

THE
GIRDLE OF TRUTH.

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.”—Eph. vi.

VOL. I.

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A WORD TO THE READER.

Dear reader, let me ask you to read the scriptures referred to in the various passages that come before you in this little publication, whether referred to in the way of illustration or of proof. With this, (and prayer for God's wisdom,) what you read will be plain; without it there is but little hope of your understanding it. Whatever can be understood without *attention* will be read without profit; but what may

seem difficult on a first reading, will ordinarily be easy on the second: and be assured that what is presented to you in these pages was never intended to be read as a newspaper, and then thrown aside. It only remains for me to commend you and this little volume to the blessing of God, who has permitted it to be brought to that measure of completeness, in the first year of its publication, of which such a work is susceptible.

EDITOR.

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THE

GIRDLE OF TRUTH.

ADDRESS.

THE first requisition in connexion with the Christian's call to "put on the whole armour of God," is to stand, having his loins girt about with truth; and few Christians, who think at all, will deny that in the character of the present times there is a special reason to heed the exhortation. But it must not be supposed, from the title adopted, that those who have commenced this little work, think, for a moment, that they can, through its pages, supply this part of the armour. The whole of the revelations of God, in His word, come under the compre-

hensiveness of this title ; and according to his exigency will the Christian, who studies that word with the simple intent to do God's will, be furnished from its various parts with this girdle. But since it is proposed, as God may give ability, to present in the following pages, in a plain and simple form, truth drawn directly from the divine word, and truth that may advance believers practically in the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is hoped that the title, thus modified, may be allowed, and not be misunderstood.

The necessity for such a publication has from various quarters been pressed upon those who have undertaken it, and, in attempting to supply the need, they may state, that whilst truth suited to help believers in "building up themselves on their most holy faith," may form the chief part of that which is

communicated, it is not intended to exclude the presentation of the "grace and truth" of the gospel of salvation, nor prophetic subjects, so far as they bear upon the Church's hopes, and Christ's glory, and the world's solemn prospects.

It is intended to publish a number monthly, if the Lord will, and sometimes, if need be, a double number; and the desire of those concerned in its publication is that the poor and the simple, especially, may find such instruction to their souls as God may own, and as may result, through His blessing, in them, and in all who read it, in a better knowledge of Christ's worth, and that thus His name may be more set by.

To say more is unnecessary, as the character of the work must be gathered from a knowledge of its succeeding numbers.

HOW A BELIEVER IS "DEAD UNTO SIN, BUT ALIVE UNTO GOD."

Rom. vi.

Grace always sets us in liberty. Even in holiness, liberty is the character of its separation. It is liberty from the bondage of sin. It is willing, joyous, consecration to God.

This chapter is most practical, yet deep, very deep, as everything is that comes from God. For everything that comes from God returns to God. Man is his own end by nature. All his thoughts and actions begin and end with *self*. Christ could not come down here and walk in righteousness without doing everything *to God*. So the incense of "the meat-offering" went all up to God. No doubt the priests smelt the sweet savour, but yet, as offered, it went all up to God. So this new life, of which the chapter treats, coming from God, goes to God. It

brings forth fruit, of course, but that is not its end. As it is in Ephesians v, 2, "Be ye followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love." That is christian morality. God's nature, God's life, expressed in men. Life that flows from God and must go to God. But it is added, "as Christ also hath loved us and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice *to God* for a sweet smelling savour." The life God gives goes to God. And when that is wanting, there is nothing. Beloved, that is everything—because a man is not what he does, but what his motive in doing it is. Two men may do the very same thing from the most opposite reasons: one, for example, may labour for his family, another, to spend what he earns on sinful pleasures. How different the act, though they do the same thing, and equally well, for their employer! Everything in the new nature goes back to God. Hence we have to judge ourselves. For even the Christian, when walking blamelessly before men, may suffer other things

than simply *pleasing God* to come in and spoil the sweet odour. Oh, how dreadful, when self comes in and spoils the odour!—it may be not to others, but to ourselves.

In the 3rd chapter of this epistle we get the way in which the blood of Christ met actual sins, whether of Jew or Gentile. In the 4th, we have the full character of christian faith,—reposing in God, who had come in power, and had raised one who was under death to His own right hand. Looking at Jesus as a man under death, we see divine power coming in and raising him up. In the 5th chapter, this principle is applied to justification; and we have the joy which is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost. Then the law, which is contrasted with grace, and was brought in by-the-bye, after man had become a sinner, itself righteous, and thus demonstrating the sin of man. There are two ways in which man might stand before God; he could be righteous, or he can be saved. There is no other way. He could be, indeed,

innocent, I mean, as Adam was; but by the entrance of sin that is lost for ever. So now he can only stand on the ground of sovereign grace. The law is a good law; and if lived in, it would make any man happy—it would make angels happy. For to love God with all one's heart, and one's neighbour as one's self, is practised in heaven. But it could not, in the form in which it was given at Sinai, be given to an innocent Adam. For the law always supposes the sin to be there, and it comes in to bring out its real character. Having shown us that as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous; having thus shown us that God traces the family of sinners up to Adam, and the family of righteous up to Christ; he takes up, in this 6th chapter, the objection, that this seems to make it indifferent how we walk. For, if by one man's obedience men are made righteous, and we are looked at in the head to which we belong, our actions are no matter, not being the

ground of our acceptance. The flesh would say this. For the flesh will turn everything to evil. It will take the law, which was given to *convict of sin*, to make out *righteousness* by it; and grace, which is the power and way of holiness and communion with God, it will turn into an occasion for sin. Thus we have Adam and Christ brought before us as the two heads of the two families of men. But Adam becomes a sinful man—sin has been accomplished in his condition ere he becomes a head. Christ, too, accomplished righteousness ere He becomes the head of His family. And as we come into the state which was accomplished in Adam, so do we into that which was accomplished in Christ. And as there was a life in us which liked the state in which we found ourselves by Adam, even so, when we find ourselves justified in Christ Jesus, there is a life in us which likes this state.

The apostle's answer, then, to the use the flesh would make of the truth of our being made righteous by another's obedience, as being in the head

Christ, is drawn from the very truth which gave rise to the objection. The Christ, in whom we are, has died and risen again. "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" In Christ we have died to sin. It is never said that we ought to die to sin, but that we *have died* to it. We are set in Christ. Where is my place? In Christ, dead and risen again. If I have this justification, it is in Him in whom I have possession of this life. If I have not the one, I have not the other. The apostle is not now talking of motives. He is laying down what *must be* from the nature of our union with Christ. If I believe that I am saved by the blood of Jesus, then, I find in the blood, put on my ear, &c., a motive to walk in consistency with its claims. But here, he is not talking of motives, but of resurrection. How have you got this justification? By death and resurrection. I am treating you as dead, for Christ is dead, and you are in Him. If I am dead, I cannot live in that to which I am dead.

That is the doctrine. We are to mortify our *members*, but *we* are not commanded to die.

The great question is, how can we get rid of sin in our nature? We must kill it. We must put ourselves to death. How can I do that in that nature itself? I must get another life before I can kill the one I have,—a new life, ere I begin to crucify the old. Otherwise, I put to death the only life I have. I get this new life, and so I can mortify what is of the old. It is my *members*, too, that I mortify—not me. I, the old I, has died in Christ's death, as it is written, "I am crucified with Christ," but, it is added,^e "nevertheless I live;" the new life is *me* now. I live. I have a new life, though the old one was put to death, and I can now afford to exterminate all that belongs to the old.

Liberty is thus connected by the apostle with death and resurrection,—
"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that hence-

forth we should not serve sin." "If we be planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

What Christ have you a part of? A dead, or a risen, Christ? Is Christ divided? We do not get a half Christ. If we die with Him we also rise—"that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life." There is our walk. And see the standard of that walk, the measure that is set before us—"the glory of the Father."

I stop here to examine this wonderful expression; for whatever shows us the excellency of Christ gives us power. What I see is this, that there is not a single thing that makes the Father glorious that was not concerned in the raising of Christ from the dead. Take divine power,—it is God that raiseth the dead. Take death as the ruin of man,—out of it God raises Him. Take the love of the Father, it is in special exercise. Does ever the love of the

Father appear so drawn out as because of the death of Christ? Never. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." A new motive is added, as it were, for the Father to love His Son. But, besides, it was the Father's Son who thus lay under the power of death, and, therefore, He cannot be left there. For His glory's sake, the Father would not suffer His Holy One to see corruption. Take righteousness,—the Father's righteousness was magnified. "I have glorified thee on the earth, and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self." The Father, having been indebted, so to speak, to the Son for having been glorified on the earth, had to see to it that He should now obtain His reward. Thus, everything that constitutes the Father's glory was at work in raising up Jesus to His own right hand. There had been a gap in heaven, a fearful gap, if Christ had not been raised. But it was not possible that He should lie under the power of death.

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” He does not say *realize*, though that be all right in its place ; but, *reckon* yourselves to be dead, since Christ is so,—in the power of this risen life. It is here I get this life—even in Christ risen. I get my soul elevated into the apprehension of the Father’s glory, and character, and relationship, with Christ in seeing every divine perfection displayed in the raising of Christ, and being made partaker in Him of the life in the power of which He is raised. How does this associate me with it ? Why was He there in death ? For my sins. This connects this risen life with my every day affections. It is not mental power or penetration that enters into it. It is the soul in the power of the Holy Ghost entering into the excellency of the person of Jesus—seeing that He was such a sort of person as could not be holden of death, and the glory of the Father engaged in His resurrection. Oh, when we know the person

of Christ, then know we shall that He could not be holden of death. It was to the knowledge of this that the Lord led the woman of Samaria. He first deals with her conscience, "Go, call thy husband;" and then, after telling her "all that ever she did," He leads her on till He can' say, "I that speak unto thee am he." So that the person of the Lord Jesus fills her heart and soul. It is when God has made the soul to apprehend, through the power of the Spirit, that it is a dead Christ who is raised that we get the power of life. I enter into union with Himself as risen, but as once dead for my sins, and come, by grace, into the condition I was in; raised up out of it by the glory of the Father. How near it brings the Lord to us. How could you or I rise up to heaven to see the Father's glory? But here I see the Father's glory enter into the place where Christ was dead for my sins. He has been concerned for me—exercised for me. And do not suppose, for a moment, that it is mental wisdom that

gets to this. It is knowing that you are such a sort of sinner as that Christ was in the grave for your sins. First, conscience is reached by the power of the Spirit of God, then, the whole issue of its conflicts is seen in what takes place in His person wholly under the burden of our sins.

We see that all the power and glory of the Father was concerned in raising Him up, and the heart follows Him up there.

Next as to the manner. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." I do not get a half Christ. If He has died, and our sins are put away, then also He is risen, and our place is in Him as so risen. (For justification is not in this part of the epistle. Justification is not presented as His having put away sin, but that He in His person is the accepted one; (raised again for our justification;) and we in Him.) "Our old man is crucified with Him, that henceforth we should not serve

sin." Serve sin! He is talking in the language of a country where they employ slaves; talking after the manner of men. You are servants now of righteousness—and yet not servants, for indeed it is liberty. The idea is that of one person who is at the will of another. He was the slave of sin. It is the same thing to be under the law and to be under sin. (See John viii.) "The servant abideth not in the house for ever." If you are under law you cannot abide for ever—you are only servants—you may be turned out, or (as told of slaves) killed if you do not serve well. But if you are a son you are a part of the household, you are free, and you abide for ever.

Now you cannot charge a dead man with anything. His master cannot bring a dead man under guilt. You *cannot mortify till you have somebody to mortify*. The life to which guilt could be charged has gone out of existence. We are dead. How can I talk so? Christ is dead, and we are dead in Him. "Now he that is dead

is freed from sin." Ah! but you say, it is not done with. Are you wiser than God? He says that it is done with in Christ. It was all attached to, laid on, Christ for us by grace, and He has died, and there is an utter end of it. For all that I see in myself—evil principles, &c.—that is what He died for. It is done with in Christ. And now I am to mortify all that savours of it. Therefore "reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin"—reckon—that is the word—and there is liberty—liberty from sin, and not to sin.

I make two remarks. While fruits are surely produced in me, the grand doctrine of Christianity is, that I am saved by a mediator. If I am to be saved by myself—all is gone; all is lost. If you ever enter into judgment, you are lost. Therefore, the whole doctrine of salvation is this—there is a days-man. As to myself, as Job says, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the

ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." But there is a days-man. One who can lay His hand upon both. And this days-man is Christ. He is my life, and of course I bring forth fruit; but I am made the righteousness of God in Him.

Still you say, I find sin alive, nevertheless. But let me ask you, Is Christ all this for the sins that you have, or for the sins that you have not? Of course for those you have—those you find out. Those are the sins for which Christ died. The jealousy is all good, but with the jealousy remember the grace which has put them all away.

If we are dead we also live. I am brought, through connexion with Christ, into a new state of existence, in which nothing can come against me—sin, Satan, or death. There is not a thing which could reach me as a sinner into which Christ has not gone for me, and He has got out of it all. We are set in quite a new place—as over the Red Sea. He died unto sin once. If He had shrunk from going through all

that weighed down upon me as a sinner, I should not have escaped—I should have no liberty. “But he learned obedience by the things which he suffered.” He was put under obedience to the uttermost. He was put through everything to see if unwillingness to obey could be found, (and that is sin,) and it could not. Therefore, in this death, there is not only expiation, but the moral perfection of the Redeemer. Christ never asked any other cup to be put away; but that cup He could not wish to drink. It was suffering for sin—the hiding of God’s face. So, in the garden, He chose rather to have God’s face hidden than fail to obey. Now He lives beyond it all. Now mark, what is your position? You are dead—are you not? “Dead, indeed,” but yet alive. There we get the proper christian position. It is not, “if you are not this you will not get the value of the blood,” but you *must be* this because Christ is. I do not exhort one who is not my child to live like my child. No, in truth I do not.

“ Likewise, reckon ye yourselves,” &c. I get the position and the consequence. I am to reckon that I am dead. This is faith. It does not say “ experience,” but reckon, and the consequence will come. By grace I have the title to reckon myself in like manner to be risen, then I live to God. I now get the justified position of living for God before the world, as before I got the condemned position of the sinful life of Adam. He does not say yield yourselves to morality, but yield yourselves unto God. Whatever comes from God goes to God. (I hate myself when I find myself doing a good thing, if it is not done to God. Alas! I find it. And in speaking of the best thing there may be the worst sin.) Now I yield myself to God. One of the first things I saw in the Gospels was, that *in them all Jesus never did anything for Himself.* He had not time to sleep. Prayer occupied his night, or He rested in peace in the tossed ship. He is there in obedience, not merely in the things commanded, but because

they were commanded. Oh what liberty! If you are a Christian you know what it is to be a slayer of sin and self—and that is the most blessed thing. I have a right to have done with myself.

In the 5th chapter we have one, ungodly in himself, under the judgment of unrighteousness; here, one under the dominion of sin—like Israel of old, making bricks without straw. They did not like it, but they could not help it. Well, but you say, it has dominion; I am afraid I am not right. Where are you? You are putting yourself not under grace. You must be under grace, and then go to God and get power against sin. Therefore chapter v is before chapter vi. You must get under grace. Grace is not to a holy being—that is love. Grace is to one unworthy of it. “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace,”—you have God on your side against it.

Men will say that if you give man perfect peace he will forget God. Alas! it is in our wretched nature to do so

at all times, and to abuse the relief of our conscience to do so. But the power of resurrection in Christ in which we have this relief sets us free from sin. How can he that is free be a slave to it? "If we are led of the Spirit we are not under the law." The Holy Spirit will never lead us into sin. "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." When I speak of your being servants, I speak after the manner of men; for after all it is real liberty to serve God. Now mark there is fruit in righteousness. What fruit had we in sin? Its end was death; but, righteousness, serving the will of God, bears blessed fruits. Not merely is there righteous fruit, but there is fruit in righteousness. "We have our fruit unto holiness."

What is holiness? Separation unto God. Adam was not holy—he was innocent. God is holy. He knows good and evil, loves the good and hates the evil. So is it with Jesus, and so with us. We love good and hate evil. I, as a creature, cannot estimate the

difference between good and evil. So I must have God as an object to make out the full measure of good, and thus judge and be separate from the evil. The affections drawn to Christ are the channel and power of it. In this latter sense Christ could not have an object, though ever regarding the Father, and as man looking to the joy that was set before Him. But He had no need to have His affections drawn to an object to sanctify Him. He had them in perfect communion and truth. And indeed, as taking this resurrection place, He sanctified Himself, set Himself apart as the resurrection man through the revelation of whom we should be sanctified through the truth. He Himself was the object of God's delight on earth, (Matt. iii, 16, 17.) Elsewhere He is ours in heaven. (Acts vii, 56.)*

There is no fruit from sin. It is the perishing down into death of that which is degraded by having lost the image

* When I say on earth, I speak as when actually revealed. He ever was. See Prov. viii.

of God. Now I must walk in righteousness. What is the consequence? I get withdrawn from the spirit and ways of the world, I get away from the influence of the things which govern it, my heart is more abundantly occupied in the practical liberty of the new nature, with that which is of God; confidence in Him is increased, prayer has a larger sphere, the heart is drawn nearer to Him, and living in intercourse with Him, He Himself is more fully known. It is not merely that there are fruits, but besides this practical walk in righteousness, there is connected with it the consecration of the heart to God and the having knowledge of Him. If we live to God there will be the knowledge of what good and evil is in the eye of God—not simply that you live to Christ as to outward devotedness, but you will get your heart withdrawn from the influence of the things which drew it formerly away.

Therefore, in plain common life, oh let God be everything! Be not like one slipping and getting on, and slip-

ping and getting on, as Christians often are, but be advancing quietly and steadily, increasing in separation to God; then you will have fruit unto holiness, you yourselves being servants, it is not said unto holiness, but *unto God*. There is the spring and glorious excellency and liberty of service. You may be a servant unto righteousness to satisfy your conscience and worry yourself to death. But what I get here, through grace, is, liberty through righteousness, and then Christ's will the motive of all I am and do. O blessed thing! it is liberty indeed. There must be the practical every-day fruit; but besides, there is the joy of serving God, the positive joy of serving God. And it is sweet after all—after showing us this practical way of getting righteousness and true holiness, even the image of God—to learn, that eternal life is altogether of grace, the free gift of God. I had rather have eternal life as the gift of God than earn ten lives; for having it so, it is the proof of His love, and that is bliss.

The Lord give us, in every day common life, to live in the secret life of the heart, and hence in the outward life of our daily service *to Him*; founded, as it is, on reckoning ourselves to be dead and alive again, yielding ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead.

THE PASSOVER.

“CHRIST OUR PASSOVER IS SACRIFICED
FOR US.”

Exodus xii.

Redemption, as presented in the type of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, has two aspects. The one is seen in the feast of the passover, the other in the passage of the Red Sea.

The history and circumstances of the two disclose, in a wonderful manner, the redemption which God has wrought for His people in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the deliverance at the Red Sea, by Israel's being brought through a path, by the power of God, which was

death to all who attempted to go through without it, we have presented to us the power of God in associating believers with Christ in His resurrection, and so delivering them from the reach of all their enemies—sin, Satan, death—as well as separating them from the whole portion and judgment of the world.

Accordingly, at the Red Sea (Exodus xv) there is the song of victory, and the celebration of the triumph which God's power has given to His people over all the power of their enemies. And the knowledge which a poor sinner finds now, through God's grace, of his being "risen with Christ," makes his heart indeed rejoice, and say, "we are more than conquerors through him who hath loved us."

But in the passover the deeper question is met, of *how God's power can be thus displayed on behalf of those whom His holiness has condemned as sinners.*

"God is light"—"There is none holy as the Lord." He cannot, therefore, link Himself with sin, nor can He

bring a people into association with Himself until He has put away their sins.

Hence the passover comes *before* deliverance at the Red Sea; even as Jesus must be known as *dying* for our sins, before we can say, through His resurrection, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The passover, which answers to Christ's death, brings redemption before us in connexion with God's righteous holiness, and the judge and hater of all sin. The deliverance at the Red Sea, which answers to Christ's resurrection, shows how God's power in Christ is on His people's side, because His death has met the claims of all the holiness of God.

Israel were delivered, it is true, on the night of the passover: but from what were they delivered? Not from the pursuit of Pharoah, but from God's judgment for sin. The blood was sprinkled on the lintel and on the door-posts to bar the way of God's entrance as a judge. It is not *power* that

delivers in the passover; but weakness, *death*, the blood of the Lamb!

The question to the Israelite, on that night, was how God should be staid from entering his dwelling as a judge. And God showed him that nothing but his trusting to the sprinkled blood of the Lamb, would cause the angel of death to pass over his dwelling. He entered every dwelling, of high and low, of the Egyptians, where the blood was not sprinkled. For "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." "For," says the Scripture, (verse 23,) "the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians: and *when he seeth the blood* upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you." Blessed picture of the ground of security, which a simple trust in Christ's blood gives to the chief of sinners! For in the blood of *this precious Lamb*, God's justice has found its full answer:—"He was delivered for our offences." "He who

knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Can I then, though trembling with a sense of guilt, say, “O God, my trust is only in the blood of the Lamb;” “I seek a refuge only in the blood shed on Calvary?” Then the answer of God to my heart is, “*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*” What security is this, when God says, “I will pass over.”

The passover then, as a type, presents the redemption of believers from the just judgment of sin; while it, at the same time, shadows forth the execution of that judgment upon the world. And alas! there will be no escape for high or low, if the blood, which alone shields from judgment, be despised. It is said, (ver. 29, 30,) “And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that *was* in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And

Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for *there was* not a house where *there was* not one dead."

No height of position, no worldly power and glory, can shield from the judgment of sin; nor can any meanness of condition escape. The firstborn of Pharaoh on the throne, and the first-born of the captive in the dungeon, are smitten alike. "There is no difference, for all have sinned."

I may add here, as to the world's judgment, that the Red Sea is a type of death to all who are not brought through it by the power of God. Israel was brought through the sea, and safely landed on the other side of it, as believers are brought through death, by the resurrection of Christ; but Pharaoh was lost in it. He entered in pride and unconsciousness of the power which was leading the hosts of God through the deep waters, and, when too late, he found that he could neither retreat nor make good

his passage on the other side. Not one escaped: "The depths covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone."

To meet death without a part in Christ's victory over death, is to be lost in it. It is ruin and perdition. But God's people are brought by the resurrection of Christ, even in this world, to the other side of death: as it is said, "If ye then be risen with Christ." And as Israel, when brought through the Red Sea, and safely landed on the other side of it, could sing both of the power that had delivered them, and that would finally plant them in Canaan, so the believer, now, who is associated by faith with the power of God in the resurrection of Christ, can sing of present victory over death, and rejoice in the certain hope of coming glory. "He hath quickened us together with Christ . . . and hath raised us up together;" and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory."

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

HOW A BELIEVER IS "DE-
LIVERED FROM THE LAW"
BY UNION WITH CHRIST.

Rom. vii.

From the 4th chapter of this epistle the apostle develops the great doctrine of the power of the resurrection in deliverance and righteousness; not only God's taking the blood of Jesus for our sins, but God acting in power on man even when dead; first, in raising Christ, and then in the quickening of a saint by the Spirit of God, by the same divine power by which Christ was raised from the dead. In taking up this great principle, he applies it in the 5th chapter, not only to the putting away of sin, but to the acceptance of *the person of the believer*. In the 6th chapter he applies it to the practical walk—"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" No: a dead man will not go on in sin, or else he is not dead. He connects our not continuing

in sin—not with *motive*, from the love of Christ constraining—but with death and resurrection.

In this 7th chapter he applies the same doctrine of death and resurrection to the law. This is the great point under discussion, and not whether we have a renewed man's experience or not. Let me have never so new a nature, yet if I am still under law, the law will condemn me. The only effect will be to give me such a sense of the holiness of God as to make me miserable. Put any person under law, and you put him under the curse: not that the law is bad, but that no one can keep it.

But one will say, I use the law, not for justification, but for sanctification. I answer, you cannot use the law as you please; the law will use you as it pleases. If you do not obey it, it will curse you. It is holy itself, but it has no power to sanctify. The effect of using it is to put a man under the curse; as it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all

things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The law is good, if a man use it lawfully. You will never say it is good, if you are under it; for who has not broken it?—who has not lusted? It is a good weapon, but it has no handle? If I take it to condemn others, I must first condemn myself. It is as sharp for the person using it as for him against whom it is used. Thus, in the case of the woman taken in adultery, they thought that in whatever way Christ should act, He would be in a dilemma. But they find that the law, which they were to use against the woman, condemns themselves as well as her. Christ lets them use it; and when it condemns all, He then takes up grace. The law is adapted to the unrighteous. Of what use is it to say to a righteous man, "lust not?" If he has no lust, he does not need it; and if lust is there, what can the law do but condemn him and deny his righteousness? It was never meant to do anything else. Well,

we should thoroughly understand what deliverance from it is.

“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” (Verses 1—4.) What the apostle does here is to take the principle of resurrection and apply it to the law. The law, says he to the Jew, or to

any one thus under it, was your first husband; but you have now another, being freed by death from the first, and you are risen in Christ. We are not physically risen, but we have a part in the death and resurrection of Christ. The law is the one husband—Christ risen the other. Now we cannot have both at once. We are bound by law to have only one. Well, the law was my first husband, but I am freed from it by death. The law kills me. I die and the law's title is gone—the tie is gone. How? for it is blessed to trace the manner. It is not that we have died personally. It is not that the law was ever abrogated. It could not be. But we are dead to the law by the body of Christ, because the full curse of the law was attached to Christ. He died under the curse. The law spent its weapons on Christ. It did everything it could in the way of curse against Christ—it spent itself entirely on Christ, and Christ has risen out of it. He was perfect, yet, having been made sin for us, the law brought a

curse on Him ; and what can it do more than spend its curse on Christ. And now that He has risen out of it, what can it do to Him ? Nothing. Is Christ under it now ? Oh no. He is in an entirely new position—"Set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." There is the position of Christ now. Now this position of Christ is applied to the Christian by faith. For whilst Jews were actually under the law, almost all who are called Christians are under it virtually :—alas ! that is in their thoughts and apprehensions. But here I see how God has set us free. Here I see Christ coming and taking up my cause. I see Him, as mediator, taking my place, and faith applies to me everything that He has done, and into which He has come for me. I find my place in Christ as the Second Adam risen. He comes and gives me a portion in His place. What is the law to me ? It condemned me, it is true ; but then God has settled every claim the law had against me in the body of Christ ; and now I have a life in Him

beyond the reach of law. Now I have life in Him; for the tie with my first husband is broken by death, and is gone. Hence the believer is dead to the law.

Does this take away its power and authority? By no means. People say to me, do you know the killing power of the law? Yes—but I know it as freed from it, for it has killed me. It cannot kill me again. You cannot make a dead man feel. The law found sin in me, and it has not merely pronounced the curse, but executed it in Christ. And now I can talk about it in peace. It is not to the law that I am now joined, but to my new husband, to whom I am tied by faith; not to exact fruit from a bad tree by commanding it, but to graft a new graft—Christ as our life—“that we may bring forth fruit unto God.”

Thus you see that if you are under the law in any sense, you are under the curse. You have sin in your flesh. Will the law allow it? Do you think it will let you off? Can it deliver you

from it? Do not talk of the sanctifying power of the law. Your *putting* yourself under law is not wanting to be good, but your unwillingness to own how bad you are. You hope to get good out of your heart, if you have not yet succeeded. Now, if God require anything from me, I cannot give it. God does in fact leave us often under law. What is the consequence? The sin which works against the law becomes positive transgression, and sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful. Not only so, but the motives of sin are stirred up in us by the prohibition of the law, and the will works against the barrier to work to death and condemnation.

Persons say, take away a man from under law, and you leave him without restraint. Of course, if there be no reality in the life of Christ—but He liveth unto God, and unto God we too live with Him. I dare you to be under the law with a sense of God's holiness. You could no more stand one moment in the presence of His holiness than

compete with His power. The law will have righteousness and true holiness. It will not ask you if you take it as justification or a rule of life. It will take you on its own ground. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death." This was not the law's fault. God's law is holy. "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." While there is a will in us, the law must condemn us, for it resists the law and authority of God. Law does not talk of a new nature. It asks, do you produce the thing that God demands. It will allow of no excuse. It would be a bad law if it did. Do you love God with all your heart? No, you do not. Well that is sin, and you are cursed. The effect of a will in us, restrained by the law, is to urge the will against the law which checks it.

"But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were

held ; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter." It is a deliverance. You do not know that you are slaves to the law if you do not know that it is a deliverance. How do we obtain it? By dying to the law. "Being dead to that wherein we were held." (*margin.*) I died under it, and that is the way I got deliverance. The *law* is not dead. It is in full force against all who are under it. But we have died under it. It has killed us by its righteousness. It is the ministry of death. It was written on stones in its requirements, and I have a nature which does not meet them. It will not neglect—not modify them. It condemned me because not obedient, and now it has had its full effect—of course in Christ. By faith I find my place there. I get by faith into Christ—I get part with Him. One man takes another into partnership, and gives him all the benefit of the connexion, and the advantages the firm already had acquired, though he had no part in acquiring

them. So we all come into partnership with Christ. All debts are discharged, and I have part in all that is His. It was all kindness on His part, for I had brought nothing.

“We are delivered from the law, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” It is not a letter demanding, but a spirit making me walk in that which is agreeable to God, as partaking of His nature—its desires and delights—in the power of the Spirit of God. It is not a law delivering up to a curse for breaking its requirements; but that which makes me partaker of righteousness as it is in Jesus before God.

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law.” But it did not cure me of sin but provoke it; and then it came and brought death to my soul. It is thus good in the way of showing the need of Christ.

But will bringing death to the soul convert a man? Never. When he says, I had not known sin but by the law,

he means in conscience: of course he knew sin, and was sinning every day. "For I was alive without the law once;" that is, going on quietly, without any thought of its bringing death and condemnation on his soul. "But when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." He found it was of no use to be combating sin in this way; that is, by thinking on the prohibition of the object, and of course of the object prohibited, with the lust in the soul. Victory over it is obtained by looking away from it altogether, and this we are enabled to do in the power of a new object, Christ possessing the heart by the Holy Ghost.

"And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." This was not the fault of the commandment. It was given for life if men had kept it; but man being a sinner, it was a commandment unto death.

The source of all this we find in the 5th verse, in which we get a most important truth. "When we were in

the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." In chap. viii, 9 we see the contrast. But here "being in the flesh" gives the whole position and standing of the man. He stands as before God in the flesh—in the helpless sinful nature of fallen man. That is the case, the condition the man is in. He is not a dead and risen man. Does the law quicken him? No: the law could not give life. (Gal. iii.) It proposes life when man is at a certain point; that is, when he has already kept and obeyed it. But how can man get to this without life? How obey in sinful flesh? Can we while in the flesh and under law? Hear the judgment of the word. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God. For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The law does not give life or the Spirit; but to obey I must have both. Now we are all "in the flesh" until we are "dead and risen with Christ." Compare vii, 5, and viii, 9, and see the

difference. In the one we have, "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death:" in the other, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." Now the law and the flesh go together; they are correlatives. The law deals with man as man—with man in the flesh—man ere he gets the Spirit, which he receives in virtue of redemption. And what is the effect of its operation? "The motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought all manner of concupiscence." "Sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful." Is that the way to get holiness?

Verse 14. "For *we* know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin." He could not say, *we* are carnal. For of whom is he speaking

when he says "*we*"? of Christians. Hence they are viewed in what they have as such in common; that is, *in their spiritual standing, so viewed in Christ.* "We" know that the law leaves nothing untouched respecting a man's standing in the sight of God. It judges everything in the motives and intents of the heart, according to the searching judgment of the Spirit, and to the light of God's nature. But when he says, "I am carnal," he is talking of individual conscience. Christians, *as such*, are in the Spirit. They are not carnal. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." (Rom viii, 9.) The flesh is in us, it is true, but if walking in the Spirit we are not in the flesh: for in the Spirit is power and liberty according to God. Here, however, man is not set free, but is viewed in his own capacity to deal with evil when his will is set right, and seeking to attain righteousness according to the desires of a new nature. It is personal individual conscience making the discovery of what is in his heart, but in

the presence of the law which judges the whole result. You will find, at the end of the chapter, that he speaks constantly of I, I, I; and never once of Christ or of the Spirit. It is the experience of what the human heart is, and not the knowledge of what the heart of God is. It is the experience of what I am, as acquainted with good and evil, and not the knowledge of my position by faith. This we get in the 8th chapter, and there we are not under law.

What is our subject all through the chapter? The question is not whether it is a renewed man or not. I believe it is a renewed man, for he delights in the law of God after the inner man. But it is the case of a man under law. It is the effect of the law, as a measure of righteousness, on the conscience, where there is no power. You will never understand the end of this 7th chapter of Romans until you see that it is the discussion of law dealing with a man under it. He always wills what is right and never does it. There

is a total want of power. Do you not want power for holiness? The law will never give you that. It is as feeble to do that as it is strong to curse. What the apostle is here saying is all about self. Till Christ is known as a deliverer, and the power of the Spirit comes in, giving liberty, and occupying the soul with all that God is, has done, and sets before us in the love which secures us for the enjoyment of it; all that the soul can say is, I am this, and I am that. And while it is what you are to do and to be, you are occupied with yourself. There you are floundering, like a man in a morass, because of the kind of ground you are on. If you think to pull one foot out, you have only the other deeper in. Now you want a deliverer.

Take the question of peace with God. If you were more holy, do you not think you would have more peace with God? Oh yes, you reply. Then your holiness increases the value of the blood of Christ, or you are not resting on that blood as that which makes peace fully

and absolutely. Your answer shows that. Is holiness then not necessary? Most surely it is. But I thus speak to show you that you cannot have peace in this way, because the result of holiness in you does not reach the holiness of God, and God forbid that that measure should be lowered. We are made partakers of His holiness. I say it to make you know that you cannot have holiness in this way. That is given us in nature in the communication of the divine nature. It is practically maintained through the knowledge that God is "for us," in the peace with Him which Christ has perfectly wrought and gives to the believer.

In verses 15 to 23 it is I, I, I; and God says 'I will give you enough of it; you will get tired of it, and then you will be glad to be beholden to me in *grace*, and to be done with law and self.' Now what is the end of all his labouring? "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Divine power is needed. If you have got a good will

through grace, you must get power too. Is he brought by progress to peace? No; but he is brought to give up the effort to bring flesh up to it, and to the knowledge that no good thing is in him—that he has no power to do good. So now he says, “Who will deliver?” He learns that he has got a bad self, and that he must get a deliverer. All is now changed. He looks on another to do that which he cannot do, and he finds it all done. Man is brought to his real level, and then God is brought in, and he thanks God through Jesus Christ. Thus he gets power by learning that he has none, and by receiving peace with God through the blood of Jesus, *while knowing that he has none*. He is brought low—finds that he is a sinner incapable of getting better and reaching God thus; and then Christ dies. “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” But this is not merely giving strength for the struggle, so as to make a man content with his success, and so get peace, but it is the knowledge

of a complete salvation, wrought by God in view of what we were, and to the sense of which we were reduced—salvation and peace. I come to know what I am as man and I am wretched: I come to know what God is for me, and I am happy. Moreover, the resurrection, which has obliterated every trace of condemnation, brings into a new sphere where the Spirit gives liberty, and the hope of glory to which it leads on.

Thus we have, first, that you cannot have two husbands at once. Then the doctrine that the law provokes sin. Then we have man put under the law, that he may have what is called experience. It is all about I and self; and not till the end do you get Christ and a deliverer, and thus, "thank God," though the two natures remain the same; the new, however, walking in grace, the old being held for dead. Thus, as a doctrine, we get entire deliverance from the law; not weakening it, but giving it its whole power—but that power kills. The person who

weakens the authority of the law is he who puts man or any one under it, and leaves him any hope. For sin is in the flesh, and the law will allow of no sin, but curses all who take up its works to do them. To mingle grace with it is to destroy its obligation, and undo its authority, which is righteously exercised in condemning. We die to the law; and then we get Christ's position, being delivered by death and resurrection. Then we get the law applied as a matter of experience in this holy way, to bring home to the soul the want of its power to keep it. It is a great deal more difficult to know our want of power here than to know our sin. Conscience will tell you of sin, but it requires long experience, though we know it is true, to learn that we have no strength, and to have flesh so broken that we have no confidence in it; to learn that there is no power, just as there is no forgiveness, but in grace; and to find that it is the discovery of what we are that settles the question of peace and power, for then it is God Himself.

HOW CHRIST IS GRAVEN ON THE HEART BY THE HOLY GHOST.

2 Cor. iii.

The apostle, in the beginning of this chapter, tells us what a true Christian is. He calls him an epistle of Christ. He is a person upon whose heart God has written Christ, as Moses wrote the law on tables of stone. This the apostle opens out; but first he states what Christians are in contrast with the law. A Christian is a person on whom Christ is engraved—not on tables of stone, but on the fleshy tables of the heart. If the heart is serious, one must see that many have not this. We see many persons very amiable, and others with a trying nature. But here it is not difference of mere natural character. That is not the point. Natural amiability of character is not Christ graven on the heart. It has nothing to do with being a Christian. That is a positive real work of

God. It is the Holy Ghost engraving Christ on a man's heart, putting Christ into his thoughts, his words, and his ways, just as the law was put upon stones. Now a person may get angry at this; but, nevertheless, Christ is the object of a Christian's life, and your own conscience must judge if it is so with you. It is not that there is not failure. A man who is seeking to make money does not always succeed; but every body knows what his object is. Just so, *Christ is the object of a believer's life.*

God gave the law, not to make men righteous, but to prove that there were none righteous. The law condemns every one. It was the ministration of death. But after men had broken God's law He sent His Son. "God so loved the world, that he gave his *only begotten Son.*" "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son." God's Son has been in the world. How comes it that He is out of it? The world would not have Him. Men spit in His face.

That is what the world has done. Now I do not ask you about duties; but I ask, is Christ engraven on your heart? We cannot kill Him now; but our hearts can reject Him as much as ever the Jews did. An honest man—I do not speak of a Christian—will own that from morning to night Christ is not in his heart.

Now what was the apostle doing? When a Christian went from one place to another, it was customary to give him a letter of commendation. But, says the apostle, Do I want a letter? If one came to him to ask what he went about doing, he would say, Look at these Corinthians: (for they were going on well then :) they were his letter. How so? *Because they were Christ's.* Now I leave it with you as to whether Christ is on your heart. I do not ask if you love Him as you ought; for if you love Him at all you will not say that; He is too precious for that. But if you are a Christian you are sure there is not anything that you would not give for Christ. You

may not be able to govern yourself, still, Christ is the object of your heart.

Notice now another thing: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." It is not liberty to be fearing and trembling before God. "Liberty" is to be happy with Him. When the Holy Ghost begins to show me my sins, I have anything but liberty. I begin to be afraid of my sins; I do not know whatever to do with them. False liberty is taken away, and true liberty is not given. And that will always be the case until the perfect love of God is seen. Now, law will never teach me that. Suppose I command my child to love me, and threaten him if he does not; will that make him love me? Why, it will make him tremble. That is what the law does. It cannot produce the love, it can but command. What is the effect? I cannot stand in its presence. When Moses had been up on the mount, his face shone. He had been with God. And when he came down with the two tables of the law, the children of Israel

were afraid to come near him. He had to put a veil on his face, for the glory of his countenance. When in the presence of God's glory, they cannot bear to look on it. The only effect of the revelation of the glory of God is to drive me away as far as ever I can get from Him against whom I have sinned. There is not a pleasure in the world that the presence of God would not blast in a moment. There is not a happiness of man, as man, that is not spoiled by the very mention of the name of God. Now think what a terrible state that is to be in.

The apostle calls this claim of God by the law the "ministration of death and condemnation," because it claims righteousness; and does not produce the thing it claims. Whenever a person is looking to his conduct for what he ought to be, he is under the ministry of death and condemnation. That is not the way to get Christ written on the heart.

Before we turn to look at Christ as He is now, let us look at what He

was, God manifest in the flesh. In what state did he find men when He came? He found them "all under sin." And what does Job say of himself, as being in this condition? "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet thou shalt plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both. Let him take his fear away, then would I speak; but it is not so with me." Now what do I find in Christ when He came? I find "a daysman"—the very thing that Job wanted. Was there fear in Christ? Was any one afraid of Christ? If a sinner was ever so burdened he could go to Christ, and thus to God. Now here I find that though my sins hindered me from going to God, they could not hinder God from coming to me. You will never find a single case in which Christ did not receive the sinner with open arms. Never. Now, that is what you want. Christ did not

say, get righteousness and come up here, and I will have you. No; but He came down here to meet us here. That is an entirely new thing. Christ came in this way to win our hearts thus. And therefore they reproached Him with receiving sinners, and eating with them. It is quite true, He replied, but is not a father glad to receive his lost son? Even so is it with my Father in heaven—and therefore am I come to seek and to save that which was lost. Now, that is grace. But there is righteousness too. When the Father fell on the neck of the prodigal, he was in his rags. He could not bring him into the house in his rags, it would dishonour the house. So, His blessed love goes on—and Jesus gives Himself for the sins, which unfit me for the Father's house. I see that *the very Lord, against whom I sinned, has taken my sins and put them all away.*

Now where do I see the glory of God? Not now on the face of Moses—I could not look on it there. But

now I see it in the face of Jesus Christ. Dear! I say, that is the one who died for my sins. He could not bring my sins into the glory, and therefore He put them away. I have got His word and His work for it; and the glory for it too; and therefore God is now ministering righteousness. Now it is "the ministration of righteousness." The sins are not passed over. He sweat great drops of blood for the sins. He has really gone through everything that holiness required on account of them, and now He is in the glory; so that every ray of the glory I look at is the proof that my sins are put away. When I see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, it is the very thing I like to look at; because the one whom I see in the glory is the one who bore all my sins. Oh! I delight to look at Him. And that is the way I get Christ graven on my heart by the Holy Ghost. "We all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same

image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." It is the ministration of righteousness, because the Holy Ghost comes and tells us that there is a righteousness accomplished "by one man's obedience." It is the ministration of the Spirit, because the Spirit is given on the foundation of the righteousness. And now the man is at liberty, because his conscience is perfectly purged. Here he will have trial and conflict, it is true; but as between himself and God he will never have anything but perfect peace.

This is God's way of graving Christ on the heart. First He gives a man the consciousness of being entirely condemned; showing him that his nature is enmity against God; that the law he has broken; and that when Christ came in grace, Him he did not love. And when He has brought him to this in his conscience, then he shows him that the God against whom he sinned has come and wrought out a righteousness for him, and that this blessed man is now in glory.

Now mark how the heart thus learns to trust God. Dear! I say, when I was in my sins, God came and put them away. My sins are the very thing that give the greatest proof of His love. He has given Christ for them. Well may I trust Him for everything else.

Let me now ask you, dear reader, if your confidence is in this God? Has your heart been brought to submit to this righteousness—for you have none of your own? Oh, it is the hardest thing for the heart to be broken down so as to be willing to have righteousness by the obedience of another! “By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” (Rom. v, 19.) But if you have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ you will desire to “*be found in him*, not having your own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness, which is of God, by faith.”

HUMILITY.

1. There is a difference between being humble before God, and being humbled before God. I am humbled before God, because I have not been humble. I am humbled, because of my sin. If I had been humble, I should have had grace given me to prevent it. For "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

2. The only humble place is the presence of God. It is when I get out of His presence that I am in danger of being lifted up. People say it is dangerous to be too often on the mount. Now I do not think that it is when we are on the mount that we are in danger, but when we come off it. It is when we come off the mount that we begin to think that we have been there. Then pride comes in. I do not think that Paul needed a thorn when he was in the third heavens. It was after he had come down that he was in danger of being exalted above measure—from thinking that he had been where no one else had been.

3. I do not believe that to think badly of ourselves is true humility. True humility is never to think of ourselves at all—and that is so hard to come to. It is constantly, I, I, I. If you only begin a sentence with I, there is nothing that a person will not put after it.

4. What hearts have we! "I the Lord search the heart." Who but God can know them. Persons who think they search their hearts and are quick in their evil, do not really know their hearts, nor are they truly humble. The fact is, they *must* be talking of *themselves*, and their pride is nourished even by talking of how evil they are.

WHAT THE CHRISTIAN IS.

Rev. i, 5, 6.

“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

There are certain expressions in the word of God which unfold, in the most familiar manner, what the Christian is; and which, if there was but the most ordinary attention on the part of the reader, would lead him to say, “well, if that is what a Christian is, I know nothing of the matter.”

These expressions are not the violent stretching forth after some hope, but they are characterized by the quiet certainty with which they appropriate the blessing. As John here says of all the Christians to whom he was writing, “unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,” &c. Now, if I were to ask you—you, perhaps, who would be affronted if I should say

you were not a Christian—if I were to ask you, are you sure that Christ loves you? that He has washed you from your sins in His own blood? No, you would say, if honest, I know nothing of it. Yet these are the expressions of the common recognized state of Christians.

Or can you say—“yes, blessed be God, though a poor thing in myself, I do know that God loves me.” To be able to say this is the common portion of the believer. And so it is written, “*we know, that we are of God; and the whole world lieth in the wicked one.*” All Christians are recognized as knowing salvation. And in ii Peter we read of one who had forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. But he could not forget what he had never known. Forgetting “that he was purged,” was *backsliding; the Christian state* was knowing that he was purged.

You will find every kind of exhortation addressed to the believer; but they are all based on the ground of his having been brought to God. I ask

any one, would there not be a quieter, happier, state of soul if you were certain that God loved you? There cannot be happy affections if the soul is not in confidence with God. That is the kind of knowledge of God which is life eternal. God is love, and if you do not know *that* you know nothing. And where are you if you know not God?

If you believe fully that God is love, love toward you, what kind of thoughts would you have of Him? Would you think that you must obey, or else He will punish you with His vengeance? Would you think of Him as a *Judge*? No. Such thoughts are not the thoughts of one acquainted with His saving love.

Of course there is a judgment, but there is no mercy then. When Christ comes to judge, can you stand if He marks iniquity? can you answer Him for your transgressions? No. But if you really believed in His righteous judgment now, you would say, "enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall *no man living*

be justified." But Christ is not now a Judge; He is a Saviour. It is all mercy now. He is not imputing to any their trespasses. *Every eye must see Him.* We Christians see Him *now* as a Saviour. You who do not believe put it off till the judgment, hoping to be able to meet Him then; but then "all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." He is a Judge when He is not a Saviour. It is judgment then, not trial as to whether you will pass. Now there is a trial going on, not indeed as to whether you are a sinner or not; but as to whether you will receive Christ or not. Now your heart is put to the test: alas! your wilful heart would still reject Him, if grace does not bow you in the sense of sin. God will justify *Himself* in that day, and no one else. In that day He will demonstrate the sin which is the ground of the judgment. Every secret thing will then be made manifest. It is not then that the question is raised, but that the judgment is manifested. Now, the question is

raised. All this is brought into the soul now. In spite of all the fair appearances of the world we justify God now, we accept the judgment God gives of man now, we justify Him in condemning us. *The eye of God brings the judgment into my conscience now*, and I bow to it. I feel and say that God should not let such a wretch live before Him. That is what *will be* when every eye sees Him; but it is also what *is* now in the soul, when the Lord reveals to us our state by faith. I now justify God. I say I have been all darkness and sin, and I abhor myself in His presence. Conscience is dumb in the light of God. If you have been brought to this, you know yourself. If you seek to hide it you are not the better, but the worse.

Suppose that I am brought to this, I shall not now be trusting to a vague feeling that God is merciful. It was not so with Peter when he found himself a sinner in the presence of the Lord. He said, "depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." He felt

that sin and Christ, as the Holy Lord, should not be together. So is it ever when the soul is brought to be jealous about God. The idea of compromise is a horror to one whose conscience is active about sin. Well, when brought to this, what *can* the soul have confidence in? Oh! in this,—that *when we were in such a condition* we have full assurance of the love of God toward us.

Now if I turn to nature, I see signs of goodness, but wide-spread misery and wretchedness too, so that I know not how to say God is love; and these very signs of goodness show me that *I* have lost it all, for this God I have offended. If I turn to providence, I find it all confusion. How often have the wicked the upper hand. If I look to the law, it condemns me, and leaves me without hope.

In all these I see things *about God*; but nothing that reveals *Him*. In Christ I get what reveals God. I, for myself, just where I am, find that He is the “faithful witness” of God. For it is in this world, where all the sin

was, that Christ was the faithful witness.

There will be no need of a witness in heaven. Now *I can* go to Jesus and see God in Him. Do you ever find a single act or word of this faithful witness that was not love? Never. Of course He would unmask the hypocrite. But the moment a person is true,—were he the greatest sinner in the world—the moment he is contented to be what he is in Christ's presence—you will never find that He was anything but love. Of course God must convince of sin. He will write on the sepulchres and tell what is within. God will unmask what we are; our self-deception He will discover to us; but then He is perfect love, and nothing else. What brought Christ here? To know that there was sin? Oh no! He knew it well; but He came here *because there was sin*. The very sin I am confounded at, is the very thing that brought Him here in love.

In the case of the woman who was a sinner, in the seventh of Luke, Christ

puts down Simon, and He does not care for the guests. Why? Because a poor woman was to be comforted in love. Christ came into the very place where sin was. If it is a question of truth, He knows my sins. When I speak of Christ loving me, it is that He loves me *knowing all that I am*; it is not loving, surely, the sinful condition I am in, but loving me when in it. He will write on the ground to let my conscience act; He will bring my sin into my conscience. He will not let me get satisfied with myself, but He will have me to rest in His thoughts of me. What the heart struggles to do is to be satisfied with itself; but God will break that down; and the moment you are brought to that, He will make you to be satisfied *with Him, just as you are*. He will not leave you there, of course; but He will have you to rest in the knowledge of His perfect love: "Unto him that loved us;" then I find rest.

But that is not all: it is added, "and washed us from our sins in his own

blood." It is not said, *will* wash us, but *has* washed us. We want it now, for peace, and for holy affections. "In his own blood." Who has done this? Christ. He has done it. He has made us "clean every whit." And if *He* has washed us He has done it in righteousness, knowing all our sin, and maintaining all this perfect righteousness which made us tremble because of our sins; but *in accordance with it all* He has washed us from our sins in His own blood. He knew what our sins were in the sight of God, and so He gave Himself up; Himself entirely He gave for me. An angel could not, nor should not, do it; he is called to keep his first estate,—but Christ only. In this act of Christ in washing my sins I find Him giving His blood, His life, Himself, for me. Not one single spring do I find that was not love to me. Such is the knowledge I get of Christ.

He has washed me from my sins in His own blood. Do I believe this? Oh yes! I do. I believe that every

one of them is washed away, and that He has done it, as it is said in Hebrews, "by himself he purged our sins." Ah! you say, if I only *felt* this! But let me ask you, will your feelings add to the value of Christ's blood? Oh no! Then why not rest on it, as that which has perfectly satisfied God on account of the sins? The question of sin Christ settled between God and Himself. "By himself he purged our sins;" He did it according to the holiness of God, and according to my need. And what cleanness do I get? The cleanness which God's eye requires; all that which shut us out from God being perfectly put away, so that we are brought into the light as God is in the light; and in doing it His perfect love has been revealed.

"And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." If I take a person and bring him into the enjoyment of everything that I have myself, I give the fullest proof of the perfect outgoing of my heart towards him. Kindness may give something for a

person; but that is perfect love. I cannot do more. Well, that is what Christ has done. He is the King and Priest; and He makes us kings and priests too: and it is worth so much the more because it is the very thing He has Himself.

Another thing we get,—the perfect love of the Father. Not the love of Jesus alone, but the love of the Father, the knowledge of which Jesus gives us. He makes us priests unto His Father. Was ever love like this? Never. Was Christ ever anything else? Never. He is nothing but this perfectness of love for us. And the sum of it all is, “he has loved us.” Has He anything else to say to us? No. What love had to do, it has done. Oh, in the simplicity of thankful hearts, to say, “he has made peace by the blood of his cross.” “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father: to him be glory and dominion, for ever, and ever. Amen.”

THE WILL OF GOD, THE WORK OF CHRIST, AND THE WIT- NESS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Heb. x.

The basis of the argument of the apostle in this chapter lies more in the contrast, than in the comparison, between the law and the good things to come. The law, he says, had only a shadow, not the very image of the things. For example, under the law the priests ministered in infirmity; now Christ ministers in glory. They offered oftentimes the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins; He one sacrifice—once for all. Then, there was a veil; now, there is none. Then, the priests could not enter into the Holiest; now, we have boldness to enter in by the blood of Jesus. The law had a shadow of good things to come, not the very image. It was a mere figurative witness of the things that were to be spoken after. Just as the shadow of a man gives some

general indistinct idea of him, but does not present a single feature clearly; so was it with the law. It could never make the comers thereunto perfect, as the repetition of its sacrifices showed. Now the unity of the sacrifice proves its perfection; and the present position of the worshippers gives the most complete contrast possible to that under the law, though there is a certain measure of analogy.

There are three things brought out in this Scripture: first, the source from which all blessing springs: secondly, the means by which it is accomplished: and thirdly, the testimony by which it is known.

This last is a most necessary part of the matter, in order to our communion; because, unless we know sin to be all put away, it would be absolute madness to attempt to enter into the presence of God: a Jew even would not have thought of such a thing—much less a Christian. If I am not as clean as an angel, the presence of God is no place for me; and the attempt to appear in

it would be to follow the example of Cain, who thought to stand before God as a worshipper *without blood*. We may cry to Him from the depths, of course, and He will ever hear; but if the conscience be not perfect, we cannot go into His presence *to worship*.

With the Jews, this perfection was, of course, only ceremonial; with us it is real: with them, the veil hid God; now that it is gone, and that we enter into the Holiest of all, there is the greater need of perfection of conscience. This is why the apostle insists so strongly on the word "*once*." Indeed, all the reasoning of the chapter depends on it. "Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many." "*Once*, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself." "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, *once* for all." If those sacrifices could have wrought perfection of conscience, would they not have ceased to be offered? Christ was *once* offered, thereby proving the

perfect result of His work ; it needed no repetition. That is why he says, elsewhere in this epistle, that, if this be rejected, "there remaineth no more offering for sin." If that has not made perfect, there is no hope. If that be rejected, there is only "a fearful looking for of judgment." In the repetition of sacrifice there was a remembrance made of sin. It was not God's saying, Their sins and iniquities I will remember *no more*. Christians now have often a mind to be in the same place still, and call their unbelief humility. With the Jews, of course, it must have been so, because it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin. *Therefore, God changes the whole thing.* "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

This brings out the *first* principle to which I alluded, namely, *the source of all blessing*. It originates in the *divine will*, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." It originates in the will of God, and not in the will of man ;

that is only sin. As a creature, man should have no will of his own, just as Christ had none. The principle of His obedience was not a controlling power, hindering the operation of His own will; but, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!" This was perfect obedience as a man. God's will was His; and that will alone brought salvation and life, where man's will had only brought sin and death. This gives stability and perfection to everything, to find its source and origin in the will of God. If it had been the result of my will, all would have been vacillating and changing, as man's will is; and, moreover, if we had earned heaven by our own will, there would have been no love of God in the matter, and we should lose the sweetness of holding everything as the fruit of divine love.

This will of God is not presented to man *to do*; it is the Son of God who says, "Lo, *I come to do thy will, O God!*" Man could never have done the will of God. The second Adam does it. As belonging to the first

Adam, *our* place is to confess that we have not done, and that we never could do, the will of God. When brought back to Him, of course, we have nothing else to do, for we are sanctified unto obedience; but, as regards acceptance, it is the result of the work of another. "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." God does all for us in grace, and leaves man out, both in the *will* and *work*. Salvation is the result of *God's will* and *Christ's work*. And it gives quietness and confidence in this work, to see that it was not a work done to turn God towards us, as it were, but that, from all eternity, it was counselled by Himself. We have the source of all in the unchangeable purpose of God.

Secondly, we have the work itself. It is a wonderful thing for us to be thus let into what passed between the Father and the Son before the world was; and most blessed to see the free-will offering of Christ. If it were God's will to be the author of our salvation, it was equally Christ's to be the in-

strument of it; and whilst He, in order to be so, makes Himself a servant, His divine power is still evinced in the very expression, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!" *that* could be said by none but by one competent to execute any command of God's. Supposing that command had been to make a world, instead of to save one, Christ was the only one who could do such a will; and in fact, both divine power and divine love were evinced in a higher degree in redemption and resurrection, than in creation.

In verse 5, where the quotation is from Psalm xl, the verbal difference is considerable, but the sense identical. "A body hast thou prepared me," and "Mine ears hast thou opened," or "digged," are both expressions of assuming the form of a servant. The ear receives commands, and the boring of the ear was making one a servant for ever. So when a body was prepared for Christ, He took on Him the form of a servant.

Thus far we have the will of God

working in grace, and Christ undertaking to accomplish it.

Then, in verse 11, we have the contrast between the priest standing, and Christ sitting. His work is finished,—there is nothing further to do ; and He sits down till His foes be made His footstool. “For ever,” in verse 12, means “continually,” “constantly,” not that Christ will never rise up again ; but, as regards His sacrifice for sins, He will never have to rise again to do any thing more. Having offered one sacrifice for sins, He sits down till His foes be made His footstool. As regards His friends, all is done—not as to intercession, of course—but as to acceptance and perfecting the conscience. But He has still to deal with His enemies ; therefore is He waiting, still retaining His servant character, until God makes His foes His footstool. We, too, are expecting, till Christ rises up from the throne and judges His enemies. This is not done yet, else wickedness would be purged from the earth ; and it explains the call for ven-

geance in the Psalms, which sometimes puzzles people,—“Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered,” &c.; and, “Of thy mercy cut off mine enemies.” These surely are not the cries of the Church. She does not want to see her enemies judged, but saved. She goes to meet the Lord in the air. Not so the Jewish remnant. It passes through great tribulation; and “except those days were shortened, no flesh should be saved.” So they call earnestly enough for deliverance. But such is not our part at all; we are associated with Christ while expecting; in grace now, and in glory by and bye, but not in judgment.

In verse 12 we have seen that Christ's one sacrifice was such, that He has for ever sat down; so in verse 14 we read, that “by one offering he hath perfected for ever,”—or “continually,”—“them that are sanctified.” Thus we are continually perfect; not *practically* here—though the Spirit sanctifies the heart and affections as far as this goes—but *here* the work of Christ

makes the conscience constantly perfect. "The worshippers, once purged, should have no more conscience of sins. Thus we are brought into the presence of God, never to have any more conscience of sins, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." We are called *so to know Christ's work*, as to see that it is quite impossible for us to have sin on us before God. Sin cannot be in God's presence. There is nothing but perfection there; and we are there because perfected for ever by the one offering of Jesus. We are in God's presence *because we are clean*, as clean as He could wish us to be. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." It is quite true we have to keep a conscience void of offence; and not to grieve the Spirit; but we are sealed of God unto the day of redemption, and there can be no mistake. The Holy Ghost could not dwell in us unless cleansed by the blood of Christ; and then He is the witness, not to the fruits, but to *the virtue of*

that blood. The fruits could not be produced unless He were there, of course, because they are "the fruits of the Spirit;" and when produced, the order is, first, the internal ones, then all the rest. "*Love, joy, peace,*" precede the outward manifestations of the Spirit's presence.

The Christian ought to keep himself in the present communion of his known place before God; because then, besides the joy, the Holy Ghost has its full flow in using him as a vessel to others, to God's service; whereas, otherwise, He must occupy us with ourselves. I have not only communion, but power, *only as thus in immediate intercourse with God in His presence.*

We come now to the *third* point. Having seen the source of all in the divine will, and the accomplishment of all in the divine work, we get the testimony to it all in the divine witness. "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after that he had said before, This is the covenant," &c., then He said, "And their sins and

iniquities will I remember no more.” And here is the secret of settled peace. If I think that God will ever remember sin, I am denying the will, the work, and the testimony of God. In short, if a believer in Jesus, it comes to being a sin to have the least thought of God’s ever imputing a sin to me. It is just as much a work of the flesh as to commit the sin. He does not now impute sin, and He never will. “Where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin,” sweeps away every refuge of lies, and lays the blessed foundation for full confidence. “Having, therefore, brethren, *boldness* to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus,” shows that the very way we enter into God’s presence, proves that the thing which shut us out is gone for ever.

“Our bodies washed with pure water,” refers to the priests, who were washed with water, sprinkled with blood, and anointed with oil. The latter is not mentioned here. After they were once washed, the priests needed only to wash their hands and

feet. The anointing with blood of the ear, the thumb, and the toe, was the application of the work of Christ to the whole moral man. The work of Christ is always set first, then follows the work of the Spirit. In Ephesians it is said, "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word." Therefore, in the tabernacle, the first thing you meet is not the laver, but the altar. *As a sinner*, I must first meet the blood; then I am fitted for *service*, by the removal of all that is contrary to God: but I cannot skip the altar to reach the laver; I must there own myself a sinner first; then I can delight in the holiness of God, and understand it too.

The apostle then goes on, "Consider one another to provoke unto love," &c., that is, having got to God in grace, we must be diligent in acting towards others in grace. He introduces—"Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together," to meet the tendency there

was to avoid public testimony, and to think that private faith would do, in times of persecution such as these were. This was their natural tendency; and, whether it be persecution or reproach, it is the same thing. The latter is perhaps our snare. "And so much the more as ye see the day approaching;" for judgment is surely coming. If the power of evil increases there is the more need to cling closely to Christ. And we must not suppose that the world is improving because the Spirit is working: on the contrary, this is just the proof that judgment is nearing. The more rapidly souls are gathered in, the more reason have we for believing the coming of the Lord to be at hand. Whilst the longsuffering of God is salvation, the hope should ever be a present one to the Church. It was the wicked servant who said, "My lord delayeth his coming;" yet he did delay it.

Then, in verse 26, it is as though he said, If you don't hold fast,—if you will give up, and *abandon this perfect*

sacrifice, then there remains nothing further; there is no year of atonement to come round again with a new offering; but just as those who believe are eternally perfect, so, he who refuses, is left remediless. It was he who despised Moses's law who died without mercy, and not he who broke it; so it is he "who counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and does despite to the Spirit of grace, that shall be counted worthy of a sorer punishment;" not he who fails. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins:" such is the gracious provision for failure through infirmity—advocacy, righteousness, and propitiation. But if a man, after having seen all the grace and fulness that are in Christ, deliberately chooses sin as his portion; and, rejecting the blood of the new covenant as insufficient, turns back again, then he must take the consequence. God's grace is His last resource, so to speak, for winning man.

If that does not suffice, judgment must take its course; and "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." On this ground the position is at once that of "adversaries," and we know Him that hath said "Vengeance is mine, I will recompense." "Let us, therefore, hold fast our confidence, which hath great recompense of reward;" and let us remember that we shall "have need of patience;" but "yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

GENTILE MERCY, NOT JEWISH PROMISES.

Matthew xv, 21—28.

There is a practical lesson in Christ's way of mercy toward this woman, as well as a secret in her lowly, uncomplaining, assumption of the place that belonged to her, that many a heart,

that is seeking for help in Jesus, needs to know.

The soul that knows and owns its wretchedness, and makes no pretension to any claim, yet brings its misery before a God of goodness, is a soul that Jesus can never refuse to comfort. He may be repelled by the claims of a false and pretended righteousness; but He cannot hide Himself from the misery that seeks His aid, and has no plea nor appeal except for mercy's ear. For mercy dwells, as in its proper fountain, in the heart of God; and Jesus is both the expression of that mercy, and the channel through which it flows.

Blessed Lord! He can dismiss from His presence a company of proud Pharisees, who find fault with His ways of grace, with the stern rebuke, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice;" and can say to a poor outcast Gentile, that pretends to receive nothing from Him but what goodness can give to a dog, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Misery thus owned and felt, and making its appeal to sovereign mercy, reaches at once the eternal spring of goodness.

This woman was of the outcast nations of Canaan, (dwelling in the regions of Tyre and Sidon, proverbial for their wickedness,)—a mere sinner of the Gentiles—an “alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenants of promise.” Her misery had drawn her to Christ for help, and her heart had entire confidence in His power. Still, at her first, and even second, appeal, she meets only with a repulse. She said, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David.”—“But he answered her not a word.”

The “Son of David” was a title that indeed belonged to Christ, but it was as the Messiah of the Jews; and this woman was not a Jew. A Canaanite had nothing to do with “the Son of David.” She was a Gentile, and she must take the outcast Gentile’s place, relinquishing the ground of

Jewish promises, to which she had no claim. The disciples would have got rid of her at any rate—for her misery could not be repulsed—but man's thoughts are not to set aside the order and the covenants of God. Therefore Jesus answered them, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This *but* brings the woman nearer to Christ, with the more touching expression of her sorrow, "Lord, help me!" But no! she must go lower yet. She was an outcast Gentile; Israel's covenanted mercies did not reach her case; and she must hear the word from Christ, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs."

This was a terrible word to fall on her ear. But it was true. And until our hearts have learned to submit to this, we have not reached the place to which sin has brought us in the presence of God; nor are we on that ground of rest, (even if believers,) that nothing can shake or disturb. It is indeed a terrible thing to feel one's

ruin in the presence of God, and to know that His mercy is our only resource, and, at the same moment, to be obliged to own that we have not the least claim to the exercise of that mercy. But this is the truth of our case; and the Lord's dealing with this woman illustrates it in the plainest way.

She had no claim to the promises, and therefore could not plead them. She was not a child, and therefore could not claim the children's portion. She was, in truth, a Gentile dog—and she could only have a dog's portion. In the presence of God, even when suing for mercy, we must indeed take the place that belongs to us. This poor woman does so. She does not refuse the place that belongs to her, however low and degraded it may be. But, oh, there is a reality in her dealing with the Lord that nothing can set aside. She meets the reply of Christ, by taking the dog's place; and answers, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

She owns God's sovereign right to choose a people, if He pleases. She acknowledges that she is not one of them, and that she has no right to the children's portion. But, at the same time, she casts herself on that sovereign goodness, to which she can make no claim, and is content with what, in its sovereign exercise, it can bestow on a dog.

The apparent harshness of Christ, in refusing to meet her appeal on ground that did not belong to her, only drew her soul to where mercy could flow without a bar. When she lets go the title of "Son of David," which a Gentile could not use; when she owns that she has no title to the children's bread; when she asks only for the mercy that the God of goodness can show to a dog, she finds that her apprehensions of His goodness are more than confirmed by Christ, and that she has reached a fountain that rises above every thought and desire of her heart.

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT; THE HOLY GHOST IN US; AND GOD FOR US.

Rom. viii.

There are three parts in this well known and remarkable chapter: first, Deliverance in the power of life from God,—the power of God in resurrection giving life in the spirit as our portion through the work of Christ; secondly, The presence of the Holy Ghost Himself,—not merely the fruit of His operation, but His own personal presence; and thirdly, The outward security—what God is for us—not anything in us, but that for which we can count upon Him. Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God. For only the creature can pretend to separate us; and no creature can separate from God, as being mightier than He. “If God be for us, who can be against us!” Therefore in the end we have nothing of

the inward work ; *that* the apostle had fully spoken of before. So entirely does he pass it over, that when he says, " Whom he justified," he does not add, *them* He also sanctified, though that is true, but " *them* he also glorified."

I repeat, we have, first, the inward effect and work—*life*—to its full result, even to the resurrection of the body. (Ver. 1—14.) Then, secondly, the presence of the Holy Ghost in us. (Ver. 15—29.) And, thirdly, all the securing power of what God is for us outwardly, in His counsels, &c. ; not looking at His work within the soul, maintaining it, and so on.

But before I enter on this chapter, I would say a few words on the conclusion of the last. A godly person, who had come to the deliverance there is in Christ Jesus, in the end of the 7th chapter,—that is, to the beginning of the last verse,—might suppose that there was an end of conflict ; but it is not so ; for such is the instruction of the latter part of the

same verse. It is after the soul has known deliverance by Jesus Christ, that this great principle comes out, "with the mind I serve the law of God;" therefore, until the deliverance is known, this cannot be realized; but the flesh remaining in us, after we have known deliverance, occasions conflicts after deliverance, because there are conflicting principles, contradictory one of another. In the 7th of Romans *the law* and the flesh are opposed to each other; but in the 5th of Galatians—where we get the real form of both conflict and deliverance—it is the opposition of *the flesh* and the Spirit. In Galatians, they have the Spirit, and therefore you get real power after the deliverance, which you do not get in Romans, because they have not the Spirit. Thus, in this 7th of Romans, it is not flesh and the Spirit, but man under law; and, therefore, he does not say, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit;" but, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He delights

in the law, it is true. Of course he does; for, if the new man is begotten it will delight in the law, whether under it or not. But the law has no power to give the Spirit; therefore, if under it, I cannot be led of the Spirit, I must be led of the flesh. "But we"—who believe—"are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us." "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "And, if we be led of the Spirit, we are not under the law." Therefore, in Galatians, where they have the Spirit, they are exhorted to "walk in the Spirit." But, if they have the Holy Ghost, why this exhortation to walk in the Spirit? Because the flesh is still there, and "lusteth against the Spirit," and there is ever a danger of acting according to it. "The Spirit," however, on the other hand, "lusteth against the flesh;" and is given for the very end that we may overcome, "that we *may not do* the things that we would," which is the force of the passage. If I walk

in the Spirit I do not fulfil the flesh's lusts.

I now turn to the doctrine of our chapter.

In the first three verses of this 8th chapter, we have the results of the argument shown in chapters v, vi, and vii. In the first verse we have the result of chapter v, in the second Adam—"justification of life." In the second, we are "dead unto sin," as in chapter vi. In the third, we are "dead to the law," as in chapter vii. Under the first Adam, who brought in sin and death, there was nothing but what pressed down; while in the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, it is all lifting up—perfect liberty. God has come in, in delivering power. But you say, "How is that?" God's own Son went down under the power of death for our sins, and rose in the power of a new life without them. He left them behind Him, with the life in which He had borne them, and to which the claims and curse of the law attached, and entered into a new

position before God. And by association with Him we are taken from under our sins into this new position—into resurrection-life with Christ. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation.” Christ has undergone the judgment due to sin, and then arisen from the dead; and in Him we too have died to all that came upon Him as dying, and in Him risen; and because we are alive, through the life of Christ, *after the judgment for sin has been executed on Him* who died for it, there can be no condemnation to those who are *in Him*. Moreover, “it is God that justifieth.” God came in in power, and put them through a work of death and resurrection in Christ, and there is an end of their whole standing as in flesh before God, and of all that attached itself to it.

Therefore, now it is no question of *hope* where faith is simple. I do not hope anything in speaking of the effect of the cross. I do not hope that the work of Christ puts away my sins; it *has* put them away,—it is a

past thing, executed and done. He "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Moreover, we do not now trust in promises for our peace, but in a fact, in an accomplished promise. Of course we do trust in promises for our every day's need and deliverance, but that is quite another thing. As to *salvation* we rest in that which is already done. By *the righteousness of one* the free gift is of many offences *unto justification of life.*" We are brought in living power into God's presence in resurrection. We are in Christ Jesus, who not only died, but having passed through death is beyond it all, in an entirely new position. There is our position, in Christ Jesus, in God's presence. There is no condemnation *there*. There is an end of the whole condition to which it applied: for it has exercised all its force on Jesus.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Here, too, is the secret of the walk of the Christian—"who walk not after the

flesh, but after the Spirit." Now we get that of which we had nothing in the end of the last chapter, that is, Christ and the Spirit. Indeed, we get more of the Spirit than of Christ and His work, for He is talking of that which results from what Christ has done. I find here the living power of the Spirit in Christ Jesus, setting us, as associated with Him, in a position where we are sitting out of the region of condemnation, made free from the law of sin and death.

Notice now the connexion of the three first verses of this chapter, with the argument of the three preceding chapters. The first verse looks back to the 5th chapter, and asserts that we are justified because Christ is dead and risen; and that there is no condemnation if we are in Christ Jesus. The second looks back to the 6th chapter, and answers the question, "Is this free justification a principle of sin?" No, for how have we got into Christ? By death and resurrection. Then you have the life of Christ, and that is

the very principle of holiness. The law of the Spirit of life has made us free. The third verse looks back to the 7th chapter, and shows that what the law could not do, God "has done;" viz., condemned that sin in the flesh which so troubles and besets us; and that through Christ's coming in the likeness of it, and as a sacrifice for it, so taking us from under its dominion. The righteousness of the law is now fulfilled in us; the principle of it is planted in us, "for he that loveth hath fulfilled the law." Thus we get the practical result, besides "no condemnation" and standing in Christ. The law could never give that.

I desire to call your attention again to the first verse, as there is extreme force and power in it. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation." It does not merely say that they are not condemned, but it goes a great deal further—"there is *no* condemnation." And the soul needs this full assurance. For conscience is more lively the nearer we are to God. And

the nearer to God the more miserable, if there is anything at all as a question between the soul and Him. There is, then, no condemnation to them that are in Christ. Is there any condemnation for Christ? Why! He is the Blessed One of God, the very substance and principle of being and accomplishment of what God delights in. How then can there be any condemnation for the one who is in Him? He makes our standing. In Him is our peace. All the old sins are gone, and there is perfect peace and security in God's presence, for we are there "as he is."

Verse 2. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." In the 7th chapter, we saw the power of the flesh, which was constantly subjugating the man, whose will was set right. There was a law in his members. But the Spirit has a law—a constant uniform principle of action—just as much as the flesh had. There is power too—living power—

in Christ. It is not taking a man and saying to him; here is the law, and keep it. Man would put this first, and get out of condemnation by it. Now we are quickened by the life-giving second Adam, and have part, as we have seen, in His resurrection, in order to getting out of condemnation; Christ having first wrought the atonement, we enter into life discharged from sin. But man would get his conscience free by the movings and actings of this life, that it might be as to his consciousness—*himself*; but this cannot be. There must be submission to condemnation, and the sense of helplessness, so that Christ may be our hope; in other words, there must be submission to God's righteousness. Until the conscience is clear, we cannot be dealing with God as a God of power. God will not let us have the power until we submit to the condemnation, and get it settled by Christ. But having submitted to God's righteousness, there is living power in Christ, which sets

the man free from the law of sin and death. In Rom. vii, there are the desires of the new life, but working in relation to the law, and therefore no power; but here it is life bowing to Christ.

Verse 3. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." The law was not in fault; it only failed through the weakness of the flesh. You cannot make anything perfect out of bad materials. A man may be a very skilful workman, but if you set him to work upon bad materials, all his skill will be of no avail. For instance, a man might carve on wood, and display the most exquisite taste and workmanship, and produce that which every one would admire; but if he were to attempt to do the same in clay instead of wood, it would only crumble to pieces beneath his hand, and all his skill would go for nothing. So the law attempting to work on the flesh only crumbles it to pieces. The material breaks down under it. The law never effected the giving of righteousness.

It promises life to those who keep it, but it never gives life. Christ alone gives life.

What man could not do, that God does; and that is the secret of the whole chapter. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." The question is, How can sin in the flesh be condemned?—not our sins merely, but this terrible thing, sin in the flesh. Well, God is going to deal with it. God condemns it. I see He ought to condemn it, and that frightens me. Well, how has He done it? "By sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin." Thus He condemned sin in the flesh, and put it away in Christ's sacrifice. He executed it in Christ's dying for us. The whole condemnation has run out on Christ. This terrible thing, which I do not know what to do with, God has done away with—outside of us altogether—in Christ. Christ died,

not only for sins, but for sin. It is a real, thorough redemption. If God sets about delivering, He does it perfectly. He would not deliver you from your *sins* and leave you under your *sin*, to worry your conscience about it. For the grand point here is not merely pardon, but deliverance, so as to stand in liberty before God. Therefore, what the true heart wants is power over the sin with which it is in conflict every day, and a conscience really freed in God's sight, that if past sins are put away they be not working in power in him as a law in his members, by which he is captive to sin. Yet he knows and feels that its root is still there. But root and branch have been condemned by God's sending His own Son. It was He who thought of this. *His own Son.* There we learn the extent of His grace and His firm purpose to accomplish that work of deliverance for us.

Verse 4. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the

Spirit.” Here He takes up the walk. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled *in us*. It is not a law which is given outside us, and has to act by a flesh whose lusts refuse its requirements, and whose will rebels against its authority. It is a new life in power which discerns, indeed, and brings to light, the lusts of the flesh, but which makes me walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The flesh is not changed, therefore I am not to walk after it. The flesh is there, but that is no excuse for walking after it, for the Spirit of Christ is in us. And, moreover, “God will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear.” The flesh is still present, and must be judged and kept down. We all, as believers, have the flesh in us, though we are not in the flesh; but that does not necessarily make the conscience bad,—it does not hinder my communion if it is not allowed to act in any way. I go and talk to God about it. I am in communion with Him about it. I go and say, “Father,

help, or I shall fail." If I allow it to act in any way, conscience gets bad, and I lose communion, and I have to go and confess my sin before communion can be restored. Thus, the mere fact of indwelling sin is—if we walk with God—an occasion of communion; (I do not say the cause of it;) whereas, in so far as I allow it to act, it is a barrier, though grace comes in and restores.

Verse 5. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." "After the Spirit" gives the condition and position of the man looked at as a spiritual man. Every nature is suited to certain objects. The vile nature has its objects; and they who have the Spirit will delight in the things which are according to the Spirit's nature. They who are after the Spirit have a mind which has objects on which it rests, and towards which it tends in its desires.

"For to be carnally minded is death." The carnal mind, fruitless in its nature,

lies under the death of the old Adam,—death comes in to seal the condition. “But to be spiritually-minded is life and peace.” Here we get the inward thing in the power of the Holy Ghost—life and peace.

There is a two-fold peace; peace in the *conscience*, and peace in the *heart*. The former the blood of Jesus has obtained and gives; the latter, of which this verse speaks, is a far higher thing; it is peace in the heart and affections. There is peace in the heart when the affections in quiet are at rest in the steady delight in and pursuit of a perfectly satisfying object, for the pursuit of which the conscience will never reproach us. If we are delighting in the Lord, there will be peace. If we are ever disquieted, it is with ourselves we are occupied; but if the Spirit is at work, He takes us away from self to God. And herein lies the contrast between Ecclesiastes and Canticles. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon is taken up with himself: it is “*I, Solomon, the king;*” singing men and singing wo-

men; gardening, and knowledge, and all that the heart can desire; and "what can be done after the king?" But the things of the flesh cannot fill the heart: "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." For let him exhaust all that the world can afford, the energy that exhausts it is never satisfied; the greater the energy to find out all the world can afford, the more is it found out that it cannot satisfy. But when we get *Christ*, as in the Canticles, we want, on the contrary, the capacity to seize it all. What peace and joy is found in communion with Him! But if self comes in the rest is broken.

Verse 7. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God." Here we get a deeper thing still. Here we find that the flesh has *a will* that will not be subject to God. It would not be *will* if it were. The flesh has not only desires that are contrary to God, but a will that is not subject to His law. The law declares not only right things, but also the authority of the lawgiver; and when the authority of God comes

in it brings out the rebellion of the flesh; for the flesh immediately says, 'I will, and I will not.' So if you break one commandment you are guilty of all; because unwillingness to submit is as much shown in the breaking of one as in the breaking of all. If I bid my child do three things, and he does only two of them, which he likes, and in the third takes his own way, insubjection of will is as much brought out by his disobeying in one point as if he had disobeyed in all. "So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Its lusts are contrary to His nature—it goes against His will and authority. This will, by its existence, is hostile to God,—for our place with Him is to obey. To have a will of my own is not to obey.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." Our standing before God is not in the flesh—not in the first Adam and in his nature and will. We are looked at of God as alive in the Spirit. The flesh is there and lusts, but he is in the Spirit; the living

power of God having come and wrought the new man and working in it. Hence by His power there is liberty—holy liberty. All that the Spirit delights in and desires characterizes the man before God; for a man is what the object, thought, and feeling of his mind is. You are not in the flesh,—He does not say the flesh is not in you. There is another life, even that of the risen Jesus, which is in you, and is that in which you live before God, though the flesh may seek to guide you; if not, we are not walking in the power of the Spirit.

“If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” It is not merely God working for us, but God in us;—not merely producing a new nature, but dwelling in it and working in it. For besides the new nature we want power.

If we have the new nature only, we have good desires, but we do not accomplish them, as is the case in the 7th chapter; but if the Spirit of God dwell in us, not merely have we new thoughts and desires, but there

is living power to accomplish them. It is most precious to see how he brings in God as the real practical deliverance of the man who was before in the flesh. For it does not say, "ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," *if born of the Spirit*—though that is true; but, "if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you;" showing that it is God Himself working in power—as the Spirit of God. Such is His form and character as working in man in power, in contrast with flesh and man.

As to practical character He is called the Spirit of Christ in man, for there the life of the Spirit was perfectly displayed.

Verses 10, 11. Finally, for the full and complete accomplishment of deliverance from the body of sin and death, we are assured that if the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ dwell in us, He that quickened Jesus shall quicken our mortal bodies by reason of His Spirit that dwells in us. The body is not left until it, too, is brought to participate in the full result of

resurrection power. Meanwhile, this is realized in the power of the Spirit and new life. I hold the body for dead; for, if its will works as alive, its movements and fruits are nothing but sin; and I hold the Spirit as my alone life, for its fruits are righteousness. And how entirely this testimony of the resurrection of the saint being by virtue of the Spirit dwelling in him, separates him from the whole condition of the world. The world will not be raised because the Spirit of Christ is in them. They have it not. We however shall be raised by His Spirit who dwells in us.

Here is the link. Saints are raised, because livingly united to Christ. "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." This shows in what a place we are set. Thus we have three characters of the Spirit: He is called the Spirit of God, as contrasted with the flesh; the Spirit of Christ, as characteristic of our walk in the world; and the Spirit of life, as connected with our resurrection.

Thus we get, up to the end of this 11th verse, the answer to the 24th verse of the 7th chapter, O wretched man that I am! For here, there is full deliverance, not for the Spirit only, but even for the body. The Holy Ghost, in the working of His power in the saint, does not leave the body until it is fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. The desires are there according to the new nature—liberty and power,—all in and through the working of the Spirit by real life communicated, and finally, glory. It is the forming of the new man—power; while the flesh is there resisting the working of the Spirit; and finally, a body fully conformed to the life which we have by the Spirit. This communication of life, so that it may be our nature, and the presence of the Holy Ghost Himself, causes the effect of that presence to be spoken of in two ways; for Scripture speaks of Him as our life, and as separate from it and acting in it. Hence He is both nature and power. The new

nature given to us, but the Holy Ghost dwells in us. And, as the fruit of His operation, we read, "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." A groan comes forth. I may not understand my groan, but the Spirit in me does. I may not have the intelligence to know what is the just answer to it; but God finds the working of the Holy Ghost sensible of what is around me according to God. "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." It is my heart, but also the Holy Ghost who has produced it as a real feeling in my heart. It is me, for it is done in me; and yet it is not me, looking to its power. We thus get the working of the Holy Ghost in us, and the comfort of knowing that it is *us*, and the Holy Ghost too. For, from the 14th verse, we have the second form of this truth, that is, the Holy Ghost acting personally in us, as Himself there in power and sympathy. It is not merely that He is

a source of life in us, but He acts in and on this life—He leads and guides us as Christians. He Himself acts in us, though here as in connexion with this life.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit,” &c. When He wants to show the source of power *in* our spiritual life, He points to the Holy Ghost. “The Spirit is life,” and so He is. Without the Spirit we cannot believe; “after that ye believed; ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise;” yet it is very important to remember that after having believed, the Holy Ghost Himself is given to dwell in us. “*Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*” The indwelling of the Holy Ghost is a different thing from the quickening power of the Spirit. Old Testament saints had the quickening power of the Spirit, but the indwelling of the Holy Ghost could not be until Jesus was glorified. (John vii.) Instances are given in the Acts, where

there was an interval between these two things, to make us sensible of the distinction between them. We read, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," that is, the new nature. But then the new nature wants power; it has neither strength nor power. The very characteristics of the new nature are dependence and obedience. But there must be *power*; and that is the Holy Ghost,—ours in virtue of redemption and uniting us to Christ; and then *the leading of the Spirit*. Then it is said, we are "led of the Spirit." Now the Spirit does not lead the flesh, but the new man. It teaches me to reckon the flesh to be dead; and if I reckon it dead, it is not *me*. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you; then ye are temples of the Holy Ghost, who is *in you*, which we have *of God*. A temple is that in which God dwells; and our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost. What a solemn reason for holiness of conversation! And again it is said, in

John xiv, He shall be in you, as the other Comforter. He was not in them before. Jesus went away; but there is this new Comforter, not merely with us as Christ was, but in us; and He abides, He does not go away as Christ did. There is no power in us to apprehend the truth, or to walk in the power of it. But the Holy Ghost not only presents the things of Christ, but gives us the capacity of apprehending them; and moreover it is by Him we are enabled to enjoy them, and to walk in the power of them.

In 1 Cor. ii, 12—15, we find these three things stated regarding the Spirit: 1st, Divine instruction received by the Spirit. Ver. 12. "We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God." 2nd, Communicated to others by the Spirit. Ver. 13. "Which things we speak in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." And 3rd, Spiritual capacity to discern, through living power in the

souls of those taught. Ver. 14, 15. "He that is spiritual, judgeth [discerneth] all things."

The solemn truth is this, that the Holy Ghost has been really given as indwelling power. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh;" for, besides life, there is this indwelling power of the Holy Ghost. The Comforter could not be given in this way, until Christ was gone, and redemption fully accomplished; for by the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, the seal was put on the value of the work which Christ came to finish. The seal was put, not on what *we* had done, but on what *Christ did*. The Lord's own anointing, when baptized, was a seal to His *personal* perfection. Him hath God the Father sealed; but could God put the seal *on me* in whom sin is found? No. "*In him* after that ye believed ye were sealed." Even if I am born of the Holy Ghost, righteousness is not accomplished in me according to God. Therefore He

could not seal the whole result. The Holy Ghost was also given to testify of Christ's glory as the risen man. It is not merely that Jesus personally was accepted, when He went up on high—He was present for us, and as the Head of the body; and He received from the Father the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost's coming is declared to be dependent on Christ's perfecting His work, and taking His place on high as man—the Head of the body; and He bears witness also to the personal glory of Christ. The effect of this was manifest in the difference in the apostles before and after Pentecost, and before the giving of the Spirit. Peter was born again; yet we find ignorance, stupidity, and fear. What do we find after? We find the same Peter, who had denied Christ worse than the Jews, (for he was in fellowship with Him,) charging home this very sin on the Jews. Was he afraid? No; his conscience was purged, for Christ had died meantime; and besides we find he was filled with the

Holy Ghost. "They perceived the boldness of Peter and John." I am not here speaking of miracles, the mighty signs and wonders which were wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost; but of the boldness with which the apostles spake after they received the Spirit, as we see all through the Acts. It was not the boldness of the flesh, but the fruit of the presence of the Holy Ghost working in them spiritual energy and power, so as that the conscience should be in perfect liberty before God, and the fear of man disappear through the acting of a power which made God present to the soul in love. We have a beautiful type in Aaron. After he was washed, he was anointed *without blood*, but his sons were not anointed until sprinkled with blood. So Jesus was anointed down here with the Holy Ghost, and with power, as the seal of His personal perfection, *before* the blood had been shed; but we are anointed and sealed after we are perfected through the blood of Christ.

(2 Cor. i.) Christ sends the Holy Ghost, and He is in us as the Spirit of adoption; the effect is to put us into direct communion with the glory and place of Christ in the presence of the Father. This gives the character of our walk. We are to mind the things of the Spirit. Do they who are after the Spirit mind the law? No; they keep it, because they do not mind it, nor are under it. They mind the things of the Spirit. And what are they? Anything in the world? No! nothing. "He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." He gives us the knowledge of *past* redemption, *present* peace and liberty, and *future* glory. He occupies the soul with Christ; thus bringing joy, and thankfulness, and power, into the soul. The Spirit turns the eye back, and teaches *the glory* of the cross, after we have known its saving power, and this we can then peacefully contemplate, for we are on God's side of the cross. Whatever is morally glorious we see it in the cross. There we see

love, obedience, holiness, righteousness, and law; there, too, we see whatever was morally bad; condemnation, sin, and death. God and sin met together in the person of Christ on the cross. When I have found peace, I can say, "now is the Son of man glorified;" not now I am saved, though that is true; but, "now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." And surely there is no joy like the joy of knowing that, in that act of deepest suffering for our salvation, both God and Christ were most deeply glorified. If Christ suffered all that agony for my sin in obedience to the Father's will, surely there never was a moment when God could look on Him with deeper delight; and I have now all the effect of it. The heart gets impressed and penetrated with the sense of His love, if I now look at what I am in Christ, such as that Christ is satisfied in me and the Father too. I am the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul. The light of God's love rests on Christ

Himself, and we are *in Him*. "In that day," when ye obtain the Comforter "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." We have the blessing of union with Him now, and there is but one thing more—to be *with Him* for ever. The Comforter is the perpetual remembrancer of that word, "so shall we be ever with the Lord."

The Church is to be brought to Christ, as Eliezer brought Rebecca to Isaac. All along the road he was telling her of the one to whom she was going. Just so the Holy Ghost is leading us up to Christ—the cross being the starting point of the journey, and the whole character of the road all along the way answering to it; and meanwhile He is telling us of all the glory of Christ and of the Father's house. There may be trial in the way, but what is that to the heart whose affections are set on Christ. Poor Rebecca! if she thought of her father's house when she was in the wilderness with an uncertain future; but if she

thought of what was before her, then all was joy, and there was certainty as to the future. The cross is the commencement of this journey, as separating us from the world; and if we know the Spirit's power in our souls we must keep in this narrow path (in heart I mean) all the journey through. Beloved, you have to go through the world, but do not make the wilderness the object of your hearts. Israel did this. You may desire earthly good, and you may get it; but it will bring leanness into your souls. Rather let us be, like Paul, doing one thing—so pressing on to the glory, as that we can forget the world and all that is in it, as things which are behind us—on which we have turned our backs.

I add a few words on the rest of the chapter.

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. The Spirit giving us the assurance that we are sons, we have no longer in any wise the spirit of bondage to fear. Fear has torment. Our relationship

with God is of quite another character. He has loved me, blotted out my sins, made me His child, and I am now in that relationship with Him. I do not know Him otherwise than as a loving Father, and I a saved son.

But then I am an heir, an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. Such is my joy and hope by the Spirit. But in this world of sorrow and evil Christ was a sufferer; if led by His Spirit I must be so too, like Him and with Him; but then it is the path to glory. But then this very apprehension of the glory by the Spirit makes us sensible according to God of the sorrow and suffering of the whole creation, which is waiting for the manifestation of us the sons of God—and not only do we see the creation groaning around us; but, as to our bodies, we are of it, and we groan ourselves, being burdened; not because the heart is uncertain of God's love, but because, having known our share in the glory, we are therefore sensible of the contrast of the state in which we are as in

the body, and thereby connected with the first creation. But then the Spirit enters into all this sorrow, not in the selfishness which dreads it for itself, but in the sympathy which is according to God, as it was shown in Christ Himself. We may not know the remedy, but the groan of the heart is the movement of the Spirit sensible of the sorrow and misery that is around. Besides, if we do not know what to ask for as we ought, we know that God makes all things work together for good to them that love Him. This leads to another very important point—what God is; not as working in us by the Spirit, but what He is for us. Hence, sanctification is omitted. He foreknew, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified. Nothing shall separate us from His love.

Thus, after the first three verses, we have, first, the Spirit as life. Then, secondly, the Holy Ghost acting personally as present with us. In this we have the double character. He gives us the knowledge of sonship and joy

of inheritance, and He takes part in our sorrow and infirmities as in this world. And thirdly, we have God *for* us, so that none can lay ought to the charge of God's elect, nor anything separate them from His love. Blessed thought it is. We have life in the Spirit, the Holy Ghost in us, and God ever for us.

HYMN.

O Jesus! when I think on thee,
My heart for joy doth leap in me;
Thy blest remembrance yields delight;
But far more sweet will be Thy sight.

Of Thee, who didst salvation bring,
I shall for ever think and sing:
Thy love, O Jesus! ne'er can cloy,
Fountain of bliss, and source of joy.

For me Thy precious blood was spilt,
To seal the pardon of my guilt;
And justice poured upon Thy head
Its heavy vengeance in my stead.

O let me ever share Thy grace ;
 Still taste Thy love and view Thy face ;
 Where'er I am, where'er I move,
 Be Thou the object of my love.

Blest Jesus ! what delicious fare,
 How sweet thy entertainments are !
 Never did angels taste above
 Redeeming grace and dying love.

To Thee I'll be for ever joined,
 Joy of my heart, joy of my mind ?
 And in Thy Father's house above,
 Unhindered taste Thy perfect love.

THE POWER OF ETERNAL LIFE.

NOTE ON 2 COR. IV, V.

We have, *first*, the object fully revealed by the power of God shining in upon the soul, but giving it as an object in its own perfection — “The light of the knowledge of the glory of

God in the face [person] of Jesus Christ." Here was the divine object, life in glory. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (iv, 6.)

But, *secondly*, it was really possessed as life within: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," which of course did not answer to the object.

Thirdly, this was the occasion of the display of divine power, and the exercise of dependence. "That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (iv, 7.) Hence cast down, and divine power sustaining. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." (iv, 8, 9.) The manifestation of the life, in proportion of the sentence of death in ourselves, God securing by the path that nature be kept in check—the new man developed and exercised. "Always bearing about in the body

the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." (iv, 10, 11.)

Fourthly, then comes the possession of the glory to which the power is competent to work us, and of which we are assured. This power is in "knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you," (iv, 14, and on to chap. v;) only he sees there is power enough in this life, seen in Christ, to swallow up what is mortal, so that death disappears.

Not yet having possession of the objective glory, we have the earnest of the Spirit, and the certainty already that God has wrought us for the very glory we have seen in Christ. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." To this we have a most wonderful and

glorious result as regards the time of seeing Christ in the glory.

All (saints and sinners) will be manifested before His tribunal. Thus, while seeking to be agreeable to Him ourselves, we have the terror of the Lord before us. But what is the effect? We are righteousness perfected for Him, purified by God according to the purity of God. Hence the manifestation of the light which judges raises no question then at all. Indeed we shall be glorified to appear before the judgment seat, for Christ will come and receive us to Himself.

But there are two aspects of God, perfect holiness and purity, and love. The purity in judgment having to do with His own purification of us, whom He will then have conformed to the image of His Son who sits on the judgment seat. There is, as to this conformity, no question; but this other part of God's nature, *love*, free to act in virtue of this conformity, constrains when the judgment is thought of, and he seeks to persuade men. "Knowing

therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (v, 11, 14, 15.) Yet we are still in the body, still in conflict; but we have this immense advantage from the revelation of this glory in judgment, not that we think of being manifested, though we shall be; but that *that* being laid hold of by faith we are manifested to God. This is a glorious position, and full of preciousness to our souls, if in truth we seek to be with God.

This is all founded on the work stated in v, 20, 21: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be

sin for us who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

HYMN.

Oh ! dearest Saviour, take my heart :
Where can such sweetness be,
As I have tasted in Thy love,
As I have found in Thee ?

Let every fervor of my soul,
By Thy sweet sacrifice,
For ever be at thy control,
And but to serve Thee rise.

'Tis heaven on earth to know Thy love,
To feel Thy quickening grace ;
And all the heaven I hope above
Is but to see Thy face.

Then keep me in Thy love, O Lord,
And teach me of Thy ways,
Till Thou shalt come to take me home,
And see Thee face to face.

THE DIVINE CALMNESS OF
CHRIST, EVEN ON THE CROSS.

Note on Luke xxiii, 27—45.

It is lovely to see how the Lord does not merely show a resignation under trial, produced by an effort which makes Him bow,—and yet be absorbed by it, as we often are,—but a perfect obedience and acceptance of His Father's will, such that He rises altogether above it, so as to be quite free, to be in the fulness of, and to express just what grace would do; or, if needed, truth also, in that which was presented to Him.

Thus, when led to the cross, to the women He says, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children; for the days come," &c. Then, when speaking on the cross for Israel He says, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This was the one and only ground which could

be good for Israel. The Holy Ghost answered to it in Peter's sermon; and Paul refers to the principle. Then to the thief on the cross He says, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." There was the full present effect of His work and salvation.

Now how perfectly calm—as if He had only to teach in grace from heaven—is all this; and in the perfect appropriateness in each case which divine clearness could give. And how wide the scope of instruction! The judgment of Jerusalem,—the ground on which the Jews might be forgiven in virtue of the cross,—and the full present blessing in virtue of the cross, short of resurrection, not yet accomplished. The whole scope of truth was here.

Thus, *if we quietly do that which is given*, and trust God in the peaceful answer to what is brought before us, what wide-spread power of truth comes in.

CHASTENING.

If I am proud in my spirit, and lose the place of humility before God, and some lust breaks out; God may use this particular failure, and even continuance in it, to get at and chasten me for this root of pride, or of self-will, which seemed to have no connexion with it. So it was with Peter; only in his case there was not continuance in the sin. Peter had confidence in himself, and this led to his fall. The Lord, in His grace, had provided for it beforehand; so He looks upon Peter, and breaks his heart. After this, He does not say one word about the particular failure; but He does deal with Peter in the closest way to bring out, and to root out, this confidence in himself. "Simon, son of Jonas," He says, "lovest thou Me *more than these?*" A second and a third time He says, "lovest thou Me?" So that at last Peter had to take refuge in the Lord's omniscience. He who

knew all things could see the love which was in Peter's heart, though it might be no one else could.

MAN'S PARADISE AND GOD'S HOUSE.

The 84th Psalm opens out a new and special source of delight, but one which unfolds itself in many other passages. When God put man in paradise it was not God's dwelling, but man's. God visited man there, though man was already unfit for His presence; but at least it was man's dwelling, though prepared of God for him. But now God calls *us* to dwell in His house—His tabernacle. This is altogether a new thing, and of sovereign grace,—our dwelling with Him and in His house. (Compare John xiv.) We have this by His dwelling in us, and so our dwelling in Him; for thus we know the joy of what belongs to the place where God has

made His home, and thus become the home of that soul where He dwells. The passages above ; Eph. ii, at the end ; Rev. xxi ; and 1 John iii and iv, all open this out.

MY HOME IS NOT HERE.

MY home 'tis not here, in a region of death,
 Which sin has defiled with its poisonous breath ;
 Where Christ was rejected, where man is oppressed,
 In a world full of groaning, I seek not my rest.

You may show me its palaces, stately and fair,
 But the brows of their inmates are furrow'd with care ;
 Its wisdom is folly, and madness its mirth :
 For the shadows of death all envelope the earth.

I may gaze on the mountain, and forest, and flood,
They speak of their Maker, my Father and God ;
 His sun it enlivens the day with its light,
 His moon and His stars give a voice in the night.

His hand paints each flower with its beautiful dye,
 His providence watches the sparrows that fly ;

I hear *Him*, I see *Him*, wherever I roam,
For this earth is His work, but it is not my
home.

My home is in heaven, for Jesus is there,
He's gone His own home for His friends to pre-
pare;
In the land which no evil has ever defiled,
Where each tear shall be wiped from the eye of
His child.

My home is in heaven! yes, there we shall meet;
What joy it will be our companions to greet,
With whom thro' this desert we journeyed along;
When the sigh shall be changed for the harp and
the song.

ON TAKING THE ARMOUR.

Eph. vi, 10—18.

If I do not know practically in my soul my acceptance, and my position as a member of Christ's body, I cannot take in the instruction of this portion of the word of God. It presents, in its connexion, emphatically, the full result of Christ's work in relation to

the Church, as the object of God's thought and counsel before the foundation of the world. There is such a union between Christ and His members that His standing is their standing; His acceptance is their acceptance; and His life and glory are theirs. So, also, there should be a correspondence in the walk with the position in which we are placed. My walk, indeed, is here, but the springs of it are all above. It is just as I apprehend my acceptance in Jesus, and my consequent place in the world, as He was in it, that I shall practically realize this.

The apprehension of this conflict depends upon the realization of the Church's position in Christ. It is not merely the mortifying of the flesh, though it is impossible to meet Satan if I do not keep under my body: for if I am yielding to the flesh, Satan has me down, and, so far, under his power. Nor is it the contending with the temptations of the world, though these, of course, we have to overcome. So far as a Christian is a worldly man, he

is a miserable man; and the more so the better. This conflict takes a higher character than either the mortification of the flesh, or the victory, in spirit, over the world; but it will never go on, if those be wanting. It is in a region where Satan and his hosts put forth their might. It is not conflict *in our souls* about God as to our standing in His sight or as to His thoughts about us; or what the final result of His grace may be. It is of an entirely different character. It is "against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places." (See *margin*.)

Now it is not by underrating these enemies that we are to meet them. It is not by making light of them that we are to overcome them. Satan may soon put down our vaunting. Yet there is no reason to fear him. David did not fear Goliath; but it was because he went against him in the strength of the Lord, and only in His name. There is a phalanx, then, of spiritual enemies—not want of spiritual

affections, which, indeed, may be, and will surely unfit us for the conflict—but an army of real spiritual enemies, which every Christian, and the Church of God, has to meet in the heavenly places, if our true and blessed position, as *risen in Christ*, is to be enjoyed.

Now, says the apostle, in effect, if there is no room for boasting, there is no room for fear. For we are not avenging our own wrongs; we are fighting for God, and seeking, in His might, to destroy the works of the devil. Therefore he says, “be strong in *the Lord* and in the power of his might.” And, if we are found practically walking above with Christ, we shall find our need of the exhortation, “Put on the whole armour of God.”

To illustrate what is meant by “heavenly places,” take the case of Israel. First, there is redemption out of Egypt by the blood of the lamb; not merely from guilt, but from destruction by the sprinkling of the door-posts. Then there is the power which made the path of death to others (the

Red Sea) the path of life to the believer. And after all this, there is the wilderness. We are in the wilderness—Oh that we realized it more and more! Well, Israel had there to meet Amalek: (see Exodus xvii:) and their whole strength was residing in Moses's uplifted hands. So it is by the power of God alone that we overcome. Everything depends on the power of God. It is out of ourselves; yet it is ours to lay hold on it. But the conflict of Israel with Amalek presents rather the conflict of the believer with the enemy, as seeking to hinder God's pilgrims in their onward progress through the world as a wilderness. It is the hindering power of the world, used by Satan to stop the march of a Christian through the world to God's rest in heaven. Hence his power must be met and overcome too, or we cease to be strangers and pilgrims upon earth. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." But the world *must* be overcome; or the pilgrim character

must be dropped. But afterwards, even when Jordan was crossed, there was conflict; that is after death and resurrection in Christ are realized this conflict begins. After Israel had got beyond Jordan and were in Canaan, the Canaanites had to be overcome.

Now, here is the point. How am I to live a heavenly life? How am I to present a heavenly character. Why, by *living* in heaven. It is not by rule, but by living in heaven. Christ said, "I am from above;" so, as to every spring of my action, it ought to be drawn from heaven, from Christ. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." If the wars of the Lord are to be maintained, and if the character of a Christian is to be maintained, it is by our living in heaven, by having our hearts in heaven. We belong to

heaven. O beloved! it is not words that can communicate the knowledge of this to you. I might talk for ever of heaven to you, and you would never comprehend it unless you were *there*. But if you are *there* you know what I mean. Now if you are in heaven, it will cost you no trouble, no anxiety, how to live down here. The power of that life which has brought you there, and the array of everything which faith finds there will mould your character down here. If, however, you are not in heaven, it will cost you much anxiety how to shape your conduct; and how to act so as to have the good opinion of others; and also how to keep on good terms with conscience and yourself. This is the thing, walking in the light as God is in the light.

Now, just as we realize our position in Christ shall we be able to meet the wiles of the enemy. It was just as Joshua got beyond Jordan that he had to conquer Jericho; that Israel fled from the men of Ai; and that

he had to meet the wiles of the Gibeonites. The point is to keep our position in the heavenlies. Thus you see how the conflict is taken wholly out of the world. Worldly things have to do with it, yet it is carried on in heavenly places. How little do we realize these powers of evil! Not mere flesh and blood, but spiritual enemies, who strive to hinder our enjoyment in the heavenlies.

We begin at the wrong end when we begin with ourselves. Oh! it is sad for a Christian to be ever questioning and doubting, not certain of his salvation. It is not merely that he is unhappy—of course he is that; but he is not realizing what Christ is. It is a positive slur on the work of Christ. You may say, it is only a question of privilege; but no question of privilege stands alone. Oh, no! It is no light thing to be ignorant of Christ: I do not mean ignorant of His salvation; but ignorant of the fulness of His person, and the divine, eternal, perfectness of His work.

Now as to the Armour.

“Take unto you the whole armour of God.” Make a practical use of all the truth that is in the scriptures, and especially of that which is presented in this epistle, and let it have its due power in your souls. Thus you will be able to stand against the enemy.

“Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.” Do not hold truth loosely. There is much taking up of truth in a loose way. Why do men use a girdle? To enable them to gather up their energies, — to strengthen them for combat, or the race. *Truth* is what I want to strengthen me for my conflict with Satan’s falsehood. And it is just so much of the truth as I am practically enjoying with God, that I can use as a girdle. O beloved, what are you doing here? Are you drones? Are you taking your ease? Are your garments loose? It must not be. “Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus

Christ." (1 Pet. i, 13.) We are called to serve Christ. "And, if any man serve me," says He, "him will my Father honour." Every one is called to serve Christ. It is poor work if we are not asking every day, "what wouldst thou have me to do?" By and bye, He will need no service, and we shall need no girdle; then we shall rest. But here we are in a world where Christ needs service. We are called to fight for Christ, and the apostle says, "no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath called him to be a soldier."

"And having on the breastplate of righteousness." It is the breastplate of *righteousness* which gives us a perfect standing before God, so that Satan can never raise a question as to this vital point. "We are made the righteousness of God in him." What is the good of Satan's coming to me, and telling me what I have been? I know it all; but I also know what I now am in Christ. By a careless walk

the sense of this may be lost: I may lose, *practically*, the breastplate of righteousness; I may forget that I was purged from my old sins. But there is a righteousness, a perfect divine righteousness, in which the believer stands accepted in the Beloved. I may trip, but nothing can undo the work of God in Christ.

“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” A walk in peace; fitted by these shoes to walk in the rough places in the world in peace, fitted to go on in peace in the path set before me. If I am abiding in the peace of the gospel, I shall be in rest and quiet, whatever the circumstances of the world may be. Yes, in that peace I can go anywhere. Jesus is our peace; that divine blessed peace, which does not hang upon circumstances.

“Above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” All the fiery darts. There is not a single shaft that can pierce or

wound me, if I am holding up this shield of faith. Satan wounds by weakening our faith; and nothing does this sooner than neglect of God's word, or the allowance of any practical unrighteousness. It is not a question of what darts; it may be about acceptance, or temptation to a careless walk. But I by faith get up into the heavenlies, and see my position there: what then can harm me? There I know that all things work together for good.

There is no ground for faith but the sure word of God.

“And take the helmet of salvation.” I must be sure of my salvation if I go up into the battle. There is no maintaining this conflict with Satan, if the soul is not established in grace. What a blessed thing it is to know that I am already saved! Then I can hold up my head, *having on* the helmet of salvation. As David says, “Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.” A soldier might almost as well be without his shield as without his helmet: in either case he is unable to look his enemy in

the face;—almost as well be without faith, as without the knowledge of salvation, in the practical question of meeting Satan in conflict.

“And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” This is an offensive weapon. All are not defensive; though we are secured against injury by the breastplate, &c., before we are called upon to take the sword of the Spirit. We are to use the sword to make head against the enemy. We are to use it so as to deliver others held in his bonds. And this is not simply by a great knowledge of the word. I cannot use the sword of the Spirit with an arm of flesh. I must use it in the power of the Spirit. Oh! there is need to honour the Holy Ghost—near to me as Christ is, and dear to me as Christ is! For we read not only that Christ died for us, but that He sent that other Comforter. Oh! that word, “quench not the Spirit!” “Grieve not the Spirit!” Beloved, we should be anxious about this. We cannot use the sword of the Spirit, if

we are grieving the Spirit. We cannot enjoy fellowship with God, if we are grieving the Spirit. There cannot be too much enjoyment of the corporate presence of the Spirit; yet we must have the apprehension and enjoyment of His indwelling power. Alas! alas! the inward life has fallen far short of the position in which we are placed. There is a great want of individual practical walking with God, not only so as to get enjoyment—that is low ground—but so as to glorify God, so as to give the consciousness to every one who comes into contact with us that our walk is with God, and that our strength is in God. The sword is not wielded in the power of the Spirit. We take the blessing, but the power to keep it, and to glorify God by it, is wanting.

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,” &c. It is blessed to find that after being fully equipped for the warfare, absolute dependence on Christ crowns the whole. There is our place of strength.

And it is for all saints ; because it is alone as I see the Church's union with Christ as risen, and the Holy Ghost revealing the common position of all believers in Christ as His body, that I can understand the place and grounds, and reason, and power of this conflict. God has provided the armour ; it is for the believer to take it to himself and to put it on.

THE CHRISTIAN MARINER.

“And so he bringeth them to the haven where they would be.”

Yes, billow after billow—see they come
 Faster and rougher, as his little boat .
 Nears evermore the haven. † Oftentimes
 It seems to sink and fall adown the wave,
 As if borne backward by the struggling tide ;
 Yet mounting billow after billow, wave
 On wave o'er riding, tempest-tossed, and shattered,
 Still, still it nears the haven evermore.
“Poor mariner ! art not thou sadly weary ?”
 Dear brother, rest is sweeter after toil.

“Grows not thine eye confused and dim with
sight

Of nothing but the wintry waters?” True;
But then my pole-star, constant and serene,
Above the changing waters, changes not.

“But what if clouds as often veil the sky?”

Oh, then an unseen hand hath ever ta'en
The rudder from my feeble hands the while;
And I cling to it. “Answer me once more,
Mariner; what thinkest thou when the waters
beat

Thy frail boat backward from the longed-for
harbour?”

Oh, brother, though innumerable waves
Still seem to rise betwixt me and my home,
I know that they are numbered; not one less
Should bear me homeward, if I had my will;
For One who knows what tempests are to weather,
O'er whom there broke the wildest billows once,
He bids these waters swell. In His good time
The *last* rough wave shall bear me on its bosom,
Into the haven of eternal peace.

No billows after! They *are* numbered, brother.

“Oh, gentle mariner, steer on, steer on;

My tears still flow for thee; but they are tears
In which faith strives with grief, and overcomes.”

. Some of the hymns may have been in print before.—ED.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

Heb. xii.

There is one thing remarkable in this epistle, that whilst it is full of warnings, still in none is encouragement and full confidence in God so remarkably set forth. And nothing brings a soul into entire confidence in God but encouragement in grace. So here, the apostle says, You are not come to the Law, but to Zion—to grace. He does not pass by the difficulties—he takes them all up; but he shows that the true way of overcoming difficulties is to treat them as none at all.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight,” &c. As if he said, As for all that hinders you, Why, throw it off. How strange to a soul that is toiling under the burden! But remember it is with *difficulties* he is dealing—not with

standing;—that is settled in chapters ix and x. Now there are two things that hinder in running this race, a weight and an entanglement. How simply the apostle treats either. Just throw it aside.

When a soul has got into weakness it has simply got away from Christ. That is what the Hebrews were doing. They were looking to something visible, to ordinances and the like, and had forgotten an invisible Christ. They had known Him once as the portion of their souls: for we read in chap. x, ver. 34, "Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Now that is the point he is pressing here. It is to this principle of faith that the cloud of witnesses were bearing testimony. The reason why any difficulty gets power is because we have got away from Christ. If I have got Christ for my portion, what is difficulty? Nothing. Paul speaks in Phil. iii of having suffered the loss of all things, and of counting them as dross for the excellency of the

knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. If Christ is my joy, it is no hard thing to throw away dross.

The Hebrews had all those other witnesses to living by the power of unseen things—Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, &c. But in Christ we have the beginner and perfecter of faith, one who has run the whole course, so that there is not a single step in the life of faith that has not been trod in the person of Jesus. He had everything against Him. Yet for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, &c. The joy was not His motive. His own love was His motive. Reward is never presented as motive for our conduct, but as an encouragement when we are in the course. Christ, God's love, is motive. Now herein is the power of running this race—of throwing off every hindrance,—it is in having Christ as both our motive and our power.

But this supposes that we are clearly on the ground of grace—on the ground of this, that “God is for us.” It is not at all a question of conscience. The

ground here is the ground of a Christian's course. There is no proper *christian* course till we are brought to God in grace. There may be exercises of conscience, but these are in order to acceptance. If I am connecting acceptance with glorifying God, I do not know what grace is,—I do not know what a righteousness, not my own, and yet mine, is. It is so hard to give up everything that *we* are, and to believe that by one man's obedience many are made righteous. And if it is by the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is as perfect as God can make it. That is why, so long as a soul is hankering after something in itself, it can never be happy. It is not submitting to the righteousness of God. But when I do submit, and Christ is made of God to me righteousness, then I have to walk as a Christian. That is what we have in this chapter. Now we get the race. Jesus did not run in order to be accepted. Why? He was the blessed Son of God every step of the way.

Well, in running this race the very difficulties with which faith is exercised become chastening. Faithfulness may bring us into trials. But the Lord uses the very trials of faith as a moral discipline for the killing of the flesh. The chastening is discipline — correction; not necessarily on account of sin; but even the troubles which come from our faithfulness serve to detect and correct the flesh. And everything *in us* hinders from the full enjoyment of what God is *for us*. See the grace of God in marking out and noticing every step of the walk—the constant care of love and wisdom to discipline us, to the breaking down of everything that hinders from the full enjoyment of Himself. We have admonition and warning here. Why? That we may be partakers of His holiness—that His own nature may be practically realized. What could be higher? His own holiness! Every step is toward this—and yet, alas, we often do not like the means! It is not requiring holiness; (of course it is required;) but here it

is grace making us partakers of it,—positive grace communicating the essence of the divine holiness. His people He is to make like Himself—to enjoy Himself. For He has given us the nature that can do so, and His own love. Well, in bringing us to this He says, I must break down this, and that, and that.

But, he goes on to add, do not be discouraged by it. Why? God is for you through every step of the way. "Therefore, lift up the hands that hang down," &c. If you were at Sinai you might fear and quake. I could not tell you to lift up, if you were at Sinai. I should say, Do not go too near. For no man can stand before God's glory when it is requiring that He should answer to it. But ye are not come to the mount that might be touched, &c., *but ye are come to Mount Zion.* What is the character of this Zion? Israel had entirely failed—the ark of God was among the Philistines. The ark was where the mercy-seat was, and on the mercy-seat the blood was sprinkled.

So Israel could not offer a sacrifice—for the very place where the blood was presented was in the enemy's hand. Now what is Zion? It is sovereign, royal grace. It is God coming in, and bringing back the ark and setting it on Zion. It is victorious grace in power accomplishing all the promises when Israel had failed.

In this passage (22—24) we get every part of the millennial glory—the whole fruits of God's counsels concerning Christ.

First, we have Mount Zion—full royal grace. Then the heavenly city—Jerusalem—the heavenly capital of the kingdom. Then the innumerable company of angels—the general assembly—the whole host of heaven. Then He singles out what is most blessed among this company—the Church of the First-born—those with us united to Christ. Next, God, the Judge of all; and he gives Him this character because in connexion with His displayed glory. The spirits of just men made perfect—Old Testament saints,

who had run their course, but were not yet glorified—who had not yet got their bodies. Now He comes away down to earth again, when He speaks of the new covenant in blood crying from the earth. “To Jesus the mediator of the new covenant,” because it is through that that Israel is brought in then. The blood of sprinkling, &c. Earth had received Christ’s blood as it had Abel’s. But now he has got on the ground of grace, and so it speaks better things than that of Abel.

Thus we have here all the counsels of God for the glorifying of Christ:—the mount of royal grace, the heavenly city, the heavenly host, the Church of God, God Himself, the Jew resting in the new covenant, Jesus its mediator, and His peace-speaking blood. There is where I have been brought, therefore I am to have courage. “*You are come.*” It is not hope. If I am thrown back on hope I am thrown on effort. But I am not thrown on hope, for I have got it;—got it, it is true, in

the midst of trial, but look at all those witnesses, or rather at Jesus, "who for the joy," &c. We are in connexion with all this—not merely conversant with it by faith, but *livingly associated* with it. Herein is strength. For we are come to what cannot be shaken. Grace has brought us to everything connected with the display of God's counsels for the glorifying of Jesus.

The Lord sees it needful for us to learn what we are; but the moment we get Jesus, we get the strength of Jesus and an object. Lay aside every weight. How can I? the soul may say. It is very easy for you to speak so who are not burdened so. But why have these things this power? *Because your heart is on them and not on Jesus.* When the heart is on Jesus they lose their power. Do not despise the chastening; there is a needs be for it—something to be done in you; but do not faint, for it is love that is doing it.

The thing that rests on the heart is the wondrous grace that is incessantly occupied with us—with all our folly

and failing. The great thing is to be *with Jesus*; not merely to run to Him when we have got into a fault. We may then not find Him all at once. If I have been long away, I shall get exercise before restoration. But be with Him. Therein is the power of throwing off these difficulties. Be with Jesus *for His own sake*, and then you have Him for everything.

GRACE AND TRUTH IN JESUS CHRIST.

John viii, 1—11.

It is a different thing to have a rule of what is right, and to have the heart searched out. God can give a rule, and yet dwell in the thick darkness. But this is a different thing from having the soul unveiled in His presence. Now, it is not the sending of a law or a prophet merely that we have in Jesus, but far more; *the Lord Himself was there*. And this is what puts every one to the test, and what brings every-

thing out into the light. Yet there is vast comfort in it; for having come to Jesus we have come to the last and ultimate tribunal, and found it to be all grace. So the soul that has got peace knows that nothing remains behind, nothing remains undetected; but all has been brought out and disposed of according to the holiness of God.

Take the case of this poor sinner, who finds herself in the presence of God. It is not the day of judgment, but it is the presence of the Judge Himself. She finds herself in the presence of Him who will judge in that day by the same principles; the presence of Him who is not now judging, indeed, but a light to bring out every one's character. So everything is brought out, as it was with the poor Samaritan woman. And that is what we want if we are honest to ourselves. If we are honest we shall not desire to have sin slurred over. If we like sin, and wish to get to heaven too, then we shall want to get

sin slurred over; but if we have any sense of God's claim over us, we shall not want to have sin slurred over. And this is the test of the renewed heart. Well, if thus honest about our sin we want mercy. We want what will meet our need in grace, and what will meet God's holiness. If you do not wish your sin to be meddled with,—if you do not like God to probe your heart, you like sin. You want to get off,—of course you do! but that is not being honest in the sight of God. You want to get happiness and still to keep your sin. So it ever is with mere natural conscience. But when awakened by the Spirit of God there is no desire then to slur sin over.

In these Scribes and Pharisees there is the most dreadful wickedness,—a readiness to show sin up and yet an unwillingness to have it detected in themselves. Now nothing marks a soul to be wrong like wishing grace to be wrong. Whenever we think of grace, and blame grace, we have no sense of ourselves, and no sense of

God. It may seem strange to speak of not liking grace, but really that is the case ; and the principle of this is in every natural heart. Therefore, you will hear persons talk of judgment, because they have a notion that they can stand in the day of judgment, and therefore they do not like grace. Take the case here and you will find extreme hatred of grace. The Lord did not come to judge, He came as the friend of publicans and sinners. These Jews liked righteousness ; and as the Lord liked grace, they brought this woman before Him, in the hope of confounding Him. It was the attempt to put His grace in opposition to the righteousness of God. They saw that He was all grace, and thought that if He condemned her, He would not be a Saviour, the law could do that ; if He let her go, He would despise and break the law. The thought of the natural heart ever is that if grace is fully come in, it is no matter what we be. People say, God is merciful—and indeed He is blessedly merciful—but not in the

way they mean, not in the way of slurring over sin. They think they are good in the main, and that God will be bad for the rest. Now God is perfectly good and perfectly righteous in Christ.

Mark another aspect of the righteousness of these Pharisees ; it has no pity ; and it is the spirit of every self-righteous man. As soon as one comes to a pitch of wickedness to which he has not reached, he will condemn this person, who is more evidently a sinner than himself. So with these Scribes and Pharisees. They do not care for the woman if only Christ be condemned. It is the heartlessness that could condemn an outwardly greater sinner than themselves, and the attempt to condemn Christ too, if He will pardon.

The question which this narrative answers so blessedly is this—What is Christ to the sinner, who stands before Him just as He is? What is Christ to one to whom God has told his sin, and who stands in conscience before Him, confessing it. This scrip-

ture, and all scripture, shows that Christ is to that person *all grace*. It is not a question of what I am that is settled, but of what Christ is. When I am in the truth of my sin, what is Christ to me? I repeat it, all scripture witnesses that Christ is to such *nothing but grace*. But the world is not in the truth about sin. The world wants to keep a character without a conscience. The whole history of the world is this, that men's characters and their consciences do not go together. Now God cannot go on in that way. These Jews cared about their character, and therefore had to get out of God's sight. That is what the world is at.

Does Jesus leave them here with their character? No! But first He allows, in the fullest way, the righteousness of the law of Moses. What He does is this. In effect He says, I cannot let you apply the law until I put you under it, for law has to do with those who are under it. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." If you have no

sin, so that the law cannot touch you, then you may use it. What men want is a little righteousness, and the rest of sin slurred over. But this will not do with Christ. He will put every particle of sin under law. Therefore do not take justice in your hand, if you have sin. God will not put the weapon into your hand to slay your fellow without its first laying bare what you are. He brings home to the conscience all that is in the heart of unrighteousness—in effect saying, if you will have righteousness, you will have it. If you are in the presence of God, are you not all condemned? And if you are not condemned in your own conscience, it is because you have never been in the light. If you cannot bring out all that is in your heart, you have never been in the light—you are living without God in the world. The publicans justified God, the Pharisees justified themselves. All will justify God in the day when He judges; and that is what a sinner does now. “Being convicted by their own conscience,

they went out one by one." And if our souls are not true, if we shrink from the light, we shall do as they did.

Why "one by one?" Because conscience always convicts individually. "Beginning at the eldest." The one who had the oldest reputation goes out first, and lets the others care for themselves. "One by one," they get away from the light as fast as they can, and leave Jesus alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

When they were all gone the Lord turns to the poor woman. She was, indeed, a wretched sinner, but in a better condition than her accusers. She is honest about her sin. And being in the truth about her sin, she had nothing to go out for. As to man, when dealing with God about our sin, we do not care what he thinks. But it is a very solemn thing to be in the presence of God when all my sin is fully told out before Him.

Now mark how Christ acts. When it comes to be a question of righteousness, or Himself, He will give righteous-

ness ; but when that is done, then He can deal in His own way—then He can deal in grace. And thus He does deal with this poor sinner, condemned in her own conscience. He does not judge her, He did not come to judge. He came, indeed, as a light, to bring out the sin ; but He came to reveal the love of God after all the sin and judgment is owned. Now this woman had to find out what Christ was to her. She knew she was a sinner, but she had to learn what Christ was to her as a sinner. What would the Judge say to her, a convicted and confessed sinner ? He was the Judge, but He did not come to judge. So, in effect, He says, There you are, deserving to be condemned, but I do not condemn you. No man can condemn you, and I will not. They thought they could condemn her undetected themselves, but they soon found they could not. Man could not condemn her, and Jesus would not.

Now suppose this woman had said, Ah ! but if you knew everything I

have done. If you knew what a sinner I have been. This is not the first sin, &c., &c. Ah! He well knew all her sin. With one word He brought into the consciences of her accusers all their sin. And this woman was in the light, and He knew it all. We, alas! forget many sins. God never forgets. And *in the knowledge of all she was*, Jesus says, I do not condemn you. Now it is not a prophet who says this, but the very One who is to judge; and think you that then He will reverse His judgment? Will He then say, now I am to condemn you. Oh, no. He anticipates the judgment in her conscience, and then gives her the assurance of full forgiveness.

But how can Jesus act in such perfect grace? Because He went under the condemnation of all the sin. He put it all away. So with the thief on the cross. He acknowledged his condemnation before men, and Christ bore it before God. Herein is the unspeakable comfort, that if Christ speaks peace, He does it, not merely with divine title,

but *in the perfect knowledge that it is the sin which He bore and put away.* Why am I sent away fully acquitted? Only because He has had love enough to bear it all for me. We find in Christ, God not imputing to us our sins. If it is a question of our righteousness law must condemn us, but the God of the law has forgiven me according to the holiness of the law. And more than that in the love which has forgiven us, we have come to know God. "We love him because he first loved us,"—and he that loveth knoweth God. Thus we get, as the blessed fruits of being alone with Christ confessing sin, peace for the conscience, and a happy heart.

AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS.

Eph. iv, 21.

The truth in Jesus is not a mere theory before our mind, but that we put off the old man, and put on the new. I cannot, however, do this in detail, except as I reckon that in Him *I have put off the old man, and put on the new.*

THE PASSOVER.

“ Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.”

Exodus xii.

(Continued from page 32.)

The general idea of the passover, as a type of redemption, has already been given; but the details of its institution are of the deepest interest, as bearing upon the application of the wondrous death of Christ, as the ground of a sinner's deliverance from sin, and the basis of his peace and security before God.

The chapter begins with the statement, “ This month shall be the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year unto you.” The commencement of Israel's existence, as the people of God, dates from the time of their redemption from the judgment of the firstborn, and from their bondage in Egypt. God cannot acknowledge a people to be His, and yet leave them under the judgment of the world, nor under bondage to Satan, as its prince. The death of Christ alike

delivers the soul from the world's condemnation and from the world's bondage.

The passover unfolds the grounds of this. It is the presentation, in type, of the means by which a sinner is brought into association with God. Hence the first thing presented is the victim, whose blood preserves from judgment, set apart for death,—according to the force of the scripture, “Without shedding of blood is no remission;” and “ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Most precious truth that it is *God* that marks, and estimates, and *condemns* the sin, which His infinite grace puts away!

The lamb was especially marked for the households of Israel. Every man was to take a lamb for his house. And if his own household was too small, his neighbour's was to be joined with it; for the relationship of a redeemed family must not be lost. It is the household of faith which is shielded from judgment, by the sprinkled blood;

as it is also said, the whole household were to partake of the lamb. There may be in the family of God "little children, young men, and fathers," but one and the same ground of redemption is common to each; and eternal deliverance, through His blood, the blessed position of all. Redemption is the bond which unites together the whole family of God.

It was to be "a lamb without blemish." The purity of the victim is marked before the efficacy of the blood which delivers from death is brought into view. Jesus, also, is seen in all His purity, as the spotless lamb—"the lamb of God"—before His bloodshedding on the cross, presents the full answer to every claim of the moral nature of God. It needs but to refer to the word, "ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ, as of *a lamb without blemish and without spot.*"

But the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel were to kill the

lamb ; because redemption is the common need of all who are called to have to do with God. " There is no difference ; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." He can surround Himself alone by a people whom He has redeemed ; for He cannot be associated with sin, nor can sin, for a moment, abide the holiness of His presence. Hence, before there is any feeding upon the lamb, the blood is sprinkled upon the lintel and the door-posts. For the death of Christ must be known as delivering from the judgment of sin, before Christ, who is the object of God's delight, can in any sense be delighted in, or become the object of satisfaction to the heart. For in the passover God is seen in the double character of judge and deliverer. His judgment falls, and falls of necessity, wherever the blood of atonement does not shield—for " he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." This is seen in the death universally of the firstborn, taken as the representatives of the people, and also in the blood

being the symbol of deliverance. The Israelites were not delivered, in this sense, because they were Israelites. For God is viewed as judging sin, and they were sinners as well as the Egyptians. They were delivered from the judgment of God only by virtue of their trust in the sprinkled blood. When God judges for sin there can only be one of these two results—either death, as in the case of the firstborn of the Egyptians, who met His judgment in their own persons; or perfect deliverance, as in the case of the Israelites, because the judgment of sin has been met in the death of Christ, as seen in the sprinkled blood.

“The blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and *when I see the blood*, I will pass over you.” The blood was given to the Israelite as the pledge of his security when death and judgment were all around him. He took refuge inside the house, when he had sprinkled the blood on the doorway, and trusted that it would be for him a bar against

the entrance of the judgment of God. And did he trust in vain? Did God enter as a judge notwithstanding this pledge?" No! He had said, "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*" The symbol of deliverance was presented, not to the eye of the Israelite—with him it was dark night—but to the eye of Him who was Judge, and who had given the pledge of the blood, and well knew how to estimate its value. The expression is, "When I see the blood, I will pass over." "It is not said, when you see it, but when I see it. The soul of an awakened person often rests, not on its own righteousness, but on the way in which it sees the blood. Now, precious as it is to have the heart deeply impressed with it, this is not the ground of peace. Peace is founded on God's seeing it. *He cannot fail to estimate it at its full and perfect value as putting away sin.* It is He that abhors and has been offended by sin; He sees the value of the blood as putting it away. It may be said, But must I not have faith in

its value? This is faith in its value, seeing that God looks at it as putting away sin; your value for it looks at it as a question of the measure of *your feelings*. Faith looks at God's thoughts." "When I see the blood," says God, "I will pass over you."

But the flesh of the lamb, roasted with fire, was to be eaten on the night of the passover. The victim whose precious blood delivers from judgment, having been submitted to the trial of God's holiness, becomes the food of the sheltered soul. Eaten, indeed, with the bitter herbs of repentance, for sin is fresh before the mind, and the judgment due to it vividly displayed. Every part of the lamb was to be eaten, "his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof," because all that Christ is, as having offered Himself without spot to God, is given to us as our portion and our strength. Being shielded by His sprinkled blood from judgment, we feed upon Him by faith as sacrificed for us; and thus have fellowship with God in the per-

fectness of the sacrifice which Christ has presented to Him on our behalf.

The flesh was to be eaten on the same night that the blood was sprinkled, and not on the morning after: for Christ cannot be fed upon by the soul that does not see the power of this sprinkled blood as delivering from the judgment of sin. All thoughts of Christ, apart from His sacrifice, are vain, and are the mere offspring of nature, alike ignorant of its own condition in the sight of God, and of the holy judgment of God. Moreover, the flesh was to be eaten in the blood-sprinkled house, and not apart from it.

They were to eat it with girded loins and shoes on their feet, with a staff in their hand, and in haste. For the pass-over was eaten in Egypt, where they had been slaves, and where God's judgment was now being solemnly displayed. Redemption by the blood of Christ separates the soul from the world's final judgment, and sets free from its present course. It brings into association with the thoughts and counsels

of God's goodness; and while it makes the world no longer our home, it is because it presents to the heart a better home of God's own providing.

The passover made Israel pilgrims under the guidance of God, instead of leaving them slaves in Egypt, and exposed to its judgment; and it put Canaan before them, as their hope, instead of leaving them in "the iron furnace," and to such present ease and plenty as might be gathered by them in the land of their oppressors.

"The ordinance of the passover" (from ver. 43—45) brings into view the relationship in which the believer is set toward God by virtue of the death of Christ. No stranger was to eat of the passover, nor an uncircumcised person, nor a hired servant. And how simply does scripture show these relations to exist, and these barriers to be set aside by association with the death of Christ! For it says, "ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of *the household of God.*" And again, "thou

art no more a servant, but a son." Or if the servant that was bought for money and afterwards circumcised that he might eat the passover (ver. 44) be looked at, it is the same. For, "ye are not your own: for ye are *bought with a price.*" And again, "In whom also ye are *circumcised* with the circumcision made without hands."

But the ordinance proceeds, (ver. 46, 47,) "In one house shall it be eaten: thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it." The flesh cannot be carried abroad to be the portion of those who are not in the blood-sprinkled house. Men may pretend, by means of outward ordinances, or in ways of their own, to give a participation in Christ, while they are strangers themselves, as well as those who are led by them, to the faith which brings a sinner in all his sins to find a refuge in the blood of Christ; but it can never be. Christ is no portion for those who despise the

efficacy of His precious blood. The fruits of His death will never be participated in by those who have any other hope of meeting God or of being delivered from the judgment of sin but through trust in that death. This point is especially guarded here. Security was alone found in the blood-sprinkled house. There only could the lamb be eaten with bitter herbs. It was not allowed that the eating of the flesh should be so far dissociated from the sprinkling of the blood as to be partaken of *on the morrow*. And in the verse before us, "In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof." [It is not a Christ mutilated by man, but solely offered in sacrifice to God, that is our portion.] And "*all* the congregation of Israel shall keep it." Redemption is the only link of connexion between the sinner—any sinner—a sinner in any circumstances—and God.

The feast of unleavened bread, to which the passover introduced, (ver. 14—20,) comes in to strengthen this

position. Christ, in His unleavened perfectness, is indeed the food of the believer; but not until he has fed upon him as a sacrificed Christ;—until he has thus eaten His flesh. It is not Christ in death only that we are called to know, with all the grace that brought Him there; but Christ in life also, in all His perfectness as a man subject to God; “the bread of God which came down from heaven to give life unto the world.” But He is not thus fed upon, cannot be, as the power of a believer’s separation to God, until he has been known in death. Holiness (of God) follows, not precedes, redemption. The passover introduces to the feast of unleavened bread, and not the feast of unleavened bread to the passover. Holiness, or separation to God, begins with the knowledge of the death of Christ for our sins. It is the fruit of His death that we are delivered from this present evil world. “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD.

Eph. vi.

The Epistle to the Ephesians has a peculiar character. It considers man, not as having a life of sin, which he has to hold as dead in principle, and to resist in practice; but, in order to give God His own full part, and the blessing He gives its full character and perfection, it treats man as *dead* in trespasses and sins; and hence his whole moral existence is a new one, and depends on God, and is derived from His power; it has its origin and subsistence from His creative and life-giving energies. It is a new creation.

Hence, in the first chapter, before even speaking of the redemption which meets the necessities of man, the Spirit directs our eye to the eternal counsels of God's grace, towards those chosen in Christ, (ver. 3—6,) the unspeakable riches of the blessings to which they are destined. The inheritance which

has fallen to them in Christ comes afterwards, (ver. 11,) as a subordinate thing. Hence we have the union of the Church with Christ as its Head, exalted above every name in this world and that which is to come. Hence, the vivifying and raising up with Christ, and setting in heavenly places in Him, where all difference of Jew and Gentile is for ever lost, and our creation again in Christ. The Holy Ghost, according to the mystery hidden from ages, but now revealed, becoming, by His presence, the power of the Church's unity as the habitation of God, and the conferring of every gift necessary for the perfecting of the saints, for the gathering and edifying of the body by the Head on high, who had received the Spirit to this end, for the members thus united to Him. Thus viewed in its Head, and in the power of the Holy Ghost on the earth, the Church has a heavenly character, and as its privileges take this elevated character, so also its testimony, its difficulties, and its combats. (Compare chaps. i, 3; ii, 6; iii, 10; vi, 12.)

For in the measure in which our spiritual position is raised, so, of course, do the difficulties and exercises of heart assume a character which requires greater experience and greater power. Our spiritual advance introduces us necessarily into them. But God is faithful not to suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. We could not expect a babe in Christ to be exercised as an apostle. Still the principles of all temptations are in general the same, and the experience of an apostle would render him capable of entering into the trials of an infant all the better. His more thorough knowledge of the wiles of Satan, enables him to expose those wiles in their true light to the more inexperienced Christian. Because they have ceased to be wiles for himself, he can expose their wiliness to him by whom they are as yet unsuspected, or imperfectly judged. By following the word of God the simplest soul avoids danger, though it may be inexperienced in the devices of the enemy; for in that path God is found, and all is

simple. One is wise concerning that which is good, and can be simple concerning evil. Still such as we are there are exercises; and the same human nature is in the oldest and in the youngest saint. The form of the trial may be different and suited to the progress made; but the principles are the same, and the means of defence too. One may, if humbler in spirit, use them better, but God's weapons do not vary in their nature. The apostle will explain their use to the young soldier; but he uses (if with greater expertness) those he explains.

But before I enter on the character of the armour, a few words as to the position of him who is called upon to use it. It will be remarked that the spiritual use of the armour is found at the close of an epistle in which all the highest spiritual privileges have been spoken of as the portion of a Christian. He is looked at, all through the epistle, as in the heavenly Canaan; blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; quickened with Him,

raised up, and sitting in heavenly places, in Him. He has redemption and forgiveness. The desire of the apostle is that he may know the fulness and extent of his calling, of his inheritance, and the power that has brought him into it, in spirit and life, if not in body. On the earth he is looked at as builded together with all saints, as God's habitation by the Spirit. Hence, when the apostle treats of warfare, it is not carried on in order to enter into these privileges, but in order to maintain oneself in them, and to realize them by the power of God. When the apostle speaks of not combating with flesh and blood he refers to Joshua and Israel. Now the combats of Israel were not in Egypt, nor even in the desert, as such. They were oppressed in Egypt and slaves there, as the unconverted man is a slave of sin and Satan. God sees his afflictions, comes down to deliver him. He leaves his misery; weakness he cannot escape, and is cast on God as a Saviour, and through the death and resurrection

of Christ, that is, through redemption, passes into a new scene, where he is for ever beyond all that was his plague and sorrow before his deliverance. "Thou hast led forth the people thou hast redeemed, (says the song of Moses, Exodus xv,) thou hast led them by thy strength to thy holy habitation." Not only the blood on the door posts had sheltered them from the just judgment of God, but the active power of God had now delivered them entirely and for ever from the condition in which they were lying. The only difference in the Ephesians is one we have noticed, that the previous troubles and sorrows are passed over. Man is looked at as *dead* in trespasses and sins, that all his privileges, and the whole work of God, may be looked at in their full extent in themselves. I pass over the desert, which represents what this world is become to the redeemed, and which is characterized by the exercise of faith and patience, not by spiritual combats in order to realize or to maintain privileges given.

In order to enter fully into these, we must realize our own death and resurrection *with* Christ; not merely that He is dead and risen for us. We must pass the Jordan, and thus enter into the land, in spirit. The Red Sea prefigured redemption by the death and resurrection of Christ; Jordan, our being dead and risen with Him, in the power of the Spirit of God, so as to enter in spirit into that which is within the veil, according to the power of the redemption which has been wrought for us. And remark that on the entry into Canaan, as depicted in the Book of Joshua, the portion of Israel was not rest. Their combats for the enjoyment of the land began then. Jordan was doubtless the figure of death; but properly of death with Christ, in the power of the Holy Ghost, so as to be risen in spirit, in the liberty with which Christ sets us free; that we may realize and live in the heavenly things into which He is entered as our risen Head. As soon as Israel had crossed the Jordan,

before a blow was struck, they eat of the old corn of the land. They were, as to title, in full possession of the country. But to possess it actually they must combat with the enemy. The principle of the christian warfare is the same. "All things are ours." As regards our title we are sitting in heavenly places in Christ, eating the corn of that land. But conflict then begins, to hold our ground against the enemy, and realize the sum of our privileges through every attack he makes upon us. For in holding good our ground against his attacks, there is continual progress in the realization of that which God has given to us, though in the conflict itself we have only to hold fast faithfully. If we sit in heavenly places, as to title, and our place with God, as to possession, we must make it good; for spiritual wickednesses are there.

Having made these general remarks on the position of those engaged in this warfare, I return to the Ephesians.

In this Epistle, the blessings, the

saints themselves, the witness of the Church, the combats of the saints, all is in heaven. The rest will be there, as in Canaan, (figuratively,) for Israel. The combat is there, as in Canaan, under Joshua. But now the combat is not with flesh and blood, but with the prince of the power of the air, the rulers of the darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places. Carnal weapons and carnal wisdom are of no avail. One may be victorious over the instruments of Satan's power, in our reasonings, and be overcome by himself. There is no safeguard but the armour of God; and to maintain one's ground continually all the pieces of it are needed. What should we say of one who, armed in every other point, forgot his helmet or his sword? He has forgotten his enemy and his own capability of being wounded. Thank God we have the word and wisdom of God to tell us what is needed, that we may stand! Satan has no power to touch what is born of God. He who lives and

walks in the Spirit is not reached by his weapons, nor subverted by his wiles. But the flesh has no power against him; and if this is exposed, we are exposed to be subverted by him. Hence the Spirit of God shows us what is needed.

The first thing is that we remember, what I have just remarked, that the armour is that of God; that no human power, no wisdom, is of any avail. Satan's weapons or wiles go clean through them at once. The use of such weapons is the foolishness of confidence in self, which is, (witness Peter's case,) exactly what exposes us to him. Let us remember, too, the foundation we have laid: that the conflict with Satan here spoken of supposes peace with God. If I am really on my feet, combating with Satan, and armed by God, I have no question with God as to whether He is for me. My combats are not with Him, my fears have not Him for their object. The anxieties of the unreconciled soul have the dread of God, the uncertainty of His thoughts,

for their source. The combats of the reconciled soul are with the enemy.

Remark, further, that it is not in the time of combat, in the evil day, I am to put on my armour. I enter into it armed, at least if I enter into it aright, and in the way to be victorious. The armour we wear is our abiding state as regards this world, though with God all be peace.

In the next place remark that those parts of the armour which relate to the spiritual condition of the Christian's own soul and his walk—what relates to the subjugation of flesh and self—come first; then the maintenance of practical confidence in God; (and how true that order is;) and then the activity of the believer as regards others; all closed in by the expression of entire dependence. It is not the force and power of Satan which we have to resist, but his wiles. When really resisted, he has no force against us, for he is overcome by Christ; and the new nature he has nothing in or for. When the inclinations of the heart are unjudged, then he has the

power to deceive us. Hence as, to receiving any truth, the state of the soul is really what is in question. When this is not right, reasonings are vain. When the eye is single, the whole body will be full of light. So when the flesh is not judged, the enemy can overthrow and trouble us. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

The first part, then, of our armour is to have the loins girt about with truth. The word first girds about my own loins before I can use it as a sword. The girding about the loins is that strengthening and giving of firmness to the whole man, which cannot be if all is left loose in his ways and mind, and which flows from the application of truth to his soul. And this application of truth to his soul, though an internal operation, has a double bearing. It is the application to the heart and conscience of all that is revealed in Christ. Now, this first judges all that is not of Christ, detects it and judges it; at the same time, what is in the heart is seen in its true

light as compared with what I see in Christ revealed as truth to my heart. I have judged what springs from the flesh and is adapted to it; it has lost its false appearances and deceiving power, and, as Christ is really there, its power altogether. I do not let my heart go after it; it has lost its place there, because seen not by the flesh, but judged by the Spirit. Instead of having any attractions for the heart inspired by this, it has its true, hateful character. Christ, as truth, has put it into its true light, out of the affections, and into its own judged hatefulness. It is no longer myself as a moral affection at all. It is sin and flesh in my eyes. But besides this, there is what has wrought this judgment, the revelation of the truth itself of Christ in the heart. Hence what is good is loved, has power in the heart, authority there; the will and affections are bridled by what has authority over them—instead of being let loose—while they, at the same time, delight in what exercises this authority over them.

They are girded up, restrained, given moral tone and firmness, by the known value of that which is an obligation, because it is in Christ; a delight because it is good. For in man obligation, where it is in grace, gives strength. That is when the thing itself is delighted in, not imposed on, as a law. It is a governed heart, not an ungoverned will. Yet it is intelligent, and delights in what it sees in Christ. It governs itself. The girding about the loins with truth then, is the application of the truth to the affections, so that a man is braced up, having to do with what is right, in authority over his soul, while he delights in it too.

There are two passages to which I would draw the reader's attention, in connexion with the first part of the armour. Heb. iv, "The word of God is quick (living) and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

Here it is, evidently, the searching character of the word; and “thy word is truth.” It is divine, living, and efficacious. Nothing that is creature escapes its penetrating judgment. The declaration of scripture does not here go beyond this. But if I have an earnest desire that all things should be “of God,” in me, according to the new creature, (2 Cor. v,) and have learnt that as to what is of the mere creature, in so far as it has a will, all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are only evil, and that continually; if my heart is divinely right, I shall be most thankful for this detection of all that hinders my spiritual life, and comes between my soul and God, mars alike my communion and my walk, and brings the hindering inclination into the all-judging and delivering presence of God.

John xvii goes somewhat farther:

“Sanctify them,” we read there, “through thy truth, thy word is truth. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.” Here we have the word bringing in its positive formative action, as well as its detective; and Christ also set apart as the perfection of that which we are to be, that the revelation of what He is to the soul may conform us to Him. It is evident that such a communication of what Christ is, while attracting and delighting the new creature, would in everything judge the old; but it is more than merely the divine word as a sword, as the eye of God on us, discerning and detecting; there is an attractive and an assimilating power. It is a man whose nature I have, (for He is my life,) in whom I see all this moral perfection, love, holiness, truth, absolute purity, grace, patient kindness, devotedness beyond all measure, to us self-sacrifice, and an absolutely single eye in devotedness to God, His Father’s glory, and all the life-giving fullness of God, in all these things. All

this is in man, and in one with whom I have to do; who loves me; with whom I am one. He has sanctified Himself for our sakes. By the communication of all this, and much more than this, in the truth, we are sanctified. First of all in believing, so as to have a share in it, and then by daily realization of it in detail, attaching the heart thus to Christ. "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." Blessed portion! Used, it is true, in the passage which occupies us in the Ephesians more in its guardian power than in its delight and advantages; in its moral bracing energy, than in its joys in communion; but profitable alike for both. The truth, then, as this divine revelation to the soul, by the word, detects all that gives a handle to Satan in us, and destroys its hold on the soul. It causes that we are no longer debtors to the flesh; for we have a new life with God, in which we

have a right to live, and over which Satan has no right, and no power ; and in which the flesh has no claim and no part ; and which is freely and new given of God, so that none else has any claim over it. Hence the absolute and exclusive claim of God is brought in, and with delight to the soul ; delight, because obedience to Him is now delight. We love Him and His claims over us. It is delight, because the things He calls us to walk in are enjoyed morally by our souls. There is an intelligent nature which is of Him, and from Him, having the delights and desires of His nature, and rejoiced to have the perfect expression of its own desires in God's claims over us. For we are "partakers of the divine nature, having *escaped* the corruption which is in the world through lust." Hence it is called the perfect law of liberty. "He who hath looked [looked down closely] into the perfect law, that of liberty, and continueth therein, not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of work, that man shall be blessed in his doing

[it].” There is our own delight in good thus, the authority of God in it; the rejection of evil, yet not in haughtiness, for God is there; and the authority of God over us, yet in personal delight in what is good, in a nature which loves it for its own sake. What hold has Satan there? The mind is braced up, the loins girt about with truth in the midst of the dissolution and uncertainty of the world; dissolution to which the flesh would yield itself at once. It is girding the loins.

In heaven this will not be needed. The flesh will not be there. All that attracts will be divine. We can let ourselves freely go to it. There is nothing but what God has authority over; nothing but what answers to His will, His nature, and His glory; while authority is perfect and delighted in, there is nothing to watch and guard against. We can let out all our affections there. The more we have the better; at least all we have are rightly in exercise, for God and the fulness of Christ entirely fill the scene. Here we

must have our loins girt about with truth. Blessed that we can, and have this privilege in a world of which we once were; a world of dissolution. Blessed that we have God's truth to do it with!

But when the heart is thus kept, the conduct will follow. The breastplate of righteousness will not be wanting. We must remember that in the passage we are occupied with, the subject treated of is what is needed in conflict with Satan, not what is called for that we may stand before God. Christ is our righteousness before God, perfect and unchangeable; and without that we could in no way make head against Satan; but it cannot assume the character of a breastplate when we consider it as our righteousness before God. All is peace in this righteousness; peace is made, there is no combat there. Christ has met and overcome the enemy, and is become my righteousness; and this is the foundation of all. God is truly with me and before me. But in my conflict with

Satan, while I cannot do without this, I need something else: practical righteousness. My conscience must be without reproach, in order to combat with him. If my conscience be not purged with the blood of Christ, I have not yet peace with God; I am still in Egypt; though I may be striving to get out of it; I do not yet know the power of redemption. I cannot say that God is for me, nor that I am for God in this world. I need to be delivered and reconciled. But if I am, a conscience practically bad will make me weak before the enemy. How can he, whose conscience reproaches him, whom the world could reproach if aware of it, how can he go boldly into the combat? He is afraid the blow may reach him there; he is obliged to think of that: he is not free to think, in simplicity of heart, of nothing but the service which is before him. The Spirit of God also is grieved, and lets him, if he go on thus carelessly, feel that he has failed, as Israel before Ai. For boldness when we have failed

shows rather indifference to sin, or an effort to carry on appearances, when the heart is not right. But if the conscience be good, the walk upright, there is confidence in God, and self has not to be thought of. One can do God's work freely. Thus Paul—"Pray for us, for we trust that we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly." And again, "Herein do I exercise myself day and night, to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man." The second part of the armour, then, is a righteous walk, a walk with God. Only remark that, as to confidence in service, it is not merely evil known, or easily to be known to others; it is all allowed evil. Because Satan can use this against the conscience and make it timid; and certainly the Holy Ghost will not make it hard or indifferent. A good conscience before God is acquired by one thing alone, by the blood shedding and work of Christ. But the result of this is the presence of the Holy Ghost in us, and then a good conscience *against*

Satan is only when the Spirit has not been grieved by anything done contrary to the light He has afforded me.

But many have not the courage to go on in God's warfare, because they hold to something which is inconsistent with the light they have received. Perhaps, alas! they lose the light which they have not acted up to, and *Satan* is able to bring their mind under the darkness of his good reasons for staying where they are, without conquering more territory from him, though they are uneasy, perhaps bitterly hostile, when light reaches them from without, which threatens to awaken conscience again.

The existence of flesh in us, though judged as sin, does not give a bad conscience, nor interrupt communion; but the moment it is allowed, even in mind, it does both.

If the Lord will, I will send you some thoughts on the remaining parts of the armour, at another opportunity.

COMPARISON OF PSALMS LXIII AND LXXXIV.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DELIGHTING
IN GOD WHEN "THE RAIN FILLS THE
POOLS," AND DELIGHTING IN HIM
WHERE "THERE IS NO WATER."

These two Psalms are brought together with the view of showing the difference there is in the character of the blessing, and enjoyment of God expressed in them. Both are most blessed, and, in one way, each is complete in itself. But there is a marked distinction between them. The former expresses perfect enjoyment in *God Himself*, and in Him *alone*; the latter, the enjoyment of Him in the midst of blessings with which He, in His mercy, surrounds us, and *in fellowship with them*. As saints we must realize God in both these ways; though, in His mercy, His *general* way of dealing with us is rather that of the 84th Psalm; that is, granting us the assistance, the help, and the comfort of outward blessings, and communion with fellow-

christians. The 23rd Psalm is another example of this. It opens with what one may call the natural condition of a saint, the quiet, peaceful enjoyment of the green pastures, and still waters of the Good Shepherd. But that does not continue always; it is not the experience we get. Sorrow, and trial, and failure come in, and then we learn that He *restoreth the soul*. And by His strength made perfect in weakness, and the table spread in the presence of our enemies, we gain the knowledge of God, which says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for *ever*." And our hearts need this sort of discipline, that we may not merely, as in the first moments of our salvation, rejoice in the love that has redeemed us; but that we may know with what a God we have to do, and learn, *apart from all extraneous helps*, what our portion is in Himself.

In examining a little more closely the Psalms before us, we may notice the opening of the 63rd. It begins

with the address: "Oh, God," not "Oh, Lord of Hosts," as in the 84th Psalm. It is not His title in covenant with Israel that is before the soul, but the individual apprehension of what He is in Himself. "Oh God, thou art my God. My soul longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, *where no water is.*" Such is the land in which God is learned as *our* God—where there are no springs of refreshment by the way, no outward comforts, perhaps even no sources of spiritual help and strength, no "courts of the Lord," no "tabernacles." True, we may have seen and rejoiced in God's power and glory in these at other times; and so we ought, for they are divinely appointed means of grace and help for us; but the psalmist, in verse 2, longs to see these "as I have seen them in the sanctuary." To see them in the dry and thirsty land is by no means so easy. They are not so evident there, and the heart sometimes finds it hard to say, "Thy loving-kindness is better than life"—better than all that ministers to life, than all

the blessings and enjoyments in which life consists, and which are (whether spiritual or temporal) the offspring of the very same love and kindness of God. But we must realize the loving-kindness itself to be *better* than all the blessings it gives, and find it our joy when they are all withdrawn. If we have once really tasted it, we never enjoy it so much as when we have nothing else to enjoy. The Lord Jesus was, of course, the perfect illustration of this trusting in God, and finding joy in Him too, in a dry and thirsty land. We know in what sanctuary He had seen God's power and glory; and His life proves He saw them *equally* in this land, which was to Him, how far more dry and thirsty, than to us! He could say, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of;" and pray that *His* joy might be fulfilled in His disciples. "My soul shall be satisfied as with *marrow and fatness*,"—this, too, in the same circumstances of barrenness and death. What a contrast between the actual position of a faithful saint and the joy

which he derives from the presence of God. The 6th verse is but another expression of the loneliness and absence of all external sources of help and support. The light of day, even of the presence of others, all gone. Still the experience of what *God* has been gives confidence, and joy, and peace in the shadow of His wings; and the dry and thirsty land—the place of death to the natural man—becomes a place of blessing, and of proving the Lord's right hand upholding us.

The 84th Psalm is quite another thing, as to circumstances; though, of course, all the joy and blessing of it spring from the same source. It is the full confidence in God, and desire after Him as a God that has been known and loved; expressed in Jewish language, as the tabernacles, courts, and Zion show, and having an application to Israel, of course; though I take it now in its spiritual bearing. The tabernacle is to us the heavenly places, where we enjoy God's presence, and which are the home of our heart; just as

the nest is the home of the swallow, and the place where she finds rest and joy.

It is, perhaps, as especially assembled together, and privileged for a while to shut out all, save our heavenly home, that this Psalm regards us in *this* sense. "They that dwell in thy house shall be still praising thee." Praise is here the one legitimate object of our souls, and employment of our lips. In secret with God, conflict and petition, and the like, have all their place. In His house, our one occupation is to be still praising Him, who is our strength here, and the object of all our desires. These desires will never be satisfied until we are for ever in His house, until we get to our God in glory; and therefore till then, the *way* thither must be the thing that fills our hearts. "Blessed is the man in whose heart are the ways." These ways may be rough, for they lead through the valley of Baca, the place of tears; but what matters this, if they lead *home*? If my heart is set on the end of my journey, the roughness of the way matters but lit-

tle. It brings me where I want to be; and a smoother, pleasanter path, in *another* direction will not even have an attraction for me—it does not lead *home*. It gives great decision and firmness to the christian character, to keep this simply before the mind. And after all, the valley of Baca is turned into a well to us; and we often find a deep source of spiritual blessing in the things that cause the trials. They are not pleasant, of course, but they are the means of breaking down these miserable fleshly hearts, and of making them fit to receive the blessing our God designs to bestow. Then “the rain also filleth the pools.” Streams of *heavenly* blessing come pouring in upon us, making our path a continuance of refreshment and help. Thus a rough road, and *His strength* and help *along it, is our portion*. Then we are led from “strength to strength.” The strength is ever tried by the needs of the way, but ever *renewed* by the grace of our God, “till we appear before Him in Zion.” The only thing for

a Christian in this world is the path towards glory, which leads *out of the world*. In that path he can never fall; the causes of tears become means to him of grace, and of the powerful refreshings of the Spirit. Living waters from above divinely reanimate his courage, and all this because the *anointed* is there: God looks on *His* face, and so all is secure to us. Nothing shall separate us from His love. "Neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall ever separate us from the love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord," prone as our poor hearts are to let any creature do it now.

Well, beloved friends, we must all learn God in these ways; learn Him in the midst of His blessings, and in a measure *by them*, perhaps, first; but sometime or other we must have our hearts *tested*, by being cast over on *Himself*, and *nothing* else—being brought into a position where nothing *helps God to make us happy*, if I may use such an expression, and where we must find in Him alone our *all*,—our

joy, our strength, our peace, our hope; find Him such too "in a dry and thirsty land where no water is." Still, blessed be His name, He has given grace, and will give glory, and withhold no *good thing* from us. Well may we say, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

GROWTH THROUGH THE TRUTH.

Eph. iv, 15.

A person may be honestly delighting in what he hears and yet not connecting it with Christ, so he does not grow a bit: he knows nothing; for then what he hears is as an object before his mind; whereas when mixed with faith it connects his soul with Christ, and he gets it livingly in Him. Whatever is revealed of Christ, judges something of the old man antagonistic to it and then there is growth. If I hear and delight in the truth, and yet do not detect and judge the old man, there is no growth. So, as to detail, verse 22.

HOW THE LORD ACCEPTED JOB.

Job xlii.

We see in Job's history the workings of God in the soul in bringing it to Himself, and the exercises the heart passes through when learning itself in the presence of Satan and in the presence of God Himself.

“The Lord accepted Job.” It does not say that the Lord accepted his acts, or his works, or anything connected with him; but that He accepted himself. And that is just what we want. The moment our souls are really awakened to a sense of what God is and of what we are, we then want to know that we are accepted of God. Till that is known, we may try to bring our acts and our works to clothe ourselves with them; but when we have really come into God's presence we clothe ourselves with *nothing*, and then we get the sense of the divine favour.

The converse of this is also true. We know that our works are unholy ; and when our souls are truly awakened we look at ourselves as being the spring of these unholy works ; and thus we learn that in heart, and spirit, and nature we are far from God. Then I am grieved, not only for *my sins*, but because it is *I* who committed them. And this is a present thing. If I am looking at my works, I may put them off till the day of judgment ; but for myself, personally, I cannot be satisfied without the sense of the present and immediate acceptance of God. I must know that I am at this moment standing in His favour.

It is not said that God accepted Job till the end of his trials. And what had his friends done for him during the sifting through which he was passing ? Well might he say, " Miserable comforters are ye all." They had no true apprehension of God's character, and so were unable to understand His dealings with a soul. They had no proper sense of sin, and therefore knew

not that if God would deal in blessing with man, it must be entirely on the ground of grace. They did not know how to meet his case; and though they had said many true things, yet they had not said one single right thing in its application to Job, for they did not understand him.

Job had never really been brought into the presence of God. There had been a certain work in his soul, which produced fruits. But in the xxixth chapter we evidently see that he had been walking in the sense of blessings from God, and in a measure in the sense of the fruits of grace produced in his heart. He was resting in what he was to others, and not in the favour of God Himself. He owned God, it is true, and bowed under His hand; but, notwithstanding, he had never been truly in His presence, and consequently his heart had never been searched out. It was not a question of fruits, but a question of *what he was*. So God goes on dealing with Job, till in the very thing in which Job was most famous,

he is brought to nothing. Job, the most patient man, curses the day of his birth. Why is this? Because we must be broken down—we must be brought to the sense of what we are, as well as of what we have done; and then God can deal with us out of His own heart. Thus God's dealings with us are intended to bring out really what we are *before our own eyes in His presence*, in the presence of that eye which looks on while we see what sinners we are. Thus God went on dealing with Job till Job was brought to say, "I am vile, I abhor myself."

In the xxiiird chapter we see Job's confidence in God, and his desire for God, although the stroke was bitter. He said, "Oh! that I knew where I might find him!" He did not attempt to keep away from God. He had that kind of sense of what God was that he wanted to get to Him, "even to his seat." It is true he speaks of "ordering his cause before him;" but in the ixth chapter, where he is speaking of man being justified before

God, he says, "If he contend with me, I cannot answer him one of a thousand;" and again, "If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me." Here we find that Job was thinking of being in God's sight. There was not the wretched, hypocritical attempt to keep away from God; there was the consciousness of having to do with God; and in heart he desired to get to Him, though his conscience kept him away. Thus there was much more truth in Job than in the see-saw truths of his friends; for conscience was in full exercise in him, and not at all in them.

There was also more grace in Job's heart now than when he was floating along in prosperous circumstances. It was, in truth, wretched, miserable work; but still he was finding out what was in him. And what grace it is in God that He should take up a heart, and thus wring it out, that the soul might be brought, *such as it is*, into immediate dependence on Himself.

The sinfulness of Job was brought out, so that he could not say it was

not there. The sinfulness of his heart was brought upon his conscience; it had come fully out; and a terrible thing that is. We know what it is to the unconverted man; it makes him reckless in iniquity. Let a man think that he has lost his character, and he will then run loose in wickedness. When a man comes to this it thoroughly breaks him down. It is one thing for a man to lose his character with himself, but it is another and a very different thing to lose it with his neighbour. But when Job has lost his character—when it is entirely gone, then God comes in.

After all the sifting, Job is brought into God's presence, and then "the Lord accepted Job." In God's presence his mouth is stopped; then he said, "I am vile;" "I will lay my hand on my mouth." But Job must be brought further, because God is to bring him to Himself; he must be brought to confess not only that there is *no good* in him, but that there is a great deal of evil. And this he does, as in verse 3, "I have uttered that I

understood not." For now it is not a question of condemnation, but of sin. When the sinner has judged himself, the fear of condemnation has passed away. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Thus Job takes God's side against himself. He laid himself before God, and abhorred himself; and then he repents in dust and ashes; for it is only in the presence of God that we learn repentance. In its fullest sense true repentance is, when our sin is so thoroughly brought out that we are taking God's side of the question in judging ourselves, and in justifying Him. Then it is that He justifies us, and makes us accepted in the Beloved. Then it was that "the Lord accepted Job." And blessed is the man whom the Lord accepteth. May we indeed feel the need of Him, and not rest in the hypocritical quiet of keeping out of His presence.

FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON.

1 John i.

The great purpose of God, in all His dealings in grace, is to bring us—and to bring us individually too—into fellowship with Himself. “Truly our fellowship is with the Father.”—Thus we have the full knowledge of God, as far as it can be known out of Him, and that in full communion with Himself: not in the way of creation—that is, not merely as creatures, but in “union;” and we are made partakers of the Holy Ghost that there may be power; “we dwell in him and he in us.” There cannot be anything more intimate.

It is not knowledge or science that has anything to do with this; for if it be but the human mind working on the things of God, it is but that “high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.” Babes in Christ have possession of these things, they have not to seek for them, they are in

possession of them, though of course they have to ripen in acquaintance with them. Knowledge itself, mere knowledge, puffs up; but being brought low, the Spirit of God can act upon the soul and give knowledge in communion and in fellowship with God.

Although the Epistle of John is very abstract, yet it is abstract about things that the very *feeblest* saint knows in Christ. God is brought down to our nature, for God can come down to us in our weakness in Christ. The difference between the writings of Paul and John is this, that Paul unfolds to us the counsels of God in creation—the counsels of God towards the Jews; (there are various developments of Christ's person, as in Hebrews and Colossians;) but John may be called more abstract, because he speaks of the nature of God Himself. The purpose and object of God is to bring us into full fellowship with Himself.

There are *three* things I would here notice. *First*, the work of God by which we can stand in His presence

perfectly free from any question of sin, so that we can enjoy all that God is. *Second*, justification by faith and acceptance in the beloved—the perfect cleansing of the conscience, knowing we are accepted so as to be able to be before Him in perfect peace. *Third*, the new birth, commonly called regeneration. There must be a new nature capable of affections towards God. An orphan who never knew a father, has the affections of a child, is capable of loving a father, and is often very unhappy because without the object towards whom those affections would naturally flow. So the capacity to love God is that which we get by being partakers of the divine nature. The Holy Ghost is that which gives us competency to enjoy these things. We have an unction from the Holy One given to us, to enable us to enjoy what God has given to us. There must be our standing in the presence of God without our conscience being at work at all; a nature capable of enjoying God—a new nature; and

power to walk in that new nature, which is by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us.

The thing brought especially before us is what that is we are to enjoy: the nature of the things brought down to the understanding of a poor sinner; and that tries the conscience, just as it moves the affections. God is light, and if I am brought into the blessedness of what God is, it must put the conscience to the test; and I ask, am I standing in it? If I am capable of it, then I enjoy all the blessedness of standing in the light, and am in a position to test all that pretends to possess this character. "God is light." He is bringing this home to the hearts of the saints. And this must be by presenting Christ Himself. There was, at the time this Epistle was written, a great deal made of development, and He wants to bring them back to the truth. Science, so called, had got in. The character of apostolic teaching was to bring them back, "earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." "But *continue* thou in the

things which thou hast learned." "That which was from the beginning." My soul ought to know Christ better every day. The moment I get "God manifest in the flesh," I cannot know anything out of that, but that which is false. The question of knowledge is to give place to Christ. If I get there nothing can shake me. I am in Christ. "These things write we unto you that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." Do you believe on the Son? *then rest there.*

1st verse.—First, it was from the beginning; second, it was a real, substantial person they had known familiarly, *not a doctrine*; that is the blessed secret of all. If they have Christ, then they have all that the Father has, all that is revealed of Him; and they cannot go from that without being wrong. They have *got eternal* life, the perfect revelation of God—the power of life in Christ. This is what is presented to us as the full enjoyment and the safeguard of the saint. It is ours, though that which was with

the Father, yet was so near to us ; (not union ;) but so near to us that nothing could be so near as Christ Himself. Instead of wanting anything between myself and Christ, it is revealed to me, so that nothing could be so near to me as Christ Himself. This is the eternal life that was with the Father. And it is as we study the Lord Jesus Christ that we shall have affections established towards Him, which nothing can break. The poor woman who was a sinner had that confidence in Him that she had come to Him, and *loved Him* ; but the secret of our joy is to know the *love of Christ* to us ; and then we have confidence in Him, understanding that God has come so near as to reveal Himself, and inspire confidence. The more we go out and study Christ—the more we penetrate into His ways—the more we learn the depth of all these riches in Him, the more is His divine fulness revealed to us. If it is His taking little children up in His arms, I see in it what God's character is. "He that has seen me, has seen the Father."

Having *truth* thus revealed in a person, I get it for the humblest, lowest, poorest sinner, because it is a personal *act* of our Lord Jesus Christ. "That which was from the beginning." And now mark this "word of life," while it shows what God was in Christ, shows it communicated to us; and everything, true or false, is tested by this. So he asks, "Is there love?" No. Then it is not of God. "He that loveth not knoweth not God." That is now what he teaches. He brings me up to the object—what God was. "That which we have seen with our eyes;" "God is light;" "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin;" the communication of life in the Christian; the height of the source of the life communicated to us. But in the gospel of John you will find "of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace,"—"which thing is true in him and in you." "An old commandment which was from the beginning;" now a new commandment, become true in Him and in you.

He called it a new commandment, though an old one—a simple truth that Christ Himself is become our life. “That the life of Christ might be manifest in our mortal bodies.” If a poor sinner is converted, he has the life communicated from Jesus up there, and yet it comes down to the lowest need in us ; and yet how high it rises !

The gospel begins before creation ; Genesis begins with creation, and gives the scene in which all is to be acted ; but John gives Him who created, and having stated the pre-existence of God, —“Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth,” “thou art the same,”—we get Christ before the creation, and then in creation. “The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” and became the source of life ; and we receive our life from Him who existed, before all worlds, from everlasting. We receive our new nature from Him, and are united to Him who was before the world, and who created the world. This has a double effect,

(if right with God,) lifting our hearts up in ten thousand, thousand thanks, if it does manifest the life of Jesus. The least thing manifests the life of Jesus. Whatever does not manifest Him is of the world; whatever is not the manifestation of the life of Christ in our souls, that is sin; and do not think that a hardship. No; rejoice in it. I would have your hearts enlarged; as the apostle says, "be ye also enlarged." Oh to have Christ so before the eye as to be able to judge everything in His light! Do not think it is great learning; no: there may be the lust of the mind as well as the lust of the flesh; but if in communion with God, it discerns all things.

I call your minds back to see the way we received the life; it was in the humblest and simplest way. He who came into the world to save sinners, He has made us vessels of His fulness. Thus we have fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and display it. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

The effect is, we have the Father and the Son, and we have nothing more to seek. I have the Father and the Son. Can I get truth out of the Father and the Son? I may have more to learn. If a man is on the ocean there may be a great deal he has to discover of it, but he has not to *get* there; he says, I *am* there. So I *am* in the truth. I have got a great deal to learn; but I am in the Father and the Son, and I am in the truth. I do not want to seek it if I am in it. I have the very eternal God in whom I dwell—I have come to the Father. When there is a consciousness of this, oh, what comfort! what peace! It not only guards us from evils without, but it gives spiritual rest within. If I am striving to get something, I have no communion. If I want to get to the sovereign, when I am in his presence already, I have no communion; and if I am not brought up there, I cannot have the sense of what the conscience ought to be in God's presence. The joy is that our fellowship is with

the Father, and *not* that of getting there.

“These things write we unto you that your joy may be full.” There is where God brings the saint if there is humbleness. And if there is not humbleness, we shall slip. When we lose the sense of God’s presence, the sense of it, I say, (because we are always in His presence in truth,) we are at the point to sin. My natural character or flesh will show itself, if I am out of His presence. There is such a thing as the saint’s dwelling in the conscious presence of God without fear. If there is anything between me and God my conscience will be at work, but when the Spirit is not grieved, the soul is in the presence of God for joy; learning holiness, it is true; but in joy, because occupied in communion instead of in detection; and that is a great thing. There is such a thing as being in His presence without the conscience having to be exercised, and in perfect joy. “My peace I give unto you.” What was that peace?

There were no vagabond affections—there could not be, and so there was full peace of heart with God. He was divinely perfect—all his affections always in tune with God. Now, through the grace and power of God, we may be brought to that, Christ having been revealed to the soul, the world is cast out, and Christ is everything, and there is perfect joy. This is often what our experience is after conversion, but afterwards the love to Christ grows less fervent—the world creeps in little by little, and we have less joy.

There are three things which characterize a Christian. 1st, "He is in the light as God is in the light." Now God had said to Israel, "I will dwell in the thick darkness;" and at Sinai told them to keep off; "for if so much as a beast touch the mountain it shall be stoned." There was a great deal of good there, but He was in His pavilion of darkness, not seen. God *acted* towards Israel, but did not *show* Himself. *Now* the veil

is rent from top to bottom, and all is light. It is the very nature of the truth we are in that God is now manifestly revealed, and He that is come in through the rent veil stands in the light of God's holiness, perfect purity in itself, and it shows everything that is not so. 2nd, "Fellowship one with another." We are there together, and all have fellowship by the same Holy Ghost dwelling in all. 3rd, We can be there because "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." The more thoroughly in the light, the more it is seen that there is no spot on us through that blood. This could not be said of a Jew; but now the righteousness of God is set forth, and we are brought into the light as He is in the light. Is this a thing that makes you unhappy, or gives you joy of heart? If we are true of heart, we shall be glad of the light to detect the darkness in us. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the

way everlasting.” We do not want to escape from the light, but to be searched by it—not with a pretension that we have no sin, but the consciousness that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. For the effect of being in the light is, that we confess our sins. “In whose spirit there is no guile.” There are two things there, the confession and the love.

From the 1st to the end of the 4th verse is that there may be no deception. Then in the 5th verse, “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” Now that is the test,—when Christ is known in the presence of God there is no question about sin—How came I there? I came through the blood—then I have got peace. If I am reasoning about God that is another thing; but if we have got there, we got there through the blood, and that gives peace, a peace which is never lost. There is a peace which may be lost: happy at first, while fresh from conversion, and all is

easy and smooth with us, our hearts attracted by the grace of Christ; but if failure comes in conscience is awakened, sin alarms, and we lose our peace, so that we do not know where we are. Until we have apprehended that we are brought to God—where we never could be brought if there remained a spot of sin upon us—we cannot know settled peace in our souls, as spoken of in Hebrews, “no more conscience of sin”—and that is enduring peace. The power of the affections of the new nature forms a link of fellowship with God; and only as we keep in the light, shall we know the practical enjoyment of it. We must be in the light that evil thoughts may be shut out, so that we may have fellowship with God. In how many things, in our intercourse with one another, or with the world, self comes in and is not judged by us. There is a practical consciousness in the Christian that he cannot go on without God, and he judges, waits, and confesses, trusting in God, and thus his heart is kept calm and in peace.

There are two things—1st, The manifestation of the eternal life—for it has been manifested to us;—2nd, we are partakers of it, I have fellowship with the Father and Son. He has communicated to us that nature, so that we can delight in His fellowship. *The Lord give us to keep ourselves in the love of God—in His presence, in the light, detecting everything that is not of Him, judging it, and thus to be in the enjoyment of His love.*

BELIEVERS THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST.

2 Cor. iii, 2.

It is good for our souls to dwell on what it is to be an epistle of Christ, though I am sure none of us can express the greatness of the calling. Any gathering of the saints is the epistle of Christ, “to be read of men.” They are His letter of recommendation to the world. The world needs to ascertain what Christ is from the lives of

the saints ; although they might learn it, it is true, from the word. And the great importance of this place of witness is brought out by the tacit contrast with the law, "written in tables of stone." Just as the ten commandments were the declaration of the mind of God, under the dispensation of the law, so now the Church is the engraving of Christ, "written, not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart," to show forth the virtues of Him, "who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light."

I would refer to one great thing in the life of Christ, namely, that He never, in one simple act, word, or movement of His heart, did a single thing to please Himself. "Christ pleased not Himself;" and so "we ought not to please ourselves;" for "*none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.*" Jesus said, "that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." This was obedience, flowing out of love, and

manifesting love. Nothing ever moved Him from that. The temptation to move from obedience to a commandment might come in a very subtle form, with all the ardour of affection; as when Peter said, in answer to the Lord's word about His sufferings and death, "This be far from thee, Lord." This was affectionate in Peter; but the Lord would not own it, for that would have been to turn from the Father's commandment. And what does He answer? "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be *of men*."

Another thing I would remark. Not only was Jesus heavenly in His nature, but, as Son of man, He lived in heaven—as He said, "the Son of man which is in heaven." The whole spirit of His mind, the tone of all His feelings and thoughts, was heavenly. So if there is any motive in my heart which I could not have if I were in heaven, I am not like Christ.

Again, all the grace that was in Him

was brought out to meet man's sorrow and misery, and to bear on every earthly circumstance. In this we often find our failure. Even when the motive is right, the manner is wanting in graciousness. But it was never so with Christ. He was always seeking to promote the glory of God; but never did He, in manner, on any occasion, depart from the spirit of grace. We often are not close enough in our communion with God to have confidence in Him. We become impatient, and resort to means that are not of God, as Jacob did, who had not confidence enough in God to say, "He will secure the blessing." Would not God have made Isaac give the right answer? Surely He would. So we often fail by not waiting upon God, who will bring the thing to pass, most surely, though we know not how. So it was in the sorrowful case of Saul. He would not wait; yet Samuel came at the end of seven days, and Saul lost the kingdom. And those who really are the children of God always sustain loss when they

depart from confidence in Him. Christ was always trusting in God, and always waiting upon Him; and so He was ever ready for every sorrow and misery; ever ready to bring out the resources of God to meet every necessity. It is touching to read the vth chapter of Matthew. Every beatitude is a lively portrait of Christ. Who so poor in spirit as Christ? who mourned as Christ? who so meek? so hungering and thirsting after righteousness? His whole life was hungering and thirsting after righteousness. "The life was the light of men."

But, further, Jesus was the victorious man over all opposition, even though it were death itself. There is a great difference between good desires and power. The quickened soul may say, "O wretched man that I am;" but we cannot be the full epistle of Christ, unless we exhibit power over all obstacles—even over death. Death is given us. The believer, living in the power of Christ's life, has entire power over death.

Again, the Lord Jesus, amidst all His zeal, never failed in love. Strictly speaking there is no motive in love, though there may be joy in its exercise; and this is our triumph. If I look for a motive, it is not love. Therefore love enables a man to meet all trials. Should one spit in his face, this makes no difference, for love abides; because it never draws its strength from circumstances, but rides above all circumstances. Nothing can be presented to a saint which can separate him from the love of God. The love which he enjoys triumphs over all circumstances. If we do not show this heavenly-mindedness of the love which is of God, doing nothing from any motive but obedience, we are not a true epistle of Christ. I might be walking lowly, but if I did not show out Christ, I should be nothing. So Christ. He gave no answer when God gave no word. And we, in passing through the world, should stand still and wait if we cannot see how we may so walk as to please God.

In the latter part of the chapter the apostle tells us how we may be acting as the epistles of Christ—ministers, not of the letter, but of the spirit. The letter refers to the requirements of God from man, which necessarily was a ministration of death. But the gospel is the manifestation of God, not from Sinai, requiring righteousness; but from His own throne revealing the accomplishment of His own righteousness, and sending a message concerning it to draw our hearts to Himself. To those who submit themselves to this righteousness, the Holy Ghost is given on the foundation of the righteousness, and He is in them a Spirit of power. So now we can use great plainness of speech, because we are speaking of grace. We can tell men that they are wicked, wretched, and helpless. We can speak all things plainly, because we are not expecting anything from them, but telling them of God's grace to just such as they are. We can speak plainly of God, for it is of the God of all

grace. Israel could not look at the reflection of the glory in the face of Moses, poor though it was; but now man can look plainly—wonderful to say—at the full glory of God, because it is now in the face of Jesus. It is this very glory that tells me of the putting away of my sin. I see the glory of God, not dimly, but as of one who put Himself in my place as a sinner, and who could not be in that glory if He had not put away all my sin; for my sin is enough to dim any glory. What a glorious thing, not only to see God visiting my soul in grace, but that, so to speak, the glory has taken the place of my sin! The transition from the cross has left nothing between them! Thus we get righteousness in our Head, and the Spirit goes with the message, so that there is power, for “where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.”

The soul that submits to the righteousness of God becomes the epistle of Christ, because he is looking at Christ in the glory. This cannot be

while only looking at Him down here; but when the eye is fixed on the Lord Jesus in glory we get changed into the same image. The heart living in the glory counts all things else but dross and dung in comparison. This is the real victory—when all of this world surrounds me, to say, I do count them but dross and dung. This is being like Christ. We soon learn the weakness of the flesh in this, but the faith that thus looks to Christ is the true victory. The apostle said, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” We sometimes say this too lightly, for we have not proved it. We may say a believer can do all things, but he could say, I can do all things through Christ, for he had proved it by deep experience and arduous conflict.

The Lord give us so to recognize the power there is in Christ, as that we may heartily walk in the strength of it—though it humble us in the dust.

UNION WITH CHRIST.

People have a notion of a mystical union with Christ as an ideal thing. But the word is very explicit, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." I am more really united to Christ than my hand is to my body; for the life of the latter union is in my blood, but that of the former in the power of the *Holy Ghost*.

This is an amazing truth—that I am livingly united to Christ at this moment. It is not merely that He has done certain things which suppose that I was in Him, as to their value, so that I have peace, but a whole class of affections spring from the realization of this union. I am drawing life from Christ with every affection that Christ has in me.

And as to power—I am in the Lord; and when strong in the Lord, whatever Christ is competent for, I am competent for; or, as the apostle has it, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

REST FOR THE WEARY.

Matt. xi.

Sin against God may be looked at in two points of view: 1st, as seen in Adam's transgression in the garden, when he broke the first commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy *God* with all thy heart;" 2nd, as filled up in Cain's slaying his brother, who thus broke the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

But there is another character which sin takes, and is seen in connexion with the pains God takes with the sinner, thus in his sins. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and set to work to make himself comfortable away from God. Now, suppose God sent messengers after him and pressed him to return, his remaining away would, in such a case, be additional guilt. But if God Himself came out and entreated him to return, and he would not, this would be a much greater sin than his having at first left him. *Carelessness* may take a man

away from God ; but refusing to return when besought is positive *hatred of God*. Not merely does the sinner see no beauty in Christ, but God has now to deal with him on the ground of refusing the activities of His love. Sin, therefore, now takes a new form, far more dark and more deadly, namely, that of a positive refusal of God's dealings in love.

The Jews were put under the law and failed, thus proving that man could not keep the law. But the rejection of Christ is a proof of what men's hearts are. If you take a piece of ground by the sea shore, and plant it, and then find it fruitless, you reject the whole shore ; not only the piece you cultivated, but the whole shore. So the gospel proves what all our hearts are in the sight of God. God has given us the history of the Jews, not to tell us what the Jews are, but *what we are*. Thus do these plain testimonies about ourselves prove that our dependence is only on grace ; for "*by nature* we were children of wrath, even

as others." What resource have we, then? None, but to turn to God's nature, which is "rich in mercy." This is what the apostle is doing in Eph. ii, 3, 4. He there takes up what man is, in contrast with what God is. After speaking of the sins of Gentile and Jew, he sums them up by saying, "and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others;" and then he turns to God's nature, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,—by grace ye are saved," &c. God has now given up seeking fruit from man *as man*. (From the saints He does seek fruit, the outward manifestation of the life within.) Christ came to the Jews seeking fruit, but finding none, He will thoroughly purge His floor. Then, as a certain King, God made a marriage, but those bidden would not come; "they all with one consent began to make excuse." Thus they rejected the one, as they had failed in the other.

“Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” And why? Because their natural conscience was not hardened by a *profession of religion*. “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell,” &c. The nearer they came to God outwardly, the farther they were from the reception of the truth, and the more hardened they became. They said of Christ, “Is he not mad, and hath a devil?” So now, men call themselves Christians from mere outward profession; this has the evil tendency to harden the heart against the truth.

But the peculiar feature which characterizes the saints of God is, that they hear the voice of the Shepherd. “My sheep hear my voice;” that is, they believe Christ’s testimony. Christ

is received into the soul, by His own testimony. "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, but *we have heard him ourselves*, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." Every witness to Christ must come in on the same simple ground of Christ's testimony to that individual soul. As a matter of testimony, John did bear witness to Christ, and yet John comes in as one who must take the testimony of Christ about Himself. Christ testified, "Blessed is he who-soever shall not be offended in me." But woe unto him who rejects the counsel of God against himself. John was a believer, knew certain truths, and said, "there is One to come;" but that was not the point. It was the fixing the truth upon his mind, the testimony of Christ concerning Himself. The soul that hears the voice of Jesus Himself, and receives His testimony, is thus a believer in Jesus. You know that nothing can cleanse but the blood of Christ, that Christ is the only Saviour; yet, per-

haps, like John, you are saying, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" You have not yet got your confession from the word of Christ Himself, that "He is indeed the Christ;" for when the sheep has heard the voice of the Shepherd, there is never any uncertainty about it. Moreover, He calls His own sheep by name. The moment He said "Mary," she immediately responded, "Rabboni," without any hesitation or uncertainty whatever, because she had received the testimony of Jesus about herself. The voice of Jesus had reached her soul; she was sure it was the Jesus she loved, and she was happy. It is not merely a spiritual hearing of the voice, but receiving Christ's testimony about Himself. When Jesus had come to the house of Zaccheus, He said, "This day is salvation come to this house," because Christ's testimony about Himself had been received. The testimony of the Holy Ghost is still to the same effect, as we see in Acts xi, 13, 14, "Send for Peter, who shall tell thee

words whereby thou and thy house shall be saved." And the testimony of a soul that has received Christ is this, "I know in whom I have believed." There is a conscious apprehension of the connexion of the soul with Christ, which it is not in the power of Satan to undo.

John sends to Jesus, and the Lord turned round and gave a testimony to His servant. It was Adam who named the beasts, and not the beasts who named Adam. So now Jesus must give John his character. "What went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet," &c. The Lord's heart goes out in delight in testimony to John. The Lord delights in His people; and if John is suffered to doubt, and be a mark to others, it is but that he may receive a greater testimony from the Lord Himself.

Men were brought to the trial in two ways. "We have piped unto you and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you and ye have not

lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a devil." Why? Because he did not go on like other men. Men, who have fallen into the hands of the devil themselves, account that, when any testimony from God comes in, it must be of the devil, because it is not after the manner of men. John came in the way of righteousness, and therefore he could have nothing to say to any one; he could not eat and drink in company with any one, and therefore he went into the wilderness. He who was to testify about sin, said, "The axe is laid to the root of the trees," &c. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor," &c. Thus John was pleading with their consciences. Jesus came eating and drinking with publicans and sinners. When John does not do as man does, they say, he has a devil; and when

Jesus comes in the way of man, "eating and drinking," they say, He is the worst of men, "a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Thus, they rejected the testimony of God, whether it came in the way of mourning or piping; and rejected it with the full testimony that God was there: "they repented not."* John could not forgive sin, therefore he went into the wilderness away from it; but Jesus could forgive sin, and therefore He went amongst it. He had "power on earth to forgive sins," as we see in the case of the adulteress and others. Therefore He upbraids those cities; for, do what works He might in them, they rejected Him in them all.

But in this He submits to His Father. "I thank thee, O Father, because thou hast hid these things

* It is strange to think that while Jesus could not mend the world then, men can now. A pretty mending they will make of it! When they have brought men to do without God, in self-sufficiency, they will then think that they have done the work.

from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Having bowed His heart to the will of God, at once the glory breaks in: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." As the rejected one Jesus has received all the glory of heaven and earth. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, and no man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." To bring man out of his lost condition the Son must reveal the Father. "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." The grace that is in Jesus alone can reveal the Father's love. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Jesus healed the lame, gave sight to the blind, forgave sins, &c.; and what did these mighty works bring Him? Did they believe on Him? No; they rejected Him and knew Him not. Yet "at that time Jesus rejoiced in Spirit." And so He says, "Come unto me, I will

give you rest." He knew where rest was to be found; and as having experienced the bitterness of trial and sorrow all the way through His labours on earth, He knew how to give rest to the weary. Therefore He says, if you are seeking rest for your souls, come unto me, for I know what is to be found in the world, for I have passed through it and tried the hearts of men; and I know where alone rest is to be found. Therefore "come unto me, and I will give you rest." How many a heart may be *weary* that cannot say it is sorry for sin! Well, then, if there be a weary heart, come unto me, and I will give you rest. And where did Jesus find rest? In the perfectness of the Father's love, and the wisdom of the Father's ways. Jesus came to reveal the Father; and He revealed Him as He knew Him. "The only begotten, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." And what did Jesus know of Him? Nothing that saved Him from the troubles of the world. If Jesus has

revealed the Father, what more can you seek? That is perfect rest—rest, the perfectness of which nothing can disturb. It is a rejected Christ who could thus speak. For He had blotted out, by His blood, all that could have been against us, so that God has nothing to look for, or to seek about our sins. To speak otherwise would be to deny the efficacy and power of the blood of Christ. It is by coming unto Him that we get this rest; and when we have come to Jesus Himself, there cannot be a cloud to disturb it. There is no uncertainty there; the troubled soul has done troubling then.

“Take my yoke upon you and learn of me.” He had to bow His heart at every step, and this is the yoke put on the Christian. He gives us the rest, but puts this yoke upon our necks. He reproached the cities, but had Himself to bow — “Even so, Father.” Then immediately He adds, “All power is given to me in heaven and earth.” Therefore He is saying to each of us, “Take my yoke upon you and learn of

me, for I am meek and *lowly in heart*, and ye shall find rest unto your souls," &c. And mark here, that no man ever gets to the point, and discovers it to be the will of God, but He finds a *perfect rest* in God's ways and bidding. It comes in and meets the soul as it needs it; and the soul thus practically learns the blessedness of following in the path of Christ. If you are weary and heavy laden go to Him, and He will give you rest. Perhaps you are not troubled about your sins, not feeling the greatness of them, &c.; but He well knew them all, having borne the judgment due to them; and He is now saying to you, if weary and heavy laden, "Come to me, and I will give you rest."

CONFLICT WITH SIN.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 John i, 9.

We hear of nothing in this place but confession for forgiveness of sin;

because God is faithful and just. I would commend the faith of the power of confession for bringing the power of God to cleanse from the practice of sin;—sin as embracing everything adverse to the new nature in Christ.

However slow, or by whatever number of stages, we come to the truth that except or besides Christ there is, and can be, nothing accepted in the presence of God, yet is many a sin and a full variety of evil excused, undiscovered, and slumbered over; and this in many who have come to the full knowledge of the ways of God, and have their portion therein. It is, however, a position of peculiar danger to know, and yet to remain stationary: it morally hardens the soul; for it habituates to evil in the light of God. Evil is permitted by habit, and hypocrisy is not far off.

Again, how sad it is that many a soul dear to God is deeply troubled at sin as it rises to the surface. It struggles, resists, and prays, and is uninformed of the provision of God to meet the

desires He has implanted there—a thirsting after the image of Christ—blessed be His name for ever! Let us suppose peace—unquestionable peace and acceptance in the risen Jesus—being in the light. Now if the Christian keep to the faith of life, and so in the consciousness of it, and of his calling, I doubt not hitherto undetected sin will often be revealed to him, and it is in God that it should be met, and before God; and confession is the way; and in God's presence will the light make it manifest, and abiding in it complete the circle of the image of Christ in the soul of the believer. To *abide* until we receive what we look for *is faith*. It will come, and come effectually, even in the power of God. It is here the conflict is to be carried on—here the heart is broken—and blessing in new affections received. The previous question will only be—will he that has the conscience of sin consent to pass by his affections that are in the world, and enter there where he is to lose them? Has the Christian

been contending with sin without the precincts of the presence of God? Then he has been contending where the enemy has the vantage ground; where habits may be altered, but where affections are never really relinquished; for the heart bargains for the *sight*, or *thought*, at least, of what is forbidden; but all *must* be swept away in the presence and power of God in the new creature. It is contest enough to pass by the affections that detain him, into the presence of God, which he now knows, and knows they are there to be relinquished.

A sense of sin, if we have been awakened, would send us *naturally* to struggle in ourselves against it, and with calling on the help of God, while we do not discover that it is, in this case, under the law that we do it. How sincerely is this often done! Prayer—vexation with self—shame (but as if from *our sense of sin* we had a right to be free) possess the souls of such; and the love that God has to them for their mind towards Him, in their

thoughts of sin, and the partial success even they may gain, keep them in the path of weakness, and frustrate them of their desires. They must come lower yet. If they really examined their souls, or rather let God examine their souls, they would find that *they* have not really such a sense of sin as they suppose. They have a sense of the dishonour of it, but not of the character of it in the light of God; and that is the reason why the taste of judgments alone really alienates them from it. But these they accept, because they are content, at all cost, to be brought nearer to God; increasing with the increase of God. They learn the judgment against sin in the presence of God; and what they learn in communion is what will be revealed.

But the most important of all is the ground on which judgment is given, and to what the evil is in contrast, while he that confesses his fault is shielded from the burning rays of God's glory by God's love in Christ. That ground is that the believer, by

grace attracted by that love, has received Christ; Christ has become his life, whether in capacity of object, which God now is; or in actual condition, developed or undeveloped.

So little is commonly known of the calling of a child of God, or of the Church, Christ's body, in heavenly places, and of the grace the member of Christ receives in confession of Christ, and as witness in the *kingdom* into which he has been called, yet walking here below where Christ, as *Lord*, is nowhere acknowledged, that conscience is continually at fault for any resolution of its difficulties. It is often engaged in regulating that from which it should be wholly separate and free. Conscience in such a case vacillates, and its guidance is not to be relied on, because it can alone receive firmness by waiting on God; and, (I may say, without being misunderstood,) waiting for God, that having His mind, on however isolated a point, I should be in the way of a more enlarged understanding of His ways. If I had not my place with God in

grace, I should be still incapable of coming to any resolution ; but having that place, and knowing I have it, but not what it is, I enjoy His safeguard, as well as all that is needful to life and godliness, as part of His gift. I say this independent of any use of the word, for there may be great incapacity to use it, and yet the conscience is not to be neglected. Doubts therefore as to the world and relationships in it, and as to those arising out of it, can be well held, though God's presence be sought. As soon as I know that I am not of the world, but of Christ's kingdom, and chosen in Him, it settles a host of questions ; but I have a conscience in Christ which brings many things in doubt, it may be, long before I know that ; for His life is the light of men. I have received in Christ the capacity of receiving God, as an object ; but Christ known in glory, becomes necessarily the veiled Christ of the world ; so known to him that is a stranger here. Whenever I receive this intelligence (the gospel of the glory of Christ) I find

my way with much less fear and trembling.

A definite direction to obedience in the confession of Christ's disacknowledged rights, and the fulfilment of all headships* will be found in the word, and as regulated by the Head of the body. Without this, and the faith of what we have in Christ, indwelling in our hearts by faith, (and one may say here, too, without faith it is impossible to please Him,) all the Christian will present is a moderated world and a moral man. But when I do know Christ in me as the hope of glory, the presence of God is sought for the putting off the old man, and the putting on the new. This brings in quite another order; and the greater obstacle to a conscience, being thus clear in its judgment, is put away. Sin lives in the mind by neglect. The flesh, in

* "Works foreordained that we should walk in them," (Eph. ii, 10,) does not, I apprehend, imply that we are ordained to them, though that also is true; but that the works are fore-ordained what they should be.

every incipient, voluntary action is contrary to the new nature in Christ; and if these have found no home in us, be the occasion what it may, blessed be God. But if they have; the sense of their evil is perfected in the presence of God, and by confession there, yield to His grace. The power also that would regulate what is still to be acted in the flesh is found there, for the presence of God is the place where moral failings, which affect our duties, and their sources, are discovered and remedied. God in Christ is there. The new man in Christ is the eighth day of the cleansing of the leper, and we know the exceeding greatness of the power of God to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set him at His own right hand, &c.

There is a peculiar conjunction, and yet a difference, between the death of Christ and the blood of Christ, blessed and holy is His name. The spilling of the blood is the death, for the blood is

the life. I am not cleansed by the death, though pardoned by His bearing sin and its penalty for me. It is by the blood that has been drawn forth to the death that I am cleansed. My heart is *sprinkled* from an evil conscience by the application by the Spirit of the blood-shedding unto death—I am *washed* by the blood. Nor is the dead lamb left without its use. It is the moral power of the cross on the old man. And I observe that the intent is that the dead lamb roast with fire should be *wholly* eaten, and what remains uneaten be burnt with fire; and in the same way in the sacrifice of the peace offering, the intent is that none should remain till the morning; and if it be a vow or voluntary offering all that is left on the third day shall be burnt with fire.

It is surprising how the slightest matter defiles—unguarded intercourse—the eye—the ear; and what wretchedness to a tender conscience (in the new creature) which has not escaped from under the law and has not its laver in heaven! But where habit has

been contracted, before the soul is regenerate, how humbling, how painful, but how cleansing the work of the Lord in confession. How much worse if engendered after!—what labour in watchfulness to be free, and how sad its condition if not labouring under grace and in the presence of God. In whatever remains of the old man one fault hides a deeper, and the mass would terrify, if seen at once. But oh! the blessing of unpalliating confession! God would not have provided Christ had He not been a pure God, or had not the body of sin been to be destroyed. The character of *the law* carries trespass. The character of *grace* a new creature in power possessing the soul, becoming its life and movement. Man by it knowing his Father in heaven, and his Master at the right hand of glory; with a conscience formed by the Spirit. Where else than to the presence of God will the Spirit lead us about our soul? It is here therefore the soul is to be laid open to God, for Him to tell it of

itself, of the judgment of sin, and of the fulness of His grace; here to become acquainted with God; and here to receive the white robe at His hands.

“THE SON QUICKENETH
WHOM HE WILL.”

John v.

All through these chapters the Lord is bringing out the power that is in Him, in contrast with the means of Judaism. These means could not give life. The law could not give life. Regulations could not give life. And ordinances—helpful after there is life—nevertheless could not *give* life.

Whether we look at the guilt of sin, or at the power of sin, the law cannot take either away. Now this is the very thing that God has done in Christ. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the

righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," &c. That is, Christ has died for the sin, and guilt is gone; and Christ is now my life; and over this life sin has no power. God condemned sin in the flesh. Not merely has Christ died for my past sins, but sin—my whole condition—has been met in Christ's death.

"Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep-market, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years." There was the remedy; but the disease he had got hindered him from using the remedy. Now that is our case, as sinners. There is the law. If we keep it, well. But sin has

taken away our power of keeping it. And you cannot help a sinful *nature*. The *will* is wrong. How can you help one whose will is wrong?

“When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?” Here the Lord brings him to the conviction of his want of power, in order to smash all hopes of getting better. The impotent man wanted to get into the pool, and this very desire made him the more miserable from the feeling that he could not go in. He must be brought to the sense of his impotency.

But the Lord is there, who gives life, and with one word the thing is done. The whole thing is changed. The paralysis is gone. He does not say, “Get first into the pool,” &c. ; but from His own love, and in the power of His own word, he says, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” “And *immediately* the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked.”

“And on the same day was the Sab-

bath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed." They were professing to keep Sabbath. "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Ah! says Jesus, There is no rest; God is not resting. For sin had come in. Now God cannot put up with sin. He must either sweep it all away, or work to put it away. Now this last is what God was doing. The very effect of the sin on God's heart is that He sets about working in grace to put it away. 'God is working,' said Jesus, and 'I am working.' Thus I see God working for my salvation! My heart has got this principle, that the love of God is such that He could not rest because of what I was, until He had "made peace by the blood of his cross." I have no power to put myself right; but here I find One working who has power, and who has had love enough to take up the work. Now it is just because we needed it that He is working; and our

sin—alas! we had spit in His face—our sin did not hinder Him. The more it came out, the more need it showed of His working. Oh this love in the Son, come down into our midst to work for our salvation! It is not that we have to take a long journey, and then when we get to the end, He will have us. No. He has taken the long journey and come to meet us just where we are.

In the verses which follow we find two things presented: first, that the Lord Jesus gives life; and secondly, that He executes judgment. These two things are never mixed. He does not give life *to judge the one* to whom He has given it. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

Here I find the Son of God in the world. How comes He here? Because I was lost! God sent Him to give eternal life. And my sins did not hinder Him

from coming. But I have not power. Well, Christ has. He has got life, and He has come to give it. The Father sent Him to give it, and that I might know the love that sent it. He tells me the truth about my sin—why I am lost, and that I have no power to get better; but He also tells me that He came “To seek and to save that which was lost.”

SIMPLICITY OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

2 Cor. iii.

It is astonishing how hard it is to get the heart of man to believe in the efficacy of the work of Christ. Even in the case of those who have felt their need of it, the simplicity is unseizable; and, therefore, their power is lost. There is liberty before God; and power where there is liberty. It is of this full and blessed liberty which belongs to the believer in Christ, that it is so hard to persuade. I am sure the more I go on, the more I see how little those who believe enjoy the full and blessed grace in which God has set them. When once we have seen our entire ruin, and are cast

entirely on what God is, and what God has done, then the simplicity of the Gospel is apprehended. But not till then. Here it is called "that which remaineth."

And truly this is what conforms to Christ, as the last verse shows. No responsibility can bring to this. How can I be an epistle of Christ, if I am trying to get to Him? It is Christ that is ministered; and through the ministration of Christ we are put in the presence of God, without fear or torment, so to enjoy the glory as to reflect it. It is Christ glorified in heaven who is thus graven on the heart, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Now what is the Christ thus ministered? A Christian is a person who carries Christ graven on his heart before the world. What is this Christ? Is it a Christ graven on stones? No, that was on the outside. When God puts man under responsibility He gives a rule outside of man. Christ, even, *as an example*, was outside of man. He was perfection; but I am broken-hearted because I am not it. But if Christ is written on my heart, *I am it*.

When the Gospel is presented in its simplicity there is great plainness of speech. Nothing can be simpler in itself than the Gospel. Nothing simpler than this: you

are lost. Nothing simpler than God so loved us as to send His Son to die for us, that we might live through Him. But what the apostle is doing here is showing what men are doing,—that they are mixing up law and grace; not taking up pure law, but a mixture of law and grace. And that is done in two ways: in the way the natural man takes it up; and in the way the quickened man takes it up. Pure law no man would take up. At bottom no man would pretend to stand by it. So they say that God is merciful. But mercy with them is God's treating sin as lightly as they do. A quickened person will not go so far; yet in his case the mixing up of law and grace is far deeper and more subtle.

When Moses came down the first time his face did not shine. Then it was pure law. But when he came down the second time, the skin of his face shone, and Aaron and the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him. Now it was on this second occasion that the Lord proclaimed his name. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, and that will by no means clear the guilty." That is what men say they wish to stand on. But that is precisely what they cannot stand on. True, there is the revelation "forgiving iniquity,"

&c., but *Moses brought back the law*, and the authority of God's law cannot be given up. That is what men want. They wish to use the mercy of God to weaken the authority of the law of God. But this God will never do. He will never weaken the authority of His law. If one ray of the glory of God comes in on the principle of law, it will terrify you. Israel could not look at it. Moses said, "If thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." But God answered, the man that sins, him will I blot out. You must either destroy the authority of the law, or rest under death and condemnation.

But the moment I am brought, in my conscience, to bow to the condemnation which is my due, and so am cast entirely on God, I find that what the law could not do, God has done for me by the death and resurrection of His dear Son. Now I get two things in this ministration of Christ; righteousness and the Holy Ghost. "And where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." Thus I find that God can meet me in my sin; that God is so entirely above sin that He can meet me in my sin, in order to this wondrous deliverance. One thing is needed to understand it, and that is confession.

ROMANS I.

In taking up this Epistle to the Romans, I purpose, guided, I trust, by the Lord, not to enter into every detail of the Epistle ; but to trace its leading idea, the intention of the Spirit of God in it, and the course of the apostle's reasoning, trusting that the Lord will give some practical exhortation to the profit of souls.

In speaking lately of the Epistle of John I remarked on the distinction of the writings of Paul and John. The subjects of John's Epistle being the character of the divine life, which was *with* the Father, manifested in the Son, and communicated to us through the Spirit ; so that the divine nature in us should be traced out in the affections of the child of God. In sum, the general scope of John's Epistle is, first, the manifestation of the divine life ; and, secondly, the communication of it : Paul's Epistles have another character altogether. They reveal the counsels and the ways of God, and the conse-

quent relationships in which men are put, through the grace which justifies them in His presence.

The great subject of the New Testament is the manifestation and communication of the divine life, the making us partakers of the divine nature; and our presentation before God, and enjoyment of Him in that nature. The child derives his life from his father. Thence results, not merely likeness of character, but also the peculiar relationship of a child.

But the better to comprehend this I would here recall the four truths prominent in the New Testament. 1st, There is the manifestation and communication of *divine life*. 2nd, The counsels of God in the accomplishment in Christ of all the *promises* given from Adam downwards, made good to the Jews, His people. 3rd, The *mercy* granted to the poor Gentiles, as in Rom. xv, 8: "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles

might glorify God for his *mercy*." 4th, *The Church*, as united to Christ its Head. The first is in John's Epistle. The manifestation, then the communication of the divine life. The 2nd and 3rd are found in Romans, with only a glance at the 4th: individual relationship with God being the main subject of that Epistle. This 4th and last is brought out in Ephesians. The Church is only hinted at, not taught in Romans. The 4th point of truth, which is revealed in the Epistle to the Ephesians, is distinct from the promises to the Jews, and the general idea of mercy to the Gentiles; being a *new thing*. The seeing these distinctions greatly facilitates the understanding of the Epistles, and clears up passages otherwise obscure.

We have seen that in Romans there are *two* great subjects brought out: the accomplishment of the promises made to the Jews, and mercy to the Gentiles. In treating these points, the apostle lays the foundation of all relationships between God and man. Thus

the commencement of the first chapter is an introduction to all that is afterwards unfolded in the Epistle.

The Epistle to the Romans has this large character, naturally enough. It consists well with an address to the great centre of the world's empire; for Paul was writing to the Romans, whom he had never seen, as the apostle of the Gentiles, and takes his stand on the high ground of being the one to whom God had committed His counsels. Peter, in addressing the Jews, presents resurrection as a living hope; and speaking to them on this new principle, addresses himself to them as to strangers and *pilgrims*, &c., thus carrying out that which was consequent on this principle here below, as regards those who are to participate in the resurrection itself.

Thus the varied Epistles are suited to the varied need of those addressed: as in Corinthians, to the case of moral evil; Colossians, slipping away from the Head; Galatians, falling from grace; Thessalonians, deep affliction, and the

clearing up of the doctrine of the Lord's coming : but the Epistle to the Romans, addressed to the capital of the world, where the apostle had not yet been, takes the great principles of God's relationship with men, and that which He has with the Jewish people, in connexion with these principles.

There are two parts in this Epistle. From the beginning, up to the close of the viiith chapter, forms the first part : the ixth, xth, and xith chapters form the second : the concluding chapters are occupied with precepts. In the first part you get both Jews and Gentiles reduced to the common condition of sinners. But some might object, and say, if this be so, that there is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile, how, then, admitting that the law only aggravates the sin of the Jew, is God to make good His promises to the Jews? The infallibility of the promises of God is shown, and this truth reconciled, and that from the Jewish history and scripture, in chaps. ix—xi, the common ground on which

both Jew and Gentile are set in perfect salvation, common to both, in Christ Jesus. In the next place, mark the way in which Paul sets man aside, as being proved a sinner, poor, vile, and lost; and that he does this to bring God in. It is not merely that he introduces man, as a sinner; but man must be thoroughly put down, to bring in God Himself, in the place of man, that God may act towards man in His own way, and according to His own character. As in Ephesians, after Jew and Gentile are spoken of as children of *wrath*, the apostle passes over, at once, to that which God is in grace; and God is brought out in His own character, as "rich in mercy;" and what *He* has done, and what *He* is to such as they are, is unfolded. We can have no settled *peace* or rest of heart till we are on this ground; nor can we know God, so as to trust Him, to rest in Him and adore Him, till we know Him **THUS**. Then it is a settled question, and our hope and trust are in God. As it is written, "Who by him

do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be *in God*." Therefore the apostle does not say, we are justified *before God*, though that also is true, but "it is God who justifies;" that the heart might be brought to rest in *God Himself*.

Paul himself had gone to the extreme extent of sin. It was not a mere looseness of expression when he called himself the "chief of sinners;" for Paul in heart was the wickedest man that ever trod the earth; not guilty, of course, of immorality—as he says of himself, "after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee,"—but the most deliberate and ardent enemy of God's anointed. When he reached the highest point of his wickedness, "being *exceedingly mad* against *them*," at that moment he was separated unto the gospel of God.

We will now rapidly go over, without entering into the detail of it, the history of what man was. God had borne with man, leaving him at first to him-

self; but the result of leaving man to himself was, that, so great was his iniquity, he must be destroyed from off the face of the earth; and it became necessary to put a close to his abominations by a flood. The law followed, and that was broken. The prophets came next, and they were despised, stoned, and were sawn asunder. Last of all, God sent His Son, and Him they killed. It was not all, therefore, that man had broken God's law, and slain his prophets. The goodness of God had come, and men hated the goodness, and Jesus was rejected and crucified. But even then Jesus prays for His murderers, pleading their ignorance: "Father, forgive them, for *they know not what they do.*" As in the case of the one who owed the ten thousand talents, forasmuch as he had nothing to pay, his lord forgave him his debt. And this is what I take to be the meaning of this passage. Israel was guilty of the death of Christ, yet in the testimony of the Holy Ghost, God deals in forgiveness with them; but they reject

the principle of grace. And mark here, that the Holy Ghost takes up again, and carries on, this very intercession of our Lord, as forgiveness of sins is preached by Peter at Jerusalem, saying, "And now, brethren, I wot that through *ignorance* ye did it, as did also *your rulers*. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Did they repent? *No*. Not only had they killed the Prince of life, but, in stoning Stephen, they now fill up the measure of their iniquity by rejecting the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the grace and goodness of God. Just at *this* point, in the history of man and of Israel, it is that Saul of Tarsus comes upon the scene, as the participator in this hostility to the testimony of God; and so mad was he against it, that he became, voluntarily, the very apostle of the enmity in the heart of man, against the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the grace and goodness of God. But here God meets him in the way, and his mouth is closed in conviction, and to all but the grace

that had visited and pardoned so bitter and determined an enemy. All that God could do to reach the heart and act on the responsibility of man, had been brought into operation in this testimony, and Paul was found in the most active hostility to it, being determined to put a stop to the testimony of grace and goodness if he could. While thus occupied, the Lord appears to him in glory, revealing the Church's connexion with Himself, "Why persecutest thou ME?" — for "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." Thus Paul sets out as the leader of this active energy, in opposition to God; and is called, in the midst of his career of enmity, that he might be a perfect witness of the grace that overcame him, as he himself sets it forth, testifying that there is grace and forgiveness for one such as *he*. "That in me first," he says, "Christ might show forth all long-suffering." Everything that could have religiously sustained his heart was broken down when God met him by the way. Take conscience, for instance :

how very terrible it must have been to Paul to find that his natural conscience had been all wrong. He had thought that "he *ought* to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." He was an enemy of the Lord in doing it. All his thoughts are upset. Three days *without* sight, he neither eats nor drinks. Then take the law. He had been blameless as regards its enactments; zealous for it; but he is the Lord's enemy by his zeal. It is his ruin before God. Then the priests, the pharisees, and his own zeal, had only led him into opposition and open rebellion against God; and everything in which his heart had trusted, every prop suddenly broken, and its falseness and futility shown to his amazed heart, left him a mere sinner, naked in the presence of the glory of God. Thus ended all *means*, leaving Paul a child of WRATH, even as others.

But the consequence is, through grace, that Paul starts, not from what he is, but from what *God* is. His will is broken, too, before the divine presence,

and he commences his onward journey, as the Lord's servant. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He starts in his career, and so addresses the Christians at Rome, as a called apostle, separated* unto the gospel of God. It is not merely, remark, the gospel of Christ, but the gospel of God; and it is a wonderful expression. The gospel of God is the activity of God's love, going out into a world of men, as hopeless and bad as Paul had been. It is not dealing with man on the ground of what man may be, save as ruined and miserable, but on the ground of what *God is*. The gospel of God is God's own good news in giving His Son to carry this message of mercy and grace to lost man. It can well be called the gospel of Christ also, as it is He who brings the message of salvation to man,

* This last expression, however, refers more to the mission from Antioch. He was called by the Lord on the way to Damascus, but specially set apart for the work by the Holy Spirit, who said, "separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost," &c.

and who declares Himself to be the only way of access to God.

The Jews accused the Lord of breaking the sabbath. The sabbath was the sign of the covenant between God and His people, and to be kept on the seventh day. It was also the expression of God's rest in the creation, which He had pronounced very good. But that covenant is set aside; buried in the tomb of Christ, where He passed the sabbath which characterized it. But besides this, as we find in John v, 17, there was no sabbath, for sin had come in; and there is no rest for a holy God where sin is—none for a God of love, where the misery it brings in reigns. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." It was not that the people were to work; but God had come down where sin was, and God was working in grace; and His Son, too, was working in the accomplishment of that grace. Such is God's place, as revealed in this glorious answer of Christ to the malicious accusation: God might destroy in judgment; but grace in the Father and the Son works in redemption. Paul

comes in here as the servant, or slave, bound to the work, and bondsman to Christ; separated unto the gospel of God. That was his business. If he could further the gospel by making tents, of course he would continue to make them; but he was an *apostle called* to the gospel of God; and where God gives ministry it is as the vessels of God's activity in grace, for the calling of sinners and the building up and edification of His saints.

It is very important to distinguish between teaching to the Church and the testimony of mercy to the world. The Old Testament is full of mercy; but that is not the Church: nor is what He had promised afore by His prophets, in the holy scriptures, the Church. The Church was not the subject of promise, but the gospel of God was: "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." The Gentiles had not the promises; for the promises of God were made to the second Adam, and not to the first. The promise in Genesis that the ser-

pent's head should be bruised, was made to the seed of the woman, which Adam was not. So it is said, to Abraham were the promises made and to his seed, that is, the promises given to Abraham were confirmed to the one seed (Gen. xxii) offered and received from the dead in figure. The promises, then, are entirely connected with Christ, who is the *seed* in whom all these promises centre. The person of Christ is the great subject of the gospel, even before His work. This point is of all importance. God is now claiming subjection to His Son. There is not an infidel, nor a rebel, however great, that shall not bow the knee to Jesus. If in grace, it is salvation; but if the heart does not bow to the grace, the knee must bow under the judgment.

In this 3rd verse, "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh," the apostle is bringing out the double character of the Lord. In the first place, we have the person of the Lord as the subject of the gospel.

Then, secondly, He is presented as the seed of David according to the flesh. Then, thirdly, Paul brings out definitely the character of the Son, "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." There is the accomplishment of promise and the introduction of divine power in the deliverance of man from the state in which he was lying. Then we have the Son of God with divine power, though clothed in humiliation. Further, we have the Son in the midst of defilement, according to the spirit of holiness. This was shown all through the whole scene of evil through which he passed, untouched and unsoiled by sin, though in contact with it, and touching it all round. Separate Himself, He touches the leper. Was He defiled? *No.* In touching it He chases away the uncleanness without becoming unclean Himself. None but the Son of God could do this. But His was perfect grace coming down into defilement, banishing and dispelling it without

receiving defilement Himself. Such was Christ living in the world.

Further, the manifested power of Satan was this, that he had the *power of death*. This Satan had by the judgment of God Himself, for God had said, "in the day that thou eatest thereof *thou shalt surely die*;" and God could not go from His own word. Thus man was under the power of him "who had the power of death, that is the devil." Therefore, if the Son of God is to deliver man from under this power of Satan, He Himself must go down to his stronghold, this last citadel of Satan. He must Himself go down under the *power of death*; for God's judgment was there as well as Satan's power, "that through death he might deliver them who, through fear of *death*, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." He, the Son of God, feared it as the judgment of God, but "He was heard in that he feared." He broke all the bars by which Satan held us, and has set us free. Satan committed himself entirely by putting his

hand on the spotless person of the Prince of life, who bore our sin. By His rising from the dead the judgment of God, the sin which was its cause, the power of Satan in death, were all gone for him who had part in this work. The resurrection shows the divine power of the Son of God. When Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the *living* God," the Lord said, "upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" that is, neither the power of death, nor Satan who possesses it, (for that is the meaning of the gates of hell or *hades*,) shall prevail against the Church, which is founded on Him who has the power of the life of God in Him. Man had been tried by every means besides the law, which gave the measure of his responsibility. He only brought forth wild grapes. It was in result double death, while holding out the promise of blessing to obedience. But if the foundation of blessing be the Son of the *living* God, the gates of hell, the *power* of

death, shall not prevail against it. The power of the spirit of holiness, which characterized the life of Christ, is demonstrated by* resurrection from the dead. If we consider the resurrection, as it was displayed in Christ, and will be in the saints, it is the power of God coming into the place of death and breaking its bonds in those that are His, and taking them out from among the wicked dead. This resurrection in spirit is our present state, though we still wait for the redemption of the body. The very same power, we learn in Eph., which raised Christ from among the dead, has wrought in us and quickened us together with Christ. The Son of God goes down in grace for us to the very place we had got by sin, and by His own divine power breaks the bands of *death*, and takes us up from under

* The expression is abstract. The resurrection of all—of Lazarus, of Christ, of the saints, of the wicked, all show the power of the Son of God. Though, of course, as to His person, His own resurrection was the great proof.

its power, placing us, according to the efficacy of *His own work*, in the presence of God. Thus all that my sin could do has been met by divine power and put away; rendering void of power him that had the power of death, that is the devil. How marvellous the grace! The consequence is not merely that there *ought* to be holiness in us, but that there must be holiness. How did Christ get out of death? By His own divine power. Well, it is the same divine energy raising me from the dead that will be the power of a new life in me. All that he has done is mine as righteousness before God; but I enter into it by virtue of a new life, which is a holy one. It is not merely a *duty* to be *holy*; but there is holiness in us, because we are partakers of justification by means of a life which is essentially holy. Let us ever remember this wonderful truth, that the Son of God has come down in divine power into the place of sinners, and broken all those bands by which Satan held us, and set us free. This is the gospel.

of God, God in the activity of His own love in the person of Christ, coming down here and walking in holiness where sin was, going down under the *power of death*, that He might deliver us from him who had the power of death; for I am raised now spiritually and morally by the very same divine power that will take up my body.

“By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations.” All are called now to bow to the revelation of Christ, who was dead and is alive again for evermore. The expressions “called to be saints,” is incorrect; it should be, saints called, that is, saints by the calling of God: the same principle here as the *apostle called*. We are saints called, thus showing the grace of God. It is not to us by birth or descent, as to the Jews; but it is all of grace: so Abraham was called, and chosen, and faithful. If we are called, it is not of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of *God*. And

we are bound to give thanks, in that "God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling." What a very different thing it is in our souls, (for what a very different thought we have of God) when we believe the activity of his love! It is not only that *God is love*; but that God is ACTIVE IN HIS LOVE. "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Alas! we pass over these gracious words very lightly; and what is there that we do not pass over lightly! The apostle felt what he said in the power of the Spirit. Favour and peace from the Father and the Son. *Mercy* is only added when the Epistles are addressed to individual saints. But when the saints are looked at as a whole, they are seen as the objects to whom all "mercy" has been already extended, being seen by the eye of God as under the influence and energy of the love and grace that had saved them. Still, as individual saints, they need *mercy* every day. The apostle looked at them as under the eye of

a Saviour God, and he wished them to have the full manifestation of what was in the God that had saved them—all the effect of there being not a cloud between them and God. God is never called a God of joy, though He gives joy; but constantly He is called the God of peace. The apostle desires their peace from God should be undisturbed—that they should have perfect peace in Him in the midst of this wilderness. He desired for them all the effect in their own souls of the consciousness of their position—the full exercise of what God was to them in this relationship. If a child feels towards his father as towards a master, he does not know his position. If we have not unlimited confidence in God as our Father we have not found our place. All these relationships are known, not by the intelligence placing us in them; but in the exercise of affections flowing from the consciousness of being in them. A child addresses his father as such—why? a servant his master as such, and why?

They live in these relationships. The saints, in the love of the family, will address God as their Father. In the government of the Church it is the Lord Jesus we shall address. This distinction will be always marked when praying in the Spirit, not by an effort of attention; but by being in the spirit of the relationship. In all our petitions, as children, even in our failures, confessions, and need, we go as individuals to God as our Father; but in everything relating to the Church—conduct and order—we go to the Lord Jesus, as Head of the Church. The consciousness of our relationship is of great importance in our daily walk; for the character of our walk, and the state of our souls depends upon it. If our souls have not unlimited confidence in God to go to Him with our very follies, we do not know "*the Father.*"

If Christ said, It is my meat to do His will, Paul could say, "whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son." It is no service at all, if it

be merely outward: unless we can say, "Of thine own have we given thee," it is no service at all: true service must flow from communion with the source of service. It is *no* service if we are not drinking in Christ, and conscious that we are doing His will. If I could take up any service without being confident God would have me do it, there would be no power in it. Service, then, if real, must flow from direct communion with God. We may go on in a course of action, as a consequence of communion, for a good while. Thus, for instance, contrast the Thessalonians with the state of the Church at Ephesus in Revelation. In the Thessalonians Paul knew "their work of *faith*, *labour* of *love*, and patience of *hope*." Here we see the three cardinal points, faith, hope, charity, springs of the activity displayed by the saints, so that their service had all the freshness of the source from which the service flowed. Not so in the address of the Lord to Ephesus in the Revelation. There was work, labour, patience; but there

was not the present spiritual power of that which comes direct from God. Therefore we find the candlestick removed. They had left their first love. How often does our service flow rather from something we may have to do, than from direct communion with God. It then becomes the mere activity of the flesh, or of habit, or, at best, a mere duty; instead of serving with "my spirit."

What a comfort that all my life through I may be serving the Lord with my spirit. This would be a wilderness, a labyrinth; but God is guiding us through it. When Israel was in the wilderness, was there any path for them? None. "They wandered in the wilderness where there was no way." So we read that Moses said to Jethro his father-in-law, "Leave us not, I pray thee, forasmuch as *thou* knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness; and thou mayest be to us *instead of eyes.*" *No*; God says, *I will be as eyes* to you; for as Israel departed from the mount a three days'

journey, the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them three days' journey, to *search out a resting-place for them*. Now the ordered place of the ark was in the midst of Israel; for they were to keep the charge of the Lord, and they were to journey as they encamped. But when Israel journeyed it went before them *as eyes* to them. Again to Israel: "though I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to *them a little sanctuary* in the countries where they shall come." And is God less than this to us? *No*; He is leading us through this world's wilderness, where there is no path, no way but Jesus; for He is our only track in this wilderness of sin and sorrow. But what an unspeakable comfort to have such a *track*; for if we are perfectly dependent we shall discern the perfect path that has in it the stamp of the Lord's own footsteps. But to this end *flesh* must be practically mortified; and the WILL subdued.

"Without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." See

the apostle's wonderful energy with God. And this is one mark of spiritual power—the capacity of keeping up, in his own soul, an interest for all saints everywhere. In practice he intercedes for all saints in every place. This leaves him in entire dependence on the will of God; for no real spiritual power takes us out of the place of waiting on God. So it was with Eliezer. He said, “Lord, let the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, . . . be the same thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac.” And when the woman had given him drink, and his camels also, he does not say, Oh! here is the answer to my prayer; but he is still waiting on God, and, “wondering at her, held his peace; to wit, whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not.” And when the camels had done drinking, he said, whose daughter art thou?” And when he found that she answered the description; that is, according to the will of God by the word of Abraham, “he bowed his head and worshipped

the Lord." Success often takes us out of the place of communion; because it is *our* success when we do not acknowledge God in it.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation." It is God's coming in in power. That is the true character of the gospel. It is complete in its object, and in the means it employs to effect it. And it is God who works in it to produce this effect; it is not a mixture of man and God; but God acting for, and in quickening power in, man, justifying the believer by the work which He has wrought, and creating us again in Christ Jesus. "The wrath of God is *revealed* from heaven." It is not yet manifested, though it was seen, to a certain extent, in the Deluge. On the cross it was complete in the moral sufferings of Christ, though not yet executed against the sinner. But the nature and character of God is brought out. Hence, necessarily, all that is contrary to His nature and character is necessarily judged. Wrath is revealed against all that is opposite to

His nature. It is not merely certain acts condemned, according to the measure of a revelation, in which God remains as yet veiled in His own nature. He is revealed; and hence what is contrary to Him is judged. But then in the gospel He is revealed to meet what *man is*. God now looks at what man is, in the presence of what God is. But it is the very perfectness of the activity of grace that has brought out what man is. Is it claiming righteousness? *No*; for now man's righteousness is entirely laid aside. It is God's righteousness made known; not something which is to grow up to righteousness, but that which is perfect now. It is *revealed* from *faith* to *faith*,—that is, faith is the principle on which it is revealed; and henceforth, wherever it is found, has part in it. God's righteousness being a perfect and existing thing, complete in itself, is revealed on the principle of faith. The man that has faith gets it. If it were given on the principle of righteousness, the righteous man would have it.

I would desire that our hearts might rest on this wonderful truth:—the activity of God's love coming down into a world ruined by sin, and under wrath, when every remedy had been tried, and nothing would do. But God Himself has come in, and done it, and *there we rest*. The more pains God has taken to set men right, the more only was it proved that the more you dig and dung a *bad tree*, the more bad fruit it will produce. But God, from the beginning, has had His own way of salvation; and He who undertook the work comes down into the stronghold of Satan's power and God's wrath; and by rising from the dead, has openly declared that Satan's power is destroyed, through death, and God Himself is satisfied in this righteous claim.

And now there is a perfect revelation of God's righteousness,—not of man's working, or man's righteousness,—but of God's working and God's righteousness, to be trusted in and believed, that it may be by *grace*. It is *God's* righteousness, and given to *us* at the

same time, according to the spirit of holiness. He Himself is the rest of our souls and conscience, as He is the guide all the way; His divine favour and unchanging love and goodness accompanying and abiding with us all the journey through.

The Lord only give us the simplicity of faith, that we may see this activity of love, that we may apprehend His ways in grace, and thus know Him,—know His grace in working, that we may know Himself.

1 PETER, IV, 7.

“But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” Pray always, and faint not because of the difficulties by the way; for it has been said, “that all *in* the way is a mere circumstance; but God is above it all, and *faith* knows Him to be a very present help.” “Be sober,” and cast off the “works of darkness,” for we are “children of the light,” and “in his light we shall see light.” “Be sober, and watch unto prayer;” for the master is coming, and looks for faithfulness in service. “Be sober,” for “the night is *far* spent, and the day is at *hand*.” Remember the words of Jesus, “Behold, I come quickly.” May our hearts reply: “Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

ROMANS III, 17; IV, V.

I have just taken the close of this chapter, as being the summing up and application of the apostle's argument, which he had drawn from the sin of Jew and Gentile. Then, in chapter iv, he passes on to another principle, as brought out in the testimony of Abraham and David. After the opening introduction, at the beginning of the Epistle, in which the apostle presents the mission with which he had been charged, and consequently, as we have seen, grace and righteousness revealed to man in the gospel, he turns to unfold man's need, and the way in which it had been met, as that alone on which the soul could rest. He opens out the horrible evil of the Gentile, and of man generally, throughout the world; and he then shows that, without any *inspired* testimony, the two great testimonies that ought to have acted on their consciences, were, first, *the knowledge of God possessed by their fore-fathers*, but which they had not

retained; and second, the *creation*. The invisible things of God being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and godhead, so that they are without excuse. "Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man," &c. "Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts." For if a man has left God he cannot suffice to himself;—that is the prerogative of God—he always turns to the lusts of his own heart, and to objects below even himself. Hence if they had not discerned what became God, they should not be able to discern what became man. It is God's way, when the light He gives is rejected, to give those up to blindness who have rejected it; and this giving up by God is an act of judgment on God's part. As these Gentiles, not liking to retain God in their

knowledge, *God* gave them over to a reprobate mind. It was so with the Jews in rejecting the testimony God had given them; God says, by the mouth of the prophet, "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." (Isa. vi, 10.) So will it be with professing Christendom. In 2 Thess. ii, 11, it is said, "God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie." Thus we see, whether Jew or Gentile, or Christendom, the effect of man being given up by God. We see what man becomes when left to himself. It was not all, as regards the Gentile, that natural light was given in the beginning in the testimony of creation, but men did not like to retain God in their knowledge, when that knowledge was there. Every man has a *conscience*, distinct from grace; but conscience cannot bring us to God. Conscience is the sense of responsibility, united to

the knowledge of good and evil; and if the conscience becomes awakened, and there is not the power of life drawing to God, it only drives us away from God, like Adam in the garden, hiding himself from God. The Gentiles did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and God gave them up to a *reprobate* mind: properly, they did not discern (in the way of moral approval) to retain God in their knowledge, and God gave them up to an undiscerning mind, i.e., a mind incapable of distinguishing what was good, with approbation of it. So the Jews, having rejected God's testimony, sentence is passed upon them by Isaiah, seven hundred years before it was accomplished. "Make the heart of *this people fat*," &c. Also, as Stephen says, "Ye do *always* resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did (before Christ) *so do ye*," (now that He has been revealed.) Both are guilty of the same sin. As regards the public state of that people, they were adjudged to blindness; and so it will be at the close of the present

state of things. Those very things by which, according to Peter's testimony, Christ was testified to have come from God, will be the very things, according to 2 Thess. ii, that will lead the Jews (as it will doubtless others) to receive the false Christ in the latter days. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by *miracles*, and *wonders*, and *signs*, which God did by HIM in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." (Acts ii, 22.) Compare this with 2 Thess. ii, 8, 9: "Then shall that wicked be revealed, even him whose coming is after the working of *Satan*, with *all power*, and *signs*, and *lying wonders*." In Greek the words are the same, 'power' in the one being the same as 'miracles' in the other. Thus as the Jews rejected what *God* did in their midst, by Jesus of Nazareth, so they will be allowed to receive what *Satan will do* by that wicked one; and all this, as the apostle goes on to say, "because they received not the love of the truth,

that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

From the 17th verse of chapter ii, the apostle speaks of the Jews; and finally, from the 3rd verse of Ps. xiv, and other passages of the Old Testament, in the 10th to the 18th verses of Romans iii, concludes all are under sin; the Jew under law, as well as the Gentile without law, are alike guilty. For if the Gentile be given over to a reprobate mind, the Jew is proved by his own scriptures to be just as bad. Thus "there is none righteous, *no not one*;" there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh. *The will* is gone wrong. They are blind in mind, perverse in will, and guilty *before* God. Not only was the nature sinful, but they had slighted the testimony, and rejected the light God had revealed to them. Such was the state of the Jew, for the law spoke to him. Natural conscience sufficed to condemn the Gentile; but the God of judgment was there to discern the

truth of the state of those who boasted of the law; and now it is proved that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be saved; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Thus we see those under the law are brought under condemnation. It is no use for the Jew to attempt to get his part before God, in virtue of the privileges and condition in which God had placed him; for the law, of which he boasted, condemns him. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." The viith of Romans springs out of this. The Gentiles had no right really to put themselves under the law; but we all do, somehow or other, put ourselves under the law; and see where it brings us to: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek after God." And were there any? *None.* "*They are all gone out of the way;*" and the Jew, if he listened to the law, learned that on his own ground he was utterly guilty; though the apostle does not bring against them their hardness of

heart in rejecting Christ. But both Jew and Gentile are alike thoroughly guilty.

But now it is the righteousness of God without law: and here the apostle carries on this great principle to its full extent. He states it in a direct and absolute manner: righteousness is altogether on a different principle—it is the righteousness of God; and it is a righteousness without law at all. It is God's righteousness, and who can give a law to Him? And being God's righteousness, it is altogether on a different principle to law; for law requires from man; but here the righteousness is God's. God's law, consequently, only condemns, for it requires righteousness, and it cannot give life. Put a man under obligation, as a means of righteousness, and it is all over with him, because man is a sinner. He is blinded in mind and perverse in will. Man has a will, (that is not obedience,) law brings it out, and man's will never submits; for it would *cease* to be *will* if it did. God never meant righteous-

ness to be by the law. It would have been cruelly mocking man, being a sinner, to have proposed it^a to him with this object. "The law was given that the offence might abound." Not, mark, that *sin* might abound; for sin was there and abounded before the law was given; but it is not *offence* until there is a law. Thus it is that the law worketh *wrath*; for where no law is there is no transgression; but sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful. Thus every mouth is stopped, and all the *world* is brought in guilty before God; and now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. Remark that it not merely exists, but that it is manifested; it existed ever in the purpose of God, and hence promises were given, to which faith clung by grace; but it was not *manifested* till the gospel was brought out; therefore the apostle says, "to declare at *this time* his righteousness."

No sinner ever stood, or could stand, in God's presence, from Adam downwards, but in God's righteousness.

But it had not been manifested *until now*. "But *now* the righteousness of God without [the] law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." Thus the law and the prophets only showed what God was going to bring in. But the Church of God is founded on God's righteousness, and is in the light as He is in the light; therefore it is manifested at "*this time*." God's righteousness is brought in without law, but witnessed by the law and the prophets; it was witnessed to before it was manifested. We do not get into the Church position till we get into the ivth chapter. In the iird chapter we get all brought in guilty before God; and then how we are to get into the presence of God. Can man, that is a sinner, approach God in himself? No. But Christ has been made a sacrifice for us; He has answered for all we have done in the old man; and as the new man, He is in the presence of God for us, and we are there in Him, in all the favour and acceptance in which Christ Him-

self is: always there as *He is*. Thus it is man gets, or rather becomes, the righteousness of God. The claims of God against the old man have all been met in the new man, Christ Jesus; and we are made the righteousness of God *in Him*. In the end of chap. iii, we have the answer to God's perfect demands;—the sin, whether of Jew or Gentile, put away by the *blood-shedding* of Jesus Christ, and God's righteousness brought in; for Christ has perfectly glorified God in respect of good and evil. In chap. iv, we have another thing, resurrection, at least in principle: "Abraham believed God." And not only did he believe in the resurrection, in spite of the principle of death which was in him; but he did so, as believing the God who could raise from the dead. So we, as the apostle states it, do not merely believe in Jesus, who rose from the dead, but in the God who raised Him. Thus we, having entirely done with law, by which sin is imputed, get the second of the two great principles on which the gospel is

founded. The first is blood-shedding, the second, resurrection; and the Jew, who might be put to silence on the ground of law, might appeal to Abraham; but here the doctrine of faith, and righteousness by faith, comes clearly out; for in referring to Abraham, who had nothing to do with law, he says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." It is not said that he believed *in* God, but he *believed God*, and that is how he got his righteousness. So also David; he believed God. Thus we see that Abraham and David alike found righteousness by grace, through faith; and the faith of Abraham, in this respect, is our faith; only we believe not that God can, but that He has raised Jesus. Thus it is that Abraham is called the father of the faithful,—first publicly called out from the world to righteousness and relationship with God by faith. Having touched this point of the resurrection, before going farther I would show its use in the following chapters. Christ

having taken, in resurrection, the place of the accepted man, after having been delivered for our offences—justified by faith, we are at peace with God, stand in His favour, and repose in the hope of the glory. For there Christ is before God. This brings out the great doctrine of our standing in the first and second Adam; constituted sinners by the disobedience of one; righteous by the obedience of the other.

Having thus, in the vth chapter, taken up the *two men*, the old man, the first Adam, and the new man in Christ, the second Adam,—in the vith chapter he goes on to show that some will say, ‘Oh! if Christ’s obedience alone has made me righteous, and grace reigns, it is no matter what I do. If it is righteousness *without* works, then we may walk as we like.’ *No*; it is not so; for we cannot have part in this righteousness but in Christ. Now Christ has died to sin, and lives to God. Hence in Christ I have not only righteousness, but have it as in Him, dead to sin, and alive to God. I can-

not be righteous but in this condition; for such is the Christ that I have it in. If I have a part in justification, I have necessarily a part in life, and that a *holy life*; not that the life is the same thing as the justification, or the cause of it, but the two are always united. I am risen again in Him to be in this new position of justification. Now a new and holy life brings with it *hatred of sin*. The same principle of resurrection is applied, in chap. vii, to the law. If I am dead and risen again, the law, which is binding on a man as long as he lives, has lost all claim upon me; I am dead to the law by the body of Christ; I am delivered from that which has power over me, that I might serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. We have the application of the risen life to man as placed in justification before God, as in a risen Christ, in chap. v; as dead to sin, and alive to God, as risen again in the power of a holy life, in chap. vi; as dead to law, in chap. vii; for the law has killed us, therefore it can do

no more ; its greatest work was to kill Christ ; but He rose again, and we in Him, beyond the power of the law. Chap. viii then brings out the Christian in perfect liberty, in virtue of our being risen in Christ, justified in Christ, our affections showing our life in Him ; “ he that is joined to the Lord is *one* spirit ; ” and “ where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. ” Being thus fully and freely justified and accepted in Christ Jesus, we are only waiting for the redemption of our bodies. It is now no *man's* righteousness, it is God's righteousness for all ; and no man can come in in any other way, if it is God's righteousness. He cannot accept a Jew in preference to a Gentile ; it is “ to all ; ” it is as free to sinners of the Gentiles as to the Jew. As regards the standing and peace of the soul it is deeply important to see that what we are ever struggling for is to get something in which we can come before God, while it is God who *comes* and presents to us Christ as our only righteousness. “ It is unto all ; ” *but it is upon those*

that believe. Mark here another thing that is connected with peace of soul. Some may say, 'I do not deny His divine righteousness; I believe it; but how am I to know that I have a share in it? Is it applied to me? I want it applied to my soul.' Well, God does work by His grace to make you believe, (and He alone can,) but what do you mean? If, by divine teaching, you believe you are verily guilty, and look to Christ's work as your only hope, then God has applied it to you. If in the consciousness of your sinfulness you have believed the record God has given of His Son, then you have had it applied to you, *for it is upon all them that believe.* You are righteous. It is bad if, when awakened of God, we go on tampering with sin, or with the world; God must work this out of us; and thus it is often long before the simplicity of faith is there; but the thing that is believed is *what* His Son is, and has done. If there is tampering with sin or the world in our souls, it prevents our laying hold of the truth;

neither can we have, consequently, the joy of the Holy Ghost in our hearts; for God must be *real* in His ways with us. The Holy Ghost cannot tamper with sin, and if He works in us, He will make us recognize and judge and resist sin. But it is not by seeking fruits we shall find peace; for till the Holy Ghost is there in power, there can be no fruit; and for this we must submit to the righteousness of God. He it is that takes of the things of Christ, for the joy of our souls. But if God has fixed the faith of your hearts on Christ, God *has* applied this divine righteousness to you. But if there be any sin or worldliness lurking in the secrecy of your soul, God being real and faithful to you, He must work it out in judgment in your soul, to bring you to lean on Christ as your righteousness because of it; and of course while that process is going on in the soul there cannot be joy.

But we are returned to our main subject. "The righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ *unto*

all and upon *all* that *believe*, for there is no difference ; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Being *justified* freely by his grace, through the *redemption* that is in Christ Jesus.” Here we have the absolute freeness of divine grace, the sovereignty of God’s own goodness, in His being glorified in respect of our sins, by virtue of the efficacy of the work of Christ, which has met and put them all away, having discharged everything that was against us. That is the efficacy of His death ; and being in Christ, I rest upon the acceptableness of His person. Many a Christian would be glad to rest there ; and why don’t they ? Because they have not really learned the value of the cross ; for if they had they would not be trembling, as if their sins were not put away. You say ‘you have no other confidence than the cross ;’—as to the conviction of your heart, that may be true ; and ‘that you feel your need of it ;’—that I suppose, or you would not look to it. But you have not yet learned the value of the cross ; and the

secret of it is that you have still a little bit of your own goodness lurking within. You do not think yourself as thoroughly bad as God says you are. You have to learn that it is the *ungodly* that God justifies. You do not think yourself ungodly, and nothing else, and *to be nothing else*, in order to be justified; and therefore you have not yet realized God's justification.

Here, "being freely justified by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," is not mere justification, but actual *deliverance*, entire redemption. In the case of Israel it was a question between God and Pharaoh, "Let my people go." It is a real positive redemption, not merely a forgiveness. Christ has bought us, free from all Satan can have against us. If I buy a slave, he is mine, and no one can have any right over him; and that is true of us. Even with regard to our poor bodies, though not yet redeemed by power from sorrow and suffering, they are free from Satan's power to serve God with. The body is for the

Lord, and the Lord for the body. God will have us entirely for Himself, by the work of Christ; for not even the smallest *particle* of our *dust* shall remain in Satan's kingdom; and this is why redemption is mentioned last in 1 Cor. i, 30; it refers to full, final deliverance, and includes the redemption of the body. Such was the typical order of the deliverance of Israel in Egypt; it was one thing for them to be screened from the destroying angel, by the blood on the door-posts, when in Egypt, and another, and very different thing, for them to be brought clean out of Egypt by the passage of the Red Sea, thus being entirely delivered from the *power* of Pharaoh. But more than this; Jesus has broken and destroyed all the power of death, by which Satan held us, taking them captive whose captives we were; and is now making us, who were Satan's captives, the vessels of God's power and testimony against Satan.

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood,

to *declare* His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the *forbearance* of God." Here we have the connexion of the blood of Christ with God's righteousness. It has been *declared*. It rested only in promise till Christ came in the flesh. It was not manifested until then; so that, take Adam, Abel, or Job, they rested on the promise of righteousness, because the blood was yet to be shed. But now it is declared as having been fulfilled, and it is an amazing difference between resting on a promise, though that is blessed, and on a fulfilment. A man in prison, with a promise that his debt shall be paid, though relieved by the promise, is not in the condition of him who is walking at liberty, with the knowledge that it has been paid. It is not forbearance now, but accomplished salvation. It is God's own righteousness declared: can He *forbear* with *that*? The time of forbearance was in the time of the Old Testament saints. Then God was forbearing because of what He was going

to do ; but that is not our condition. We have God's righteousness at "*this time*," this *present* time. He is not speaking here of that which is past of our natural life, but of the time passed before Christ's death. This is part of that "better thing God has provided *for us*." For if I sin, I do not want a prophet, as Nathan, to come and tell me my sin is put away. I can say I *know* the blood has been shed, therefore I know, as a *present* thing, that my *sin* is *put away*. It is a settled question. It is such a righteousness that He who accomplished it is set down at God's right hand, and our life is in Him there. Abraham could not say, 'I am one with the man at God's right hand,' for Christ was not there *as man* then. But the believer in Christ can say so ; for as surely as the first Adam was turned out of paradise, so surely has the second Adam entered heaven, and I am as sure of my place in Christ as of my place in Adam. Well, then, it is such a righteousness as God recognized, and, as regards the blood, such a work

as has fully satisfied God. He is *just* to forgive. It is His own righteousness which is upon the believer, and he must own it; and here is the resting-place of faith. This is justice; but the opening of my heart is at the out-flowing of love. For the opening of the heart is under the sunshine of grace. To see ourselves perfectly cleansed makes us hate sin. A man who is thoroughly clean will not like to get a spot on his garment; while he who is already somewhat dirty will not care about getting a little more dirty. When the blood was put on the lintels of the door posts, it was to keep the God of judgment out, and He passed over; for had He come in, He must have judged them, for they *deserved* judgment as much as the Egyptians; nay, more, for they *knew better*. Therefore it was grace keeping God out. But at the Red Sea they were to stand still and see the salvation of God. It was God over-riding every barrier and coming in and taking them out of the place of judgment altogether,

and bringing them to *Himself*. While the one was keeping *God out*, the other was bringing them *to God*, on His own ground and by His own arm. As an ungodly man I am justified by His *blood*; but as a Christian I am accepted in Him. Has the cross then left me outside? *No*, it has saved me from judgment, therefore I value it. I see a sinner trembling at the foot of the cross, feeling his need of the cross, or he would not be there; but not seeing the *value* of it, so he gets no further. He thinks he values it, but if he valued it aright he would not be trembling any longer at the foot of it.

Where is boasting then? It is all gone, as it is God's righteousness by the law of faith without any legal deeds whatever. Recollect we are not under law as innocent; for man is a sinner, and the law cannot allow of even a lust. Then where is the use of giving a law to man that is a sinner. What is the use of my giving a righteous law to a man who sells fraudulent goods? What is the use of my giving a true measure to

him, but to teach him where he is wrong? So God never gave the law to make men righteous, but only to convict them and show them their sin. Men may abuse the grace to continue in sin, but that does not alter the nature of God's righteousness. If a law is given to man, already a sinner, it must be to make him know himself a sinner.

Is He the God of the Jews? Yes, and of the Gentiles also; for He will justify the *circumcision* by *faith*, and the *uncircumcision* through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? No, we establish it. Not only Moses' law, but the principle of law. If a thief is hanged on a tree, is that making void the law? No, so far from making it void, it establishes it. So when Christ died, He established the law; and faith comes in and says, So far from making void the law when Christ died on the cross for my sin, He established the law: but that does not put me under it. If under it, I am lost, not merely as a sinner, but also by the law itself. Nothing establishes the

law like the death of Christ. The first chapters give us the Gentile, *lawless*, and the *Jew, under law*, condemned out of the law. Christ was born under law. He kept the law and died under its curse; and is He under it now? No, He is dead to the law and risen again. I am the dead sinner; He died for me; He has borne the curse, and it is all gone, and it has lost all power to touch me, for I am one with Christ. I stand *in Him* in the presence and favour of God, as dead and risen again in Christ. He gave all His sanction to the law and suffered it—glorified it, but delivered us from it.

In chap. iv the apostle refers to Abraham and David, as believing God; for if the law did not bring in righteousness, this does not dispose of Abraham, who was before. His testimony, therefore, is brought in. He goes on, therefore, to show the ground on which Abraham gets the promises, and in what state he was when he got them. He was accounted righteous through faith, and it was in His uncircumcised

state that he obtained the promises. As righteousness was reckoned to Abraham in uncircumcision and on the principle of faith the Jew's mouth was stopped and the promise available to the Gentiles. Then in David we have the same thing. "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." The law worketh wrath; and therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace, so that the promise should be sure to all the seed of Abraham; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all before Him whom he believed, even God who *quickens* the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they were;—thus introducing us as raised men in Christ into the presence of God. Beloved, in a day like this, what a thought it is to be set in God's righteousness. Christ has set aside all man's reasonings by the manifestation of God's righteousness, as the rising sun not only dispels the darkness, but

causes even the stars to vanish by reason of its brightness. When Christ is first revealed to the soul, it is always humbling, because it displays to the soul what it really is. I do not say that the affections may not be moved towards Christ without this; but there must be, sooner or later, such a revelation of what Christ is, as to show us what *we are* in the presence of Christ; and it is *that* which breaks down all inside the soul—foolish and vain desires, self-will, sinful thoughts and feelings, and everything that is the opposite of Christ; thus showing us, not only our need of Him and our committed sins, but that we are sin. Then afterwards we understand how we are brought into the unclouded favour of God, according to the love which sought us and gave His Son for us.

WORSHIP.

Worship is the rising up to God again from the believer, or from the

Church, of His own thoughts about His beloved Son, and about what He has done.

Confession is not worship. We have constantly to confess *before* worship, because we cannot worship while there is a spot on the conscience, but if we stop there, we know not worship.

It is when I have passed through the blood of atonement, and (if needed) have used the sin and trespass offering, that I have *fellowship* with God, which is being led, through the power of the Holy Ghost, into God's estimate of the beauty and the humiliation of Christ. It is when resting, in the Spirit, between the Father and the Son [that I have this fellowship]; not telling about my sins—for God's mind is not filled with my sins, nor is the Holy Ghost taken up with thoughts about my sins—but with that in Jesus which put my sins away.

Worship is being nothing, and having God's thoughts about Jesus rolling through my soul.

When Jesus, Jesus, is everything, I

am acting in the power of that life which is by and by more fully to be manifested. If we act upon this life, we shall then, from Jesus risen, have the flow of glory in our souls; for we are in Him now, and have the mind of God about His Son. God is not occupied with what *I am*, but with *what Christ is*.

God wants us, as His children, to know, not only that we are within the Father's house, but within the Father's bosom also. He wants to have our minds filled with a volume of thoughts about His Christ, and when a saint is full of this, and it ascends up to God, that is worship. And there is transforming power in Christ to change us into His likeness while we are in communion with Him and with the Father about Him.

Worship is the being *lost in wonder* at what we find in God and in Christ.

When the Spirit has led us to know the blood on the Mercy-seat, He does not send us back to feed with the swine,

but spends His time in taking of the things of Jesus and showing them to us, and thus supplies food for worship.

In the burnt, meat, and peace offerings, we have Christ presented to us in type as the subject for worship. In the burnt offering, His perfect self-renunciation and devotedness to God, even to the death. In the meat-offering, His life in action. In the peace-offering, as the link between God and the Church, that on which God and the Church together feed in happy communion. When this worship is interrupted by sin or defilement, we find, in the type of the sin and trespass offering, that God has already made provision before-hand in Christ, to restore the soul, as soon as confession is made, to the power of worshipping.

PEACE OF CONSCIENCE AND PEACE OF HEART.

Peace of conscience and peace of heart are two distinct things. A per-

son may have peace of conscience, knowing that he is a forgiven sinner, and yet not have peace of heart. He may say to himself, I know that my sins are forgiven, but I am not happy. And why? Because in heart he has been wandering from Christ,—one thing or another occupying his heart rather than Christ. And whenever a person goes vagabonding from Christ, he is sure to lose peace of heart: and the secret way to know this is that his thoughts are all turning round himself and not Christ.

HOW TO BE SIMPLE.

If a person does not say more than he has to say he can be simple. But when we want to please people a quantity of things come up in order to do so.

I am speaking right when I say something God bids me. But when giving out my own thoughts I have a thousand things to enquire, How far they go, &c.

FAITH AND WORKS.

James ii.

It is a simple and general, but safe, answer, to any question arising on this chapter, i.e., as to that part of it relating to this subject, that God could not accept hypocritical faith. We are told by the truth that God cannot be mocked, and the conscience receives a safe direction on the matter by such an answer. But if the enquiry be pressed farther, it comes to a question of truth, of confession, and of glory; and the place requires a farther elucidation.

The God of glory is presented to us from the first. The God (not the Father) of our Lord Jesus Christ. To us, indeed, He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; but God as the God of glory is the pivot of the truth revealed.

The God of glory appeared to Abraham, and called him, in the power of glory, (*κρatos δοξης*) from home and kindred and father's house to a place

that God did not, but *would*, show him. The sight of the God of glory was the secret spring of Abraham's path; for when he had come into the land which God had in mind for him, when He called him, which he was not then to possess, he refused to take possession of so much as a foot of that which he was to receive, in his posterity, at the hand of God, in God's own time. Abraham, individually, waited for and gets a city whose builder and maker is God. This was the faith of Abraham. The word of God is his perfect reliance, his dependence is on God; and he looks for all subsidiary things at His hand, and is chastised when he fails. He is invited to walk before God and to be perfect, in the hope the God of glory showed him. To do the reverse, that is, to distrust God, was Adam's sin, and to *trust Him* is faith. In this view all the difficulty of this chapter is dissolved.

We must now recur a little to the habitual—we trust habitual—thoughts of the believer, of the well-instructed

believer at least, full of the joy of privilege and of his nearness to God, by the faith of the Son of God. Such a one knows and has believed the wonders of the grace of God in Christ, the sonship he has received in Christ, his union with Him, his place in the heavenlies, the hope of his calling, the love of the Father, and his worship of Him in praise and thanksgiving. If son then also heir, saith the scripture. Of what is he heir? That of which Abraham is heir—that of which Christ is heir—heir of the world, as joint heir with Christ,—but this linked, in pure grace, now to the child of *God* in grace. The sinner, the rebel in heart, corrupt, under judgment to return to the dust and not to die there, is sought and found of God in grace: his confession, as convinced by God of sin and of incompetency to good, leading in the path of God's mercies. To him then, so found, that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted unto righteousness;

and now, not only to forgiveness and the non-imputation of sin, but unto imputation of life also by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Now faith was the special characteristic of Abraham, which makes him the father of all that believe; and therefore it is said, if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed; for they have believed unto righteousness, and so heirs. Now here follows this great principle, that that characteristic must be carried into every relation to God.

The apostle Paul is at great pains, so to speak, in the ivth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, to prove that it was by faith and not by law that we became heirs; for Abraham believed, and his faith was counted unto righteousness when he was in uncircumcision, (of which we are,) and the promise that he should be heir of the world was not to Abraham and his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Now the effect of the appearance of the God of glory was to bring Abraham

out from the world in which he was, and to keep him out of the world into which he came in Canaan, while looking for the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, even the heavenly kingdom. This is different from the position of the Church, though linked to the Church. It is linked with the Church as its heirship, which is attached to it in Christ,—if sons then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, which shall be manifested in the dispensation of the fulness of times, but pregnant with present duty.

No one ever trusted God and was confounded. Christ was the head and leader in this trust, and found resurrection. Abraham found all, too, in God. Christ was the author (so translated, but, perhaps likely to give *misdirection to the mind*) and finisher of our faith, who endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. The obedience of Christ to all the thoughts of God about the world,—in His love to it,

and in the full knowledge of its enmity, and evil, and desperate condition; (He came because its condition was desperate;) His separation from it unto God in the midst of it; His obedience unto death—gave Jesus Christ His place, as Son of man, in glory. Abraham was also separate unto God. The God of glory was before both in their spheres. Christ came from the bosom of the Father. The appearance of the God of glory to Abraham made every word a sure ground and *substance* on which his soul rested and questioned not. Christ is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

Under such an aspect of truth no difficulty can occur as to the mind of James. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment *without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.* What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be

naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot

justified by works when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (James ii, 12—26.)

With moderate examination it will be seen that the work of love (mentioned at verse 14) is but an illustration which would simply stand thus—You will allow, without question, that if a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not the things that are needful to the body; where is your love? What reward have you? Have you loved Christ? Have you lent to the Lord? Surely not: you have mocked Him in such a feeble pretence to love. How shall you argue about faith otherwise than you would about love? Now Abraham's work of faith, in reliance on the word of the God of glory, was to leave his home, his kindred, and his father's house,—made

him yield up his son, though all the promises of a land of earthly inheritance and universal blessing depended on this his only son. The more, in fact, that depended on that son, the more it was (in reliance on God's word) the occasion of a more ready yielding of him up, and he accordingly received him back again in a figure. The wisdom of the Holy Ghost in selecting this as the example of the work of faith in Abraham is most precious, inasmuch as it shows the depth of Abraham's faith above all other examples. It is more than abnegation. It was, together with a renunciation of hopes, *the crucifixion of the affections*, so concentrated we are told here; and he receives him back the new and risen man, the indefeasible surety of the promises. He refused to accept a foot of land, though using a portion as a purchase to bury his dead. The effect, therefore, of the appearance of the God of glory, as we have seen, was to bring him out of the world, to keep him out, and to cause him to yield up

all to God. Rahab's work of faith was in preferring the people of God to her own nation, receiving the spies from their camp, and was saved by the type of the cross. Now these are marvellous types of the works of faith in heirs of the kingdom. Of the extent of the faith of Rahab we do not so distinctly read as in the case of Abraham, but it was enough to bring her into the genealogy of Christ as her reward. Of Abraham's we hear plainly in Genesis, and in the xith of Hebrews; and Abraham and others, as this chapter tells us, confessed themselves *strangers and pilgrims on the earth*. The works of faith, then, as heirs of the world, are characterized by the works of Abraham and Rahab. Where shall the saint understand them better than in the place where grace has placed him *above* in Christ. He finds there Mesopotamia and Canaan, all alike to him. He leaves one—he dwells a stranger with his own in the other. The world has so absolutely departed from God, and is not only

not subject to Christ, a condition to which sin had reduced it; but has driven Him out of it, and become guilty to final condemnation. He would have become the Saviour of the world, and He will, when, as heir to it, He takes possession with all His saints; and they shall be destroyed who destroy the earth. No thought that earth forms about Christ, no attempt to fit Him to it, does anything but falsify Him altogether and all the thoughts of God. This it is that makes it so difficult for those, to whom the grace of God in Christ has become known through the Spirit, to find their way in the midst of a false Christianity. But can the heir of the world, i.e., the saint, for he is joint-heir with Christ his Head, have any rule for himself but subjection to Christ as LORD, waiting for his inheritance. Show me your faith by your works. To me, therefore, the setting forth Christianity as blessing the world in its own course, and as being compatible with the claims of the

world, its organization, direction (at least) of its services, its application of judgment, its ambition, its contests, its alliances, and its policy, is a denial of Christ as LORD, into obedience to whom no Christianity as it is can reduce them: nay, these have a course to which Christianity must submit, or rule in giving way and becoming more corrupt than itself.

It is quite true (and blessed is the case of such a one) that the affections I have above may form a taste and a conscience too, which, if waited upon, would repudiate the world, and its ways, and its acknowledged pursuits; but the line of demarcation, which the faith of Abraham and Rahab gives me, has not yet helped me, though the yearnings of the Spirit of promise has; while God surely intended that the heavenly kingdom and its glory should have made the path plain, so that the way-faring man should not stumble therein. The work of faith of Abraham was leaving Mesopotamia, and remaining a

stranger in Canaan. The deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt, and the passover, and the redemption through the Red Sea into the wilderness, was a closer type to the Church. The wilderness was the place of instruction. They had been baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. Many saints die in the wilderness. Caleb and Joshua, alone of the stock that left Egypt at the age of intelligence, inherit in Canaan—God can bring in. “He that overcometh shall inherit all things.” (Rev. xxi, 7.) It is a sad thing for a saint to die in the wilderness. This may not grieve, as it should, an indolent saint, who likes not the pain of confession unto reproach, and to be thought worthy of that kingdom for which he would suffer. Let them, however, consider that joining themselves to the world they must be scathed in its judgments. The saint who knoweth these things, or only feels them, laments the madness of those who shelter themselves, or rather think to shelter themselves, in

the place to be judged. They are only safe if out of it. And when God finds His saints there, He, in grace, touches and reproveth—He breaks them to deliver them ere the day of visitation come. If they deny Christ as Lord, He cannot deny Himself. He, for His part, will deny them before the Father.

A failure of understanding in the truth of faith and works, as exhibited in this chapter, and in the truth on which it is built here, brought the same confusion as the mixing of the dispensations has in other cases.

The word "if," so often puzzling to the saint, generally applies to the judgment and reward of obedience in the heirship. We see the promise plainly conditional in Rom. iv, 12: TO THOSE WHO WALK IN THE STEPS OF THE FAITH OF OUR FATHER ABRAHAM. So absolutely is the walk connected with the heirship of the world and the glory of Christ.

The hope of the Church is the being taken away to be with the Lord.

The hope of the glory is the manifestation of the Son of God at His kingdom. There is a special application of "if," just in a contrary direction. "I tell you, *if* ye be circumcised, ye are debtors to do the whole law. Whosoever is justified by the law is fallen from grace." Here the condition is that you shall *not* work; if you work, you break the condition of grace. You can offer nothing. What is given in grace to the believer is beyond work. The Church does not purchase its place by works. The righteousness of God by faith, the possession of Christ as that righteousness, who was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, does this.

I am sure true-hearted souls will feel the value of the distinction made through this paper. In a concurrent publication, and with the same ends, in Vol. vii, page 284, (without, indeed, due clearness and development,) it was shown that the declension of the seven churches was from the confession of

the *kingdom* having failed in Christendom. The cognizance of heavenly things alone lets a Christian pass through the world on easy terms, and a slight sneer or charge of peculiarity is all that will be suffered. It is true of him that is born of the Spirit, (as of the Spirit,) that the world knoweth not whence he cometh and whither he goeth; but he is so far comparatively little heeded; but the steps of the faith of our father Abraham bring about another aspect of treatment. Christ the leader and fulfiller of confession, though full of all unfailing grace and virtue, is sure to meet the contradiction of sinners, and we are all of one, and therefore He is not ashamed to call us brethren. If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together.

There is another difficulty which the distinction solves, which is the question of judgment. The Church, as the body of Christ, the persons being His members, is past the judgment: there can, therefore, be no condemnation. Her judgment was in Christ—she shall

not come into it; but all that is not of Christ, and all that is done in the kingdom, does come into judgment; and our path on earth is there, and His reward is with Him when He comes. But how needful it is to be occupied with the blessings of the Church where faith of the gift and grace of God brings experience of God. From the place of the Church even His presence in the heavenlies is strength brought for confession, and the joy of the Lord is her strength. It is here wisdom and guidance is sought and found. In the midst is worship and the praise of God the Father and of the Son, for the place of her worship is there too. Here, therefore, the sight of the God of glory is granted, by whom in us the WORK OF FAITH is fulfilled in power.

NOTE.—There are many unsuspected places of the New Testament that would receive a perfect elucidation from these things, which have vacillated between many interpretations, or been done wrong to, or passed as merely general when their appli-

cation was most strict. We can justly understand the expression, "Your faith groweth exceedingly, and your charity aboundeth." If faith meant faith in the ground of peace, the quantity of faith has nothing to say to it, but the value of the object. So the difference between the "work of faith," and "the labour of love." The expression of James, "Hath not God chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him," receives its just force; and corresponding texts also, "The meek shall inherit the earth," "Blessed are ye poor," and giving this the sense of the spirit of poverty to the expression, "poor in spirit," declining the greatness of this world. The position of poverty held in faith saves so many of the positions easily felt to be necessary to the position of this world, if there is an heirship to the world to come, and that the present world, and every part of its constitution contrary to God and to Christ, except as to the bare fact that power belongs to God. If the position of the heirship of the kingdom is held in poverty, how naturally and without question is the saint free of the world and its ambitions, its frowns and favours.

The utmost that those that *possess* can do is to possess as though they possessed not, to use as though they used not. It is an *abuse* to do otherwise, and in respect of the kingdom, (in fact its revelation,) loss. The work of faith will make this world a very wilderness. The labour of love one to another is called for: the walk of faith in it opens the way to, and is the field of, it; in fact, mutual help and love among the strangers, who wait for an enduring substance. The more thoroughly the possession of the kingdom is realized, the more steady must be recurrence to Gilgal, and the creeping in of Babylonish things, and the value of this world's goods, guarded against. We shall not be separate before God unless our hearts are bound up with Christ, it will be a meagre and failing confession without Him, and it should be "*true in him and in us.*"

Lastly, the duties and the relationships of the saints on earth, such as are recognized by Christ, are ruled by the Master and done to Him, and they receive the reward *of the inheritance*, because they serve the Lord Christ: He is confessed in all things, and every thought is in subjection to Christ; and *His* name is on their foreheads, both here and hereafter.

(Rev. xxii, 4.) We have not to go out of Christ for anything. "We are complete in Him (and this is, I believe, the true and only sense of the word in Col.) who is the head of all principality and power."

There is a point which receives perfect elucidation from this position of the believer. The truth of the place of Melchisedec, in this respect, has, I believe, been rarely fully, and clearly understood. We find in the Epistle to the Hebrews Melchisedec spoken of as entering in, but there is nothing of His coming forth. Again, happy souls know that it is not intercession that keeps them in the place of grace. They are *in Christ*, before the Father, in Christ in whom they have believed. Placed there in the settled claims of Christ, to be there unreprouable in the sight of God, and yet the office of Melchisedec is intercession while above, not only of advocacy in case of failure, (1 John ii,) but of intercession for them in the difficulties of confession; compassed with the consciousness of past infirmity, (though without sin,) and a compassionate High priest. Even the ignorant and those out of the way are the object of His graciousness. Held, indeed, as safe in Him, they, as the objects of His Father's love, are His charge while

on Satan's ground, and He becomes, to all who look to Him, the strength of their confession, and the leader in the path they walk, the beginning and end of their faith. Heirs with Him in a usurped country, seeking wisdom to distinguish between God's and Cæsar's, they confess Him not only in His grace, but in hope and patience, "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," desiring to be with Him, and looking to be in His image. The fitness of this High priest is most instructive. He who has received this office from the Father is in His place, where He intercedes, and from which He sends His help, and whence the love that animates the saints comes, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, becoming those who are to follow Him, in whom they stand, and in whom they are presented to the Father.

THE BELIEVER'S RESOURCE.

"When I am weak then am I strong."

Read 2 Cor. xii, 1—10.

It is not what Paul's "thorn in the flesh" might be, nor the nature of the revelations he received in "the third

heaven," nor whether he subsequently wrote what he tells us it was "not *possible* for a man to utter," that I would now consider; but a point of far more practical importance, namely the conditions on which the grace and strength of Christ are imparted to believers for their daily walk and service.

When the question of salvation is in view one does not speak of conditions—for it is God's grace to sinners—but when it is the believer's walk with God it is otherwise. Here there are conditions. If it be as to the certainty of divine knowledge, it is "If any man *will do his will*, he shall know of the doctrine;" or if it be the sustainment of the soul in trial, or the impartation of strength for service, it is, "My grace is sufficient for thee, *for* my strength is made perfect in weakness." For, if the apostle's case was special, as to revelations and the necessary counter-balance of a thorn in the flesh, and the buffetings of Satan's messenger, the principle which it brings out, in the Lord's answer to His thrice-repeated

supplication for the removal of the cause of His trouble, is absolute and universal.

There are two points in this answer: first, the entire sufficiency of Christ's grace to meet the exigency; and, second, the conditions on which alone that grace is imparted. Now the grace of the Lord Jesus is *the only sufficiency* of a Christian. "The flesh profiteth nothing." Yet Christians often act as if they themselves were sufficient for everything, except to meet some great trial, or to cope with some great difficulty, which drives them to their knees, and forces them to acknowledge their weakness, and to seek for Christ's strength.

This was not, however, the case with the apostle. He habitually leant upon that grace, and not on his own strength. He says, "we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." His ordinary course was not to go on, like many, in the spirit of neglectful unconscious independence, until some

crisis in his experience, or his circumstances, made him feel his dependence, and turn to the source of his strength. But even he had to learn that there was a fuller sufficiency in Christ's grace than he had ever yet experienced, or even imagined. His crushing trial drove him to the Lord as his only resource, and the intensity of his feelings is seen in his earnest prayer for deliverance; but he had no thought of a grace that could sustain under it, and make it an occasion for the fuller display of Christ's glorious power. Still, when the answer comes, it shows how simply Christ's glory was his object, and not his own ease, or credit, or anything else. We hear no more of the pricking of the thorn, nor prayer that the messenger of Satan might depart from him; but he says, "Most gladly therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." The paradox, "When I am weak then am I strong," by which he closes this account, shows how entirely his heart assented to the

conditions of his strength, and how thoroughly he had learned the force of that word, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

And how many practical lessons are to be drawn from this narration !

In the first place it is manifest, that the higher we reach in heavenly things, the lower it will put us in the estimation of ourselves, and in our condition as to this world. He who was highest of all in heavenly glory and heavenly worth, was lowest of all in earthly circumstances and human estimation. "I am a worm and no man," was His declaration in the hour of His sorrow ; and "the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," shows the condition in which He pursued this earthly service. But even in this He is our example, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus : who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,

and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii, 5—8.) And if Paul was taken to "the third heaven," where none but himself had ever been, his heavenly elevation must be balanced by a corresponding earthly depression; or else he would not have been able to use this token of the Lord's favour for anything but self-exaltation, which is but to corrupt from its true end what Christ bestows. Hence the necessity of the flesh being mortified in proportion as spiritual advances are made. If I enter into the truth, practically, of being "risen with Christ," the other side of the question is, "mortify therefore your members which are on the earth." A ship must be ballasted in proportion to the sail she carries, or she will inevitably be capsized. In the school of Christ the spirit is taught, on the one hand; and the flesh is scourged into submission on the other: and the proof of advancement in the knowledge

of Christ is found in increasing distrust of self.

In the next place, it rebukes that vanity of mind, which esteems everything of little worth which cannot be displayed for the admiration of others. The mere reference to what he had been taught as to "visions and revelations of the Lord," the apostle characterizes as speaking "like a fool." They were afforded for another end than to bring *himself* forward. And if he could not talk about his experience, in the best sense, namely what Christ had taught him and wrought by him, without being in danger of becoming "a fool," I wonder what those are who are constantly talking about themselves in connexion with what the flesh and the devil accomplish in them! Moreover the apostle could not communicate to others what he had learned in the third heaven. The revelations were abundant, but it was "not possible to utter" them. As good not to have them, then, (says the foolish heart,) as not to be able to use them. But why

is it necessary for the heart to disclose all its treasures, like Hezekiah to the ambassadors of the king of Babylon? Is there *nothing* that Christ teaches me for *myself*? Must I count that as nothing which I cannot vainly show to others, or even use for the edification of others? Why should I hinder Christ from giving me a "white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which *no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it*"?

But the non-removal of the thorn in the flesh, moreover, teaches us the folly of thinking a change of circumstances, or the removal of trial, necessary to one's service for Christ. If we want to *shine* ourselves, circumstances of trial will hinder our shining; and Christ sends them for the very end that *we* might not shine. But if we want Christ's grace to shine, that will shine most by means of the very trial and difficulty we may have longed to get removed. "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness!" And this was to bring out in the apostle, "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." Circumstances may have their effect on our own spirits, but, unless they are sinful, (and then we must get out of them,) they are certainly no hindrance to God's Spirit. A man may feel his hands to be always dirty in the world's service, and yet if he leans on Christ's grace, which is sufficient for him, he may have his heart always clean for the enjoyment of Christ, and for the service of Christ. Such a man serves Christ in his daily toil; and if he cannot always be reading and praying, he may, nevertheless, be always in communion. A mother, with half a dozen children, which occupy her hands through the day, and often keep her awake through the night, cannot serve Christ as she sees, perhaps, some others; but if she owns Christ in her circumstances, and hangs on His grace, while she is rocking one child in the cradle with her foot, and mending the clothes of

another with her hands, may have her heart fed by the hidden manna from Christ's own hand, and serve Him, whom she loves, more effectually than if she had all her time to herself, and thus felt less the necessity of the injunction, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end."

I want no change of circumstances, nor removal of trials, to enable me to pursue Christ's service; I only want to know the truth, practically, of the word, "my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." But then the sense of weakness, which alone makes room for Christ's strength, is what nature always shrinks from. "I am *so* weak," is often on the lips of Christians; and it often means that they expect strength in themselves instead of in Christ; or, that they have hitherto leant on a strength which has now broken down. In either case they have yet to learn the solution of the enigma, "When *I* am weak then am *I* strong." A Christian ought always to feel *himself*

so weak as to dread to undertake anything in his own sufficiency; and yet so strong in Christ as to be able to accomplish everything through His grace. The sense of weakness, from which nature shrinks, is essential to the display of Christ's strength. Without it we should neither know the extent of our dependence ourselves, nor should we use the grace communicated for the glory of Christ. "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isaiah xl, 29—31.)

THE EFFECT OF PAUL'S LIFE.

I do not know anything that humbles one more than Paul's life. You get judged by Christ's life, but Paul's was that of a man of like passions with ourselves. Such thorough abnegation of self! Such death as to everything in himself.

TWO REQUISITES.

There are two things we need in order to the understanding of our privileges. The first is to have a consciousness of the love of God. Even a gift from a father is a mere sign of approval otherwise. The second is to measure the outgoings of God's heart by Christ as the object of it. We get oppressed otherwise if thinking of ourselves. We must first know grace, and then see that it is in Christ. Thus it is far easier to understand it. The moment I am rooted and grounded in love, I can believe that God can give me anything.

THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD.

(Continued from page 215.)

Although the Christian who walks faithfully, clothed with the whole armour of God, enjoys the effect of its use, in the peaceful joy of communion, the difference must have, perhaps, been felt, between this state and the loss of communion, to know the immense importance of this armour, or rather of wearing it. Far better, however, to enjoy the confiding peace, which accompanies its use, than to know its importance by exposing oneself without it to the assaults of the enemy. Communion with God is a real thing, in which He pours into the soul, in a greater or less degree, the deep joy of His presence,—of that favour and perfect love in which He communicates with the soul, revealing Himself,—and gives, by His presence, the happiness of a relationship, in which no breach is suspected, nor thought of, in which the soul lives. It is more

than faith, though founded on it; other than the certainty of salvation, though the crown, and seal, and realization of this. The abstract certainty, the consoling certainty, that my Father loves me, and will not, nay, cannot, do otherwise, is another thing than happy intercourse with this love; with no consciousness of anything else, or of anything in the way of that enjoyment. The certainty of love in God constitutes the bitterness of the sense of the loss of the enjoyment of it,—for I speak only of saints here. The Spirit's seal to the truth assures of God's love; and Christ, if we fail, intercedes for us. But the Holy Ghost being the spring of the enjoyment of it in the heart is another thing. The one—the foundation, it is true, of all—assures that God is for us; the other is God in us, filling the heart with joy, with communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. There are two ways, very distinct indeed in their character, in which I may fail in this communion; one ne-

gatively, where negligence has deprived me of positive and sensible intercourse with God—the heart is cold and indifferent; the other, where the conscience is concerned, and, the heart having allowed the enemy to prevail against it, the Holy Ghost becomes in us a stern reprovcr; and while never destroying the sense of God's love, makes us bitterly bewail the loss of the inward sense and enjoyment of it, and makes us taste, more or less, the fruits of sin, as, in its nature, separating the soul from God; and thus makes it horrible to us, not as feeling *with God* its evil morally, but as in its nature separating us from Him; not as to faith, indeed, allowing us to suppose that He will give us up at all, but to feel what it is. But this last is an extreme case, and discipline, on God's part, and very severe discipline too. The other, alas! is but too common. They are very different. Many Christians live frequently in a state analogous to the last case I have supposed; but in them it is from being yet under the law, and

from their not being established in their relationship with God; and the distress, consequently, is not so great, because there has not been the same nearness to God. I have said these few words as to the result of not using the armour with which God has furnished us. I return to its character and use.

I have spoken somewhat of the loins being girt about with truth, and of the breastplate of righteousness; of the affections being governed and kept in order by the truth; the revelation of Christ, and the walk which flows from this; and godly vigilance of an unassailable conscience. Thus the soul is in practical peace,—has not to occupy itself with itself,—can walk in unsuspecting openness and confidence. When the heart is full of peace, and enjoys the unsuspecting sweetness of it with God, it walks in the spirit of peace. This peace characterizes all its ways and relationships with others. There is not effort or constraint,—nothing to guard

or keep back. The course is natural, unconstrained, and unsuspecting.

There is not fear of evil because there is not the consciousness of it. Not that the soul is without wisdom; that cannot be in such a world; but it is wise concerning that which is good, and simple concerning evil. It does not much fear evil befalling it, because it has a portion of peace that outward evil cannot touch; nor does it count on outward good as its resource. In this peace, the heart depends on God; and as above evil in this sense, it brings peace with it into the scene through which it passes.

The expression, having the feet shod with it, is beautiful, as showing the habitual character of the walk. Such was the character, especially, of Christ. He brought in peace—rejected, indeed, but not the less true—the great peacemaker. He declared such should be called the children of God. These three first parts of the armour are practically expressed in the words, as far as relationship with the saints goes :

“Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another.”

Thus governed within, and walking in peace without, the soul is free to trust in God. All three parts of the armour are, indeed, worn together, but there is a moral dependence and order. Internal condition goes before external activity; order in the affections and practical righteousness, before the spirit of peace in our ways with others; and both before that confidence in God, which shields from the assaults of the enemy. It is not that the confidence flows from this walk—it is in God only; but it is in this soil that it grows, in this state that it has its free exercise. It is as important to remark that it does not look back or calculate on any state of the soul, as that that state of the soul is that in which this confidence is found in free exercise. When we enjoy our health, all depends on the state of the body; but because it is in health its energies go out on their just object, and the health is not thought of at all. Faith here is the

full confidence in God, which counts on His goodness and faithfulness, and that He is for us,—which trusts a God who is entirely for us. Without this, all is despair, or near to it, in a conscience which feels that it has to do with God. Satan has got in; and to the soul who feels the need of God being for it, there is left only the agonizing feeling that He is not. Hence the Saviour prays for Peter, that his faith might not fail; that is, that in spite of his dreadful fall, he might not be left to the thought that therefore God had abandoned him, was against him, and that there was no hope. The fiery darts of Satan are not his efforts to seduce, by acting on our various lusts; but where, by any means, our hearts are turned away from God, the inroads he makes in the form of unbelief and despair. This is the force of the passage of the Corinthians, lest Satan tempt you for your incontinency. The evil was there, the incontinency was supposed, the temptation was the power of Satan over the soul, which was the

result. It is, evidently, a different power from his seductions. There is no pleasure in despair, but deep agony. The flesh finds its pleasure in satisfying its lusts, but there is no lust of despair: it is as a consuming fire in the soul.

We may see, in the temptations of Christ, as far as He could be on the same ground as we, this same difference. There could be no lusts and no despair; but Satan sought, at the beginning of His career, to seduce Him from the path of obedience; and brought all the terror of death upon Him at the end. Only in the former case He maintained His first estate; in the second His agony only led Him into more earnest communion with His Father. But He went through, for us, the whole pressure of Satan's power; for us in both respects, only was never reached within by it, so as to turn Him aside from God, in the perfect path of obedience.

The fiery darts of the enemy are the power of the enemy over the soul, when it has been left exposed to his inroads, by the shield of faith (an en-

tire confidence in the grace of God, in His favour, as that in which we dwell, and changes not) having been down.

Such, I doubt not, are his fiery darts; and terrible they are, when, from the shield of faith not having been our safeguard—having been dropped, we are exposed to them. But I would add, that I do not believe that this is ever a simple case: that is, that it happens by itself, without some producing cause. The passage I have alluded to in the Corinthians explains what I mean: Satan tempted, for incontinency, a heart which had opened the door to him, by lust; which had even strayed out, in spirit, into his domains, forsaking God—not in will, perhaps, but in heart—in letting itself loose, exposed itself naturally to his power; particularly in these lusts, which a corrupt will nourishes, which, as the apostle expresses it, war against the soul, and which are so contrary to the very nature of God, to His purity and holiness. Where these are, in any degree, wilfully indulged by one who is

a Christian, it is well if the result be not this terrible power of Satan over the soul, which, for a time at least, darkens the light of God in it, and hides His favour; the knowledge of which only makes the loss of the sense of it more terrible to him who suffers under it: it seems to be gone for ever,—at least it may reach this point. At any rate it is the most terrible chastisement which can reach a human heart. If a soul belong to God, it will surely be delivered; but who can say how long it may suffer. The great remedy against such a danger is to have the soul frequently, in a positive way, in God's presence. To walk there constantly is our privilege and supreme joy. But I speak of a positive entering into His presence, who is light, that all may be clear in our conscience, all free in our heart. In a word, that we may not only enjoy blessings from Him, but be, as He graciously permits us, before Him. I have gone through the effect of not having the shield of faith up, and particularly what is the

cause of it, as a warning; but the case, blessed be God's grace, is as rare as it is terrible.

But something of an analogous nature takes place, in a different state of soul, as to what is not unfrequently called the fiery darts of the enemy. I refer to those cases where blasphemous and infidel thoughts seem to arise in the mind. They are not desired, not the effect of reasoning, but present themselves unsought, to the great distress of the soul. But this, I believe, happens when the soul is not set free in Christ. When once we are really introduced into the presence of God, in the knowledge of His favour and love, are there before Him, enjoying Himself, Satan cannot get there, cannot thus reach the mind. In the state of despair, spoken of previously, feelings of rebellion against God may and do arise, but these are the working of the mind itself, in the state it is in; whereas the suggestions of which I am now speaking are foreign to every feeling, and every acknowledged thought. But

there is not, I believe, the true, personal knowledge of God in grace, though that grace may be admitted as a truth, and as the only ground of hope. These thoughts distress and harass the mind; and persons assaulted by them sometimes draw dismal conclusions as to themselves, as in other such cases they think they have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. General deliverance, and the true knowledge of God, is to be sought here. The liberty wherewith Christ sets free—for this deliverance is real—brings us, as freed from everything that was against us, to God Himself. In the case, then, of the trying suggestions, of which we now speak, the shield of faith is not dropped; it is not yet up, has not yet been borne up on the arm of faith. The shield of faith, then, is that entire confidence in God, flowing from the real, personal knowledge of redemption, which silences every doubt, and prevents every question, by the personal knowledge of God's love, which instead of having questions

with God, reckons upon Him, against everything else. If God be for us, who can be against us. It is not merely peace, as regards evil, through the blood of Christ, but confidence in God, resulting from His being thus known. If I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, says Moses, let my Lord now go with us, *for it is a stiff-necked people*. God is our resource and help against ourselves, our security against all else. Satan may prove a thousand things against us; our knowledge of God is the answer to them all.

Entire, unwavering confidence in God Himself is the spring, then, and source of energy; the efforts of Satan to break and enfeeble it are quenched by the shield of faith. Maintained practically in its place by walking with God, it rests in itself on the true divinely given knowledge of God, as for us, as He has revealed Himself in Christ; a knowledge sustained and fed by the grace and intercession of Jesus.

But there is a further development

of this condition of soul, closely allied to it, yet different,—the knowledge of and possession of salvation. The difference is this: it is not abiding confidence in what God is, but the joyful certainty of what He has done, the consciousness of the position He has set us in.

Confidence is dependence, a blessed, right, and softening feeling; though emboldening in what is right, and as against the enemies of our souls. Salvation gives boldness and energy: we hold up the head, so to speak, a head covered by the strength and salvation of God Himself. Would to God, says Paul, that not only thou, but all that hear me, were not only almost, but altogether, *such as I am* save these bonds. Was he—after two years imprisonment and wrong, in the presence of judges, as a chained prisoner, without resource save in God—was he disheartened or fearful in spirit? The helmet of a known salvation was on his head. Yet (to be possessed in glory) all was his in Christ, all was his in his own

soul. He was what the love that was in his heart could wish others to be; the consciousness that it was his, animated the love which expressed itself towards others,—gave it its object in its own happiness. His relationship to God was known; his being in the light as God was in the light, in the blessed joy of holiness, sin and evil and all confusion outside; Jesus' glory complete; the Father's love unhindered by any thing in the state of the object is rested on. This secured by the cross, so that it could fully flow in now; the possession of Jesus' love, in whom it was all secured. Salvation was a helmet to his head; he could lift it up before all. Nor is it less such to us in the day of battle: we have not to think about ourselves; that is secured, for that helmet is riven by no blow: we are free to use our wisdom and strength undisturbed by any fear for self in the conflict in which we are set. We can seek victory and blessing for others, glory for the Lord, success before Him. He has thought of us and put us into

the place where we are, and have more than man's heart knows how to desire. And secure in it we can think of serving Him. Evidently this, as all else, must be realized by the ungrieved power of the Holy Ghost, to use and walk in it.

In all these parts of the armour we have found what relates to our own standing, our enjoyment, in governed affections and godliness, of our blessed relationship with God which is given us in the new position which the second Adam has, and which we have in and by and ever with Him. This is our security, our defence, in the conflict. Thus nothing separates us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But there is *active* energy, arms which we wield in the power of the Spirit of God, which silences flesh, and baffles the power of Satan, and controls those who are under his power. When fully in the power of our relationship with God we can take the sword of the Spirit, which is His word. If the soul be not in communion with

God it cannot wield His word in His name. It is not a carnal weapon to be used with carnal force or wisdom. It is the Spirit's sword: sharp, reaching the conscience, and of the most hardened where rightly applied, and bowing and subduing the most haughty. But if the soul be not with God there is not the thought of the right passage, nor the power of God with it. It is not spoken of here, mark, as the means of edification—it is not a sword there—but of conflict. The weapons of our warfare are spiritual, to the pulling down of strongholds. The word of God in conflict, when spiritually used, carries light with it to the soul, as to our whole position in conflict—the light of God's mind on the whole scene and question before us—which inspires a confidence, of which he who has it not has no idea. Satan's object is to deceive; the conscious possession of the divine mind only makes the discovered deception an element of strength, in the knowledge of whom we have to do with, and of God's being in the

light thrown upon his wiles. It detects and judges them appositely; and a deception laid bare is a victory over the wiles to which no answer can be found. See the Lord's use of scripture, as an example—ever matchless—of this weapon. How were His adversaries put to silence, no man daring to put to Him any more questions. How was Satan himself reduced to leave one whom he could not touch. For this weapon repels all the attacks of Satan, as it confounds, by its power, all the force and wiles of the enemy. We have no other weapon; we must have skill to use it, which no practice but the power of present grace alone can give; but it is the weapon of God's own mind, and light, and truth, in the midst of the darkness by which Satan would overcloud man's mind. An arm of a peculiar and distinct character closes the list, showing how all are used in entire and constant dependence. The first parts of the armour, we have seen, are defensive, those which hinder Satan from touching us,

connected with the judgment of self and godliness: after these the active energy of the word of God, the sword of the Spirit; but the Holy Ghost, which alone can enable us to use the word, cannot do so by putting us in a position of independence; it is contrary to His nature and service, and to the moral effect of His presence with us. He puts our souls into connexion with, and dependence on, the source of all power and grace. He cannot be separated from those in whose name He acts, from whom He comes forth, and by His very presence He puts us in communion with, and dependence on, them. It is thus it is said of Him, "He shall not speak of Himself," that is, unconnected with the Father and the Son, as it is said, Sayest thou this of thyself? as an isolated spirit might say things of which himself was the source. But there is more than this, because the Holy Ghost acts in us morally, and makes us feel, as new creatures, our entire, and I may add, glad, dependence,

on so blessed a source of activity and power, as God Himself. We know we are so. It is a creature's place: it is a godly creature's place, and his willing place; for the heart, led by the Holy Ghost, is rejoiced to receive all from God, as it knows, also, it can receive no where else what is good. But this is exercised in confidence; we ask, we express our dependence; we supplicate, both in the sense of need, and in the earnestness of desire for the accomplishment of what we are thus enabled to succeed in or obtain for others. The mind, though in dependence, is brought into the channel of God's desires and blessing, by the operation of the Holy Ghost—given a share in this energy of divine working, though in the sense of entire dependence on God. God meets, answers, shows His concurrence in what He has put into our hearts by the Holy Ghost. We are occupied with what He works in, and works with, and for us. Not only are our desires accomplished, but we have the consciousness of God's

concurrence in them, and that we stand, on His part, in our conflicts and service, while we have the joy of everything being His. Nor is this all; it is not only our own part in this divine conflict that occupies; love to others, those without that are His, and united thus indeed to us, acts in the grace of intercession.

Everything is found, in this (seemingly, to human judgment, so feeble) instrument, above all precious, because it is an unseen one. Need is there, earnest desire of others good in love is there; desire for God's glory, confidence in His love, in His word, dependence on Him, reality of intercourse with Him; while, as a consequence, every inconsistency is brought to light in the heart by this nearness, not only as respects holiness, but as it touches confidence in this nearness. Besides this, there is a close linking of all the whole body together, in its dependence on the head. What a place is this to use the given sword of God; His own thoughts in power, and to be

with Himself in confidence for every answer of His love and strength. It will be remarked that it is on every occasion—always. This is one mark of our living in this state of communion, that the heart turns at once, naturally, there. It does not set about to consider, when something arises, but to pray. God's answer surely comes. Next, remark, it is in Spirit, that is, in the power of the Holy Ghost working, in our communion with God. But another element is put before us here; the active exercise of a vigilant mind, so that all turns to prayer, and that we observe that as to which we have to pray. There is the active interest of love, which is awake and alive, does not sleep over the interests of the Church of God, over the holiness and communion of the saints—cannot if we are near to God. For there is an active, living energy of love, which, in the desire of the blessing of the saints, thus draws near to God. This gives perseverance and earnestness; for whatever our confidence in the love of God,

affection is earnest and persevering; and here, above all, it is that divine affections, our personal participation through grace in the interest God takes in blessing, are brought out. Here, as elsewhere, the apostle therefore brings in all saints. (Comp. i, 15; iii, 18.) The apostle knew what it was, as all abundantly testifies, and he knew its value. It is a privilege of all saints on which an apostle himself is dependent. All have not distinguished gifts, but all have the privilege of drawing near to God as child and priest. (See 2 Cor. i, 11.) Divine power in us is the fruit of dependence on Him who gives it. The armour of God, then, begins with all being inwardly right in affection; then in practice; then peacefulness of walk; and so it is, for sin is restless and impatient; then security, by unfailing confidence, from Satan's attacks, the joy and power of salvation before God; and finally, the active energy in which we can use the word in all; and behind all dependence exercised in prayer.

ROMANS V.

It is a wonderful mercy that the scripture is so plain as it is; for the mind of man reasons about truth, therefore the heart rejoices in the wonderful plainness of scripture. Its depths, it is true, are infinite and unfathomable; but all that the salvation of the soul rests upon is perfectly simple. The more you examine the word of God, the more you find its perfection. The word of man may dazzle for a time, and seem to be clear, but it is found afterwards to be full of flaws and obscurities.

In this Epistle to the Romans we are not to look so much for the development of the Church, as for the relationship of individual souls with God. The question is—how can God and man meet? First, the blood satisfies the justice, and saves from judgment: as we saw by the blood being on the doorposts, when Israel was in Egypt. Secondly, Christ came down, and was made sin for us, and having gone through

all the wrath of judgment due to it, He rose from the dead, and ascended an accepted man into the presence of God; and now all that was His by right is made ours *in Him*. At the close of chap. iii the value of His blood-shedding is settled as the ground of acceptance; and the epistle goes on with the results of this. Chap. iv shows us righteousness imputed through faith: Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Only there is this difference between Abraham's faith and ours. Abraham believed God was able to perform His promise; we believe He has raised up Jesus. It is not so much here the believing on Christ and His blood, as the believing on Him that raised up Jesus from the dead. The subject is the intervention of God in power to bring us up accepted in the beloved. Christ had come under judgment, and God, by raising Him up, raised us up also: "raised us up together," &c. Faith also sets *us* there. Chap. v follows out the subject, and is divided

into *three* parts. First our condition before God; (the basis having been laid;) second, He reasons on the consequences of this condition as to our present state and feelings, and shows what we get, unfolding God's ways and our portion in Him from ver. 2 to 11; third, from ver. 11 to the end of the chapter, points out the contrast of the first and second Adam, and heads up the family of nature and of faith in one and the other. The last verse of chapter iv is connected with the 1st verse of chapter v; and here I would remark, that it is not properly "raised *because* of our justification"—as has been often said, but that it should be, as the text has it, "delivered *for* our offences, and was raised again *for* our justification." The reason for this we see in the first verse of the vth chapter. "*Therefore* being justified by *faith*," &c.

Thus I see, in scripture, that God never separates *justification* from *faith*; for we cannot have justification without having our souls brought into living

connexion with God, by the exercise of *individual faith*. There are three things brought out in the first verses: first, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God;" Secondly, "Access into this grace wherein we stand;" thirdly, "Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God." First, *Peace with God*. All the past, all connected with the old man, not only our *actual sins committed*, but whatever *can die* under the judgment, is put away—is done with—to the saint: hence perfect peace. Secondly, the present divine favour in which we stand, as a positive thing, a personal introduction to the full favour of God. But not being yet in the glory, we are, thirdly, rejoicing in *hope* of the glory. Christ has borne all that deserved judgment, and has entirely left behind Him in the grave everything to which judgment can apply, and is now sat down at the right hand of God without it; all therefore that respects judgment, in connexion with the saints, is ended to God's satisfaction. Though, of course, there will be the Father's chastening for

their profit; but it is impossible that judgment can be executed on those who are “the righteousness of God in him.” It is as impossible as that Christ’s worth should be *inadequate*, or that God should punish the same sin twice over, or rather put it away and then punish it. So impossible is it for God to punish for the sins of those who believe. If any one had to be shut out of heaven for my sins, it must have been Christ, for He bore them all, but we know He is raised and gone in to glory. It is this, either He *has borne* them all, or else I have to bear them myself, and then I am lost. But Christ *has borne* them, and was accepted and received up into glory; therefore the question is settled, if I believe Heb. ix, 26—28: “For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the

sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.” “He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” He did not hold back. *Sin* in all its horribleness was laid upon Him, as on the day of atonement, when the sin was laid upon the head of the victim, and judgment was fully passed upon him. But when “He shall appear the *second time*” it will be *without sin*, not merely in His person, He was always so; but as having nothing whatever to say to sin as regards them that look for Him; having perfectly settled about sin when God dealt with Him on the cross. No sin *there* and then escaped the eye of God, as seen on the spotless Christ; all was perfectly brought out; dealt with and put away, and Christ is not now on the cross, the positive value of His work having taken Him up to heaven. The judgment of my sins has all been settled between the all-seeing God and His spotless Son. We have, therefore, not merely a hope, but settled *peace*.

“When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down.” He must have failed, or else I have perfect peace, and I know He did *not* fail. “Being justified by *faith* we have peace with God.” The reference of *faith* is never to itself—to our own feelings and experience, for they may deceive us, and refer at any rate to our state, not to Christ’s work; as the reference to *faith* in this passage often deceives people who would make *their faith* the object, and so turn back upon themselves for something to give them peace. *Peace* never rests on the *experience* of anything in ourselves. There will be experience, but the perfect justification of the sinner (who believes) does not rest on experience, but is the answer of God to all that exercises me about myself, (and rightly exercises me too.) When I get peace in God’s way then I get the answer of God to my soul. I can trust the heart of God, for I know what it is, having learnt it in the gift of His Son; and it is in believing what that is, through His

work, that I find peace to my soul; and the more that freedom is worth and to be valued by us, the more horrid must be my own self and selfishness in the sight of God, if I bring anything of it, or of its pretended righteousness into it; even as "dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour;" and the better the ointment the sooner will it be spoiled. I cannot trust my own heart or its feelings, for it is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; God's I can, and His who will keep me to the end, His has never deceived me.

Faith is not experience, though we shall have experiences of what we are; but I am not justified by experience; it is the answer of God to these experiences that gives peace. Peace is not joy; those often have joy that have not settled peace; but this rests on feeling. When the graciousness of the Lord is seen and one forgets oneself there may be *joy*, while the conscience may not be purged; but *peace* rests on that which is settled.

Faith looks at its *object*, and not at itself, and the soul has peace with God and not with itself.

I do not want you to be at peace with yourself. We are not called on to believe that we do believe, but to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, by whom we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and are brought into perfect favour, every cloud that would hide God's love removed; and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God. His favour is better than life, therefore I can praise Him while I live. So in the midst of wilderness weariness, I can rejoice.

I have been lately greatly struck with Rev. iv, in connexion with peace of soul. You find God's throne here in its Sinai character, and not the throne of grace. The twenty-four elders are sitting on their thrones in perfect peace while the terrible judgments are going on towards the earth, but when it is said, Holy, holy, holy, they all fall down and worship. The thunderings and lightnings do not move them at all,

but when the worship commences they are all in action.

“Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God:”—how could I, a man, think of being in the glory of God, save through perfect grace? Thus God has not only given us blessings, but associated us with the Blessor. “The glory thou hast given me, I have given them.” Thus, in these first two verses, we have the Christian, as such, brought out: past, present, and future, all settled. The old man *all* atoned for, and the new man in Christ before God. For the past, for all that concerns the old man, perfect peace; for the present, perfect favour; and for the future, glory. What more do I want? What more can I have? Yes, there is more.

“Not only so, but we joy in tribulation also:” there are present realities for the saint to learn in the wilderness. “*Tribulation!*” The more faithful the saint is, the more trouble he will have. The more blessing he has, the more trial: because there is much to remove which would hinder the blessing when

given. As man, I find trial is not pleasant, it is not joy to realize being put into the fire to be refined; but it is most important in all the tribulation of the way to know that my peace is settled; that the matter of my justification is a finished thing; else when I come into trial I shall be saying, how can I suppose now that I have God's favour, when everything seems against me? If the believer be not quite settled in God's favour, he cannot "*glory in tribulation*;" but if I know my condition before God, then I am able to understand what I am going through, and learn the result of tribulation, which is patience; for "*tribulation worketh patience*." I find all sorts of things hindering me: I need *my will* to be broken; I shall hope to get a thing, and perhaps expect to get that which I shall never have. I may have to cry to God for three whole weeks, and fail, as Daniel did, to learn patience, and in it learn the rashness of my heart, that would expect everything at once. Thus, "*patience works experience*." The

saint feels the process ; but he does not see the progress in himself. Others are to see that, and they do see it. The saint is thus taught not to trust in himself ; and not to be in such a hurry, but to wait on God. A man may be in earnest, but in such haste, that he will break down, because of not waiting on God. "He that believeth will not make haste." See Moses and his devotedness ; he goes, in true devotedness, but in the energy of the flesh, (learnt in the palace,) and kills an Egyptian without God's bidding. Pharaoh hears of it ; Moses flees, and abides for forty years in the wilderness, to have his *will* broken ; for where faith is not the power, the strength of God is not. When *God* was going to send Moses for the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, Moses says, "who am I that I should bring forth Israel out of Egypt." Now we do not find as much energy here as when slaying the Egyptian, thus showing that where the energy of the flesh is not mixed up with the Spirit, *man* is not up to obedi-

ence. Moses left the court of Pharaoh's daughter, where he had been brought up, and preferred taking his place with a parcel of slaves, because they were the people of God; but though sincere and devoted, and with a right intention in giving up the position in which providence had placed him; (for the Holy Ghost in Heb. xi specially marks his giving up his providential blessing as *pleasing to God*,) he must be cast aside and made nothing of; then he gets that "strength which is made perfect in weakness." But first his flesh had to be broken down; and this was done through forty years' tribulation in the wilderness, keeping his father in law's sheep. He was learning experience, and "experience worketh hope;" because in this kind of experience I learn what God is, and detached from the world and its promises my hope is then resting above. Moses had more knowledge what the people of Israel were to be delivered for when he went to Pharaoh by God's sending, for he knew nothing of the

Canaan they were to go to when he slew the Egyptian. "Hope maketh not ashamed." In learning experience it may be a struggle with God, but we shall find it is of no use to struggle against God's hand in tribulation, for He will hold us *there* until we submit. But in the end it will cause me to hope, because the love of *God* is shed abroad in my heart. Not only has He given His Son for me, but God, who *is love*, *is in me*, God's own love is enjoyed in my soul. But how is it that I get this? By the Holy Ghost which is *within* me. He has shed abroad this love of God in my soul by the Holy Ghost, and this brings us back to a strength of hope which nothing can shake. I may be going through all sorts of trial, but resting in Christ and having this testimony of the Holy Ghost in my heart, of the love of God for my soul to rest on, I can go on calmly, whatever be the trial. Also, observe, that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who maketh intercession for us according to God. A

man may say, in the face of all this truth, but suppose I do not *feel* it. Your saying so proves that you are gone back from faith and are looking to your own feelings; and the moment you lean on your experience or your feelings, that is not, faith. But then how do you know you are the object of this love? Are you perfect? No—the *enjoyment* of it is within, the *proof* without.

I *know* it, because I see that “Christ died for the ungodly,” and I am simply an ungodly one, if the *ground* of my hope is inquired after, and in myself have no feelings, no strength at all. But His strength is made perfect in weakness, and Christ died when I had no feeling at all. Christ died when I could do nothing at all. What better proof could you have than that God has given the greatest thing in heaven for the worst, the vilest, thing on earth, a *sinner*? I am a sinner, and therefore Christ died for me. “Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet per-adventure for a good man some would

even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This is what distinguishes God's love from man's. While man must have some motive on which to act, something to draw out his love, God's love, on the contrary, springs from Himself. For God could find no motive in us, for we were *hateful* and hating one another.

Here mark the glorious character of the reasonings of the Holy Ghost. They are exactly the contrary of those of the natural man, and even of the quickened soul. What work it is, what havoc it makes, to reason from man to God. When man reasons, he judges of *what* God will be towards him, from what he is towards God. The Holy Ghost says, "when ye were yet sinners, Christ died for you." He reasons from what God is, and has done, to what He will be and will do. If, as a quickened soul, I judge of God by myself, I should say, God must judge me, for I know that I deserve it; but *that is not grace*; for

“God commended his love unto us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Much more being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. The Holy Ghost reasons downwards, from what God is, and not upwards, from what man is, as man always does. The Holy Ghost unfolds what God is to meet the wants of my soul. It is true that the sinner does deserve judgment — not with any hope, however, that he can be made better; for give peace to a conscience charged with what is *past*, and guilty before God, and take the law in addition, and that only shows a man that he is lost; as the apostle declares in Romans vii, where, after useless efforts to satisfy the exigence of the law with a sinful flesh present, the soul is brought to the consciousness that it wants somebody to deliver it, for it cannot deliver itself. Man needs a Saviour; well, this is reasoning which God will follow till we have got a Saviour, and are forced to cast ourselves on Him by our hopeless

need. But here, where the Holy Ghost is reasoning from what God *is and has done for the sinner*, and not from what the sinner is, it is quite another thing. It is much harder to learn that we are without strength, than to learn that we are *ungodly*. If a dead Christ will save an enemy, surely a living Christ will save a friend. There is divine beauty in God's reasonings, for God knows our hearts are such wicked things, that faith in Him is the hardest of all things to us. Satan's effort is first to hide God's judgment of sin from us, saying, "Thou shalt not surely die;" and when that has not succeeded, he then tries to hide from us God's grace, so that man should not be with God. If a dead Christ is made a Saviour, a living Christ will be a friend to you in all your need. *A dying Christ*, the weakest thing, as appears to nature, though it was God's strength, has saved you when a sinner, will He not do all you want of Him in *His life*? If He died for you when your sin was upon you, how much more will He care

for you now that it is passed away? A living Christ cannot be to destroy you, if a dying Christ has saved you. And mark, not only the *power* of the argument, but its *grace*, in taking away all torment from the heart—for “*fear hath torment.*”

Verse 11.—“And not only so, but we also joy in God.” Now that you have this point of salvation settled, and that you can rejoice in what you will get in the glory,—for your boast will not be merely in joy and happiness for ourselves, but, better still, you can joy in God. We first rejoice in the things given, but we do not rest there. We rejoice in Him who gave them, and delight in that which God is in Himself. His very *holiness*—a thing that would naturally terrify us—is now my joy; and all in which He has revealed Himself becomes my portion and my joy; for He is my God, and what He is is my delight. We are in the light as God is in the light, where no spot nor cloud can ever come. I can now delight and make my boast in God Himself.

After speaking of the peace, the enjoyment of grace, and the hope of the Christian, the apostle shows we can then sit down and enjoy the *source* of all our blessings. But if my will is not broken, it is true I cannot joy in God ; He has then to deal with me in such a way as to break my will ; and, of course, we never like that process. But when He has broken it down then we can joy in Him. So if I stray in practical walk, I do not doubt my salvation, but then I cannot *joy in God*. We only joy in God when walking with Him. If I stray, I can *reflect* about the joy, but I must take a double step in getting back (the judgment of sin on the cross, and God's unchanging grace) before I can again joy in God. (Ver. 12.) Such being the blessed result of God's dealings and of justification, the Holy Ghost now goes on to show *in whom* we have this justification—its grand and unchangeable basis—and draws the contrast between our headship in the first and second Adam ; thus laying a great foundation for the principles He

is going to bring out. Verses 13 to 17 form a parenthesis, and this you will see if you read verses 12 to 18 consecutively. The noticing this makes the passage clear. In verses 12 to 18, the Jew and the Gentile are equally headed up in the obedient man and the disobedient man. Death passed upon ALL men, and grace heads up the new and living ones in Christ; but the unbelieving ones are left in the first Adam. It is not here the bride, but the children of God looked at as in Christ. We get, then, the doctrine of these two men, the first and second Adam, in their relationships to us, in the 12th and 18th verses; but before turning to that more particularly we will look at the contrast of grace with law, of which the whole parenthesis treats. See Amos iii, 2: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities." Now "until the law sin was in the world," &c. "But the times of this ignorance God winked at." God winked at the evil in other

nations, inasmuch as He did not treat them as breakers of the law, where there was no law. But when there was law, they (the Jews) were governed by law, therefore Israel had the rod held over them, and they were to be chastened for breaking the law; and we know they were banished ultimately into captivity on account of it. But of the Gentiles who had sinned without law, He says, I will judge the secrets of men's hearts by Jesus Christ, &c. Law never *made sin*, but law made *transgression*, which is disobedience to a law made. The sin was going on all the time from Adam to Moses; as the sign of sin's reigning was present, when there was no law, for *death* was there. My child may have a bad habit of running about the streets, and it is a bad habit that cannot be allowed; but if I command him not to do it, it is another thing; for if he does it then, it becomes *disobedience*; and the thing I correct him for is not merely his bad habit, but for his disobedience to my command. But before I forbade

him it was only a wrong thing he was doing that needed correction. If we know the scriptures how simple they are! For the want of this what absurd mistakes are made! what volumes have been written on this passage, which has been applied even to the salvation of infants, and all sorts of fancies! But how clear it is when it is seen to be a quotation from Hosea vi, 4, 7, "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? For they, like Adam, [*margin,*] have *transgressed* the covenant." Some have not transgressed like Adam, but they are sinners still, though they have not broken a given law. Sin is always, therefore death is always; but *law* is not *always*. The argument of this passage is, you are not going to shut up God to the Jews only. There are plenty of people who have sinned before Moses, but the sin is not larger than God. If sin and death have been there, God must go there. Christ did not come only for those who had sinned under law, but for those also who sinned

without law ; for sin and death reigned between Adam and Moses, and grace overrides it all. "Law entered that the offence might abound." You Jews have added offence to offence, therefore you need justification and grace all the more for having the law ; for you have been guilty of positive transgressions. Then how beautiful the contrast in the 17th verse, where the Spirit is still making God more excellent in His ways than the just fruit of sin. It is not merely that life is reigning, but "you shall reign in life ;" a crown of royal glory shall be yours with Christ Jesus ; thus showing God's heart to be greater than the evil that has come in.

Verse 18 marks the *generality* of this address, "upon [or rather *towards*] all." It flows "towards all," to condemnation ; accomplished, not in *result*, but in its own proper and natural effect : grace comes in to deliver. So by the righteousness of one the *free* gift came "towards all ;" that is *not* in the sense of application ; the mean-

ing is TO ALL in its direction, and *not* UPON *all*, (“*eis pantas.*”) As Adam’s sin did not rest on Adam alone, but ran over to many, so Christ’s righteousness did not end in Him, but abounded unto many. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.”

In verse 19 we see, where it is a matter of *application*, the word “many” is used, and not the word “all,” as in the preceding verse. The 18th verse is the abstract thought; and thus I can go and preach the gospel to every creature, saying to the sinner, “the blood is on the mercy-seat, come to God;” but to the believer I can say, “you are righteous in Christ.” “By the obedience of one shall many be made [constituted] righteous.” Man may say this will do harm. Well, but God has said it; and what a comfort there is in the simplicity of scripture!

In the next chapter we get, as the certain effect of this, newness of life. You may have got the principle of

resurrection, so as to have new tastes and desires, but if you do not see the need of your having the righteousness of Christ, you do not know yourselves; if you do not know the holiness of God's heart, you do not know the unholiness of your own. Christ's death may be considered, as in itself, glorifying God, apart from its results; it may be considered, also, as His being efficaciously substituted to bear the sins of many. We have the double aspect of the death of Christ shown in the two goats, one of which was the Lord's lot, and the other was for the bearing away, into a land of forgetfulness, the sin of the people. The first was for the glory of God, the second for the conscience of the sinner. *Both were needed.* I am a sinner, says the awakened believer. Yes, but all your sins were laid on Christ.

Verse 20.—The place of the law was that the offence might abound. Wherefore the law? Not to make sin abound, but the offence abound, so to make sin exceeding sinful; “but where sin a-

bounded grace did much more abound." And abounding grace has been shown! Wonderful is the way of God! He gave man his own will, and sin is suffered to rise up to its full height in wickedness, even in putting Christ to death. Then, to show how powerless sin is, in the height of God's grace, that very thing, in which man's sin was at its climax, has put sin away. It is a glorious thing that God should thus manifest the utter impotency of sin in the presence of His grace. If righteousness had reigned we must have been sent to destruction; but it is grace reigns, though it is through righteousness: it is not righteousness hath abounded, but *grace*, (through righteousness, of course.) Grace means love working where there is evil; righteousness is being consistent with what God is. "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Then, if there be the reign of grace in the heart, there must be practical holiness—a righteousness consistent with it. If God's love works in the

heart it is to produce something like itself. God's love is such as has never been seen before in heaven or on earth. His perfect love, and grace, and righteousness, bring out what God is in a wonderful way. It is grace reigning because God has the upper hand, even in our sins, and has put them away.

GRACE FOR THE WILDERNESS.

Rom. viii, 18, &c.

There are two things needed to make good our journey through the wilderness; first, an object, a divine object; and second, the assurance of the love of God as the foundation of all our hopes.

Another thing, however, comes out before the glorious object is reached, and one which underlies the whole revelation of God, and that is, the path we have to tread, from the time of our knowing redemption to the obtaining of our rest. Thus, when the Lord

visited Israel, redemption of the good land was promised, but not a word was said of the wilderness; for the wilderness was no part of redemption properly speaking. God would show them what was in their hearts, and thus what was in His heart; but this was not properly the fruits of redemption work.

In the fifth of Romans we have, first, "Peace with God," "access by faith into the grace, in which we stand," and "joy in hope of the glory of God:" in all this not a word of the wilderness. But when he says, "and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also," *there is the wilderness*. This is not properly a part of redemption, but rather the exercising of us for the discovery of what we are, *but in the presence of the God who has redeemed us*. The danger is in not holding the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. There is no doubt of the faithfulness of God to lead us on to the end; still, as regards detail, there is danger in the journey. When the joy of deliver-

ance is first known, confidence in God is unbounded. But then we have *to learn* the unbelief and waywardness of our hearts. We own it, but we have thus to learn it. And if the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, these exercises will not in the least touch the sense of our relationship with Him.

The secret of getting on our way rightly is holding the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end. For we have a difficulty, when conscience is lively, under the sense of failure, in laying hold of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, so as to apply it at all times to our need. It is not that the Lord would have our consciences unexercised. Paul's was exercised night and day. But the danger is in this, that the eye which is turned in, and conscientiously too, is apt to be turned off from Jesus and grace. Now remember all this exercise we get as the fruit of redemption. All experience previous to that is to bring us to feel the need of redemption.

In chapter vii, when he found the difference between getting better and being saved, and was rendered hopeless of the former, then he is willing to be saved as he is, ungodly, and without strength. Then God comes in, and there is "no condemnation." Now he is brought as a believer, *as saved*, into the wilderness. Now, we are apt to be either careless, saying, it is all grace, or careful, asking, Is it all grace? We may be honestly searching our hearts; but if not *with God*, we shall do it imperfectly. But if *we are sure* that God is for us, we shall spare nothing. So in Psalm cxxxix. It is flesh that weakens confidence.

After all, though exercised, though brought under responsibility, it is Christ that is carrying on the work all through. It is grace from beginning to end. It is not merely priesthood; there is a third thing. He is the "apostle and high priest of our profession," but also "Son over his own house." Moses was not only a messenger, but a constant manager over God's house. He

was to be faithful ; and generally he was faithful. "But Christ as a Son over his own house." Moses was not over his own house, but over God's. But Christ is not in faithfulness, as a servant, but over His own house. He has an individual interest in it. The good Shepherd sought His own sheep. Christ is carrying on, not only God's house and affairs, but His own house. He takes the immediate care of what is His own : and He is doing it all as God. Thus we have all the nearness of being His own house, and yet it is God who is over it. He never fails in taking care of His house.

In the failure of Moses, we see that He did not get up to this principle of grace. But man can never be brought through the wilderness but by grace. The rod is the authority of Christ, but it is authority which has life-giving power. We need grace, special grace, which will not pass over a single fault. It would not be grace to do so, for it hinders our enjoyment. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Fa-

ther." He will not pass it over, but work in our hearts to show us the root of our sin, that it may not hinder our fellowship. He carries us to the end, but not blindfold, but through faith. Moses did not sanctify God. How? He did not manifest God. But God did sanctify Himself in spite of the unbelief of Moses, by giving all the water needed.

When we see redemption, we see God to be for us. But do you say that all the way? Alas! no. You see failures, and then you think anything but God *for* you. But why? has God changed? No; but you have. Then comes exercise to bring this out, and to deepen the soul in the knowledge and enjoyment of the unchanging love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

END OF VOL. I.