it. Did you not bring death into the world ? You have brought it in, for death was the judgment for sin. And yet people seem so surprized when death overtakes them: and we all have felt it. Well, who brought it in—this terrible thing—this anomalous thing ? What is the character of it ? Why, that “man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward ;” so much so that the poet says, “Every great thought is allied to melancholy.” That is what we have brought in ourselves. We are not only suffering from the judgment of God, but we cannot look at the dearest object we have on earth without thinking, Death may lay its finger on it, death may sweep it away. We have brought it into the world ourselves, so we ought not to be surprized at its overtaking us. Thus it is that the man who possesses most in this world is the most miserable. Soloman says: “Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.”

Now the Lord has come in and what He has done is this. He was the Son of the Father—He was the perfect Man who answered to the mind of God ; but He says, I am not going to abide alone. I do not think we estimate what a terrible thing it was for Christ to die ; He, the Creator, the Prince of Life ! We do not estimate what it was for Him to be brought into the dust of death ; He says: “Father save me from this hour ; Thou hast brought me into the dust of death.”

On the Lord's day morning, when the saints

are gathered round the Lord's table, the heart is sad and grieved as one sees their demeanour and their dress. If it were one of their own relations that had died, their whole demeanour would be different; so would their dress be different. And we go there not only to remember the death of our greatest benefactor, but that He *died for me*. I say nothing shows the unfeeling nature of our hearts more, than the way we take the death of Christ. You cannot meet a greater death than the death of Christ. Death has done its worst; the greatest death I can ever have to meet is the death of the Lord. I often prepare myself for the death of friends in thinking of this. Christ's death has thrown the whole of this scene into a new order of things; it threw man out, and cast the terrible shade of His own death over all here. I am in the scene where Christ has died, and the table of the Lord is the avowal of this, that I have passed from the man that is here, to the Man that has died for me. I "show the Lord's death until He come."

It is the wonderful centre point of Christianity. In baptism I renounce myself because of the death of Christ; but the Lord's supper is the avowal that I not only touch Him in His death, but that I have communion with His body, and with His blood. I am like the very Man that was here upon earth; I have His very nature. I have reached Him through His death. "Father save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour."

He is the antitype of both Abraham and Isaac. He was the One who met all the mind of God, but He says, I will give it all up; with my own

hand I will put out the light. It was His own action, and therefore at the supper He "*gave thanks.*" He was the most wonderful impersonation of divine beauty as a man, but He says: I will let it all go; and, not one shade of regret, I will give thanks; this is my body which is for you; this is my blood which is shed for you.

The characteristic expression of the Lord's supper is that we have passed from the man that is here. So says the apostle to the Corinthians: I have shown you your folly; now I speak as to wise men. "The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" It is through Christ's *death* that I reach the Man that is there, and thus I am referred back to the sixth of John, and eat His flesh and drink his blood.

They all bungled about this from the beginning. Every one says, We like to be like Jesus, and I agree with it, but how do you work it out? I say, I never can reach Him but through His *death*;—death of judgment, and death of calamity too. I have communion with the blood of Christ, and I have communion with the body of Christ. I make a way through; I go down into the darkness that I may find Him at the other side. *He* goes down into it. *When* is the Son of Man glorified? When He goes down under all the weight of our judgment.

He is more careful to maintain the glory of God—what is due to Him—when He takes that place, than to secure my deliverance. He answers so completely to the requirements of God, He will not weaken any of them; for indeed He

is more occupied, if I may so say, with maintaining the glory of God, than with the benefit that will accrue to me from it. He has entered into this; He has gone down into the judgment, and made a way through it; He has been raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, and has brought in the light of another day.

He is now the One to impart eternal life—life that was now to be imparted with a new order of things. Life was connected with blood; now it is connected with the Holy Ghost: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” I have a life now that is on the other side of death, on the other side of the tunnel, a life that can go through it, because the Life that has gone through it is our life. As you get in the third of John: “The Son of Man *must* be lifted up.” He has opened the way through, and now He imparts life to us; death is on our side, but life on His.

And He has given me the light of the eternal day to enjoy that eternal life—divine capacity to enjoy God without any languor whatever. It is an entirely new thing imported; He has broken the power of death and abolished it, and He has brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel. It is not that I get a man like Lazarus coming out of it, for he was bound with grave clothes; but the Lord has broken the whole power of death; the napkin about His head was laid aside.

What I want now definitely to bring before you is this: that the Lord Jesus Christ has gone into death, and you have really to accept the fact. You all know the benefit of His death, but will you go the road? Will you take the tunnel?—You

say Oh ! I will have all the benefit of it soon.—No doubt you will ; but what about it now ? Look at the apostle ; he says : Always bearing about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in me.

God will never let any soul be able to say that he is neglected. He gives you a blow sufficient to make you understand His will, and, if you do not bow to that blow, He will not give you another for perhaps four or five years. He says, Well if you will not bow, I will let you alone. But, if you do bow, He says, I will never take my hand off you. “ We who live are *always* delivered unto death.” He never takes His hand off.

I know I used to think, Well, the Lord will take His hand off after this ; I shall have good times when once this trial is over ; I will just live this out, and then I shall have a run of fine weather ! And so it was for a time ; but, the moment I began to bend, down came another stroke, and I came to understand that it is, “ We who *live* are always delivered unto death ;” I found out that it is, If you bend, I will give you another stroke, but I will help you through it. It is “ *always* delivered,” and you brought it in ; there is a justice in it.

The leader of a forlorn hope says, “ Death or glory ;” the Christian says, Death *and* glory. There are only two true things, *death* and *glory*—not death *or* glory. It is not only that Christ has answered to my sins, but He has entitled me to the inheritance of glory. It is plain no person can appreciate glory except as he knows

death. I see many people who know little or nothing of it, and I say, you have never yet tasted what *death* is; I do not mean bereavement, so much as a true sense of what the death of Christ is.

Now you *believe* in the benefit, but are you *enjoying* it? I do not believe you ever will, until you take the tunnel, and get the light on the other side.

But, you say, will you tell us what is the tunnel?—Why, throw everything here into the dark, that you may have the light there. I walk right into it; I am looking for the light at the other side; but then, if I do, I must throw the light here into darkness. “Thou wilt show me the path of life, in Thy presence is fullness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” What loss if I gain the sense of eternal life—eternal brightness? I have my heart comforted by that blessed One with the joys that accompany that life which He has brought in, and it is then a small thing to throw all here into the shade. Any man who is trying to enjoy this present life is not enjoying the other.

You say: Am I to give up this or that? It is not a question of what I am going to give up; that is *surrender*, and I am not saying anything about surrender. Jephthah was as wrong as Abraham was right; if you do such things you will be made weak. But I accept death; that is the great thing; it is all darkness here; the true character of this scene is death. The greatest One who was ever on this earth died from off it; He entered into death and thus He throws a shade over all this scene, and I do not

expect anything but death here.

Then am I to be melancholy? Not at all! I pass from it into a scene of settled enjoyment—of perennial brightness; not the coming and going. Saints have not the sense of perennial brightness; they are not sensibly united to Christ; and, as a consequence, they are often unhappy and dull if the meeting is not a happy one. I am often happier at an unhappy meeting than at a happy one, because then I rise from circumstances to the One who is the source of brightness, and I say, I am happy in the Lord, though I am not at all happy in the way you are going on. Instead of finding the “joints and bands,” I have to fall back to the Lord, the source of them. The state of the bride in the Canticles, is just that; when He is present all is right. But I am never dissociated from Him; I am united to Him; I have to do with Him. Instead of finding that I am contributed to by the scene through which I am passing, I seek for nothing from it; I am satisfied with Himself; my most blessed and happy time is to be in solitude with Himself; all my power to enjoy is in Himself.

Well, it is in proportion as you accept the tunnel now you will enjoy the glory afterwards—the light of the day that is coming. It is not always necessarily bereavement; the apostle’s “death”—that to which he was delivered—was, I think, persecution; it does not always mean bereavement.

I pass on now to the effect of the doctrine. *Doctrinally* we must accept the fact that we have to do with death; you must bring death before your

soul in order to enhance what Christ has done for you. I take three aspects of this. First the passover in Egypt; then the Red sea; then Jordan.

First, the blood was shed. The person was to go in and shut the door, and eat the lamb roast with fire. Had not he to do with death? I say that all the loss of souls is that they have not to do with death.—Oh, I am saved by the blood! you say. Very true, but staying thus you will never get out of Egypt.

Then I come to the Red Sea, where all the enemies were drowned; and I walk through it with all the assurance that Christ has first walked through it for me. You have touched it; you have been made conversant with it; it is not that you can, as it were, pass it lightly from you.

And then I come to the Jordan, and I have to walk across it, with this difference as compared with the Red Sea, that I do not see a drop of water at all. And there I am over the tunnel.

Now what is a dead man really? A dead man is one who has neither a hope nor a fear. Have you done with prospects? Prospects are far harder to get rid of than possessions, because possessions you have, and know the value of, but prospects you do not. It is a grand thing if you are done with prospects.

Now I do not believe that simple ability will ever rise to any eminence; there must be ambition also. Many men have ability who have not ambition; but it is your aspirations which mark your destiny. It is a great loss to the natural character not to have ambition; if you have no

ambition, you will not apply yourself to a thing ; but, if you have, you are sure to apply yourself. You will find that the most eminent men are the most laborious. The higher the bird goes, the more strain there is upon his wing.

You say, What are you going there for ? I am going because the Spirit of God leads me.—But He will lead you through Jordan !—Ah never mind that ! I have lost everything, I have neither a hope, nor a fear.

I find most people cannot give up their expectations ; you have not lost attractions here—links to the scene. It will not do for you to say, I will stand and *look* over ; they had to *walk* across Jordan. I have traversed the place where I have been dead myself ; I have traversed it with my eye upon the One who has abolished it. I do not

“Stand shivering on the brink afraid to launch away.”
I have the enjoyment before me of that land that is mine. I have got onto the ground of God, and that land is mine—*mine* before I enjoy it. It is not that I get it before I go in, but it is mine before I realize it.

So much for it doctrinally. Now I come to it *practically* ; what it is to express it ; what it is to a person when he really accepts it.

How differently we all view things here ! I say to a person: What are you looking forward to in this world ? He tells me: I am looking forward to the time when I shall be able to give up my business, and have some quiet little country place to which I can retire with my family.—Oh then *you* are not looking for the tunnel ! Paul says, I see the martyr's course and the stake

before me ; the fellowship of his sufferings, and being made conformable unto His death.

I say to a man who has friends, what would you do if they were all to go ? How would you stand if everything went ?—I have One who never can go—One who has won my heart ; and that One will group round Himself every single worthy object of my heart in that bright morning of resurrection ; there they are ! If my heart is wrenched when the calamity of death befalls me, it is there I learn to know the One who will walk beside me, as surely as He walked beside Mary. And He does not do it like the benevolent man of this world, who would do anything to relieve a hungry man, but who does not at all know what his feelings are. There are very few who would say, I will suffer hunger so that I may know what a hungry man feels. But this is what the Lord has done ; He has made Himself familiar with my circumstances that He might be able to sympathize with me in them.

If you only accept the Lord's supper all comes easy. The fact is I have changed my man. I desire to cultivate the knowledge of this more. I often come from the Lord's table with a sort of a shudder at the thought that I have to deal again with the man of the earth, that I have to go out again into the midst of men to be jostled and pushed by the man for whom Christ died.—It is "the communion of the blood of Christ." It is to me one of the solemn thoughts that surround the soul at the Lord's table, that He walks into the midst Himself, to see how His people are remembering His death. The angels look on

with wonder, as they see His people gathered together in solemn conclave to remember His death.

I will take now an example in the fiftieth chapter of Genesis, to show you how you really have to learn practically the tunnel in order that you may know the value of Christ. There is one thing that is as clear as daylight, and that is, that a great many people have gone through trials that have not done them a bit of good. A person goes into trial, but God only knows how that man will come out; in most cases they come out of it worse than they went in. If you become occupied with your sufferings, if you get full of yourself, you will come out worse than you went in; but if you are *exercised* by it, "*afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness," as if you had not done anything wrong at all. But, if you do not get the sympathy of Christ with you in the trial, you will come out worse than you went in. It is a well-known thing, that going through the world without sympathy makes the hardest of men; the favourite of the family, is always the most loveable; it often makes them selfish, but still they are loving.

Joseph was the best of the brothers. Never was such a brother!—I ask every person in this room, Do you know Him—the true Joseph? Are you intimate with Him?—Joseph's brethren never knew his heart. When did they learn it? When death came in—when "their father was dead." Then they said, Joseph will hate us. You have not yet learned what Christ is!—Now Joseph wept, and he spake to their hearts: "I

will nourish you and your little ones." And when does this happen? After they had been living seventeen years upon his bounty: then they entered the tunnel; light comes in, and brings out these two things; Joseph wept, and his brethren spoke to him.

But now look at what happened. Seventeen years has transpired, so that there was no question as to his being their *saviour*.—But has the death of your father so come in that there is no screen between you and the Lord Jesus Christ? I am then practically brought into such close quarters with Him, that I have discovered His heart at the very same time that I have discovered my own enormity. Thus the two things come out together. And how do they come out?—Simply by death coming in, and never could they come out any otherwise.

I next take the widow of Sarepta in the seventeenth chapter of the first of Kings. Elijah is here a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is now looking out for a home with a poor Gentile. He says: Her misery has touched my heart; I will go to her, and there I will find a home.—She is seeking two sticks that she may make a meal for herself and her son, that they may eat it and die. And what can any of us speak of more than one meal? If even that! Here was a heart that was trying to make the best of life while it lasted, and that was only for one meal. I am going to die, so I may as well make the best of it while it lasts; a short life and a merry one!

But Elijah knocks at the door: May I come in?—Yes, come in, and very glad. He comes in,

and she, and her son, and the prophet eat many days ; a full year goes by ; a spring, a summer, an autumn, a winter go over them—every variety of season before the trial comes ; they had a very enjoyable time.—But what happens now ? Death comes in ;—the tunnel. And you find she is really not clear about anything ; she says, You are come to call my sin to remembrance. Elijah stretches himself upon the child—Christ's own action in joining Himself to the dead ; the child's soul returns to him again, and Elijah comes down and says: There is your son alive ?—And now she can say, I have been in the tunnel, I have learned in it that you are a man of God ; I have learned what your heart is ; I see that life is come out of death.

Let me say, in passing, that the chastening spoken of in the twelfth of Hebrews is not in connection with wrong doing, but with right doing. It will do you good, you will think less of yourself in future, but it is those who are suffering for righteousness ; it is resisting unto blood striving *against sin*. “ My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him.” Neither be a duck that does not mind the rain, nor a hen that is miserable in it, but say, I am looking for the benefit that is to accrue to me from this very painful circumstance.

When the widow of Nain lost her only son, she lost her last link to earth. We are so constituted that if the heart has twenty-one links, and twenty of them are broken, it will still hang on to the twenty-first ; and this is where the trial comes in ; lose the twenty-first and all is over. The mean-

ing of the word Nain is beautiful; it means pleasantness. The Lord comes in at Nain at the most solemn time that you can conceive; the least prop of the broken heart—of the widowed heart has failed. Well it was *now* that life was to come in. Life and incorruptibility have been brought to light.

I see people shrinking from it, but the word is, "Count it all joy," for I have got the strength of Christ in it; I have faith in what He is to me there.

Now I pass on to take Jonah as an example of another kind. Jonah is a servant who will not do the Lord's will. Well, says the Lord, I will bring him down to death; I will bring him down to where he cannot do one single thing; nothing but death before him, and death too with a bad conscience.—Then Jonah prays to God, and says: "I am cast out of thy sight, yet will I look again to thy holy temple." And now Jonah comes up again, having learned death upon *himself*.

But he has to learn death in a double way. Sometimes I know death only in myself, and then I learn to be devoted. When I learn that God is absolutely for me, then I am absolutely for Him; it brings out devotedness to God in me when I have learned that God is for me. But many a devoted man is like Jonah when he comes up; he is full of God's work, but he is not *soft*. He must be softened. God *will* soften me here; I have a double death to learn.

Now Jonah rests under the gourd, and finds his consolation in it, and his affections drawn out towards it; and God says, I have drawn out

your affections ; now I will take it all away.—Jonah is a plain, honest man, and he says, I do well to be angry.

And it is ever thus. It is double death—double suffering ; one connected with the circumstances, the other, with the person. When you are suffering from sickness it has a different effect upon you to what it has when you are suffering in your surroundings. It is like Gideon's fleece ; at one time death only on the individual ; at another, death all around us. It is a terrible thing to have to learn that we can survive the death of everything here ; but then death has come in, not to bring this out, but that it may *cast you upon God*. This is the virtue of it, and death has come in that it may bring it out.

Well, one more example. Hezekiah had been the servant of God for fourteen years—twice seven ; and then God said to him : Now you are to set your house in order, for you are to die and not to live ; now you are to go into the tunnel. And Hezekiah is the most abject picture of misery. He says: Like a crane or a swallow so do I chatter.—Why ?—Because all his links were *here*.

And do not imagine that this is a peculiar case. At many persons' death beds there is often a wonderful loosening from all here. At first the work may be very slow, but as soon as they come to the point, It is all gone here, then it is all bright there. There are often those who have a physical fear of death, but the nearer they come to it the less they care about it. The sad part of many death beds is, that, instead of being happy at the prospect of going to be with Christ, they

are at first quite inconsolable at the thought of death. I think the death beds of most the saints in this day are lamentable exhibitions; no joy; just quiet peace at the most; showing how little they know of the One they are going to.

Let me take another example: that of Paul in the first of Phillippians. He says: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. I can take the tunnel with cheerfulness. I have not got a single link here upon earth; Jerusalem was my gourd, and a very strong link it was; but that is gone, and I can take the tunnel cheerfully.

I find many persons will talk of the Lord's coming who cannot look at their own side of it at all. Are you quite ready to go? I will look at that side. I long to depart, I have nothing to stay for; all the strings are cut, and the balloon is ready to go.—Well, if you are ready to go, you were never so fit to stay; you are not fit to stay until you are ready to go. The man who has ties here must be *warped*. Surrounded with family ties and links, he feels how hard it would be to have to leave them, not only on his side, but on theirs. The apostle says, I am ready to go; I have not one single thing to detain me, it is *better* to be with Christ, *far* better.

Then, when you come to the moral dealing, do not shrink from it. The only thing that can make the glory true to your heart is death here. The proper setting for the diamond here is death. As I walk through the tunnel I am learning the blessedness of that One who has brought in the glory to be my light in it. The true place morally for us is, as Peter says, that of death.

“Christ suffered for us in the flesh. Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.”

If Christ suffered for you in the flesh, what are you going to do? Are you going to minister to the flesh? It is a most monstrous thing to say, I will minister to the flesh for which Christ died. I, who am Christ's member! But you say, my *spirit* is all right. Yes, but your *body* is a member of Christ. Would you put on it an ornament that *Christ* would not put on? Would you go to a flower show? It is your *body* that is a member of Christ. Am I to put the members of Christ in an unholy position?—I am going to melt my body into glass, that I may be so transparent that the life of Christ only may shine out in it.

If you were thus faithfully going on, instead of finding things to invite and attract you, you would find that they were cut down, and that you were shut out from them. What your taste is in most, you suffer in most; so that where you are naturally most alive, is the very place you will find most death. Paul in the twelfth chapter of the second of Corinthians goes into the third heavens, and he comes down and finds: I am made nothing of; I am cut short in the very thing I was eminent for.—I am made little in humanity where I am made most in Christ. Where I had my natural power, there death has come in. Paul was a very energetic man; he ended by being shut up in prison.

I close with that as the moral. We know not when we may meet again, but we know Him who has made the way through the tunnel; we know the brightness of that scene where Christ is—the brightness of that eternal day; but, if you want

to deepen your sense of it, you must accept the tunnel—accept all here as a waste; throw all the light here into darkness, that you may have the light beyond you.

I often see that while people talk of making Christ their *object* they do not make Him their *mark*. Now a mark is a thing that I see; you cannot have a mark unless you can see it. If you take Christ as your mark you cannot get a higher. If you can take the highest fence, of course you will be able to take the next, which is lower. Christ, “for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Then what place do *you* expect? Nothing but a place of suffering; and I do not expect any mitigation of it.

Then do I steel my heart against everything that is beautiful? Not at all; but I accept what is *true* of myself. I am brought now into a path where there is “fulness of joy;” but that joy is at His “*right hand*.” You have to refuse to indulge yourself here; the smallest indulgence in a certain sense is mischief. The world neglects the body at one time and indulges it at another; but the body is the Lord’s, and I take the proper care of it—methodical care of it—because it is His; but I do not indulge it; “Christ *suffered* in the flesh.”

When a person argues, What harm is there in doing anything? I say, Stop, that is the flesh! there is no use saying any more about it. I have to do with Him who is all the source of life and power, and in whose presence is “fulness of joy.”

The more I go into the tunnel—the more I cast everything into the shade here—the more I know of the glory beyond. The Lord lead our hearts to know what a real thing it is to walk through this world in all the joy of Him, who has opened up a way through this wilderness into the light, and joy, and blessedness of the living God.

The world could not understand Christ; but He knew the world thoroughly. He was ever mixing with everybody, but always *Himself*, and never of the world; and we are by rights as much strangers in it as He was. Flesh, and Satan; and the world always go together; but he was ever drawing round Him everything that was of God, and judging all that was not. If you were a great man you would get a good place in an inn, if you were a little man you would get a little place; but He got *no place at all*. Have your souls got the thorough conviction that you have none either? and that all that you have got to do in it is to *overcome*.

Even if we do not cling to the world, how it clings to us! If Christ had His place it could not. If it were last night that the Lord Jesus had been put to death by the world, would any of us be hail fellows well met with it? What matters it whether it was last night or 1800 years ago? Some are insisting on belonging to this world and to Christ too. I say you are wonderful people if you can. Christ could not. All I do is to get through it as earnestly and as fast as ever I can.

(J. N. D.)