

# WORDS OF TRUTH.

“The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words:  
and that which was written was upright, even words  
of truth” (Eccles. xii. 10).

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EDITED BY JAMES CARTER.

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VOLUME I.

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LONDON:  
—  
JAMES CARTER,  
Aldine Chambers,  
13, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

—  
1909.

## INTRODUCTION.

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**T**HE object of this publication has been already stated in the Editor's announcement, and no more than a few remarks are needed to introduce it to the Christian reader.

In the present day, when the truth of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, is either despised or neglected, it behoves those who have by grace been led to know and believe the truth, to do what they can to call the attention of their fellow-believers to what God has graciously preserved to us. We read in the 2nd chapter of Hebrews, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," and bearing this in mind the Editor will endeavour to select such papers as contain sound teaching on Scriptural subjects, and such as will lead the reader to the Scriptures and to learn more of God's Beloved Son, of whom the Scriptures testify. All true ministry has this for its object, namely, the exaltation of Christ ("He must increase, but I must decrease," as said John the Baptist), and the Editor will pray for guidance so that what is put forth may be owned of God and may redound to His glory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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# WORDS OF TRUTH.

## **A Meditation on the Lord Jesus.**

**T**HE glories of the Lord Jesus are three-fold—personal, official, and moral.

His personal glory He veiled, save when faith discovered it, or an occasion demanded it. His official glory He veiled likewise. He did not walk through the land, as either the divine Son in the bosom of the Father, or as the authoritative Son of David. Such glories were commonly hid, as He passed on through the circumstances of life, day by day.

But His moral glory could not be hid. He could not be less than perfect as He acted, or as He was seen and heard. Moral glory belonged to Him; it was Himself. From its intense excellency it was too bright for the eye of man, and man was under constant exposure and rebuke from it; but there it shone, whether man could bear it or not. It now illuminates every page of the four Evangelists, as it once did every path which He Himself trod on this earth of ours.

But beside this moral glory which ever shone in Him, we see Him going from glory to glory along the whole way from the womb to the heavens. Our Evangelists enable us thus to track Him.

At His birth He comes forth in the glory of untainted humanity. He was “made of a

woman," born in the world. He was, however, "that holy thing." And thus in His person the full glory of *the nature* which He had assumed is seen.

During His childhood and youth, and the whole term of His subjection to His parents at Nazareth, it was the glory of *the law* He was reflecting. Perfect under Moses, He grew in favour with God and man. Moses, in his day, bore on his face the glory of the law; but he bore it only officially or representatively. He could not reflect it essentially or personally, for he was not himself keeping it. He could not do that. Like the feeblest in the camp, he quaked as he heard it. But Jesus kept it, and thus, personally or essentially, bore the reflection of it. Of course, I mean in spirit. He was the sole living type of the perfection which the law demanded.

In due time, however, He has to leave the solitudes of Nazareth. He is baptized, taking the new place to which the voice of God had called Israel. He was thus fulfilling *all* righteousness, that demanded by one call of God as well as by another.

Here, however, we may stand for a moment, and notice something peculiar. He passed away *at once* from under John. His baptism was rather *accompanied* than *succeeded* by His anointing, by His ordination as we may call it, His commission from the Father and

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endowment by the Holy Ghost; for we read, "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up *straightway* out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

This is peculiar. Jesus was not kept one moment under John's baptism. He could not stay there. No fruit of repentance could be looked for from One who had been already perfect under the law. He *went* under this baptism, because He would fulfil all righteousness; He was not *kept* under it, because no fruit of it, no "fruits meet for repentance," could be demanded of Him. As He came up out of the water, the heavens opened upon Him, the Spirit descended, and the voice said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

This was His glory, as I may say, under *John*; peculiar indeed, and perfect in its generation.

Then, as anointed and commissioned, He comes forth into action. It is no longer Nazareth merely, but the whole land. And He comes forth to manifest the divine character. The perfectly obedient One still, honouring the law in every jot and tittle, His business now is to manifest the Father and divine

goodness, amid the miseries and need of a self-ruined world. The glory of the *Image of the Father* now shone in Him, in the ministry He had come forth to fulfil.

It was not merely as perfect under the law He showed Himself to the world. He kept the law Himself, but He did not bring it forth to others. Had He done that, He would have been a lawgiver, as Moses had been. But while the law was given by Moses, it was "grace and truth" that came by Him. In retirement at Nazareth, He bore on Him the glory of the law; abroad, amid the ruins of man, He bore the glory of the Father, displaying the divine character in the behalf of need and wretchedness, though still the obedient One, and as perfect under the law as before. But he that saw Him saw Him that sent Him.

Such was the living, active, ministering Jesus.

As the dead, risen, and ascended Jesus, we next see Him. By His death, all that could maintain God's righteousness, while He was making the sinner righteous, or justifying him, was itself maintained. The cross reflects the assembled glories of mercy and truth, of righteousness and peace. Glory to God, peace to sinners, is the language of it. Full moral glory shines there, while God is accepting and pardoning the vilest. The veil of the temple



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was rent by it, and so were the graves of the saints. It is but just in God (fruit too, I know, of boundless, eternal riches of grace) to justify the sinner that pleads the cross. And thus the glory of *God* now shines in the face of Him that was dead, and is alive again, in the face of the Crucified seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

Surely, I may therefore say, it is as from glory to glory that we see the Lord going all the way, the wondrous, various way, from the womb to the heavens. The glory of *human nature* shone in His person as He was born of the Virgin; the glory of *the law* shone in His behaviour and ways as He grew up and lived for thirty years in solitude, or in subjection to His parents at Nazareth; the glory of the *Fulfiller of all righteousness* shone in His momentary passage through John's baptism; the glory of *the Father* shone in His ministry through the cities and villages of Israel; and the glory of *God* now shines in "the face of Jesus Christ," risen and ascended and seated in the heavens after His crucifixion and death.

And tracing thus His glories from the womb to the heavens, I may remember what another has said upon His ascension. "In the translation of Elijah, the lineaments of the ascension of Christ appear, the ascension of Him who, not rapt in a chariot of fire, nor needing

the cleansing of that fiery baptism, nor requiring a commissioned chariot to bear Him up, did, in the far sublimer calmness of His own indwelling power, rise from the earth, and with His human body pass into the heavenly places."

Very true and beautiful.

But beside this, the Evangelists give us samples of the glories which await Him in the coming day of His power. The transfiguration, the entry into Jerusalem, and the desire of the Greeks at the feast, show us "the kingdom" in certain departments of it. For these several occasions set His glories before us for a moment. The heavens and the earth, the places round the throne on high, Israel and their Jerusalem, with all the Gentiles from the four winds of heaven, are here seen entertaining Him suitably, according to their different estate and capacity.

At the transfiguration, we see Him accepted in the heavenly places, receiving there those honours which such places in their highest department well knew were His, and such honours as those places alone could confer on Him.

He is there glorified with the glory of the celestial. His garments, too, are baptized in the heavenly light. The personages that belong to those realms come forth to attend Him. Moses and Elias are on either side;

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but Jesus, as the sun, is the centre or fountain of the glory which then enshrined them all.

This was His completeness and honour in heaven. He was personally glorified there, and His train filled the temple.

At the entry into Jerusalem we see Him accepted in Israel, receiving in like manner such honours as Israel could confer upon Him. The owner of the ass acknowledges His higher claim as Lord. The multitude, it is true, cannot baptize His garments in glory, as the heavens afore had done, but they can spread their own garments under His feet, and surround Him with the joys of a feast of tabernacles (Lev. xxiii.) There are no glorified ones to wait on Him, to come forth from their homes of glory to greet and honour Him; but His citizens will hail Him as their King.

And the Greeks, the representatives of the nations, are ready to wait at the Feast, to wait on Him as the Lord of the Feast—as Zechariah both anticipates and requires (Zech. viii. 20-23; xiv. 16). The Lord refused this at that time. This is true (John xii.) His hour had not come. He would for the present be the *Seed under the ground*, rather than the *Sheaf in the day of harvest*. All that is so; but still the Greeks were ready in their place, as the heavens were ready in the day of the Son of David.

But all these were but for a moment. We

know that in spite of this passing exultation of the multitude, they and their rulers quickly denied Him; yea, and the enmity of the nations is shown us at the cross, in company with the unbelief of Israel. Still, His glories did thus shine across these spots and these occasions, that we might gather them up as pledge-fragments, or earnest, of what awaits Him in the day when heaven and earth and the creation of God in their several ways shall tell of Him, and own His presence in a world worthy of Him. And what a hope it is, had we but hearts for Him, to see Him in a world that will be worthy of Him!

But we do not know these glories as we ought, and to which the pages of the Evangelists introduce us. Above all, we do not use this Image of God with that simple faith which it claims. We have our own thoughts about God, and they prove, more or less, to be the loss and sorrow of our souls. But the Apostle could tell us the value of this Image. He could testify how this glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ rises on the heart, as of old the word which commanded light to shine out of darkness rose on the creation (2 Cor. iv. 6). And we should charge our hearts no longer to take up with their own religious thoughts and devotions, but to be occupied with this Image of God, and find our object and our rest in it by faith.

## **The Position of the Church, and Her Relationship with Christ.**

**T**HE Church is something infinitely precious to Christ. He "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25-27.)

This is a revelation that makes us feel the importance which God attaches to what He calls the Church. What an object of the affections of Christ, of His care, and how glorious will be the accomplishment of the counsels of God respecting this Church! What a privilege to be part of it!

This passage teaches us, moreover, that there is, in the union of Christ and the Church, all the intimacy that exists between a husband and a wife beloved; a feeble figure, after all, of the reality of this great mystery; that we are thus members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones; that the Church holds to Christ the place which Eve held with regard to Adam, the figure of Him that was to come; who was associated with Adam in the enjoyment of all that had been conferred on him by God (Gen. ii. 21-24).

It is well to remark that it is no question in this passage of mutual affection, nor of anything connected with fleshly imaginations. It is the love of Christ only, perfect according to His own heart, before the existence even of the Church; having, as the object of His labour of love, the presentation of the Church to Himself, without spot, and glorious. All is on the side of Christ Himself, and the object perfect according to His heart.

It is natural to suppose, that what holds so prominent a place in the mind of God should be found more than once in the Word; and such we shall find to be the case.

At the same time, it will be easily understood, by the nature of the thing itself, that this position is quite peculiar; that such an association with Christ is a special object of the counsels and purposes of God; for the place of a bride, like that of Eve, is a very special one. She is not the inheritance; she is more than a child, however dear, as a child, she may be to the Father. It is a higher thing than being God's people, though both may be true at the same time.

It is difficult to imagine anything more closely linked with self than one's own wife, one's own body. "No man," says the apostle, to express it, "ever yet hated his own flesh" (v. 29). It is one's self.

It must be evident to the reader that, from

such a relationship must flow immensely practical consequences; because it is connected, at the same time, with the closest affections, and the most absolute duties. The Lord Himself expresses the force of the position of His Church, the first time He speaks of it in a formal manner after the commencement of its existence, when He says, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" (Acts ix. 4).

Let us notice the three chief points presented by Ephes. v., which has suggested these reflections.

First, Christ "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." It is redeemed at the cost of His blood, of His life, of Himself.

Having thus purchased it exclusively for Himself, He begins, secondly, to fashion it, to sanctify it, that it may be according to His own heart's desire; that He may,

In the third place, present it to Himself a glorious Church, without the least thing unbecoming the glory, or that might offend the eye or the heart, of her divine Bridegroom.

There is here a testimony to the divinity of Jesus, so much the more remarkable as it is only by the way; and the allusion is made to a known truth. God, having formed Eve, presented her to the first Adam; but Christ Himself presents the Church to Himself; because, if He be the Second Adam, He is at the same time the One who can present it to

Himself as being the author of its existence, of its beauty, and of the perfection in which it must appear in heaven, to be worthy of such a Bridegroom, and of the glory that is there.

Whatever may be the circumstances through which the Church is called to pass, she is always considered as a whole, as much while she is being purified by the Word upon earth, as when she is presented glorious to her Bridegroom in heaven. The redemption of this body by the blood of the cross was made upon earth. Her purification through the Word, by the Spirit, also takes place on earth. The glorious result, at the return of Christ, will take place in heaven, for which place she will have been made ready.

Although the marriage has not yet taken place, the relationship has always existed as to its rights. I do not speak merely as regards the eternal counsels of God, but in fact as to the knowledge and the duties of those who were called. Since Christ purchased the Church to Himself (I speak of the fact, and historically now, always allowing time for the communication of the truth as to this, by the Holy Ghost), the Church has been His, as regards the conscience of those who were called to the enjoyment of this position. The relationship exists; and as Christ has always been faithful, the Church ought to have been so also. Her purification, on the part of



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Christ, had necessarily reference to this relationship, as this passage formally proves. It ought to have been viewed in the same light by Christians, by those who, alas! may fail in this relationship as in all others. But their responsibility is in connection with the obligations that flow from it.

The manner in which this truth must act (1) upon the knowledge of an accomplished salvation, and (2) upon sanctification, as well as (3) upon the joy of hope, is plain.

1. For with regard to the first, the existence of the Church is based on the fact that Christ has loved it, and given Himself for it. So that its purchase, its salvation, and the gracious perfect love of Him who redeemed it, with the end in view, which cannot fail, of presenting it in glory to Himself, form the basis of its whole life, of its every-day relations.

It is not a people put to the test, by a rule given. The Church is the object of a perfect work, through which Christ purchased it to Himself, when it was enslaved to Satan, defiled and guilty. It has no other responsibility, as the Church, but that which is based on its being the purchase of Christ.

This tells her, no doubt, that she ought to be entirely His; but if she ought to be His, it is because she is so already. The Christian, instructed of God in this doctrine, has the

peaceful assurance (an assurance which gives a calmness that is the basis of the sweetest affections) that he belongs to Christ, according to God's perfect love, and the efficacy of a work in which Christ (that His heart might have satisfaction in the object which His Father had given Him) could not fail.

2. The influence of this truth in the conscience is equally great as regards sanctification; for it is the purification of that which already belongs to Christ in an absolute manner, in order that it may be fit to live with Him for ever, a purification which extends consequently to the thoughts, the affections, and the manner of viewing things in all respects. Being wholly His, the Church has to do with Him in each movement of the heart, in each sentiment; if not, she fails in her relationship with Him, in every circumstance in which it is not so.

As to the result which He has in view, He will certainly no more fail in that (thanks be unto God!) than He has with regard to the redemption. He will present the Church to Himself without spot or wrinkle. But the heart of the Christian ought to respond to *that work*.

3. The influence of the relationship of the Church with Christ upon her hope, is no less great. She is outside the judgments which the coming of the Lord will bring upon the

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world, outside the course of the prophetic events which will take place in a world of which she forms no longer part. She awaits the happy moment when the Lord will call her, taking her to Himself to realize the glory and the joy of the relationship which she already knows by grace.

Such is the position of the Church, and her relationship with Christ.

## The Standing and State of the Believer.

**I**N Ephesians i. we have our standing in Christ. This must not be weakened.

There must be no turning aside from our place before God in Him. There I get to know that all I was, as the old man, is for faith gone. I see that I am dead, and that my life is hid with Christ in God.

In the flesh, there is no good thing; nothing but sin, will, lusts; which lead me away from God. But I believe the testimony of God, and see that Christ died, and that, by death for sins and to sin, the entire evil thing for faith is put an end to.

The next step is that, an end being put to me as the old man, Christ becomes in me the new man, and I am put in the presence of God as in Christ Himself, entitled to consider the old as done away. This is my place and

standing before God. It is not only that sin is put away, but my position before Him is in consequence of this.

Nor is this the only thing; for I know that, not only am I in Christ, but Christ is in me. These two things cannot be separated; but they are quite different. The one expresses my standing, the other my state.

The Lord Himself said, before He left the world, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (John xiv. 20). He has brought me into the standing; and this we have in Ephesians i., ii.

Christ is looked at [in these chapters] as having lain in death, but now raised; and we are raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him. There we are; and such is our position as connected with the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. i. 17, etc.) But in chapter iii. 14 it is, "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Again, in chapter i., it is written, "That we should be to the praise of His glory"; whereas in chapter iii. the prayer is founded on "the riches of His glory" (v. 16).

In the first chapter, God is called "the Father of glory." Here the standing is taken as a settled thing.

But we have something further: "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by

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His Spirit in the inner man ” (chapter iii. 16). Here it is state, not standing. We do not ask God to raise us up; that is an accomplished fact, and is my standing. But here the apostle prays that something may be accomplished; that, “ according to the riches of His glory,” we may be “ strengthened with might by His Spirit.” The condition of the soul must answer to the place into which it has been brought, “ that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God ” (vv. 17-19).

I know that Christ is in me, and I in Him; but I ought not to be satisfied without the consciousness of enjoying Him. “ That Christ may dwell in your hearts ” is a prayer as to state, not a declaration of standing. What we have to watch is, not to unsettle the truth of the standing, but to apply the blessedness of the standing to the judgment of the state.

Thus, if you say you have fellowship with the Father and the Son, I say, Come, let us see. I saw you laughing just now at foolishness in the street. Is not that having fellowship with a fool?

Thus it is one applies the standing to judge the state. And here it is that the advocacy of Christ comes in, and connects the perfectness of the standing with the state. Can I have a better place and standing than in Christ? I am righteous as He is righteous. My sins are all gone. And what now? I have been brought into the light, as God is in the light. But you sinned? Alas! yes. Is this the light? No. But are you going to put me back under law? No! I am going to make you own that you need, and have, an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. The condition of the soul does not depend on standing, but on present grace.

If a person says, "I am in Christ, and I am satisfied," it is to be feared, and very likely, that he is not in Christ. As to doctrine he may be clear enough; but if he really were in Him he could not be satisfied without communion. "Knowledge puffeth up"; but the effect of being in the light is to make us value not the place only, but fellowship with the Father and the Son (with one another too, of course; but this comes in by the way).

The way it works is this; the very essence of the condition of a soul in a right state is conscious dependence. Now, one may use the fact of completeness in Christ to make one independent. Two things are implied in dependence: first, the sense that we cannot do

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without God in a single instance; and, secondly, that He is "for us." In other words, there is confidence in His love and power on our behalf, as well as the consciousness that without Him we can do nothing (see John xv. 5).

That is the reason why you will find constant reference to mercy when Scripture speaks of, or to, the individual. When the Church is addressed, "grace and peace" only are mentioned. Only in Jude we have, "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied." And then, in verse 21, "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," where the departure of Christendom is contemplated, and when things were rapidly going on to judgment. We find therefore the saints exhorted to keep themselves "in the love of God." This is state again, and it shows that when the Christian profession had slipped, and was slipping, more personal dependence comes in urgently. The moment I let this in, I let all the light in, and gradually my eyes get to see clearly. Christ is that light; and when we have to do with Him the subtlety of evil is seen; but, besides the light, grace and present dependence are needed.

Let us delight in dependence, that a Person above us should minister to us, and care for us.

What should we think of a child with its

father and mother, who yet said, "I do not like to have anything to do with them"? Should we not say, "These are not the feelings of a child. You may think yourself a fine man in being independent, but you are not like a father's child"?

Again, in Ephesians iii., it is not our being glorified with Him, but that God may be glorified. Thus, in verse 21, "Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus." But this state is produced by Christ's dwelling in us by faith. It is not a question of the standing we have in Christ. This carries full, practical blessedness with it, as it is said, "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Whereas in chapter i. 22 the point is, that God "hath put all things under Christ's feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

Hence also in Ephesians i. it "is the exceeding greatness of God's power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead," etc.; whereas in chapter iii. it is, "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh *in* us," not the power that has wrought *for* us in Christ's resurrection, raising us up with Him.



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When the heart gets this, according to Ephesians iii., it is safer, very jealous of itself, and in a lowly condition; in a word, it is with God, instead of without Him.

I am perfect. I want nothing; that is my standing in Christ; but if I look for fellowship, I want God every day and every moment. But if I think of standing; suppose you have paid my debts, and given me a capital besides, I have got the thing, and want you no more for it. So I do not want God to give the place He has put me in before Himself in Christ, but I do want Him for communion; and if I find an evil thought, I go to Him for grace to get rid of it.

Do you want to be perfect in Christ before God, and not have a bit of communion? The work is done. If all your sins are not put away, they never can be; for Christ cannot die again. Not only a sin-offering has been made, but sin has been put away. This is what I call my standing, in part at least; and it is as perfect as God can make it.

That by which God has been glorified is my place before God. The best robe is on me. With me it is all grace; with Him it is His own glory. But are you to be a stock? Is there to be no fellowship? Not only there ought to be fellowship, but your joy should be full.

Come now, and answer like an honest man, Is your joy full? No. Well, but this is what it ought to be, and it is what we find in the end of Ephesians iii., Christ dwelling in the heart by faith; not Christ our life, though this last is a blessed truth; but that we may be able to comprehend all the effects produced by the reality of Christ's blessed presence, His being in us thus.

What an unlimited extent of blessing this supposes! (*vv.* 18, 19). When the standing is known, it is but the beginning of Christian life. If I am saved, I am inside the door; but inside I want to know something of what is within. First, let the soul be grounded in that which is the substance of the whole truth; then if a person is not kept in a state corresponding to the standing, he may do worse even than the unbeliever. The devil may make him for a time cast off everything.

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### **“We have seen the Lord.”**

“But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.”—John xx. 24, 25.

**T**HERE is a word in the Scriptures which says, “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son

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Jesus Christ our Lord ” (1 Cor. i. 9). I would say to you, Dwell on, rest on, the acceptance of “ that finished work,” and then go on to learn more and more of Him who has done the work for you.

If you look at Romans viii., and other parts of Scripture, what do you find? That you are made “ sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.” Have you ever dwelt in delight on that word—“ sons of God ”?—not sons of men, creatures that might perish, but “ sons ” of the holy, eternal, unchangeable God! It is something too great for the heart of man to conceive. “ Heirs of God,” “ co-heirs with Christ ”!

If these truths had full sway on our hearts, what would become of us? How the world would be as an idle nothing! We wait the confirmation of our pretensions before men; but we should walk in the consciousness of being in possession of that which is unfading, amidst everything that is fading, of knowing the truth when everything around is but a lie.

This chapter does not tell us of the work of the Lord Jesus, excepting what is implied by His showing His disciples His hands and His side (*v.* 20). But there is a great deal about the Lord in it, and about the affections of others being drawn out towards Him.

In looking forward to the appearing of the “ morning without clouds ” (2 Sam. xxiii. 4),

what is the brightest part of it to you? Is it not the thought of being the everlasting companions of the Lamb, the following Him whithersoever He goeth?

Let me ask you to turn with me to John xvi. 16: "A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father."

It is very difficult to understand this (were the disciples' thoughts), we cannot tell what He saith: "A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father." The Lord then speaks of that which depended on His going to the Father (see vv. 20-24).

I would now ask you to turn to a verse in John xiv.: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (v. 18).

The Lord was going to pass out of the world altogether, but at that period, when "the world seeth Me no more," He says, "but ye see Me." We should pass on into everlasting companionship with Jesus. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (v. 21). I need not say that this is spoken as true of us now through the Spirit.

"Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest Thyself unto

us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him ” (*vv.* 22, 23). The heart is never to be satisfied—there is a void in it that cannot be filled up—by anything, except the presence of Jesus.

Look at the Lord’s mysterious manifestations of Himself to His disciples during the forty days previous to His ascension. Very varied were they, and intended, I believe, to be descriptive of the way in which, during His absence, He would manifest Himself according to the varied need of His people. Mary was in one condition (*v.* 14), the disciples with the closed doors in another, Thomas in a third; but in each condition the Lord met and satisfied them with His presence.

There is such a thing, beloved, as knowing the Lord so with us as to be able to realize that word, “ Your joy no man taketh from you ” (*John xvi.* 22).

The Lord had been taken from these disciples. Mary weeps at His grave. The two are sad in going to Emmaus. All their thoughts are about this—the Lord is gone. They had hung their hearts and fortunes on Him; they had been attracted by His grace; they owned Him to be the Son of God: whatever they looked for and expected, they

expected with Him. They were bankrupt, broken-hearted, dispirited. Their Lord, who was their joy, their hope, their everything, was gone! The great day of solemnities at Jerusalem passed over the grave of Jesus. What a picture of religion without life! "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice" (John xvi. 20).

The "little while" over, their "sorrow is turned into joy." He comes back to be their everlasting companion. If you could throw yourself into the disciples' circumstances of sorrow at the loss of their Lord, and then of their proportionate joy at His return, you would learn what should be your uninterrupted known joy in having Him to be your everlasting companion. You may have trial and adversity of every description, but still the word is, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you" (John xiv. 18).

Just consider, besides that cherished faith which you have in the indwelling of the Spirit in you individually, there is another truth equally important; namely, that the Holy Spirit dwells in the midst of you as gathered according to that word, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (1 Cor. vi. 19; Eph. ii. 22).

When so gathered, we are called on to expect the Lord in our midst. If we wanted

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a comment on such a passage, I would say, We find it here. What was it that brought the disciples together? Not the sense of their common bankruptcy, but their common love to Jesus. They had lost Him whom they loved, *and they came to speak about Him. Whether it was in the expectation of meeting Him as being really risen or not, still it was the name of Jesus which brought them there.*

But there is such a thing as grieving the Spirit.

If it be true that the Lord dwells in the midst of us, and if we come together in the expectation of His presence, we should be able to say when we part, through the sense of His presence, either in joy or in searching power, “ We have seen the Lord.”

What was Mary waiting for? In the midst of much ignorance and obscurity, her Lord was her object. She would rather have Him dead, than not have Him at all. She wept at His grave, though not questioning about the forgiveness of her sins.

If you do not know the realized presence of the Lord, weep for that—that your souls are not knowing abiding fellowship with Jesus. This weeping has nothing to do with the forgiveness of sins. Do you know the presence of the Lord with you in your assemblies? Do you know it as you walk together two by two? Do you know it, above all, in secret? Be it

your unbelief, your haughtiness of spirit, or aught else, that is hindering, this is the proper reason for pouring out your soul in weeping to the Lord. You are washed, you are cleansed, you are justified (1 Cor. vi. 11), but if you have not that which is proper to a pardoned sinner—the known companionship of Jesus—weep for that!

If you meet together without being able to say afterwards, to those who are at the door or absent (like Thomas), “We have seen the Lord”—weep for that! And it should be equally so in our private intercourse, or when alone—the Spirit revealing Christ to us, opening Him to the delight of our hearts, enabling us to say, “We have seen the Lord.” May we so walk that the promise of the abode of the Father and His Son Jesus Christ may be realized by us daily.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John xiv. 23).

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Under the law, God *demand*ed righteousness *from* man. In the gospel, God *reveals* righteousness *to* man.

Under the law, righteousness was on the principle of *works*; in the gospel, it is on the principle of *faith*. How blessed a contrast!



## **The Living Link with a Living Christ.**

**T**HE Word of God links the soul with Christ as He was and is; it just gives one a *written Christ*.

See in Matt. v.: "Blessed are the poor in spirit"; and who so poor in spirit as Christ? "Blessed are the pure in heart"; and who so pure as He? "Blessed are the meek"; and who so meek as He? "Blessed are the peace-makers"; He was the great peace-maker, the very Prince of Peace (*vv.* 1-9; Isa. ix. 6).

The first thing, of course, is to have Him as the living Christ for the salvation of the soul; and then, through the written Word, we get the spiritual perception of what this Christ is. It is the simple expression of Christ Himself, of Him who was the express image of God, who "was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the *only begotten* of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John i. 14); and when we thus get the Spirit's testimony to Christ, the heart clings to Him as the "holy" and the "true" (Rev. iii. 7).

Thus the Christ found in the Word governs the affections; for we dare not, and would not, be without, or depart from, this written Christ. This living link to a living Christ is the only safeguard against them that would seduce you.

A holy Christ, in whom we have the truth, is the blessed strong moral assurance of the soul when a mixed and lifeless Christianity is powerless against delusion, and when the same causes make the professing church incapable of discerning a plain path, when there is not faith enough to do without the world, and mixture is everywhere.

Then a holy and true Christ is the assuring guide and stay of the soul. To Timothy Paul said, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. iii. 15); and surely there can be no better knowledge to be got than the knowledge of Christ.

This was the point in John's epistle. The father in Christ knew "Him that is from the beginning"; he could tell what the true Christ was; he knew "Him that is *holy*, Him that is *true*."

It is not *development* that is needed, but merely the getting back to the simplicity that is in Christ, to know Him truly that was first revealed, Him that was from the beginning.

Therefore if my heart is attached to the Christ of the written Word, the Christ that I have loved down here is the same Christ that I am waiting for to come and take me up there.

## The Divine Origin and Unity of the Scriptures.

ILLUSTRATED BY QUOTATIONS FROM THE OLD  
TESTAMENT FOUND IN THE NEW.

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”—Luke xxiv. 27.

THE Lord's wisdom in dealing with the Sadducees of His day, may well be our pattern in dealing with a like generation in this day. “Ye do err,” said He to them, “not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matt. xxii.).

They presented a difficulty, as they judged it to be, an insurmountable difficulty; but it was no such thing to Him. Scripture He bowed to, and the power of God He asserted. Scripture was His rule of thought and judgment; and He could rest in the power of God as that which would make every jot and tittle of it good.

This was His answer to them at once, His immediate rebuke of them. And it was enough. His Spirit afterwards in the apostle would commend the saints to God, and to the word of His grace: so now, would He Himself lean on God and His word. It was enough for Him that God had spoken (*see* Acts xx. 32).

But after this He shows these Sadducees that

the difficulty they suggested was simply an imagination of their own, and not a part of the Scripture, or the revelation of God. And then, in closing with them, He exposes their unbelief by the light of Scripture, rebuking their denial of resurrection by a passage taken from Exod. iii.; thus again honouring Scripture as the authoritative rule of all our thoughts.

But this only as I pass on to my present subject, namely, the fact that quotations from the Old Testament are largely found in the New.

These *quotations* from the Old Testament, cited, as they are, in all parts of the New, with many and many a glance, or tacit, unexpressed reference, link all the parts of the sacred volume together, giving it a character of unity and completeness.

The *contents* of the volume do the same; they also give unity and completeness to it; for they constitute a history (with incidental matters by the way), a series of events which stretch from the beginning to the end, from the creation to the kingdom.

And *prophecies* in the Old Testament of events in the New act in the same way as quotations in the New of passages in the Old. And thus, in the mouth of several witnesses of the highest dignity, we have the oneness and the consistency, the unity and completeness

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of the Book, from first to last, fully set forth and established.

But this simple fact tells us, further, that all the parts of this wondrous volume are the breathing of one and the same Spirit. And again, the contents themselves speak the same. The moral glories which so brightly, so abundantly, and so variously shine in them witness that God is their source.

This constitutes the "self-evidencing light and power of the Holy Scriptures," as another has expressed it. And thus the divine *origin* of the Book, as well as its divine *unity* and *consistency*, is established; and we hold to these truths in the face of all the insult that is put upon them by unreasonable and wicked men. Oppositions of criticism, falsely so called, only spend themselves in vain, like angry waves on the sea-shore. God Himself has set the bounds, and they only return upon themselves, foaming out their own shame.

In the progress of the New Testament Scriptures, the Lord and the Holy Ghost, each in His several way and season, use the Scriptures of the Old.

As to the Lord, we may find Him doing this in several different ways.

1. He observes them obediently, ordering His life and behaviour, and forming His character (if I may so speak) by them, and according to them.

2. He uses them as His weapons of war, or shield of defence, when assailed by the tempter, or by the men of the world.

3. He avers and avows their divine authority and origin, and their indestructible character; and that, too, in every jot and tittle of them.

4. He treats them as authoritative and commanding, when He teaches His disciples, or reasons with gainsayers.

5. He fulfils them. This, among other illustrations of it, is finely seen in John xix. 28-30, where the Lord seems as though He were calling Scripture to mind; and first recollecting that one very short passage of it had not yet been realized, He refuses to withdraw Himself from the scene of suffering till it was; and then, all being fulfilled as was written, just said, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost.

In such ways as these, the Lord honours the Scriptures of the Old Testament. What a sight! What a precious fact! How blessed to see Him in such relationship to the Word of God: for that word is to ourselves the warrant and witness of all the confidence and liberty and peace we know before God!

We read the 119th Psalm with delight, there tracing *a saint's* relation to Scripture; and we know it to be edifying to mark the breathings of the soul under the drawings and teachings and inspirings of the Holy Ghost. But it is

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still more affecting, a more edifying thing, to trace and mark, through the four Evangelists, the relations to the same Scriptures into which the *Lord Jesus* puts Himself.

Then, when the ministry of the Lord is over, when the Son has returned to heaven, and the Spirit comes down, He is seen (as in the apostles whom He fills to write the epistles) to do the same service for us; and in His way, to put Himself in connection with the Old Testament Scriptures, as the Lord had just been doing. For in all the epistles, as I may say, we get quotations from them.

And, here let me add, there is no limit to this. These quotations are found in every part of the New Testament, and are taken from every part of the Old. They are found in Matthew, and on to the Apocalypse, and are taken from Genesis to Malachi. And this is done very largely; so that in the structure of the divine volume, we have nothing less than the closest, fullest, and most intricate interweaving of all parts of it together; the end, too, returning to the beginning, and the beginning anticipating the end. So that, in a sense, we are in all parts of it when we are in any part of it, though the variety of its communications is infinite.

*(To be concluded, v.v.)*

## **“No more Conscience of Sins.”**

### HEBREWS X.

1. For the law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

4. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

5. Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me;

6. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure:

7. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.

8. Above, when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the law;

9. Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

12. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God;

13. From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.



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15. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us ; for after that he had said before,

16. This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds will I write them ;

17. And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

**T**HE object of redemption is to bring us nigh to God, as it is written, “ Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God ” (1 Peter iii. 18).

But what is our state before God when thus brought nigh? The right understanding of this is most important. It is impossible that we could be happy, even in the presence of God, if there still existed a thought of His being against us. I need the perfect settled assurance that there is no sin upon me before Him.

The sense of responsibility always makes a person unhappy when there is any question as to sin standing against him : see the case of a servant and his master, or that of a child and its parent ; the conscience is miserable if there be upon it the sense of that which will be judged.

So God’s presence must be indeed terrible, unless the conscience be perfectly good. If there be happiness for me there, it can only be in the sense of His favour, and of the com-

pleteness with which we have been brought back, the perfect assurance of "the worshipper once purged," having "no more conscience of sins."

God speaks to us according to His estimate of our standing: it may not be our heart's experience. There is a distinctness between the operation of the Spirit of God in bringing me unto Jesus (bearing witness to me of God's love, and of the efficacy of what Christ has done) and His operation in my soul in producing in me the love of God.

That which is the subject of experience is what is produced in my own soul; whereas that which gives me peace is His testimony to the work of Jesus. A Christian who doubts the Father's love to him, and who looks for peace to that which passes in his own heart, is doubting God's truth.

The gospel is the revelation God has given of Himself; it displays the love of God towards us, and what is in His heart. I can trust the declaration of what is in God's heart, and not what I think of myself.

The apostle speaks of a due time: "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans v. 6). It is almost always true that there is in us a terrible process of breaking the heart, in order that we may be brought to the ascertainment that we are lost and ruined sinners; but the

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gospel begins at the close of God's experience of man's heart, and calls us from that in order that we should have joy and peace from the experience of what is in His heart.

The leaving of man alone before the Flood, and putting him under the law in Canaan, were just God's putting him to the test; and indeed every trial of his nature and tendency, up to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, had the same object.

One would have thought, after Adam had been turned out of paradise for transgression, that would have been a sufficient warning; but his first-born became a murderer. We should have supposed that the Flood, which swept off the workers of iniquity, would have repressed, for a time at least, by the terror of judgment, the outbreak of sin; but we find immediately afterwards Noah getting drunk, and Ham dishonouring his father.

The devouring fire of Sinai, which made even Moses fear and quake, seemed sufficient to subdue the rebel heart, and make it bow beneath God's hand; but the golden calf was the awful evidence that the heart of man was “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer. xvii. 9).

Again, in Canaan, a part of the world was tried to the utmost to be cultivated, but it would not do. A tree producing bad fruit was the only type by which God could set Israel

forth (Isa. v.). He might dig about it, and dung it; but, after all these efforts, it could only bring forth more bad fruit.

At last He said, "I will send My beloved Son: it may be they will reverence Him when they see Him" (Luke xx. 13), but man preferred having the world for himself, and so crucified Jesus. Looking to His cross, Christ said, "Now is the judgment of this world" (John xii. 31).

At the crucifixion of Jesus, the veil was rent (Matt. xxvii. 51), and the holiest opened. What God was within the veil then shone out in all its fulness. When grace reveals this to me, I get confidence. I see God holy and expecting holiness; quite true; but the peace of God is in knowing what He is to us, and not what we are to Him. He knows all the evil of our hearts.

Nothing can be worse than the rejection of Jesus; man's hatred is shown out there, and God's love to the full. The wretched soldier who pierced His side with a spear (in the cowardly consciousness that he could with impunity insult the meek and lowly Jesus), let out, in that disgraceful act, the blood and water which were able to cleanse even such as he. Here God's heart was revealed, what He is to the sinner; AND THIS IS OUR SALVATION.

*(To be concluded, D.V.)*

## **The Word made Flesh.**

### JOHN I.

**T**H**ERE** is one remark that furnishes a most important key to the Gospel of John, which is illustrated very simply and manifestly in this first chapter.

The object of the Holy Ghost is to assert the personal glory of Jesus; and hence it is that there is not perhaps a single chapter in the New Testament that presents our Lord in so many different aspects, yet all personal, as the opening chapter of this gospel.

His divine glory is carefully guarded. He is said, in the most distinct language, to be God as to His nature, but withal a Man. He is God no less than the Father is, or the Holy Ghost; but He is the Word in a way in which the Father and the Holy Ghost were not.

It was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who alone was the Word of God. He only after a personal sort expressed God. The Father and the Holy Ghost remained in their own unseeable majesty.

The Word had for His place to express God clearly; and this belonged to Him, it is evident, as a distinctive personal glory. It was not merely that He was the Word when He came into the world, but "in the beginning was the Word" when there was no creature.

Before anything came into being that was

made, the Word "was in the beginning with God"; not merely *in* God, as if merged or lost in God, but He had a distinct personal subsistence before a creature existed. He "was in the beginning with God." This is of immense importance, and with these truths our gospel opens.

Then we find His creation glory stated afterwards. "All things were made by Him."

There is nothing which more stamps God to be God than giving existence to that which had none, causing to exist by His own will and power. Now, all things exist by the Word; and so emphatically true is this that the Spirit has added, "And without Him was not anything made that was made."

But there was that which belonged to the Lord Jesus that was not made: "In Him was life."

It was not only that He could cause a life to exist that had not existed before, but there was a life that belonged to Him from all eternity. "In Him was life."

Not that this life began to be: all else, all creation, began to be; and it was He that gave them the commencement of their existence. But "in Him was life," a life that was not created, a life that was therefore divine in its nature.

It was the reality and the manifestation of this life which were of prime importance to

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man. Everything else that had been since the beginning of the world was only a creature; but "in Him was life." Man was destined to have the display of this life on earth. But it was in Him before He came among men. The life was not called "the light" of angels, but "of men."

Nowhere do we find that eternal life is created. The angels are never said to have life in the Son of God. They were kept by divine power, and holy. Theirs is a purely creature life; whereas it is a wonderful fact of revelation that we who believe have the eternal life that was in Jesus Christ the Son of God, and are therefore said to be partakers of the divine nature. *This is in no way true of an angel.*

It is not that we for a moment cease to be creatures, but we have what is above the creature in Christ the Son of God.

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### **Christian Standing and Condition.**

**T**HE possession of eternal life in Christ Jesus risen and glorified, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, are blessings which characterize Christianity, and it is consequently of the utmost importance for the child of God to apprehend these truths. The two are intimately connected, as we shall see.

As to what we are by nature there is no room

for doubt : “ They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Nor will improvement or reformation gain acceptance with God, for “ that which is born of the flesh is flesh.”

Even the knowledge of forgiveness of sins does not touch the root of the evil in us. Supposing the fruit of a tree is offensive, to strip off the fruit may remove the offence for the time being, but will not prevent a fresh crop appearing.

Just so, many a soul truly trusting in the blood of Christ, but knowing only the forgiveness of sins, fails to enjoy settled peace. Fresh sins and daily failure trouble the soul, and there is a constant recurrence to the blood to get relief for the conscience.

What, then, is needed, is not only forgiveness for our sins, but the judgment of our state, and a new nature given, a new life capable of enjoying God, and of bringing forth fruit pleasing to God.

All this we have in Christ. He has not only borne “ our sins in His own body on the tree,” but God has condemned sin in Him on the cross (1 Peter ii. 24; Rom. viii. 3), so that faith can say, “ I am crucified with Christ ” : adding also, “ Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ” (Gal. ii. 20). This, and nothing less, is our place in virtue of the work of Christ. “ Even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him



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should not perish, but have ” (not merely forgiveness of sins, or even the new birth), but “ eternal life ” (John iii. 15).

What is it to have eternal life? It is to have *Christ*. “ He that hath the Son hath life.” “ This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is *in His Son* ” (1 John v. 11, 12).

Observe, it is the gift of God, and it is “ *in His Son.*” It is not in our keeping, but is secured for us in Christ. So we read, “ When Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear ” (Col. iii. 4).

Faith believes the record of God, receives Christ, and passes from death unto life; as Jesus says, “ He that heareth *My word*, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ” [judgment, it should be], “ but is passed from death unto life ” (John v. 24).

How simple! May it be yours, dear reader, if not sure of your portion in Christ, to receive what God gives in the simplicity of faith. He has given His word for the purpose of removing every difficulty. “ These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that *ye may know* that ye have eternal life ” (1 John v. 13).

It is important to observe, that eternal life is in *a risen Christ*. It could be said of Him in incarnation, “ In Him was life ” (John i.

4); but man could not be brought into association or union with Him except on the ground of redemption. As He walked here below He was ever the holy One—"holy, harmless, undefiled, *separate* from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26).

How could any link be formed between Him, as such, and those who were "dead in trespasses and sins"? Obviously it could not be. There must be the entire setting aside in judgment of all that pertained to the first man, ere there could be living association with "the second Man, the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 47). So Jesus says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it *abideth alone*; but *if it die*, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24).

In marvellous grace He took our place, and died in our stead. But that is not all. He rose again, and we are brought into His place before God. That comes out in John xx. Immediately that He has risen from the dead He can say, "Go to *my brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God," thus placing them in the same position as Himself with reference to God.

How sweet to hear Him thus, at the earliest possible moment, *associating* His loved ones with Himself! Can we doubt that He looked forward with joy to that moment? We hear

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Him saying, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 50).

This was now over: the pressure of that hour was removed; sin was gone from before God; redemption was accomplished; and now the love of God could flow out with unhindered force. What is the result? In the first place *peace*—"Peace be unto you." Blessed result! And then "He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

This remarkable scene reminds us at once of the manner in which Adam received life. The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. We know how soon the life was forfeited, and how, as fallen, Adam became the head of a fallen race.

Jesus, then, as the risen One, Head of the new creation, communicates resurrection-life to His disciples; a life, too, that was to be in the power of the Holy Ghost. This is more than being merely quickened or born again. The new birth was always essential before a soul could have any knowledge of God. The disciples were already quickened souls, yet Jesus says, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John x. 10).

The life more abundantly is now being realized; but it is in resurrection. It was some-

thing quite new in character and quality. It would not now be divine life struggling with difficulties, producing desires after God, and groaning with the pressure of evil surroundings, but life in the power of resurrection, where nothing can enter to disturb the peace or destroy the relationship into which He who is the life has brought the objects of His love.

Yet, in the present day, is there not many a soul truly quickened that does not know the peace which John xx. unfolds? Although born of God, it sees no further than the cross as meeting its guilt, and consequently is troubled with all sorts of difficulties and fears.

This surely is not the Christian state; for life in resurrection, consequent upon the complete judgment of the old man, is unknown. Such a soul has really never entered upon Christian ground. It is a stranger alike to the privileges and the experiences of that state.

But while the scene of John xx. resembles in some respects that of Genesis ii., it is also its contrast. Adam's life was held under conditions, and rightly so. This life is one that has already been fully tested; and not only so, but is made good for the believer on the other side of death and judgment; therefore, beyond the reach of either. This is what we get in Romans viii., "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

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Why? Because judgment has already been executed on the cross. Sin has been condemned in the flesh, and the One who bore its judgment is alive again. The believer, therefore, who is "in Christ" is "not in the flesh" (Rom. viii. 9); that is, is not in the condition or state to which sin and judgment attached. He has died with Christ, and with Him is out of it. He is now under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which has made him free from the law of sin and death (Rom. viii. 2).

Practically, he must learn to "walk in newness of life," reckoning himself to be dead unto sin (Rom. vi. 11). The flesh is in the believer, and will be so long as he is here; but faith is never occupied with it (save as judging it), but always with Christ.

This gives power for walk; and in so far as the flesh is practically kept in the place of death, the lovely fruits of the new life will appear.

But as to the standing, faith gives to me to see what I am in a risen Christ, and judges self, or the old I, according to the measure of its utter condemnation in the cross. Christ on the cross is the answer to my old state, and Christ in the presence of God is the expression of my present standing and condition (Col. iii. 1; Eph. ii. 6).

Let us look now at the connection between

such a condition and the presence or indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

In John xiv. 16, 17, Jesus, speaking of going away, declares that the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, would come to them to *abide with them*, and to be *in them*. Thus, not only must resurrection be accomplished as a matter of fact, but He must go away ere the Comforter could come (John vii. 38, 39). So really were the two things connected, that in John xvi. He adds, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

What would be the result? "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (John xiv. 20). "We know" is what the Holy Ghost enables us to say: "And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us" (1 John iii. 24). Founded on death and resurrection, the believer is in Christ, and Christ is in the believer, and the Holy Ghost is sent down to make us *know* it; hence, "At that day ye shall know."

Turning, now, to the Epistle to the Romans, where the whole question of our condition is taken up in detail, we find that the Spirit is not once mentioned until the fifth chapter, fifth verse, when, peace being known, consequent upon death and resurrection, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the

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Holy Ghost, which is given unto us ”; and not again until the eighth chapter, which opens with the believer “ *in Christ.* ”

*Then*, however, the complete standing of the believer in Christ having been established, the Spirit of God is introduced again and again, and shown to be the energizing power of this new order of things. It was not always so; but the Scripture does not recognize anything short of this *now*; for we read, “ Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God *dwells in you* ” (Rom. viii. 9); and it is added, “ Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His ”; that is, he is not stamped with that which distinguishes a Christian. If “ *in Christ,* ” then the Spirit of God dwells in you; and if not, you have still to learn practically this distinctive characteristic of Christianity.

Into the various aspects of the truth of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the individual believer, and in believers as the body of Christ, we do not now enter. Suffice it to say, that the whole energies and desires of the new life are carried out in the power of the Holy Ghost. He is the living power of the new state into which the believer is introduced, and in which the flesh has no place.

As the believer cannot lose eternal life, because his life is hid with Christ in God, so the Spirit does not cease to dwell in the

believer as the seal, until the day of redemption (Eph. iv. 30). Hence the exhortation, ever applicable, not to grieve the Spirit by the allowance of that which is dishonouring to Christ.

Further, the Spirit always exalts Christ, and delights to engage our hearts with a risen and glorified Christ, whereby we become transformed into His image, "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

Finally, the Lord Jesus was "that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John i. 2, 3). If, therefore, we want to see the practical exhibition of eternal life, we find the perfect manifestation of it in Him, who was the obedient and dependent One.

Thus, He is not only our object as the exalted One, but as the lowly One He is our pattern; and if the Spirit engages our hearts with Him in glory, it is that "the life also of Jesus might be made manifest" in us down here (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11).

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## **The Cleansing of the Leper.**

LEVITICUS XIV. 10-20.

**I**N this passage we find the ceremony, according to the law, for the cleansing of the leper, [which is] a figure of the cleans-



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ing which Christ has accomplished for us; for leprosy is a type of sin.

There is a distinction to be made between the purification of the leper and that of the priest.

There were but three sprinklings [of persons] with blood in the Old Testament: the sprinkling of the leper, that of the people, and that of the priest. They each took place once, and were not repeated (Exod. xxiv. 8; Lev. viii. 30).

There was nothing to be done for the healing of the leper; it was the work of God.

In order to prove that the disease was leprosy, the leper was kept by himself, set apart, and watched, and observed every seven days. When he was entirely white, or when the spot had become white, he was purified. (Compare Psalm xxxii. 3-5).

When sin is hidden, and the leprosy internal, the evil is greater. The manifestation and confession of sin lead to peace, and the heart is set at ease. This is the upright and honest heart.

The symptoms of leprosy are described in Leviticus xiii. The healing came from God; the priest could only ascertain the disease, and perform the acts for purification. Leprosy excluded its victim from the camp; sin hinders communion with God and His people.

After his cleansing, the leper was re-instated in communion with the children of Israel; but

the first effect of the knowledge of sin is to take from us the desire for communion with God, the intelligence of that communion, and the seeking after it.

Cleansing gives us, indeed, the right of communion with the children of God, although souls often fail to understand that from the first they have this right. Healing often precedes the knowledge of this healing: the converted soul puts itself under law, instead of accepting joyfully the whole gospel.

As to the means used for the cleansing of lepers, they are: FIRST, the birds, one dead, [which is] a type of the death of Christ. It was killed over a vessel of running water. The living bird is a type of Christ's resurrection (Lev. xiv. 4-7).

Our sins brought Jesus to the tomb, but He rose out of it, and left them behind Him there; He had accomplished all.

SECONDLY, the leper was to be washed with water (*vv.* 8, 9). Jesus cleanses us by the word which He has spoken to us. His word does for our souls what the cleansing with water did for the body. (*See Eph. v. 25-27*).

This cleansing was done once for all. Sanctification is once for all, but the Christian must grow in it. All believers are justified in Christ. This is an accomplished reality; the Holy Ghost puts us in this position.

There is the sanctification by God the

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Father, that of Jesus by His blood, and that of the Holy Ghost, who gives efficacy to the Father's will and the work of the Son (John xvii. 17; Heb. xiii. 12; 1 Peter i. 2).

The Holy Ghost accomplishes it in individuals. He communicates life to us by the Word, and sanctifies us wholly.

THIRDLY, after cleansing follows the knowledge of what has been done. The leper must understand it, and receive its efficacy in his heart (*vv.* 10-20). The leper is presented to God, with a sacrifice for his offence. He was anointed with blood, as a sign of sanctification.

The Christian is never to allow anything to enter his *ear* which would be inconsistent with the blood of the Lamb.

The *right hand* is the symbol of action. The Christian should not do anything which would be dishonouring to the blood of Christ. All that he does every day should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, and he must not act in any way which would not accord with the measure of God's thoughts in the death of Jesus. All in our actions which is not holy as the blood of Christ, is sin.

Blood on the *great toe* is a figure of holiness in our walk. We are not negative beings; Christ's life should always act in us. Our thoughts, actions, walk, all are under the blood of Christ, and that blood is the measure

of what our holiness should be. One must either be under the shelter of the blood of Christ, or outside it. The child of God has on him that blood which can neither be effaced, nor lose its value. There is never need of another sprinkling. Every day our souls are renewed inwardly by the Holy Ghost, and we confess our sins before our Father.

FOURTHLY, blood was not the only necessary; oil was required. The oil, a type of the Holy Ghost, is given because the blood is there. It was not after the water, but after the blood, that oil was applied.

The Holy Ghost comes to dwell in us, because the blood of Christ is on us. If we are as pure in the sight of God as that blood, why should not the Spirit be in us? The blood of Christ has exhausted the wrath of God against sin. There is nothing but love for those who are sprinkled with that blood.

The Holy Ghost is a Spirit of knowledge, joy, peace, and love; these are His first-fruits. He is also a Spirit of strength and power, able to overcome the obstacles which arise in our path.

The effect of all was to re-establish the leper in communion with God.

## **“No more Conscience of Sins.”**

HEBREWS X.

*(Concluded).*

**D**EATH and judgment teach me redemption. God judged sin indeed in sacrificing His well-beloved Son to put it away. It must be punished; Jesus bore the blow: this rent the veil, and showed out what God really is. The very blow that let out the holiness of God put away the sin which His holiness judged.

The perfect certainty of God's love, and the perfect cleansing of the conscience, are what the defiled and trembling sinner needs.

“By the grace of God” Jesus Christ has “tasted death” (Heb. ii. 9). Death, “the wages of sin,” is seen in the cross of Jesus as the consequence of “the grace of God.” “Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness” (Judges xiv. 14).

Were any one to demand of me a proof of God's love, I could not give more than God has done in that “He spared not His own Son” (Rom. viii. 32). No other proof could be so great.

But then it might be asked, May not my sin affect it?

No; God knew all your sin, and He has

provided for it all : “ The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin ” (1 John i. 7).

In real communion the conscience must be purged; there can be no communion if the soul be not at peace. We read here, “ By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

There is very frequently the confounding of what faith produces with what faith rests upon. Faith always rests upon God’s estimate of the blood of Jesus as He has revealed it in His word : faith rests upon no experience. Jesus said, “ Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God ! ” ; “ by the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

“ *We are sanctified.*” It is not something proposed for our attainment : it was the good will of God to do it, and the work is done, to bring our souls back unto Himself. Jesus has said, “ *It is finished* ” (John xix. 30).

But then there must be the knowledge of this also, in order for us to begin to act. You might have a person willing to pay your debts; nay, you might even have them paid; but if you did not know it, you would be just as miserable as before.

We are not called upon to believe in a promise that Jesus should come to die, and rise again. The work is *done* : He “ sat down on

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the right hand of the Majesty on high,”  
 “when He had by Himself purged our sins”  
 (Hebrews i. 3). But then this is not sufficient  
 for me: I must know that the work is done;  
 and therefore He sent down the Holy Ghost to  
 be the witness that God is satisfied.

Knowing perfectly their guilt and amount,  
 God has declared, “Your sins and iniquities  
 I will remember no more.” Faith rests on  
 this, “God is true.” “He that hath received  
 His testimony hath set to his seal that God is  
 true” (John iii. 33).

The Lord said to Israel in Egypt, concern-  
 ing the blood of the paschal lamb, “When I  
 see the blood, I will pass over.” Could there  
 be hesitation if we were in a house marked  
 with the blood on the door-post? Should we  
 not know that He would pass over?

Faith is always divine certainty. God has  
 said, “I will remember no more.” This is  
 the ground on which we enter into the holiest.  
 “The worshipper once purged” has “no  
 more conscience of sins.”

God has found His rest in Jesus; our peace  
 and joy depend upon knowing this. Were  
 anything more necessary, it could not be His  
 rest. God is not seeking for something else  
 when at rest. None else could have afforded  
 this. “God looked down from heaven upon  
 the children of men, to see if there were any  
 that did understand, that did seek God”

(Psalm liii. 2). "They are all gone out of the way" (Rom. iii. 12). "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 10).

But God bore witness unto Jesus, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17). God is well pleased in Christ: God rests in His Son, not merely in His life (though that was holy, and acceptable unto Him), but in His work on the cross. Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24); and that meets our need.

When He shows His glory to the angels, He points to what has been done by man. In man was God glorified; as in man, the first Adam, He had been dishonoured. Christ reversed all this: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him"; which God recognizes in straightway glorifying Him (John xiii. 31, 32). Righteousness cannot be looked for from the creature, but the fruit of righteousness will; the thing itself is only in Christ.

God is not a grudging giver. Did Satan, tempting Eve, question this in the forbidden fruit? God has given His Son; He rests in Him; the sinner likewise rests there. What can man do for me? Nothing. If I were to come to him to deliver me from death, could he help me? No. He might fill my hand



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with those perishing things which could only swell the triumph of death, and decorate the tomb; but there his power ends. “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him” (Psalm xlix. 7).

In Jesus God has found His rest. This is mine also. I know it from the testimony of God’s truth. Have you found rest in God’s rest? If you say, I have not, will you say that God has not found His rest there?

Will you look to your own heart? In *that* you can never find it; it is only in Jesus, who said, “Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest” (Matthew xi. 28).

Would that all knew the perfect rest to be found there!

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**“Come Unto Me.”**

MATTHEW XI. 25-30; See ISAIAH XLIX.

**T**HE Lord, though deeply and thoroughly sensible of Israel’s rejection of Him, bows completely to the will and wisdom of God in it. “I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” In this His blest supremacy was fully shown: “Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.”

The knowledge of God makes all necessarily

good to us, for it comes from Him. It may be very contrary to our nature. To Jesus, men's rejection of His message was, of course, painful. It threw Him on the sovereignty of God His Father, whom He knew, in the fact that His Father had hid these things from the sages of the world, and revealed them to the despised and weak. He acknowledged the Father in the thing done, and in its suitability to the whole order of God's dealings in such a world. That, of course, was all that the Son of God, or we, taught of the Spirit, could desire; but it was in circumstances which required perfect submission of heart and way.

But this perfect submission of the Son gave rest, and brought His Person out to light. If He was thrown entirely on the Father, it was because He was Son, and because of His entire rejection in that character, in which, while perfect, and showing who He was, He had not taken His glory, and would have taken but the earthly dominion (Ps. ii.).

The secret was that this was but "a light thing." *All things* were delivered to Him of His Father, and by reason of the very glory of His Person, being Son of God, no man knew the Son but the Father. His service now was to reveal the Father in the prerogative of grace. For none knew the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will

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reveal Him. “Come unto Me,” says this only patient witness of love. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Here I am, the rejected One, to whom, in sure title, all things are delivered of My Father; but One whose heart has bowed in all long-suffering of love, who has learnt submission, who has felt what it is to be pained and scorned and outwardly to find no refuge but submission. “Come unto Me.” Men may have rejected Me, but I am the Son, and none knows the Father but as I reveal Him. Whosoever is burdened, and passes not on with this haughty world, whosoever labours, and is heavy laden, here I exercise My love. “Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest.” I have learnt how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. (Compare Isa. 1. and the end of Rom. viii., with its full extent of blessing to us.)

It was the Lord’s submission under such circumstances which brought the sense to His soul, and the revelation to others, of a much better portion than that of Messiah according to the law and the prophets. Into this, so to speak, He was rejected, and blessed be God for it! He had manifested patient, gracious love to the nation, but they repented not, even where His mighty works were done. The dispensation, although Messiah came in person, ended in failure. “Then I said, I have

laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain.”

He had stretched out His hands to a rebellious and gainsaying people. When He came, there was no man. For His love He had hatred. Reproach broke His heart. His hopes for the people, the title that He had, the title of His own love, were cast aside. Still there were babes who saw what was hidden from the great. “So it seemed good in Thy sight” was the hinge of the Lord’s comfort. This was enough.

But what follows on this rejection? “All things are delivered unto Me of My Father”; a wider, fuller, and more real glory. Yet, high as He is, He bids all come, and declares He will give them rest, the rest of the revealed Father’s love.

There is none else to come to. All have proved faithless. “Come unto Me.” Who could say this but the Son of God? Who could give rest to all that come but the Son, Jehovah Himself? But One will give rest freely and bountifully, the meek and lowly Son of God. He gives rest supreme, as One who knew what peace was in trouble, as none ever did.

He speaks the secret of it to others: “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

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It is not now, "I will give." That He could do, as Jehovah and God the Lord; that He would do. But the word here is, "Ye shall find"; I have learnt the way. ("Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God"—Heb. x. 9). It is found in the path which Jesus has trodden. He alone trod it, or could tread it, perfectly in this world.

And yet it is not violent or laborious. In one sense it is easy, as the Lord says. Submit! Say, "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

Such is His yoke, and thus we learn of Him, who ascribed all to the Father, not to the circumstances. Hence He gave thanks to the Father always for all things, as we may and ought to do in His Name. "It seemed good in Thy sight." That was enough. It was perfect submission, and the Father beamed out in it. Its value hangs on the perfect knowledge of Sonship. The whole is most blessed, and to be learnt only in Christ.

The infiniteness of the Son's divinity was kept up, in His humanity, and therefore apparent humiliation and present inferiority, by His absolute inscrutability therein thus specially and signally maintained; while His oneness with the Father was made known in His competency to reveal, and supremacy of will in revealing, the Father.

Both hold their place most beautifully,

maintaining the Person in the glory of communion with the Father, and the inscrutability of God thus manifested while the Father was revealed.

How wise, perfect, singularly divine, is Scripture! There is nothing at all like it. No wit of man could have framed such a sentence as that (v. 27).

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## **The Divine Origin and Unity of the Scriptures.**

ILLUSTRATED BY QUOTATIONS FROM THE OLD  
TESTAMENT FOUND IN THE NEW.

*(Concluded).*

**I**T reminds me of the figure of the body and its members, used by the apostle to set forth Christ (1 Cor. xii.). There are many members, but one body. There are many books, but one Scripture, one volume. All are equally divine workmanship, though all may not be of equal value to the soul. The foot is not the hand, nor the ear the eye. But God has set them together in one body; as, in the heavens, He has set stars and constellations together, though one may differ from another in glory.

But to pursue the same figure of the body and the members, we do boldly say, one part of the volume cannot be touched without all feeling it and resenting it. "Whether one

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member suffer, all the members suffer with it"; God has so tempered it together. If Moses be insulted, Paul feels it; if Daniel or Zechariah be questioned, John and Peter will resent it.

Yea, and I may go further in the same analogy, and say, the uncomely parts have been given more abundant honour. The shortest piece in the whole volume is made to be heard in the conclusion of the finest and most elaborate and most weighty argument we find in it. Psalm cxvii. is brought forth as a special witness in Rom. xv.

And the Book of the Proverbs, dealing as it does with common, practical, every-day life, is honoured by being made as rich and blessed a witness to the Christ of God in His mysterious glories as we get in any part of the whole Scripture (chap. viii.).

Yea, and I will take on me to say this further. As all other parts of the volume, like the members of one body, will resent trespass and wrong done to any part, so will the Spirit say of God and of the Scriptures, as He says of God and of His people, "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of His eye." The Scripture is His handiwork; and God will make the quarrel of Scripture His own quarrel. If He will awake in due time, to the controversy of His temple, or His covenant, or His Zion, so will He most assuredly to the contro-

versy of His word. He has magnified His word above all His name. "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words," says the Lord Jesus, "hath one that judgeth him" (John xii. 48).

And again let me speak, as I stand in presence of God and His oracles: Scripture links itself with eternity in ways that are divine, like everything else in it. If we have quotations in the New Testament of passages in the Old, so have we, in both Old and New, references to the eternity that is *past*. And if we have foretellings in the Old Testament of events in the New, so have we, in both Old and New, the foretelling of the eternity that is *to come*.

Scripture, as I may speak, retires behind the borders of time, and discloses the secrets and counsels of the past eternity, unsealing "the volume of the book," and disclosing the predestinations formed and settled in Christ ere worlds began; and Scripture passes beyond the borders of time, and is in the scenes and glories of the eternity that is to come, giving us to hear each tongue confessing Jesus to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 11), and many, many kindred voices, and to see many, many kindred glories.

And happy for us that it links itself with *time* as well as with *eternity*. It goes before



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us, to show the way all through the confusion and corruption that is abroad, to the last moments of the dispensation. All is anticipated; so that we need not be stumbled by anything, however saddened and ashamed we may be. "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall *offend* them" (Psalm cxix. 165). We need not be afraid with any amazement since we have it.

The confusion and corruption may be infinite, strange indeed in their changeful forms, and deep in their insolent wickedness; but Scripture has prepared us for all superstitious vanities and infidel insolence. The tare-field was spread out on the page of Scripture ere it stretched itself out in the defiled plains of Christendom. The unmerciful fellow-servant is seen in Matthew xviii., ere he is seen in the wars and controversies of Christendom. God in His Word has not forecast the shadow of *uncertain* evils.

It is indeed marvellous; and yet not marvellous, because it is divine. The Spirit of Him who knows the end from the beginning can account for it; but nothing else can. The Book itself, as another has said, is a greater miracle than any which it records.

And I would now end with a word about quotations, as it was with them I began.

These citations out of His own writings by God Himself, first in the Person of the Son,

then in the Person of the Holy Ghost, are beautiful in this character; God is *sealing* what once He *wrote*. At the beginning He sent forth those writings as from Himself, being the source of them; so now, after they have come forth, and been embodied in human forms as in all languages of the nations, and been seated in the midst of the human family, He comes forth to accredit them there Himself, as with His own sign manual. God has both written them, and sealed them; and we receive them as from Him; and in our way of responsive faith and worship, "set to our seal that God is true" (John iii. 33). "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart" (Ps. cxix. 111). Surely these things are so.

To notice, with some care, the quotations themselves, as they meet us while we pursue our way from Matthew to the Apocalypse, is an edifying exercise of the soul. It helps directly to let us into the fuller light of the Old Testament oracles, giving us nothing less than God's own key for unlocking the treasures that are there.

And this exercise has also another direct effect: it binds all the parts, however distant, of the one volume together *under our eye*, and serves to present the whole as one complete and perfect piece of workmanship, in full consistency with itself throughout.

The light is one, though it may be that of the patriarchal dawn, of the Levitical or Mosaic morning, of the prophetic fore-noon, of the gospel meridian or noon-tide, and then of the Apocalyptic evening hour, with its shadows, just before the solemn night of judgment, which is to precede the second morning, the morning of millennial glory.

But this indeed it is. In Scripture, from beginning to end, we are in the light of God, from the first morning of creation to the second morning of the kingdom; having passed our own noon and evening hours, and also the season of the world's midnight.

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### **Our Saviour God.**

“There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”—1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

**T**HERE is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, a Man, Christ Jesus.

These are the two great truths which form the basis of all true religion.

Judaism had already been the revelation and testimony in the world of the first: there was only one God. This remains eternally true, but did not suffice to bring men into relationship with God. With regard to men, He

abode within the veil, in the darkness which shrouded His majesty.

Christianity, while fully revealing the one God, presents the second truth: there is one Mediator between God and men. There is one; and there is but one. It is as true that there is but one Mediator, as that there is but one God. This is the great and distinctive truth of Christianity.

Two things here characterize the Mediator. He is a Man; He gave Himself a ransom for all. The time for this testimony was ordered of God.

Precious truth! We are in weakness; we are guilty; we could not bring ourselves near to God. We needed a Mediator, who, while maintaining the glory of God, should put us into such a position that He could present us to God, in righteousness, according to that glory.

Christ gave Himself as a ransom. But He must be a Man in order to suffer for men, and to represent men. And this He was.

But this is not all. We are weak, here, where we are to receive the revelation of God; and weak, with regard to the use of our resources in God, and our communion with Him, even when our guilt is blotted out.

And, in our weakness to receive the revelation of God, Christ has revealed God, and all that He is in His own Person, in all the cir-

cumstances wherein man could have need either in body or in soul. He came down into the lowest depths, in order that there should be none, even of the most wretched, who could not feel that God in His goodness was near him, and was entirely accessible to him; come down to him; His love finding its occasion in misery; and that there was no need to which He was not present, which He could not meet.

It is thus He made Himself known on earth; and, now that He is on high, He is still the same. He does not forget His human experiences: they are perpetuated by His divine power in the sympathizing feelings of His humanity, according to the energy of that divine love which was their source and their *motive power*.

He is still a Man in glory, and in divine perfection. His divinity imparts the strength of its love to His humanity, but does not set aside the latter. Nothing could resemble such a Mediator as this; nothing could equal the tenderness, the knowledge of the human heart, the sympathy, the experience of need.

In the measure which divinity could give to what He did, and in the strength of its love, He came down, took part in all the sorrows of humanity, and entered into all the circumstances in which the human heart could be; and was wounded, oppressed, and discouraged, bowing down under the evil.

No tenderness, no power of sympathy, no humanity, like His; no human heart that can so understand, so feel with us, whatever the burden may be that oppresses the heart of man. It is the Man, the Christ Jesus, who is our Mediator; none so near, none who has come down so low, and entered with divine power, into the need, and all the need, of man. The conscience is purified by His work; the heart is relieved by that which He was, and which He is for ever.

There is but One : to think of another would be to snatch from Him His glory, and from us our perfect consolation. His coming from on high, His divine nature, His death, His life as Man in heaven, all point Him out as the one and only Mediator.

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### **Faith and its Adjuncts.**

“ Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ : grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue : whereby are given unto us exceed-

ing great and precious promises : that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure : for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall : for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—2 Peter i. 5-11.

**F**AITH here is the portion we have now in the things that God gives, which in Christianity are revealed as truths, while the things promised are not yet come.

It is in this way that the believing Jews were to possess the Messiah, and all that God gave in Him, as the Lord had said, “Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe

also in Me. There are many mansions in My Father's house; I go to prepare a place for you." That is to say, "You do not visibly possess God; you enjoy Him by believing in Him. It is the same with respect to Me: you will not possess Me corporeally, but you shall enjoy all that is in Me (righteousness, and all the promises of God) by believing."

It was thus that these believing Jews, to whom Peter wrote, possessed the Lord: they had received this precious faith.

He wishes them, as is the custom, "grace and peace," adding, "through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

It is the knowledge of God and of Jesus which is the centre and support of faith, that which nourishes it, and in which it is developed and divinely enlarged, and which guards it from the vain imaginings of seducers.

But there is a living power with this knowledge, a divine power in that which God is to believers, as He is revealed in this knowledge to faith; and this divine power has given to us all that pertains to life and godliness.

By the realizing knowledge which we possess of Him who has called us, this divine power becomes available and efficacious for all that appertains to life and godliness, "the knowledge of Him who hath called us by glory and by virtue."



Thus we have, here, the call of God to pursue glory as our object, gaining the victory by virtue (spiritual courage) over all the enemies that we find in our path. It is not a law given to a people already gathered together, but glory proposed in order to be reached by spiritual energy. Moreover, we have divine power acting according to its own efficacy, for the life of God in us, and for godliness.

How precious it is to know that faith can use this divine power, realized in the life of the soul, directing it towards glory as its end! What a safeguard from the efforts of the enemy, if we are really established in the consciousness of this divine power acting on our behalf in grace! The heart is led to make glory its object; and virtue, the strength of spiritual life, is developed on the way to it. Divine power has given us all needed.

Now, in connection with these two things, namely, with glory and with the energy of life, very great and precious promises are given us; for all the promises in Christ are developed either in the glory or in the life which leads to it.

By means of these promises we are made partakers of the divine nature; for this divine power, which is realized in life and godliness, is connected with these great and precious promises that relate either to the glory, or to

virtue in the life that leads to it; that is to say, it is divine power which develops itself, in realizing the glory and heavenly walk which characterizes it in its own nature.

We are thus made morally partakers of the divine nature, by divine power acting in us, and fixing the soul on what is divinely revealed. Precious truth! Privilege so exalted! which renders us capable of enjoying God Himself, as well as all good.

By the same action of this divine power we escape the corruption that is in the world through lust; for the divine power delivers us from it. Not only do we not yield to it, but we are occupied elsewhere, and the action of the enemy upon the flesh is kept off; the desires from which one could not cleanse one's self are removed; the corrupt relationship of the heart with its object ceases. It is a real deliverance; we have the mastery over ourselves in this respect; we are set free from sin.

But it is not enough to have escaped by faith from even the inward dominion of the desires of the flesh; we must add to faith, to that faith which realizes divine power, and the glory of Christ that shall be revealed, we must add to faith, virtue.

This is the first thing. It is, as we have said, the moral courage which overcomes difficulties, and governs the heart by curbing all action of the old nature. It is an energy by

which the heart is master of itself, and is able to choose the good, and cast aside the evil as a thing conquered, and unworthy of one's self. This, indeed, is grace; but the apostle is here speaking of the thing itself, as it is realized in the heart, and not of its source.

I have said that this is the first thing; because, practically, this self-government, this virtue, this moral energy, is deliverance from evil, and renders communion with God possible. It is the one thing which gives reality to all the rest; for without virtue we are not really with God. Can divine power develop itself in the laxity of the flesh? And if we are not really with God, if the new nature is not acting, knowledge is but the puffing up of the flesh; patience but a natural quality, or else hypocrisy; and so with the rest.

But where there is this virtue, it is very precious to add knowledge to it. We have then divine wisdom and intelligence to guide our walk: the heart is enlarged, sanctified, spiritually developed, by a more complete and profound acquaintance with God, who acts in the heart, and is reflected in the walk. We are guarded from more errors, we are more humble, more sober-minded; we know better where our treasure is, and what it is, and that everything else is but vanity and a hindrance. It is therefore a true knowledge of God that is here meant.

*(To be concluded, D.V.)*

## **The Church of God.**

“The Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood ” (Acts xx. 28).

“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God ” (1 Cor. x. 32).

“And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all ” (Eph. i. 22, 23).

“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, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish ” (Eph. v. 25-27).

**I**N a day like this it is exceedingly gracious of God to give clear light from His own Word as to the true character of the Church of God.

To the Christian its importance cannot be overrated; for as God is in this dispensation forming and building up the Church, the body of Christ, if the soul be not in communion with Him about that Church, which Christ loved and purchased with His own blood, and which will ere long be presented to Himself a glorious Church; I say, if the

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Christian be not in communion with God about that, how can he have clear light on other parts of the truth, which are put before us either in contrast or in connection with it?

The Church of God is an entirely new thing. And when I say "new," I mean new as in contrast with all the former dispensations. Before the death and resurrection of Christ, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, there were only two classes of persons found in the world, Jews and Gentiles.

But since the Holy Ghost came down, consequent upon the blood-shedding of Christ, and His glorification in the heavens, we have three things presented to us as co-existing in the world; therefore I read that scripture in confirmation of it: "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God." There are these three classes then in the world at this present moment, Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God.

Let me also say that the Church of God is not revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures. Do not be startled at this, because, if you follow me patiently, I trust you will see that the Scriptures fully warrant the statement. I do not say that we do not get in the Old Testament symbols of the Church; I am sure we do. Adam and Eve were symbolical of Christ and the Church. But what I said was, that we get

no distinct revelation in the Old Testament Scriptures of the Church of God. In fact, if we had only the Old Testament Scriptures, we should not have had an idea that there was such a thing as the Church of God. I am, however, prepared for objections to this, and will now try to meet such as seem worth considering.

Some people say that the prophet Isaiah is full of the Church of God, and that most of the Old Testament prophets have written many beautiful descriptions of the Church of God. But, in order to give a shadow of a proof of this, they interpret "Jerusalem" to be the Church, the "house of David" to be the Church, "Zion" to be the Church, and I do not know what else to be the Church, without, as far as I can see, any authority whatever for so doing.

But you will find, with regard to the prophet Isaiah, that the book is headed with these words: "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." And, therefore, whilst the Holy Ghost, in writing the Scriptures, might underlay and interlace most precious truths which we can now take up and use for our edification, yet it is clear that the plain instruction of these scriptures has reference to the nation and people of Israel, and not to the Church of God.

To those who may feel surprised at my questioning the right or wisdom of what they call spiritualizing the Old Testament Scriptures, or at my raising a question whether the words "Jerusalem," "house of David," "Zion," etc., mean the Church, I would say, Consider with me two scriptures. One in Micah iii. 12, "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field."

Now is that the Church? To say such a thing would be an absurdity; for we know as a fact that it has had its literal accomplishment for many years, as travellers have frequently seen.

In the 2nd Psalm we find the other scripture to which I refer: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Where is that? Can it possibly be any other than the literal Mount Zion, where God's King by-and-by will actually reign?

Surely Christ is not King in relation to the Church. Do not for a moment suppose that Christ is reigning over the Church like a king reigns over his subjects. No, the believer is one with Christ ascended, a joint-heir with Christ; and whatever Christ will inherit believers will share with Him as His joint-heirs.

Yes, blessed be God, we shall share with Him the honour, glory, dignity, and wealth of the inheritance to which He is

entitled as Heir of all things. This is a very different thing from being reigned over; and these two scriptures ought to be enough to show the unwarrantableness of asserting that Zion means the Church.

The second objection, perhaps, that would be brought to the statement, that the Church of God was not revealed in the last dispensation, would be a passage mentioned in the 7th chapter of Acts, verse 38: "This is He, that was with the church in the wilderness."

There we see at once an apparent difficulty, because it seems to assert that the Church was known in a former dispensation; but there is no reality in it, when you consider it fairly.

The same word that is here translated "church" is twice translated in the 19th of Acts "assembly." In v. 39 of that chapter we find, "It shall be determined in a lawful assembly," that is, in one of the ordinary courts of law at Ephesus. And in the 41st verse, "He dismissed the assembly," that is, he dismissed the crowd that made the uproar.

Precisely the same word is here translated "assembly" as we find translated "church" in the 7th chapter.

*(To be concluded, D.V.)*



## **The Token of the Love of Christ.**

LUKE XXII. 1-38.

**A**LL the circumstances of the death of Jesus sum up for us these two great principles: the love of God, and the hatred of man.

Here the Lord makes preparations for His departure; but, though absent now, He is ever present spiritually with His own, and His desire is that the children of God should all lean on Him.

Our strength comes from our weakness; but we easily overlook the sense of our weakness when God's grace acts, because we attribute to ourselves something of its effects. It is then that we need to be sifted; for the flesh has come in, and evil with it.

The Church is a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men, to show them, and to make them know, the power of God, the power of the Holy Ghost prevailing over the power of evil, and that even in the weakness of man.

But if we abandon the support of the Spirit, the flesh re-appears, regains its strength, leads us into temptation, and does not shelter us from the effects of this last. This was what happened to Peter; the strength of the flesh suffices to lead him into temptation, but not to draw him out of it.

Jesus, in this way, allowed Peter to be sifted, and to make experience of the weakness of the flesh, in order that he should, by this knowledge, be fitted to strengthen his brethren. The Lord says, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations" (*v.* 28); and yet often they had neither understood Him, nor followed Him faithfully.

By the Lord's departure, He leaves His disciples to themselves, as sheep in the midst of wolves; hence the instruction of verse 36. He gives them also the example of His deep humility.

From the moment that we think ourselves to be the benefactors of anyone (*vv.* 25, 26) we take God's place; man is glorified at God's expense in the presence of his fellows. We lose our character as children of God when we lose our place as servants.

Jesus was the Servant of all (*v.* 27). The more we are servants, the more we shall be like Him. Love makes us the servants of others, because of their miseries. A mother is servant to her child, although she is above him.

With regard to the Lord's Supper, the Lord wished to give His disciples a testimony of His love. But there also He was Servant (*vv.* 14, 15). The Lord was going to take His place in heaven, to become the Nazarite there, separated from the joys of His disciples, and separated outwardly from sinners.

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Love cannot be happy without those that are loved sharing what it has. Jesus cannot be satisfied until the Church is gathered with Him in glory. But before He departs, He leaves us a token of love. He had much desired to eat that passover with them before He should suffer. He made Himself man and servant, that our hearts might have an object for our love, at the same time human and divine.

The link of love is perfect; it is the most intimate communion of Him with us, and us with Him. Jesus is the First-born among many brethren, and takes that character as the object of our affections. He does not command love, but He produces it by the manifestation of His love for us.

Jesus is not changed. He places us in the same position as Himself; He produces in us the desire for communion with Him. Taking a meal together is a sign of love and fellowship. The joy which accompanies it is not at its height, because now the Lord is separated from us, and does not eat with us in person any longer; He has left us together in love. The Christian is separated from the world by his love for the One who is far away from it.

How can a Christian stay away from the Lord's Supper? It is to excommunicate one's self. The Lord's Supper is a token of pardon;

the memorial of the love of Jesus. Christ is spiritually present with His own; but He is also absent, and we wait for Him. By partaking of one loaf, we show that we are one body; and I cannot cut myself off (excommunicate myself), from the body of Christ.

In the Lord's Supper Christ desired to express His love, to remind us of His love; it is a necessity of His heart. The token of the love of Christ, the Friend who has died for us, the absent Friend, must be precious to us.

He deigns to be one of us, separated from us for a little while, but finding His joy in making us happy.

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### **Confession of Sins.**

I JOHN I. 9; II. 1.

**G**OD has been perfectly satisfied, as to all the believer's sins, in the cross of Christ.

On that cross a full atonement was presented for every jot and tittle of sin, in the believer's nature, and on his conscience. Hence, therefore, God does not need any further propitiation. He does not need aught to draw His heart toward the believer.

We do not require to supplicate Him to be "faithful and just," when His faithfulness and justice have been so gloriously displayed, vindicated, and answered in the death of

Christ. Our sins can never come into God's presence, inasmuch as Christ, who bore them all, and put them away, is there instead (Heb. i. 3).

But if we sin, conscience will feel it, must feel it; yea, the Holy Ghost will make us feel it. He cannot allow so much as a single light thought to pass unjudged.

What then? Has our sin made its way into the presence of God? Has it found its place in the unsullied light of the inner sanctuary?

God forbid! The "Advocate" is there, "Jesus Christ the righteous," to maintain, in unbroken integrity, the relationship in which we stand.

*But though sin cannot affect God's thoughts in reference to us, it can, and does, affect our thoughts in reference to Him. Though it cannot make its way into God's presence, it can make its way into ours, in a most distressing and humiliating manner. Though it cannot hide the Advocate from God's view, it can hide Him from ours. It gathers like a thick, dark cloud on our spiritual horizon, so that our souls cannot bask in the blessed beams of our Father's countenance. It cannot affect our relationship with God; but it can very seriously affect our enjoyment thereof.*

What, therefore, are we to do?

The word answers, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,

and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

By confession we get our conscience cleared, the sweet sense of our relationship restored, the dark cloud dispersed, the chilling, withering influence removed, our thoughts of God set straight.

Such is the divine method; and we may truly say, that the heart that knows what it is to have ever been in the place of confession, will feel the divine power of the apostle's words, “My little children, these things I write unto you, *that ye sin not.*”

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### **The God of Peace.**

**I**N God all is peace. He can be active in love; He can glorify Himself by creating what He will; He can act in judgment, to cast out the evil that is before His eyes.

But He rests ever in Himself; and both in good and in evil He knows the end from the beginning, and is undisturbed.

When He fills the heart, He imparts this rest to us. We cannot rest in ourselves; we cannot find rest of heart in the actings of our passions, either without an object or upon an object; nor in the rending and destructive energy of our own will.

We find our rest in God; not the rest that implies weariness, but rest of *heart* in the possession of all we desire, and of that which

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even forms our desires, and fully satisfies them, in the possession of an Object in which conscience has nothing to reproach us, and has but to be silent, in the certainty that it is the Supreme Good which the heart is enjoying, the supreme and only authority to whose will it responds; and that will is love towards us.

God bestows rest, peace. He is never called the God of joy. He gives us joy, truly, and we ought to rejoice; but joy implies something surprising, unexpected, exceptional, at least in contrast with, and in consequence of, evil.

The peace that we possess, that which satisfies us, has no element of this kind, nothing which is in contrast, nothing which disturbs. It is more deep, more perfect, than joy. It is more the satisfaction of a nature in that which perfectly answers to it, and in which it develops itself, without any contrast being necessary to enhance the satisfaction of a heart that has not all which it desires, or of which it is capable.

God, as we have said, rests in Himself, is this rest for Himself. He gives us, and is for us, this entire peace. The conscience being perfect through the work of Christ, who has made peace, and reconciled us to God, the new nature (and consequently the heart) finds its perfect satisfaction in God; and the will is

silent. Moreover, it has nothing further to desire.

It is not only that God meets the desires that we have; He is the source of new desires to the new man by the revelation of Himself in love. Hence there is the opposite to weariness in the heavenly enjoyment of God; because He who is the infinite object of enjoyment is the infinite source and strength of capacity to enjoy, though we enjoy as recipient creatures.

He is both the source of the nature and its infinite object; and that in love. It is His part to be so. It is more than creation; it is reconciliation, which is more than creation, because there is in it more development of love, that is to say, of God: and it is thus that we know God. It is that which He is essentially in Christ.

In the angels He glorifies Himself in creation: they excel us in strength. In Christians He glorifies Himself in reconciliation, to make them the first-fruits of His new creation, when He shall have reconciled all things in heaven and on earth by Christ. Therefore it is written, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children [sons] of God" (Matt. v.) They have His nature and His character.

It is in these relationships with God; or, rather, it is God in these relationships with us



in peace, in His communion, who develops sanctification, our inward conformity of affection and intelligence (and consequently of outward conduct) with Him and His will. "The God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly" (1 Thess. v. 23).

May there be nothing in us that does not yield to this benignant influence of peace which we enjoy in communion with God. May no power or force in us own anything but Himself. In all things may He be our all, so that He only may rule in our hearts.

He has brought us perfectly into this place of blessedness in Christ, and by His work. There is nothing between us and God but the exercise of His love, the enjoyment of our happiness, and the worship of our hearts.

We are the proof before Him, the testimony, the fruit, of the accomplishment of all that He holds most precious, of that which has perfectly glorified Him, of that in which He delights, and of the glory of the One who has accomplished it, namely, of Christ, and His work. We are the fruit of the redemption that Christ has accomplished, and the objects of the satisfaction which God must feel in the exercise of His love.

God in grace is the God of peace for us; for here divine righteousness finds its satisfaction, and love its perfect exercise.

## Faith and its Adjuncts.

2 PETER I. I-II

*(Concluded).*

**T**HUS walking in the knowledge of God, the flesh, the will, the desires, are bridled; all their practical power diminishes, and they disappear as habits of the soul; they are not fed. We are moderate; there is self-restraint; we do not give way to our desires; temperance is added to knowledge.

The apostle is not speaking of the walk, but of the state of the heart in the walk. Still, being thus governed, and the will bridled, one bears patiently with others; and the circumstances that must be passed through are, in all respects, borne according to the will of God, be they what they may. We add patience to temperance.

The heart, the spiritual life, is then free to enjoy its true objects; a principle of deep importance in the Christian life. When the flesh is at work in one way or another (even if its action is purely inward), if there is anything whatever that the conscience ought to be exercised about, the soul cannot be in the enjoyment of communion with God in the light, because the effect of the light is then to bring the conscience into exercise. But when the conscience has nothing that is not already

judged in the light, the new man is in action with regard to God, whether in realizing the joy of His presence, or in glorifying Him in a life characterized by godliness. We enjoy communion with God; we walk with God; we add to patience godliness.

The heart being thus in communion with God, affection flows out freely towards those who are dear to Him, and who, sharing the same nature, necessarily draw out the affections of the spiritual heart: brotherly love is developed.

There is another principle, which crowns and governs and gives character to all others: it is charity, love properly so called. This, in its root, is the nature of God Himself, the source and perfection of every other quality that adorns Christian life.

The distinction between love and brotherly love is of deep importance. The former is indeed, as we have just said, the source whence the latter flows; but as this brotherly love exists in mortal men, it may be mingled in its exercise with sentiments that are merely human, with individual affection, with the effect of personal attractions, or that of habit, of suitability in natural character.

Nothing is sweeter than brotherly affections; their maintenance is of the highest importance in the assembly; but they may degenerate, as they may grow cool; and if

love, if God, does not hold the chief place, they may displace Him, set Him aside, shut Him out.

Divine love, which is the very nature of God, directs, rules, and gives character to brotherly love; otherwise it is that which pleases us (that is, our own heart) that governs us. If divine love governs me, I love all my brethren; I love them because they belong to Christ; there is no partiality.

I shall have greater enjoyment in a spiritual brother; but I shall occupy myself about my weak brother with a love that rises above his weakness, and has tender consideration for it. I shall concern myself with my brother's sin, from love to God, in order to restore my brother, rebuking him, if needful; nor, if divine love be in exercise, can brotherly love, or its name, be associated with disobedience. In a word, God will have His place in all my relationships.

To exact brotherly love in such a manner as to shut out the requirements of that which God is, and of His claims upon us, is to shut out God in the most plausible way, in order to gratify our own hearts.

Divine love, then, which acts according to the nature, character, and will of God, is that which ought to direct and characterize our whole Christian walk, and have authority over every movement of our hearts. Without this

all that brotherly love can do is to substitute man for God. Divine love is the bond of perfectness; for it is God, who is love, working in us, and making Himself the governing object of all that passes in the heart.

Now, if these things are in us, the knowledge of Jesus will not be barren in our hearts. But if, on the contrary, they are wanting, we are blind; we cannot see far into the things of God: our view is contracted; it is limited by the narrowness of a heart governed by its own will, and turned aside by its own lusts. We forget we have been cleansed from our old sins; we lose sight of the position Christianity has given us.

This state of things is not the loss of assurance, but the forgetfulness of the true Christian profession into which we are brought; purity in contrast with the ways of the world.

Therefore we ought to use diligence, in order to have the consciousness of our election fresh and strong, so as to walk in spiritual liberty. Thus doing, we shall not stumble; and thus an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom will be our portion.

There, as throughout, we see that the apostle's mind is occupied with the government of God, applying it to His dealing with believers, in reference to their conduct and its practical consequences. He is not speaking in an absolute way of pardon and salvation, but

of the kingdom, of the manifestation of His power who judges righteously, whose sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness.

Walking in the ways of God, we have part in that kingdom, entering into it with assurance, without difficulty, without that hesitation of soul which is experienced by those who grieve the Holy Ghost, and get a bad conscience, and allow themselves in things which do not accord with the character of the kingdom, or who show by their negligence that their hearts are not in it. If, on the contrary, the heart cleaves to the kingdom, and our ways are suitable to it, our conscience is in unison with its glory. The way is open before us: we see into the distance, and go forward, having no impediments in our way. Nothing turns us aside as we walk in the path that leads to the kingdom, occupied with things suitable to it.

God has no controversy with one who walks thus. The entrance into the kingdom is widely opened to him, according to the ways of God in government.

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### **Holding Fast the Truth.**

**O**NE of the most alarming symptoms in the religious world at the present day is the idea that there is power in the truth to preserve.

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There is no power in the truth to preserve; but the question is, whether the soul holds fast the truth.

Unless my thoughts, my heart, are in the truth, there will be no power in the truth to me.

It is very certain that God will keep His truth; but is my heart kept? If not, it is the mere confidence of man's mind; for "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John iv. 4).

The only ground of victory is the power of the Spirit of God in the affections and consciences of the saints; and then the heart will be set on Christ, and the things of Christ; to love Him, enjoy Him, and serve Him better.

The conflict and difficulty are rather when the truth is brought in question, than when it first goes forth in power. If I am not kept by the Spirit of God, I shall not be able to resist the daily solicitations of sin.

Man may grow tired of his sins, and tired of the world; for he has long been in bondage to them, and desires (sincerely too) to break off from his sins; and he is attracted at first by that which promises him deliverance, and is glad to close with the offer, and so breaks off from his sins for a while, and is very religious, and seems devoted too.

But his soul does not continue. He does not like the trials and tribulations which arise.

He cannot bear to lose his friends, and his prosperity, and his place in the world; and then error is found the easier thing. And there must come a falling away; and so it will be but a little flock.

False religion might make a monk, but can never put the conscience into the presence of God. Error quarrels not with men's passions; for false religion in the man ever ministers to the passions, the thoughts, the feelings of men; and thus it is that false religion suits the world better than truth, because it suits itself to man; and the mass will ever follow error.

So Paul had to say, "All in Asia are turned away from me." The apostle did not expect that truth would have power over the world, but plainly declared that error would.

So we see, when the Lord allows the sifting of a large body of people on a point of truth, the greater number will adopt the error.

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### **Citations from Amos in Acts.**

**A**MOS was the prophet who went before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah (i. 1). We may say that he was the prophet of that event (viii. 8; ix. 5).

That earthquake is treated by Zechariah as typical, as a notice of the Lord's controversy with the world, when again there will be earth-



## CITATIONS FROM AMOS IN ACTS. 101

quakes and pestilences, ministers of judgment, and vessels of wrath (Zech. xiv. 5).

Accordingly, *judgment* is the great burden of Amos's prophecy, and it therefore served the purpose of Stephen in Acts vii.; for that moment was also a *crisis* in the history of the Jews, and Stephen there quotes Amos (Acts vii. 42, 43; Amos v. 25-27).

But again, Amos treats the *Gentiles* as dealt with by God, as well as the Jews. He judges them all alike. He brought the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir, as He had brought Israel from Egypt. And, in coming millennial days, He will have all *the Gentiles called by His name*, as surely as He will build again the fallen tabernacle of David (i., ii., ix. 7-12).

In this character the word by Amos directly answered for James in Acts xv., where the apostle was insisting on the independence of Gentile saints, and that they must not be required to be circumcised, and to adopt the customs of Israel.

Amos intimates this, and James cites him, to show that the Gentiles were to be adopted of God (or to have His name called on by them acceptably) in a way quite independent of the Jews; or that the Lord knew them before Israel knew them.

Thus those two great occasions in the history of the Church in the New Testament,

Stephen's words in Acts vii. and James's in Acts xv., were served by the Spirit through Amos, who may be regarded as somewhat a distant and unnoticed portion of the Word of God.

But it is beautiful thus to see that we are to live "by *every* word of God" (Luke iv. 4). We know not in what obscure corner of the volume, so to speak, that scripture may lie, which is fitted and destined by the Holy Ghost to stand by the soul in the trying hour.

Amos, ministering to Stephen and to James, witnesses this.

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## **The Church of God.**

*(Concluded).*

**B**UT further, consider for a moment what the assembly was in the wilderness. Was it not so rebellious, sinful and unfaithful that not one of that immense congregation, except Joshua and Caleb, entered the land? Could we then gravely think of that being the Church?

Let me be clear on this point. The word for "assembly" is also translated "church" in the New Testament; but why I read the verse from the 1st chapter of Ephesians was to show that the assembly which we call the Church of God is there defined to be

the body of Christ, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

These are some of the objections to the statement that we do not find the Church of God revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures. And in the New Testament we have the plainest possible intimation that it was not so revealed. For instance, in the 3rd chapter of Ephesians it is written, "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ); which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel."

Here we get the distinct statement that "the mystery" was revealed to Paul the apostle, and that it had not been made known to others "as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets."

And particularly observe one thing here. The order is always "apostles and prophets," not "prophets and apostles." In the 2nd chapter the Church is spoken of

as "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." And so, with regard to gifts, "He gave some apostles, and some prophets" (Eph. iv. 11), to show that the prophets of the New Testament are referred to, and not the Old Testament prophets. If it had been the latter, the order would have been prophets and apostles; but it is always the reverse, "apostles and prophets." Hence we have, "As it is *now* revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets."

But the difficulty might be raised that it was partially revealed to the Old Testament saints, although it was not then fully brought out as it was to Paul. But if we go a little further down this 3rd chapter of Ephesians we find, in the 9th verse, "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which *from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.*"

Mark that expression, "hid in God." It does not even say, "hid in the Scriptures"; but declares that the mystery of the Church, the body of Christ, was not revealed, but was "hid in God." And in the 16th chapter of Romans we are told of "the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began." So that the Church of God is a new and special revelation, a thing that was not known until it was revealed to "His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

There is another thing which we ought now to enter into a little, namely, that the Church had no existence (save in God's purpose) until after the death and resurrection of Christ. The first mention, I believe, that we have of the Church in Scripture is in the 16th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew.

Christ had been virtually rejected by the nation of Israel. In the 12th chapter the Pharisees held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him; and in the beginning of the 16th chapter He speaks of the Pharisees and Sadducees as an adulterous generation.

Further on, in reply to Peter's confession of Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My Church." This is the first time the Church is mentioned. It did not come out until after Christ had been rejected by Israel; and if you read the 21st verse of the 16th chapter of Matthew you will find, "From that time forth" Jesus "began" to speak of His sufferings, His death, and His resurrection.

The distinction is most beautiful, because, prior to that, at least to the end of the 12th chapter, the testimony of John, the forerunner of Christ, and the testimony of Christ Himself, was to the kingdom. John's ministry was "Repent" (not, for the Church is at hand, but) "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

(Matt. iii. 2). And when John was put into prison Christ came forth, and took up the same ministry Himself, uttering the same words, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iv. 17).

In the 10th chapter He sends out His twelve disciples to preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. The result was that this testimony met with almost universal rejection; so that, instead of welcoming the Messiah to set up the kingdom, the Jews actually went about to destroy Him. Then, when Peter confesses, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus says, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona." He tells Peter he is a blessed man; and added that He purposed to build His Church.

Now, can anything be clearer than that the Church was then a prospective thing, that it was not then in existence? It was His intention to build it. Therefore, at that time, it was a thing in the future.

You will also find, in the 1st chapter of Acts, after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, He says to His disciples (those very people on whom He had breathed, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost"), "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (v. 5).

Accordingly, on the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost came down. He came down, and

sat upon each of those believers, so that they were all *filled with the Holy Ghost* (Acts ii. 4).

But you may say, What has that to do with the formation of the Church of God?

It has everything to do with it. That was the time when the Church of God began to be formed upon the earth, and at the end of the chapter we read that the Lord added [not to the nation of Israel, not to the disciples, but] to the Church daily such as should be saved (Acts ii. 47).

In confirmation of this, turn to the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, verse 13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

No doubt there had always been believers, with more or less distinctness of apprehension of the coming Redeemer, from Adam downwards. Adam evidently had faith in the Redeemer, as well as Abel, Enoch, and a host of others. They were justified by the blood of the promised sacrifice; but they were always individuals. What God is building now on earth is a body (a corporation, so to speak) of believers in a crucified, risen, and ascended Saviour, who are actually in God's sight baptized by the Holy Ghost into "one body," in union with Christ, the ascended Head in heaven.

It is quite true that Christians have slipped away from the enjoyment of this place of blessing into which God has put them; yet,

thank God, the fact has not altered through our failure. We are not only in Christ, who is seated in the heavens, but we belong to Christ here, we are united to Him by the Holy Ghost as members of His body; so that He can speak of us in the 5th of Ephesians as "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

And most blessed is it to see that the death of Christ is the foundation and security of these marvellous blessings. He died that He might gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad (John xi. 52).

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### **The Second Coming of the Lord.**

"If He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch."—Luke xii. 38.

**W**ATCH after watch has passed, and our Lord has not yet come. Still, however, His word, "I come quickly," abides in all its eternal freshness and truth; and long ago the Spirit said, "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand." How soon then He may be here!

In the *first* watch of the night there were some saved ones on earth who waited for Him, and, as far as we can gather from the Spirit's record of their state, were so deeply attached to the Lord Jesus as the hope of their hearts that they were ready to open to Him imme-



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diately. They "went forth to meet the Bridegroom" (Matt. xxv.)

This blessed hope, however, soon declined; it did not last long. Worldly associations and circumstances took hold of their hearts, and so far displaced Christ, that the appalling sentence could be truthfully written, "While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept"; yes, "*all* slumbered and slept," so that this bright and blessed hope for a long time was lost.

The time of the *second* watch arrived, and passed away, and the Bridegroom did not come; but "at midnight," the closing moments of the second watch, instead of our Lord coming, He sent forth an awakening cry: "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom; go ye out to meet Him."

Then our Lord's prophetic words were fulfilled, for there was a general awakening, and hearts in different parts of the earth were stirred towards Him. "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." This was "at midnight," at the close of "the second watch," and, we judge, began about sixty [now eighty] years ago. We are told it was at midnight when this cry went forth, and then it was that the *third* watch began.

Although for many centuries the blessed hope of our Lord's coming was, speaking

generally, lost, yet there was occasionally an individual who had something of the Lord's mind as to this. For example, a friend of the writer's lately copied the following inscription from a monument: "Here lies, expecting the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the body of Henry Clifford, first earl of Cumberland, who died in Skipton Castle, April 22nd, 1542."

The *third* watch, then, has not only begun, but must now be far advanced. According to the Jewish mode of reckoning, it extended from midnight to three in the morning, when the fourth watch commenced. This was the "cock-crowing." We are therefore now some way on in the *third* watch.

The *fourth* watch goes on to the beginning of the day. In the 14th chapter of Matthew, where we see our Lord alone in the mountain praying, and, leaving that, walking on the sea to comfort His disciples, and to bring them safely to their earthly rest and blessing (typical, as we judge, of the Jewish remnant to be brought into blessing after we are translated), it was in the *fourth* watch of the night.

It is well also to note that, while at first they were distressed, they were soon comforted and brought safely to land, and *then* blessing extended to others on the earth, which we know will be the case with and through the Jewish remnant when the Deliverer comes out

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of Zion, and turns away ungodliness from Jacob.

The Lord's coming for *us* cannot be far off. Though we look not for events, but for the Lord Himself, yet many events show that "the day," which sets in after we are gone, is "approaching." Speaking according to prophetic instruction, *the day of the Lord* begins at sunrise, or the Lord coming with His saints in manifested glory as "the Sun of Righteousness" to bring healing to His ancient people, to shine gloriously on them that fear His name, and to tread down the wicked, and make them as ashes under the soles of their feet (Mal. iv. 2, 3).

But "*the Bright and Morning Star*," for which we wait, must be before that. As such, He is the Hope of the Church of God. His last presentation of Himself to His Church on earth, to comfort our hearts and attract them heavenward to Himself, was, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star"; and He added, "Surely I come quickly." What should our warm and constant response to such grace be then but, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"? (Rev. xxii.)

How very solemn, then, as well as cheering, are the words of our Lord: "If He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so [that is, watching], blessed are those servants"!

May we hear His voice to us in these encouraging words, and not only *wait* for Him, but *watch*; for, said He, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark xiii. 37).

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### **The Bridegroom at Hand.**

*"I sleep, but my heart waketh."*

(Song of Sol. v. 2).

Children of light, awake! awake!  
 Ye slumbering virgins, rise!  
 Go, meet the royal Bridegroom now,  
 And show that ye are wise.

Like foolish virgins, ye have failed  
 Your holy watch to keep;  
 And, lo! He comes, and almost finds  
 Your languid souls asleep.

Through love, the Man of Sorrows oft  
 Hath watched and wept for you;  
 Then gave away His life, to prove  
 That all that love was true.

Then wake; for, lo! the midnight cry  
 Of warning in the air,  
 Bids all His Church to greet Him now,  
 Their dying lamps prepare.

## Aaron's Typical Priestly Garments.

READ EXODUS XXVIII.

**T**HIS chapter speaks to us of the garments with which Aaron was to be clothed to present himself before the Lord. He was the representative of the people, of those twelve tribes of Israel whose names he bore; a type of what Christ is doing for us in heaven.

The Lord is not Priest after the *order* of Aaron, but He exercises priesthood now according to the *type* presented by Aaron. Now Christ is hid in God, as the High Priest when he entered the holiest on the day of atonement.

A priest supposes temptations, distress, or, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, infirmities. He is the mediator to intercede on behalf of the people, and to represent them before God.

I am weak; but all my weaknesses become, not a ground for judgment, but an occasion for God to display all His tenderness and all His compassion towards me, by means of our Priest.

*Down here*, Jesus washes our feet; but *before God* He represents us in His perfection. He displays to us down here the riches of God's grace towards us, and He presents us to God in His own perfection.

Exodus xxviii. shows us how the Priest pre-

sents us before God. The ephod was the garment characteristic of the High Priest. The two parts of it were joined by two shoulder-pieces, which bore, on two onyx stones, the names of the twelve tribes.

◊ The girdle is typical of service: "Let your loins be girded."

The breast-plate was fastened to the ephod, and also bore, on twelve stones, the names of the twelve tribes.

The garments were of fine-twined linen; they were, as it were, ornamented with all possible graces, the groundwork representing purity itself.

Aaron was to bear the children of Israel before God. He carried them on his *shoulders*.

All the burden of His people and the government are on the shoulders of Christ. If the stones had not been on Aaron's shoulders, the ephod would have fallen; it was fastened by the names of the children of Israel.

If Christ is Priest, we are on His shoulders, borne as a memorial before God. He bears the burden and the government. He does all. Efficacy depends entirely upon Him, even in what we do for the Church.

Aaron also bore the names of his people on his *heart*, in the breast-plate of judgment.

There is not a ray of God's glory and love shining upon Christ which does not also shine

## AARON'S TYPICAL PRIESTLY GARMENTS. 115.

on us, who are borne upon His heart. The heart of Christ presents us to God. It is not only to obtain special favours, but it is *we ourselves* that He presents according to the love there is between Him and God.

The Urim and the Thummim are lights and perfections. Aaron bore on his heart, before God, the judgment of the children of Israel, according to the perfections of God's presence.

Our sins cannot pass by Christ, and interpose themselves between God and Him. He maintains us in righteousness continually before God, according to the lights and perfections of that presence.

God never hides His face. He may chastise us. By our failures we may lose communion with Him; but if God hid His face from us He would hide it from Christ. It is hidden now from Israel, who is under the law. It is our short-comings which raise a cloud between us and God; it is a consequence of our infirmity; but God's sovereign grace is by no means changed by it.

The "holiness to the Lord" (which was graven upon the gold plate, and put on a blue lace on the mitre) is always before God. Our prayers ascend in holiness to the Lord, because Christ is there.

The iniquity in our holy things being borne by Him, our offerings (for there is iniquity, as all our service is imperfect) are presented

before God according to divine holiness in Christ.

This chapter, in enabling us to understand better the extent of the love and favour of which we are the objects, fills us with thanksgiving, and causes us to find in Christ ever new resources; for our knowledge of Him can always grow, and increase our joy.

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### **Joy and Peace in Believing.**

**W**E are so disposed to measure our own experiences by the power of truth, that the soul is very commonly below the place where *faith* would put it.

It is right, no doubt, to desire experiences, and it is wholesome to be chastened before the Lord, at times, that we know them so poorly. But **FAITH** deals with *other things*.

My *conscience* may deal with my *experiences*, and I may be humbled by the character and the measure of them, but my *faith* deals with *God*, and *His wondrous revelations*.

If, for instance, I have but little delight in the sense of His everlasting love to me, it may humble me in some sense; but then *faith* receives the fact of *my Father's* delight in these same thoughts of everlasting love to me. His counsels of goodness, of which I am the object, are His constant joy, and to accom-



## JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING. 117

plish those to perfection, His settled purpose; and *faith in me* apprehends that, and I have joy in believing that way of God's affection, though I may have poor experiences in my own frames and feelings.

There is music in heaven over the repentant sinner, and the little tiny pleasure that we take in the same fact, as another observed, is but the echo of that music, and it may be the very faint and distant echo. But we must not be hanging over the echo, grieving, and howling, and making a noise in the conscience because it is so faint and indistinct; but rather with free and happy thoughts, be led from this poor and distant joy in our own hearts, to the rich and full delight that heaven entered into at the same moment, and from the same occasion.

So in everything let *faith* be in exercise; let faith, as another instance of its way, know and *allow* that the *ascending* love is never equal to the *descending*. A child never loves a parent with the same intenseness that a parent loves a child; and more than this, *the parent is very satisfied to have it so*. Not that the parent is indifferent to the state of the child's heart toward him, but still the parent is well-pleased to have it so; so that his love for his child never does, and never can, get a full recompense from the bosom of his child.

And thus with our Father. He cannot be

indifferent to the state of our affections towards Him; but still He understands (to speak after the manner of men), that His love never can, and never will, receive its full answer from us. And He is more than satisfied to have it so; He finds it more blessed to give than to receive. He is in the higher place Himself, and His place has its necessary attributes attending it, the descending affections flow more largely, and with a richer and a more generous tide than the ascending. It is their property, nay, their prerogative to do so.

With all this, then, *faith* deals; it takes up *God's* delight in His own thoughts and counsels about us; it understands how we were His object before the foundation of the world, that wherein He could both glorify and delight Himself. It trusts the reality, and the fervency, and the unrepentancy of His love, and learns that no counsels or plans of glory and of joy are too magnificent for such love to take in the cause of those on whom it has fixed itself; and it forbids conscience to disturb its rest.

It will not allow the complainings of a self-judging spirit to trespass upon that music which it is listening to, in the bright courts of the Father's house in heaven; it rises and seats the heart in the purest scenes. Like Moses, it carries the sinner beyond all the regions of fire and smoke and darkness, and

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the voice of words. It leaves the angry thunder of the law, the charges of the accuser, the disquieting recollections of many shortcomings, yea, and these complaints that come from present conscious coldness and narrowness in our experiences; it leaves all these, and everything kindred with them *below*, and ascends to God Himself.

*God* is the object of faith, and if God be happy in His thoughts about us, so is the *faith* of a believing soul. If God's presence on high be gladdened because of the triumphs of grace among sinners upon earth, so is the heart of the believer. If the Father spread a feast, the prodigal, by faith, takes his place at it.

And if there be peace, and nothing but peace, in the sanctuary of the heavens, so is there peace, and nothing contrary to it, in the believer's heart. For faith, in its blessed ascent, rises to God; it passes as much above the uneasy grieving sense of the narrowness and coldness of our own experiences, as it passes by and above everything else.

But how blessed this is! Oh! what a journey faith takes! What stillness marks its way, or, if broken, not by prayer, but *by praise!* What can be compared to the grandeur of its movements, and the elevation of its rest and dwelling-place!

## Treasure in Earthen Vessels.

READ 2 CORINTHIANS IV.

**I**T is a great thing to remember (what Christians too easily forget) that we are called to the enjoyment of heavenly things, and we live by the revelation of them.

God has not introduced grace and His Son and Spirit to make us get along easily in this world; it was not needed; but to bring us to the enjoyment of heavenly things, and to live in them.

What characterizes a man is what his mind is on; and then all his ways flow from that.

The apostle says that we "in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened"; that is all we have of this world. The Lord uses it as an occasion of His dealings with us; but He does not take that up until salvation is settled.

Redemption being settled, we find difficulties and exercises come in; and the apostle gives us here, and in chapter xii., what the principle and power of his walk were.

What we are called to is the manifestation of the life of Christ. Your whole life is to be nothing but that. God is revealed, we have life, and the Holy Ghost is our power. We are set here as the epistles of Christ, for men to read. Whilst waiting for Christ to manifest Himself in glory, we have to manifest Him in grace.

## TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS. 121

It is not *pleasant* to “do well, and suffer for it”; but is not that what Christ did? It is what we have to do in lowliness and meekness. He first gives us a place in heaven, Christ our life, and then sets us down here to do that.

We have the revelation of God Himself in the person of His Son. He dwells in us, and we in Him; and we know it, for He has given us of His Spirit.

Our place before God is settled; Christ is our life. We have the knowledge of God, and power to walk in this world; and, another thing, heavenly things are revealed, the things that belong to the place in which we are. “We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God.”

There we are to live, and get the motive that characterizes us as Christians. If that were always so, we should be always *really* epistles of Christ—in our houses, our dress, in our every-day life, in all the things that are the expression of a man’s heart. Is Christ the motive in every thing we do? If not, we leave Him for some vanity or other. What every Christian has to do is to commend himself “to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (v. 2), that if they judge him, it should be for consistency.

“ God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,” etc. That is where every Christian is. The glory of God is revealed in my heart, and I am thus to manifest it in the world, that they should see it in my words and ways; and in my gift, if I have one; that all I say and do should give out the light of the knowledge of God in a world of pitch darkness.

It has been revealed in our hearts to make it shine out in the dark of this world. It is a blessed place, but a very distinct and definite one. If Christ is revealed, He has brought in the knowledge of God; all the glory of God, His holiness, His majesty, His love, has shined into our hearts, that we may give it out.

That is very simple, if it were all; but it is not all. It is God's way to put this in an earthen vessel. The apostle does not speak here of wickedness, but *weakness*. We have to get the flesh put down, and we get chastening. We know that; but the apostle does not go on that ground here. It is not a question of sin or failure, but of the path of the Christian as such. The first element is, he has the whole glory of God revealed; but in this “earthen vessel, that the excellency of the power may be of God”; constant dependence. Great, excellent, and wonderful as the treasure is, He has put it in a place which, to

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*man's* eye and mind and thought, is unfit for it; as to power, I mean. Therefore in your life, even when you are going on right, you get these two elements: all the glory of God revealed in your heart; but put purposely in an earthen vessel, because there is a great deal for us to learn as regards what poor, weak, wretched creatures we are.

Peter says, "I will go to prison and to death for Thee."

"Will you?" the Lord says. "I will see."

We all know what it was. You may say he had not the Holy Ghost. No, but the flesh is as treacherous now as it was before the Holy Ghost was given. Of course there is more power to keep it down. We may learn slowly what it is, but learn it we must. It comes out even when we are seeking to serve Christ honestly, as Peter was.

It is the thought of God to put the treasure in this vessel that it may learn itself what it is; and we must learn it. We may earnestly and honestly go and preach Christ, and heartily; but if we have not learnt ourselves there is some confidence in self, and we make mistakes.

It is lovely to see Moses going down, and associating himself with the poor brick-makers; but he had not learnt himself, and he killed an Egyptian, and then ran away.

I must keep watching the flesh, for I know

what it is; then I lean on a strength that is not mine, and wait for God's direction and guidance; for I know myself in such a way as to have confidence in Another, not in myself. By the discovery of my weakness, I know I have no power but in God.

Paul had a thorn in the flesh. He had been put down when he was converted, but he had to be *kept down* that he might know it was not the capacity of Paul, but that the power of Christ might rest upon him. God says, "It is *I* working in you. Cannot *I* work through your boggling?"

"Oh, then," says Paul, "I will keep it! Most gladly will I glory in mine infirmities."

Here he says, "We are troubled on every side, but not distressed"; for we have God to look to. "Perplexed, but not in despair." I cannot see a way out for myself, but I have God, and He is a sure way. "Persecuted, but not forsaken"; for God is with me. "Cast down, but not destroyed."

He lived in the consciousness that the Lord was always there, and that he *wanted* Him. Even in truth and sincerity of heart we are apt to go on as if we did not want the Lord. If for one instant I have not Him with me I am nothing.



## “Peace.” “My Peace.”

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”—John xiv. 27.

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**T**WO things are brought before us here. The first is the fact of peace, though there may not be earthly blessing and prosperity, like the Jews [had], but trouble outwardly. The second is that which characterizes the peace.

“My peace” is what He has Himself, and the extent of it. Being thus characterized, it implies that they had not it while He was with them. They lacked nothing; they had purse and scrip, etc. He could speak peace in the forgiveness of sins; but this peace, *His* peace, was not before given to the disciples.

Peace shuts out trouble, as to the realization of it. It is not peace of conscience with God here, but that which could not be disturbed by the knowledge of God. It is not peace without God, and it is independent of all circumstances. So much trouble as there is in circumstances, the peace could not be secure if it could be altered by them.

This peace is the possession of such quiet as

to be undisturbed about other things. It is peace with God in the sight of His righteousness and His holiness; and it is an absorbing thing. Suppose I am at peace with some one I do not care much about, I may be troubled enough about other things; the peace does not absorb my affections. When we have the peace itself, we may acquaint ourselves with God. The soul, so satisfied with its own peace, desires nothing else. It knows God, and finds nothing to disturb it, in God or out of God.

This peace will keep God between the trouble and us, instead of the trouble coming between us and God. Such is our danger, and such the remedy.

Mark the extent of the peace; "My peace"; and how thoroughly well He knew what He had, that He could give it them. He had been tried, rejected, had suffered; "He had not where to lay His head," "hunted like a partridge on the mountains," the "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"; and yet He knew so well the blessedness He had that He could speak of it to leave it to them.

There was an unclouded rest in God, and God an unclouded source of blessing to Him, in all His path of sorrow and trouble, so unlike that which any one else ever had. But, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee," etc. (Isa. xxvi. 3) was known experimentally by Him; and was

there ever uncertainty as to whether His Father heard Him? No; there was an unclouded certainty. Nothing could bring it into question. He need not put it to the test by throwing Himself down from the temple: this were tempting God.

The two expressions in the verse explain each other; “ peace,” “ My peace,” etc. “ Let not your heart be troubled.” I am giving you My own “ peace.” What we have we know to be His; not the knowledge of what we are with God, but what He is to God. We cannot have peace if we have the thought, When I come to know God, what will He think of me? I must know God in order to have peace.

If the Lord came this moment, would you have peace, and be able to say, “ This is our God, we have waited for Him ”? If you have the consciousness of liking anything that God does not like, you cannot be at peace. Even if you found peace of conscience about your sins, through “ the blood of His cross,” it will destroy your communion and peace of heart if you like anything that God does not like. If there is anything not given up, in the will, there cannot be peace. If you have peace, then, if God came in, your peace would stay.

Peace is never imperfect; there can be no flaw in it. If anything comes in, and produces an uncertainty, it cannot be peace. Water in a dirty pool may look clear at the surface, but

if it is stirred up, the dirt comes to the surface; and so with the heart.

Christ gives us His peace; and can wrath disturb it? Did He not know the wrath due to our sin? He bore the wrath. Did He not know the sin? "He was made sin," etc. (2 Cor. v. 21). Did He not know God? He came forth from Him (John viii. 42).

How can we have peace? Because He has made it by "the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20). He has expiated sin. The question that agitates your heart He settled between Himself and God; and not on His own account, but for us. He was the Son of God. In the presence of wrath He settled it; in the presence of holiness, too, He made His soul an offering for sin (Isa. liii. 10). God spent His Son for us; and can He fail to claim us as the objects of His love? He has bought us at an unspeakable price.

He has seen the sin, judged the sin, put the sin away in Christ. Peace is made, peace is given, peace is known by "the blood of His cross." Is it a thought of mine about my getting this peace? No. He says, "My peace I leave with you." He knows what God's wrath is; what God's righteousness is; what God's holiness is; what all His requirements are; and we have the assurance of His peace from His own mouth.

Have I earned it? No; He has earned it!

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Can He deceive me? What is my warrant for expecting the favour of God? If you have believed what wrath is, you will value the favour of Christ. Christ would rather give up His life than God's favour for us.

If Christ is your peace, He is as sinless for you as He was in Himself. He is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30).

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## **The Church's Closing Days on Earth.**

"BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY : HOLD THAT FAST WHICH THOU HAST, THAT NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN."—Rev. iii. 11.

**I**T is often said we are in the closing days of the history of the Assembly of God on earth, and that the coming of our Lord must be now very near; but the question is, Have we any instruction that we can gather from Scripture as to this?

It need scarcely be said here, because it is so generally accepted, that what is written as to "the last times" and "the last days," in the inspired letters to Timothy, has been manifested for a long time; and John speaks of the day in which he lived as "the last

time," because there were "many anti-christs."

In one sense the whole of the Church's history on earth since the time of the apostles, and even the coming of the Saviour into the world, is comprehended in the expression "last days." Hence we read, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in *these last days* spoken unto us by His Son." But by the often-used expression "closing days" we understand something more definite than "the last times," or "the last days"; it seems to speak of the time just before the Lord comes with His assembling shout for those that are His at His coming.

If we turn to the second and third chapters of Revelation, we there find details given, not only of the actual state of seven assemblies then existing in Asia, and the ways of our Lord with them, but we are also told there is some "mystery" as to the instruction communicated by them. Besides their obvious application to the then existing assemblies, there was a line of teaching which was a "mystery," or not revealed. We read, therefore, of the *mystery* of the seven golden candlesticks (i. 20).

It is now clear enough that what was then a *prophetic sketch* of the course of the Assembly on earth, as God's corporate wit-

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ness, is now an *historic sketch*; so that in these seven epistles we can easily trace seven phases of the Church's history on earth. We have declension (Ephesus); persecution (Smyrna); alliance with the world in Constantine's time (Pergamos); Popery (Thyatira); Protestantism (Sardis); saints gathered to Him who is the holy and the true (Philadelphia); self-satisfaction and lukewarmness, or indifference to Christ (Laodicea). Every one who knows anything of Church history must be able to trace these seven striking epochs of its course.

It is also obvious that these seven epistles are presented to us as divided into three and four. In the first three epistles the overcomer is mentioned last, or after "He that hath an ear," because their state seemed capable of restoration; but when, in Thyatira, the flesh and the world were openly accredited and associated with the name of the Lord and His truth by His professed witness on earth, the Lord exposes their sad state, and refers to His coming; and the overcomer is mentioned before "He that hath an ear," because the faithful have to overcome allowed evil in the house.

The last four assemblies are thus marked off from the previous three, and in these four only the coming of the Lord is announced, which shows they go on to the end; and to each of them the Lord presents Himself and His coming in an aspect suited to their state.

These four phases of the Church's history on earth, we judge, then, will continue till the coming of the Lord, and their principles may be traced at this moment in almost every city, town, and village. All these four assemblies being associated in some way or other, in the Lord's ministry to them, with His coming, seems to intimate that it would be so. Hence we have in [both] Popery and Protestantism, some who are true to the Lord, who is holy and true; and, lastly, lukewarmness to Christ, with self-satisfied profession, which He must reject as His corporate witness on earth when He comes and takes His own unto Himself. "I will spue thee out of my mouth."

If, then, these four assemblies set forth the fourfold character of the professing Church, or Christendom, till the Lord come, of which, we judge, there cannot be a doubt, is it not clear that the fourfold way in which Christ presents Himself to these assemblies must plainly show what His special lines of ministry will be in the closing days of the Church's sojourn on earth? If, therefore, we find that these presentations of Christ do and have for some time past characterized the ministry *given to His saints*, the inference is undeniable, that we are in the closing days of the Church's history on earth. But let us look further at this point.

As we have before noticed, the coming of



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the Lord is presented in an aspect suited to the state of these assemblies; and to the brightest and most devoted of them He says, "Behold, I come quickly." Besides this, we may observe that to the first of the last four (Thyatira) He presents Himself as the "Son of God"; to the second (Sardis) as "He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars"; to the third (Philadelphia) as "He that is holy, and He that is true"; and to the fourth (Laodicea) as "the Amen, and faithful and true Witness, and the beginning of the creation of God."

It is well known what uncertainty and darkness even true believers were in for many centuries; and even in the early part of this [nineteenth] century superstition, priestcraft, unitarianism, and all kinds of false doctrine, were common enough. Few even of the saints were clear of these things, till God raised up faithful servants to set forth, according to Scripture, *the person of the Son of God*.

There were also serious mistakes as to the Holy Spirit; so that His personality, Godhead, and operations were little known, and by some openly denied. But, as regards this, we know how faithfully some contended for the truth as to the person and deity of the Holy Spirit. There can be no doubt, when souls lost the truth of the personal glory of the Son of God, they necessarily lost also the hope of His

coming; and when they lost the truth of the Holy Spirit being a divine Person on earth during our Lord's absence, they turned to education, university degrees, and formal ordination as qualifications for ministry, instead of gift.

And even at the Reformation, when, by God's mercy, some truth was recovered, when Sardis, or Protestantism, came in, those carnal ways as to ministry were not given up; so that it is worthy of remark, that *there* the Lord presents Himself as the One who, as Son of man glorified, had received the Holy Spirit, and as having the seven stars, or holding all ministry for the Church in His own hand, and communicating it through gift from Himself.

Even to this day some believers are praying for the Holy Ghost to come, instead of thanking God for the abiding presence and power of the Holy Ghost in the professing Church, and in every believer. Still, at this time, through God's mercy, the reality of spiritual "gifts" from Christ, apart from man's arrangement altogether, has been largely recognized; and its importance can scarcely be overrated, because "the body is edified [from the Head] by that which every joint supplieth," and those who practise it know well the truth of it.

Of late years, while almost every one in Christendom has been saying that they meet

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in Christ's name, God has remarkably wrought in many souls to show the amazing difference between the adoption of it as a part of a creed, and the reality of the Lord Jesus being "in the midst" of those who are really gathered to His name. No doubt the Holy Spirit is the Gatherer, and He only gathers to His name who has been made in ascension both Lord and Christ.

But what has so greatly added to the priceless value of this foundation-truth is the recovery of the knowledge of the blessed fact that He who is in the midst of such so gathered is "holy" and "true"; so that He looks that His word should be kept, and His name not denied; and also, that those so gathered, should be in all their ways suited to Him. How could it be otherwise, if we think of it for a moment? And how could we associate any other name with His, lest we grieve and dishonour Him? This has been a remarkable blessing from God in these closing days.

Moreover, at this time, when every thing is being questioned, and an immense machinery is at work to exalt man in the flesh, and to undermine divine revelation, the Lord Jesus Christ is being made known to souls as "the Amen," whose word is decisive, will never pass away, and is for ever settled in heaven. Thus we may well trust Him, and rely upon His faithfulness to His own word, for He is

“the faithful and true witness”; and be assured that the first man is not recognized by Him since the death of the cross, for He is “the beginning of the creation of God”; so that, “if any man be in Christ,” there is a “new creation.”

This truth has exercised many souls during the last half century, and is, we believe, the teaching God is pressing on His saints to-day; and the believer’s comfort and blessing, and his service and pursuits, will be characterized, according as in heart and conscience he is either going on trying to mend and improve man in the flesh, or has accepted God’s verdict and ways in the cross or setting aside man in the flesh altogether; and at the same time making us a new creation in Christ, and has seated us in Him in heavenly places, the only proper Christian position.

The great point of controversy to-day in Christendom is whether the Christian is merely an improved or changed man in the flesh, or whether he is a new creation? Those who hold the former are still of the world, more or less legal, and self-occupied, with self-satisfaction and indifference to the claims and honour of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those who accept the latter know they are in Christ, and He in them; that all their blessings, strength, and completeness before God are in Him, risen and ascended, and that their old man is

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crucified with Christ, so that they have died, and their life is hid with Christ in God.

Now the question is, What has characterized the Lord's ministry to His saints during the last fifty or sixty years with the testimony to the Lord's coming, which has been going on all this time? Can there be a doubt that the infinite glory and perfection of the person of the Son of God have been largely set forth? Christ too, as having received in ascension the Holy Spirit, and Himself there the source and sustainer of spiritual "gifts" for the edification of His assembly on earth? Who can question also the clear and solemn way in which "there am I in the midst," the "holy," and the "true," has been pressed on the conscience, and lovingly owned by many hearts for amazing comfort, blessing, and some increase of separation and devotedness?

Nor need we go far to discern the Laodicean element coming in like a flood, with lukewarmness to Christ and indifference to His word, His claims, and His coming. If these things are so, surely the closing days of the Church on earth are really here. If this four-fold character of the ministry of Christ to His saints on earth till He comes is still going on (of which there cannot be a doubt, and we are here instructed that it will be so till He comes), then it is unquestionable that we are not only in the closing days, but that there is nothing

more to be looked for till we see His face. Saints may be unfaithful to the testimony, and be laid aside, and others be raised up for it; but it is clear there is nothing different to come till we hear the assembling shout.

What then are the practical lessons we are to gather from all this? Is it not that we, as already called into the fellowship of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, should stand for His personal perfections and glory, and honour Him? That we should be subject to the Holy Spirit He has received and sent down to form and energize His assembly, while thankfully acknowledging "gifts" for building up as from Himself, and caring for His household? That, as gathered to His name, we may faithfully own Him in our midst, and His claims, as the holy and the true? And knowing that the first man has been set aside, and has no place in His service, have no confidence in the flesh, but rejoice in the blessed fact that we are a new creation in Christ Jesus, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and waiting and watching for Him who says, "Behold, I come quickly"?

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## **Philadelphians.**

Blessed are the eyes that see Him,  
Him the holy and the true;  
Gathered round Him, He amongst them,  
His despised, rejected few;  
He who hath the key of David,  
God of resurrection power;  
He hath opened heaven before them,  
Shut them in for evermore.

Feeblest worms, yet dear to Jesus,  
Weary hearts that wait for Him,  
Eyes that look upon the glory,  
Till all else is dark and dim;  
'Midst the wreck, the desolation,  
Where the glorious city stood,  
Called to raise the lonely altar,  
One last witness for their God.

He the golden door has opened  
Of His temple's holiest place,  
Midst these latter days of darkness  
Called them in to see His face:  
None can shut where He has opened,  
None that "little strength" withstand,  
Which He gave amidst their weakness,  
By the touch of His right hand.

Precious to the heart of Jesus,  
Love that keeps the word He spake,  
Knowing somewhat of the sweetness  
Of rejection for His sake;

Yet so little of the glory  
 Of His scorn, and cross, and shame,  
 That His love can witness only,  
 "Thou hast not denied My name."

He their names will tell in triumph,  
 Rest not till the scorners own  
 All the love wherewith He loved them,  
 Till they see them on His throne.  
 He for that bright day is waiting,  
 They are waiting till He come;  
 Ere the judgment-thunder pealeth,  
 He will take them to His home.

He their Lord is coming quickly :  
*Brethren, yet awhile "hold fast"* ;  
 In His God's eternal temple  
 They as pillars stand at last.  
 Here to be cast out, rejected,  
 Hear to bear the brand of shame ;  
 There go out no more for ever,  
 Bear in light His God's own name.

He will write that name upon them,  
 His God evermore their own,  
 And the name of His bright city,  
 Of the bride who shares His throne ;  
 And His own new name of triumph  
 Then shall shine upon their brow :  
 Shall they not rejoice in bearing  
 His reproach, rejection, now ?



## “For ever with the Lord.”

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17).

I THINK I have had my mind more occupied of late than ever with the subject which your letter suggests, *the being with the Lord*.

I am sure it is deeper, happier, fuller *acquaintance with Himself that our hearts* need; and then we should long and desire and pant after Him, in such a way as nothing but His presence could satisfy.

I know souls in this state; and yet it is not *knowledge* that gives it to them, but *personal acquaintance* with the blessed Saviour, through the Holy Ghost.

I alighted, as by chance, the other day, on some fervent thoughts of an old writer, in connection with this dear and precious subject.

In substance they were as follows, and almost so in terms, only I have somewhat condensed them:

“It is strange that we, who have such continual use of God, and His bounties and mer-

cies, and are so perpetually beholden to Him, should after all be so little acquainted with Him.

“And from hence it comes that we are so loath to think of our dissolution, and of our going to God. For, naturally, where we are not acquainted, we like not to hazard our welcome.

“We would rather spend our money at an inn, than turn in for a free lodging to an unknown host; whereas to an entire friend, whom we elsewhere have familiarly conversed with, we go as boldly and willingly as to our home, knowing that no hour can be unseasonable to such a one.

“*I will not live upon God, and His daily bounties, without His acquaintance. By His grace I will not let one day pass without renewing my acquaintance with Him, giving Him some testimony of my love to Him, and getting from Him some sweet pledge of His constant favour towards me.*”

This is a beautiful utterance. It expresses a character of mind which, in this day of busy inquiry after knowledge, we all need, *personal longings after Christ*. May the blessed Spirit *in us* give that direction to our hearts!

It is a hard lesson for some of us to learn, to reach enjoyments which lie beyond and above the provisions of nature. We are still prone to know Christ Himself “after the

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flesh,” and to desire to find Him in the midst of the relations and circumstances of human life, and there only (2 Cor. v. 16).

But this is not our calling; this is not the *risen, heavenly* life. It is hard to get beyond this, I know, but our calling calls us beyond it. We like the home, and the respect, and the security, and all the delights of our *human* relationships and circumstances, and would have Christ in the midst of them; but to know Him, and to have Him in such a way as tells us that He is a Stranger on earth, and that we are to be strangers with Him, “this is a hard saying” to our poor fond hearts (John vi. 60).

In *John's Gospel*, I may say, among other things, the Lord sets Himself to teach us this lesson.

The disciples were sorry at the thought of losing Him in the flesh, losing Him as in their daily walk and conversation with Him. But He lets them know that it was expedient for them that they should lose Him in that character, in order that they might know Him through *the Holy Ghost*, and ere long be with Him in *heavenly* places (John xvi.).

And this is again perceived in chapter xx. Mary Magdalene would have known the Lord again, *as* she had already known Him; but this must not be; this must be denied her. “Touch me not,” the Lord says to her.

This was painful, but it was expedient; good for her then (just as it has been already good for the disciples in chapter xvi.), to know that she was to lose Christ in the flesh. For Mary is now taught that she was to have fellowship with Him in the more blessed place of His *ascension*.

So the company at Jerusalem in the same chapter. "They were glad when they saw the Lord."

But this gladness was *human*. It was the joy of having recovered, as they judged, the One whom they had lost, *Christ in the flesh*. But their Lord at once calls them away from that communion and knowledge of Him, to the peace which His death had now made for them, and the life which His resurrection had now gained for them.

All this it is healthful for our souls to ponder; for we are prone to be satisfied with another order of things. The sorrow that filled the hearts of the disciples at the thought of their Lord going away; the "Rabboni" of Mary Magdalene; the disciples being "glad when they saw the Lord," show the disposedness of the heart to remain with Christ in the midst of *human* relationships and circumstances, and not to go with a risen Christ to *heavenly places*.

How slow some of us are to learn this, dear brother! And yet our readiness of heart to

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learn it, and to practise it, is very much the measure of our readiness and desire to depart, and be with Christ (Phil. i. 23).

But all this I say to you as one that suggests a thought. Would that it were the experience of the soul! But I desire to have it so.

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## The Holy Spirit dwelling in the Believer.

READ I CORINTHIANS VI.

**T**HERE is nothing, perhaps, more striking in reading either the Gospels or the Epistles, the sayings of the Lord Jesus Himself, or what, in some respects, are more wonderful, the statements of the apostles, than the entire familiarity that appears in them, with the highest divine things.

It is never, of course, nor could it be, that familiarity which, in human things, because of their imperfection, takes away reverence. But the nearer we are to God, the more we see His blessedness, while there will be the reverence that becomes His presence.

At the same time there is perfect familiarity with the highest divine things. It stamps the one born of God; it stamps the divine revelation that we have.

I can tell that the Father loves the Son. Nothing can be simpler than the expression; but what a thing to know His divine affections

in themselves! It is not merely that He loves me, as is very true, but the Father loves the Son. So with the divine counsels. He hath "made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself" (Eph. i. 8).

It is all brought out; as it is expressed in that word, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John ii. 20). It is not that simply certain testimonies have come out (this was the case with the prophets), or that certain commandments have been given which are the most perfect expression of what man ought to be, as in the law; but God has revealed Himself, and *that* in the perfectness of His own love, that He might be known.

Along with this, and especially characterizing Christianity, there is not only the perfect revelation of Himself in His own nature as God, as light and love, revealing the Father, Son, and Spirit; but He has given us the Spirit. Having made us "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter i. 4), that we might be capable of enjoying what He is, He has also given us the Holy Ghost, that we might *know* what He is.

You get, first, our being set before God in perfect acceptance, "accepted in the beloved" (Eph. i. 6). And then, beyond that, the truth that God has not only revealed Himself *to* us,

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that we might have confidence in coming to Him in Christ, but that He reveals Himself *in* us, after having set us in Christ there, that the conscience should be placed in His presence.

At the same time, we read in Ephesians of being “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Eph. iii. 16, 17). So that He who is the centre of all the thoughts and counsels of God, of all His glory as revealed, the Son Himself, dwells in us, and sets us thus in the centre of all this glory, that we should “comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height” (v. 18).

It is not only that there has been a revelation to us of the Father and the Son, and of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, but that He has so associated us with Christ as dwelling in us, and that by the power of the Holy Ghost, that He sets our souls in the centre of all these affections, and of all this knowledge and glory.

Therefore the apostle cannot exactly say what it is, but only says “what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height,” and adds, “and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (v. 19).

He has been a Man, and dwelt among us;

yet He dwells in us, and His love passeth knowledge. This brings us into such blessed intimacy, though ever more adoringly; for the more we know Him, the more we shall see that He is God. So even with Christ Himself. We are there in the same glory with Himself, but this only brings us into the capacity to know the infinite blessedness of His person. We see this in the scene of the transfiguration. The moment there was the thought in the heart, "Let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias," the Father says, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him" (Luke ix. 33, 35). Christ stands alone.

Yet we now, by the grace which associates us with Him, are brought into that which is divinely blessed and perfect. Such is the peculiar blessedness of Christianity. It is not merely sending out a law to show what man ought to be, but it is eternal life given, in the true knowledge of the Father and the Son, and this in the power of the Holy Ghost. Therefore the affections of the heart are of the Spirit, and are filled with the Spirit, and they have their play in all true Christian affection.

Being brought into such a place, all our ways, the condition of our soul, and our conduct, of course, are looked for to be conformed to that of which Christ Himself is the perfect expression. It is not merely that there is a



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certain rule of conduct, as in the law, but it is Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith; so that our thoughts and feelings and affections should flow from that source through the Holy Ghost. That is what is meant by being "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18). We all have the Spirit, but we are not all "filled with the Spirit." He is the one source of everything, where the heart is filled with Him.

That which is here brought before us is not only the blessedness of the place we are put in, but the conduct of the Christian suitable to it in every respect. And it is that which suits the presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in him. Whatever is not fit for His presence is not fit for the Christian.

It will come down to the most ordinary things of life, because there is a path which is pleasing to God in this world; there is one way for a person to walk, and no other. Supposing a son has left his father's house, and has gone off to a strange country; he may not be outwardly given up to what shocks the conscience, but he cannot, as long as he is there, do right; he must go back in order to do what is right. Until he does this, in all he does there is not one thing that is right. This is the way with man in the world. He has left God, and cannot do anything right; never can do anything positively right, till he gets back.

If we are in our right place, we do not want a way. Adam wanted no way in the garden of Eden; his business was to stay where he was. In the world, where wickedness is, we want a way; but there is no way really, because we have departed from God. But when the Spirit of God has come into it, He has created a path for him that believes. For the Israelites in the wilderness, where the cloud went, there was a way directly. God can make a way for Himself, no matter how wicked the world. If I injure a man, it is wrong; and if he revenge himself, it is wrong; but Christ can make a way through it all. He can give me to walk with wisdom and patience in all circumstances. He can bring in motives and principles for every difficulty of this world; and that is where the Christian has to walk. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John ii. 6).

The life of Jesus should be manifested in us. Our life ought to be the expression of this new thing; that is, divine life in the midst of a world that is away from God. Nothing but Christ can do that, and it is Christ in us. The power of it is by the presence of the Holy Ghost acting upon "the new man which after God is created in righteousness and in true holiness" (Eph. iv. 24).

It is not the old thing corrected at all,

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because the old man never can have the divine motives, but its own motives. It may be corrected in an outward thing, for people are not all thieves and robbers; but it never can have the motives that belong to the divine nature; and therefore, though it may be decent and respectable, it never can be right. It is the nature that has departed from God, and it cannot be right before Him.

We read that that which we have (the new man) is "after God, created in righteousness and in true holiness." And in another part it is said that it is "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. iii. 10). The measure of spiritual knowledge, as to the walk and affections, is the image of Him who created us. And where do I see this perfectly? In Christ. He is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15). The power of that life was shown in the resurrection; the character of that life was shown in all His path on earth. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4). The declaration of the power of the life was in resurrection; the character of it we see in the Son of God walking in this world; and Christ is our life (Col. iii. 4).

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye

have of God, and ye are not your own." It is redeemed. "Ye are bought with a price." Being redeemed by God, the body, which is our servant and vessel of working, is the temple of the Holy Ghost. There I get power, and power by One dwelling in me, whose presence is that which must measure everything I do. Therefore He says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30).

Such is the measure He furnishes us.

*(To be concluded, D.V.)*

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### **The Last Knock.**

REV. III. 8, 16, 20, 21.

**T**HE Lord's last words to His assembly on earth are singularly solemn and instructive. In the closing moments of her history, when things are hopelessly bad, He still stands at the door, and knocks. The witness of the bride and body of Christ on earth is about for ever to cease, and He reminds the faithful of it by saying, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (iii. 11).

Faithful ones surely are contemplated till He come, however few they may be, and the overcomer is encouraged to the last moment (ii. 26).

It is clear that two things will be found

here in the closing days of the history of God's assembly on earth: some true to the Lord, and many indifferent to His claims and honour. Though slighted, He knocks, and presents Himself in richest grace to every one who hears His voice, and opens the door. We have [in this chapter] the Lord's commendation, His threat, and His entreaty.

1. The faithful at the close are characterized by keeping His "word," and not denying His "name"; and these have always been the marks of vital Christianity. His word makes Him known. Our faith is founded on it, and it is sufficient to guide us every step of our way. Without believing His word there is no faith, and consequently neither joy, nor peace, nor hope.

It is to the written word the Spirit of God always directs us, as having final and conclusive authority; so that it is certain that none are walking by faith, walking in the Spirit, walking in the fear of God, in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, or for the glory of God, who do not in some measure surrender their thoughts, purposes, and ways to the divine authority of the word of the Lord which endures for ever.

The test is simple, but very searching. Are we keeping His word? Not merely *reading* it, or even *admiring* some of its striking features; but *using* it as a lamp unto our feet,

and a light unto our path; being in heart and conscience subject to it; and finding guidance from it for every part of our way.

Such, we judge, *keep* His word. They love it, hide it in their hearts, have the Lord Jesus Christ ministered to their souls through it by the Spirit, and are thus kept in communion with Him, living for His glory, and waiting for His return from heaven. In this way there is not only intercourse with the Lord, but such holy intimacy that they can count on His blessing being with them, who said, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 7).

Happy are they who keep His word and have it dwelling in them *richly*, so that they "walk in truth"!

Another mark of the faithful in the closing days of the church on earth is, they have not denied our precious Saviour's "name."

We are persuaded there is a great deal more in this than many think. The way in which a person mentions the name of an absent friend often discloses the esteem or indifference in which the speaker holds him. And is it less true with regard to how we speak of the infinitely worthy name of our Lord Jesus Christ?

We think not; and we hesitate not to say that nothing more manifests the state of the

heart than the way in which His holy name is repeated by us. Quietly to take sides with the insolent who say, Who is this Son of man? or to maintain intimacy with the despisers who are wont to speak of Him as the carpenter's Son, or with scoffers who say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" betrays a heart that cares little for His name, or for His glory.

To the Spirit-taught soul, His name is "as ointment poured forth." Nothing wounds him like dishonour to Christ. To such, no name on earth can ever equal His. In heaven too, He has been found infinitely worthy of a name which is above every name. It is the name of our Lord Jesus Christ which is the only centre of gathering together on earth, or will be the centre of gathering us together when He comes. His name is the touchstone of holiness in the assembly, calling us to depart from what dishonours Him. And to His name every knee must yet bow, of beings in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Oh, yes,

" His name's a rock, which winds above  
And waves below can never move! "

It is the name, when mentioned, which sets forth the person, and at once claims our esteem or otherwise. We cannot ordinarily separate

the name from the person. The name of our Lord Jesus Christ not only conveys to us true thoughts of His Person, but calls out our affections toward Him where He now is.

It is impossible, therefore, to say what may be involved in denying His name. That every thing which dishonours Him, every word that is derogatory to Him, all insubjection to His authority, should be judged, all irreverence reprov'd, and that every unholy association with His peerless name should be shunned, there can be no doubt. But these are of a profane kind.

A more refined and covert way of denying His name is not giving Him His rightful place in the assembly as gathered to His name, who "is in the midst of them"; not according to Him His rightful place in our hearts, our houses, and touching all our affairs. Yet most would admit that Christianity is the continual surrender of ourselves and our all to Him, as not our own, but bought with a price by Him who is now "Lord of all," and soon coming forth to reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.

2. Besides our Lord's last commendation of some, His last threatening of others is most solemn. "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (v. 16).

Their state and ways were so nauseous to



our Lord as to be intolerable. Professing to love Him, their hearts were indifferent to His honour and His claims, so that they could only be rejected by Him who is emphatically "holy" and "true." Plenty of Bible knowledge there may be, and zeal for religious activities; such too may be prosperous in the eyes of the religious world, and have abundance of fancied competency and self-satisfaction, and yet Christ be outside it all.

How appalling is the possibility of such a state! But, alas! it is too true. Is it Christ that is before the soul; His word, His ways, His interests, His people, His service, His honour, His glory? Is the love of Christ the motive power which constrains us? Have we personal intercourse with the glorified Son of God, who is our life, our righteousness, and peace? Is communion with Him that which we seek and enjoy? Is Christ known, welcomed, and revered as "in the midst" of the assembly when gathered in His name? Alas! how can anything short of this be acceptable to Him? Those who desire not His glory, who do not love His word, do not seek to obey His voice, and to honour Him at some personal inconvenience and loss in this world, are, we may be sure, among those who are "neither cold nor hot," and must be rejected by Him.

*(To be concluded, D.V.)*

## **“The Mystery of Godliness.”**

I TIMOTHY III. 16.

**T**HERE is a very remarkable passage in Timothy, the force of which is very frequently overlooked. The apostle would teach Timothy how he ought to behave himself “in the house of God”; and he then presents the formative power of all true godliness in the words, “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

This is often quoted and interpreted as if it spoke of the mystery of the Godhead, or the mystery of Christ’s person. But it is the mystery of godliness, or the secret by which all real godliness is produced, the divine spring of all that can be called piety in man.

“God manifest in the flesh” is the example and the power of godliness, its measure and its spring. Godliness is not now produced, as under the law, by divine enactments; nor is it the result in the spirit of bondage in those (however godly) who only know God as worshipped behind a veil. Godliness now springs from the knowledge of the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. It takes its spring and character from the knowledge of His person as “God mani-

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fest in the flesh ”; the perfectness of His obedience, “ as justified in the Spirit ”; the Object of angelic contemplation, and the Subject of testimony and faith in the world; and His present position as received up into glory.

This is how God is known, and from abiding in this flows godliness.

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**God in Christ : Man's Proper Object.**

**M**AN (and, above all, man having knowledge of good and evil) should have God for his object; and as an object that his heart can entertain with pleasure, and on which his affections can be exercised; otherwise he is lost. The gospel, Christianity, has given him this.

God, who fills all things, who is the source of, in whom is centred, all blessing, all good; God, who is all love, who has all power, who embraces everything in His knowledge, because everything (except the forsaking of Himself) is but the fruit of His mind and will; God has revealed Himself in Christ to man, in order that his heart, occupied by Him, with perfect confidence in His goodness, may know Him, may enjoy His presence, and reflect His character.

The sin and misery of man have but lent occasion to an infinitely more complete development of what this God is, and of the perfection of His nature, in love, in wisdom, and in power. But we are here considering only the fact, that He has given Himself to man for an object.

Nevertheless, although the misery of man has but given room for a much more admirable revelation of God, yet God Himself must have an object worthy of Himself to be the subject of His purposes, and in order to unfold all His affections.

This object is the glory of His Son, His Son Himself.

A being of an inferior nature could not have been this to Him, although God can glorify Himself in His grace to such a one. The object of the affections, and the affections that are exercised with regard to it, are necessarily correlative. Thus God has displayed His sovereign and immense grace with regard to that which was the most wretched, the most unworthy, the most necessitous; and He has displayed all the majesty of His being, all the excellence of His nature, in connection with an object in whom He could find all His delight, and exhibit all that He is in the glory of His nature.

But it is as man (marvellous truth in the eternal counsels of God!) that this object of

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God the Father's delight has taken His place in this glorious revelation by which God makes Himself known to His creatures. God has ordained and prepared man for this.

Thus the heart that is taught by the Spirit knows God as revealed in this immense grace, in the love that comes down from the throne of God to the ruin and misery of the sinner. He finds himself, in Christ, in the knowledge and in the enjoyment of the love which God has for the object of His eternal delight, who also is worthy of being so; of the communications by which He testifies that love (John xvii. 7, 8); and, finally, of the glory which is its public demonstration before the universe.

*This latter part of our ineffable blessedness* is the subject of Christ's communications at the end of John's Gospel. (See chapters xiv., xvi., and in particular xvii. Compare also Proverbs viii. 30, 31, and Luke ii. 14, where read, "good pleasure in men"). It is beautiful to see the angels unjealously celebrating it. Love downwards in grace is great according to the misery and unworthiness of the object; upwards [it is] as the affection of the soul according to the worthiness. See both in Christ (Eph. v. 2). In both, in Christ, self is wholly given up. He gave, not sought, Himself. The law takes self as measure as to the neighbour, and supposes him on the same footing. There is no love downwards.

From the moment that the sinner is converted, and believes the gospel, and (to complete his state, I must add) is sealed with the Holy Ghost, now that the blessed Lord has wrought redemption, he is introduced (as to the principle of his life) into this position, into these relationships with God.

He is perhaps but a child; but the Father whom he knows, the love into which he has entered, the Saviour on whom his eyes are opened, are the same whom he will enjoy when he shall know as he is known (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

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### The "Man of Sorrows."

O EVER homeless Stranger,  
Thus, dearest Friend to me;  
An outcast in the manger  
That Thou might'st with us be.

How rightly rose the praises  
Of heaven that wondrous night,  
When shepherds hid their faces  
In brightest angel-light!

More just those acclamations,  
Than when the glorious band  
Chanted earth's deep foundations,  
Just laid by God's right hand.

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Come now, and view that manger :  
 The Lord of glory see,  
 A houseless, homeless Stranger  
 In this poor world for thee.

*" To God, in the highest, glory,  
 And peace on earth "* to find;  
 And learn that wondrous story,  
*" Good pleasure in mankind."*

How blest those heavenly spirits,  
 Who joy increasing find,  
 That, spite of our demerits,  
 God's pleasure's in mankind !

O strange, yet fit, beginning  
 Of all that life of woe,  
 In which Thy grace was winning  
 Poor man his God to know.

Blest Babe ! who lowly liest  
 In manger-cradle there ;  
 Descended from the highest,  
 Our sorrows all to share.

Oh, suited now in nature  
 For love's divinest ways,  
 And make the fallen creature  
 The vessel of Thy praise !

Oh ! love all thought surpassing,  
 That Thou should'st with us be ;  
 Nor yet in triumph passing,  
 But human infancy.

We cling to Thee in weakness,  
The manger and the cross;  
We gaze upon Thy meekness,  
Through suffering, pain, and loss.

There see the Godhead glory  
Shine through that human vail,  
And, willing, hear the story  
Of love that's come to heal.

My soul in secret follows  
The footsteps of His love;  
I trace the "Man of Sorrows,"  
His boundless grace to prove.

A Child in growth and stature,  
Yet full of wisdom rare:  
Sonship, in conscious nature,  
His words and ways declare.

Yet still, in meek submission,  
His patient path He trod,  
To wait His heavenly mission,  
Unknown to all but God.

But who Thy path of service,  
Thy steps removed from ill,  
Thy patient love to serve us,  
With human tongue can tell?

Midst sin, and all corruption,  
Where hatred did abound,  
Thy path of true perfection  
Was light to all around.



## THE "MAN OF SORROWS."

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In scorn, neglect, reviling,  
 Thy patient grace stood fast,  
 Man's malice unavailing  
 To move Thy heart to haste.

O'er all, Thy perfect goodness  
 Rose blessedly divine :  
 Poor hearts, oppressed with sadness,  
 Found ever rest in Thine.

The strong man in his armour  
 Thou mettest in Thy grace,  
 Didst spoil the mighty charmer  
 Of our unhappy race.

The chains of man, his victim,  
 Were loosened by Thy hand ;  
 No evils that afflict him  
 Before Thy power could stand.

Disease, and death, and demon,  
 All flee before Thy word,  
 As darkness the dominion  
 Of day's returning lord.

The love that bore our burden  
 On the accursed tree,  
 Would give the heart its pardon,  
 And set the sinner free.

Love that made Thee a mourner  
 In this sad world of woe  
 Made wretched man a scorner  
 Of grace that brought Thee low.

Still in Thee love's sweet savour  
 Shone forth in every deed,  
 And showed God's loving favour  
 To every soul in need.

I pause : for in Thy vision  
 The day is hastening now,  
 When for our lost condition  
 Thy holy head shall bow ;

When, deep to deep still calling,  
 The waters reach Thy soul,  
 And death and wrath appalling  
 Their waves shall o'er Thee roll.

O day of mightiest sorrow,  
 Day of unfathomed grief,  
 When Thou should'st taste the horror  
 Of wrath, without relief !

O day of man's dishonour,  
 When, for Thy love supreme,  
 He sought to mar Thine honour,  
 Thy glory turn to shame !

O day of our confusion,  
 When Satan's darkness lay,  
 In hatred and delusion,  
 On ruined nature's way !

Thou soughtest for compassion,  
 Some heart Thy grief to know,  
 To watch Thine hour of passion ;  
 For comforters in woe.

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No eye was found to pity,  
 No heart to bear Thy woe;  
 But shame, and scorn, and spitting:  
 None cared Thy name to know.

The pride of careless greatness  
 Could wash its hands of Thee:  
 Priests, that should plead for weakness,  
 Must Thine accusers be.

Man's boasting love disowns Thee;  
 Thine own Thy danger flee:  
 A Judas only owns Thee,  
 That Thou may'st captive be.

O man, how hast thou provèd,  
 What in thy heart is found;  
 By grace divine unmovèd,  
 By self in fetters bound!

Yet, with all grief acquainted,  
 The "Man of Sorrows" view  
 Unmoved, by ill untainted,  
 The path of grace pursue.

In death obedience yielding  
 To God His Father's will:  
 Love still its power is wielding  
 To meet all human ill.

On him who had disowned Thee  
 Thine eye could look in love,  
 Midst threats and taunts around Thee,  
 To tears of grace to move.

What words of love and mercy  
Flow from those lips of grace,  
For followers that desert Thee,  
For sinners in disgrace !

The robber learned beside Thee,  
Upon the cross of shame,  
While taunts and jeers deride Thee,  
The savour of Thy name.

Then, finished all, in meekness,  
Thou to Thy Father's hand  
(Perfect Thy strength in weakness),  
Thy spirit dost commend.

O Lord, Thy wondrous story,  
My inmost soul doth move ;  
I ponder o'er Thy glory,  
Thy lonely path of love.

But, O divine Sojourner  
Midst man's unfathomed ill,  
Love that made Thee a mourner  
It is not man's to tell.

We worship when we see Thee  
In all Thy sorrowing path ;  
We long soon to be with Thee  
Who bore for us the wrath.

Come, then, expected Saviour,  
Thou " Man of Sorrows " come,  
Almighty, blest Deliverer,  
And take us to Thee, home !

## Jesus the Heir of All Things.

READ HEBREWS I., II.

**T**HERE is a great secret in Heb. i., ii. "The Son," being appointed "Heir of all things," takes His appointed inheritance as a *Redeemer*.

The inheritance had become lost to man by sin. Adam forfeited it; and it was itself corrupted, and under the burden of sin.

If it be again inherited, it must be taken with this burden upon it, as others have long since expressed it.

The Son, appointed Heir, is therefore to take it as a Redeemer, or as One that relieves it of its burden.

This secret or mystery is suggested in Ps. viii., cited in Heb. ii. There, the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man (who is "the Son," the "appointed Heir," of chapter i.), is seen with all things put in subjection under Him. But He is seen also to have reached such lordship as One who, by the grace of God, had tasted death for the inheritance. He is therefore a Redeemer-Inheritor, and not a simple Inheritor.

Therefore, we may say to His praise, He will enter the kingdom as a Redeemer-Inheritor, while the inheritance itself will appear there as a redeemed thing. And in this manner He alone will be glorified there, while

all around Him or under Him will be in blessing and security.

And let me add, this mystery of the redemption of the inheritance is set forth in Col. i. 20, where Christ is declared to be the Reconciler of all things in heaven and on earth, through the blood of His cross.

And the cross itself bore witness to the same mystery, or His lordship of the world by reason of His death; for His royalty, with which His dominion and inheritance are linked, was there inscribed (and inscribed not to be erased), in all the languages of the nations. There it was made known, therefore, that the crucified One was the King, that the cross was His way and title to the crown (see John xix. 19-22).

All this makes "the world to come," or this inheritance of Christ, a *new* creation; that is, creation under new conditions. In the old creation, all things were "of God," it is true; but they were of God *who created them*. But in the new, all things are "of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. v.). All these will witness *redemption*. The blood of the Lamb of God, and not simply the power of the hand of God, will be traced there.

And this distinguishes the dominions of the Second Man from those of the first, or Christ from Adam. Adam received lordship of the

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creatures from the hand of God *at once*: Christ, the Son, the Man of Psalm viii., takes it, after having been made lower than the angels, that, as man, or in manhood, He might taste death for it.

But there is more in this mystery.

The redemption of the inheritance by *blood*, as we have been speaking, is to be made good by *power*. Power will have to reduce or rescue the inheritance; or, in other words, clothe the *title* of Christ with *possession*.

This action is given to us in the Apocalypse; and it is an action, consequently, conducted by *strength*, on the ground of *purchase*; that is, conducted by Him who is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," and who had already been "the Lamb that was slain" (Rev. v.)

This is to be noticed.

And thus it is, by the action of that book, that "all things" are *actually* "put in subjection" to Christ. As to "the Son," therefore, the "appointed Heir of all things," the Man of Ps. viii., the Lord of "the world to come," we see these things.

The decree which puts all things under Him is recorded in Ps. viii. That decree, commented on in Heb. ii., is declared to be not as yet made good to Him. The action by which this is accomplished (the manner in which all things are made subject to Christ), is given to us in the Book of the Apocalypse;

and then the results of that action are displayed to us in the pages of prophets and apostles; for there we see that "the world to come," or "the kingdom," or "the inheritance of all things," is in the hand of "the Son."

Thus, "the Son" is the "Heir of all things"; and after this manner, and in this due time, the inheritance will be His, brought into actual possession.

But, in the riches of His grace, He will have heirs of this inheritance together with Himself; as we read of the saints, "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii.)

Or, as we read in our epistle (chap. ii. 10), as the Captain of salvation He leads the sons to the glory; and as these heirs had redemption by blood, as the inheritance itself has, this Captain of salvation is also a "Sanctifier," as our chapter goes on to teach us (v. 11).

For if He takes us up, He must take us up with all our burdens likewise. He must charge Himself with us, from the place of our ruins to the place of His glories. And this is just what He has done, as we still further read in verse 16, "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham."

He laid not hold of angels (as the meaning is), but He laid hold of the seed of Abraham.



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That is, the Son, who is the Christ, made the interests of elect sinners (here called "the seed of Abraham"), His care, charging Himself with their blessing, and having respect to them in all His ways and doings, till He takes them into the glory, or into the inheritance of all things with Himself. In all the successive parts of His history, from the first to the last, He never lets them go. They are always seen with Him.

This, I judge, is the force of those words, "He took on Him the seed of Abraham." And this is necessary to that great mystery, *the Sanctifier making the sanctified joint-heirs with Himself of the appointed inheritance.* And this we find to be so, as we read Heb. i., ii. throughout. For we there find that we never lose sight of *ourselves* while we are tracing *Him* from the beginning to the end of His blessed, mysterious journey.

And surely this is a great and precious truth. I would notice this, as these two chapters give it to us.

First. His incarnation.

This, of course, was the beginning of His path. But this (we here learn) took place *because of us*. Because we, the children, were partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise Himself took part of the same (ii. 14).

Second. His life and suffering temptation.

This, as I may say, followed immediately

upon His incarnation. But all His life He went through *because of us*. It was that He might succour us in our temptations (ii. 18).

Third. His victorious death.

This closed, as we know, His life of suffering temptation. But this death was likewise *for us*. It was, that He might deliver us who, through fear of death, were all our lifetime subject to bondage (ii. 14, 15).

Fourth. His ascension.

This gloriously succeeded His death and resurrection. But in this He appears also *for us*. For He took His seat on high as the Purger of our sins (i. 3; ii. 9).

Fifth. His present priesthood in heaven.

His ascension led Him to this service and dignity. But it is all exercised *for us*. He makes intercession in the tabernacle for us according to our need (ii. 17).

Sixth. His future coming and kingdom.

This will be in due season, after the present service on high is over. But on this great occasion, and in this age of the glory, He will still appear *for us*. As the Captain of salvation, He will lead us to this glory, that we may sit with Himself in the sovereignty of all things in the world to come (ii. 10).

And thus we see ourselves with Him, throughout all this wondrous journey, from the womb of the virgin to the throne of the kingdom. We see ourselves interested in

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every character which He bears, and in every action or suffering that He fulfils. He is the Incarnate One, the Tempted One, the Dead One, the Risen and Ascended One, the Priest in the heavens, and the Captain of salvation entering the world to come, where the glory is; but in each and all He is either with us or for us.

We are never allowed to lose sight of ourselves or of our interests for a single moment, while tracking His path from the beginning to the end of it. He is "Heir of all things"; but we are joint-heirs with Him, having been made meet to be so by Himself in the earlier parts of His ways.

We have a fuller, brighter view of all this mystery now, in the light of the day of Heb. ii., than they could have had who walked in the light of Psalm viii. only. But this of grace and of God also. The light shines brighter and brighter as we pass on through the oracles of God.

And the day is still to come when, with an emphasis beyond even this, it shall be said, "O Lord, our Lord, how exalted is Thy name in all the earth!"

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The inward revelation of divine favour makes the path of sorrow full of sweetness.

## **The Last Knock.**

*(Concluded).*

3. It is blessed, though, to turn away from the indifference of man in his utter failure to maintain the truth and honour of our Lord on earth, and gather up the thoughts suggested by the gracious way in which our Lord presents Himself, and hearken to His loving entreaty, though He finds Himself outside the door, and knocking.

And what does He say? Does He thunder on them the immediate expectation of devouring judgment? Does He lead them to expect fire and brimstone to rain upon them, because of their most inexcusable forgetfulness of Him?

Oh, no! The last words to His ruined church on earth, which follow His last knock, abound with tenderest accents of richest grace. Let us seek to catch them, as it were, from His own lips. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to Him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. iii. 20).

Wondrous mercy! The highest blessing that can be known on earth, can be enjoyed by the feeblest soul who opens the door to Him.

Let us not fail to notice here, first, [that] the Lord's place, as rejected even by His professed people on earth, is outside the door.

His name, it may be, is often on their lips, but the rightful place is not accorded to Him as Head over all to His assembly. So indifferent are they to Him (His presence, His interests, and His glory) that they can get on, and "have need of nothing," though Christ is outside, instead of being known in their midst because they are gathered together in His name. Oh, how solemn! Can it be possible that Christendom has sunk so low that any can speak of prosperity apart from enjoyment of Himself?

The next thing is the Lord's attitude. He cannot give up the professing church to its expected judgment as the great whore, as long as any will open the door to Him. This they know. This knock is loud enough to arouse the one who is true-hearted among the mass; and he hears the voice. There is no mistaking it. It is the voice of the Beloved, the Shepherd's voice, that still small voice which goes down deep into the heart and conscience, and rouses every true and proper affection of the soul of the one who knows that "Christ is all."

This is enough. The voice being heard, the slumbering faculties are aroused, the heart bounds to open the door, to remove every hindrance to being near Him, and to abide in Him, and with Him. All must give way to Christ's voice.

The door once opened to Him, He comes

in to the feeble one who has lifted the latch, removed every impediment to being face to face with Him. Precious moment! And then (oh, wondrous grace!) He sups with such. His heart must be gratified in having personal communion with the one that has joyfully let Him in, and the humble, self-distrusting believer sups with Him.

Can anything exceed these riches of divine grace? and are we not told to be "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life"? This scene is mercy indeed; for while the mass of Christendom's people are to be spued out of His mouth, a solitary one here and there is even now supping with our Lord Jesus, having personal communion with Him.

And let it never be forgotten that the Lord's "counsel" was to have *personal intercourse* with Him, and get from Himself the pure gold of divine righteousness, which had been tried in the fire. He offers even on earth the consciousness of *personal communion* with Him; that is, in our small measure, the same thoughts, the same joys, the same affections as Himself.

How marvellous it is that we are not more roused in heart and conscience, so as to have more enjoyed fellowship with Himself; for we are, through infinite grace, "called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

HOLY SPIRIT DWELLING IN THE BELIEVER. 179

May the Lord's last knock, and His last words to His assembly on earth, duly affect our hearts at this time.

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**The Holy Spirit dwelling in the Believer.**

*(Concluded).*

**H**E gives us intelligence, and affections, and objects, which the law could not do, but Christ does. He gives us a blessed hope, too; but He dwells in us now. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost; and we are called upon so to walk, that in nothing, in word or thought or act, we should grieve the Spirit of God.

It is a wonderful measure in this case. The Spirit has these thoughts and feelings, and He produces them in us.

Mark then how Christ is connected with this: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" What sweetness there is in that!

But it is not merely a fact, it is the principle by which I measure all conduct in His presence. How do I come there? I have it all of God. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?"

What a feeling God must have about me, to

make a poor creature like me His temple, the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost! To think that God's mind about such poor creatures should be that He would make me a temple of the Holy Ghost! that He has given me the Holy Ghost to dwell in me!

For this there is absolute cleansing (for He could not dwell in a defiled tabernacle), and thus He seals till the day of redemption. God has given me the Holy Ghost to dwell in me, the seal of redemption, and earnest of glory. God's mind has been, in virtue of having cleansed me, to give me the perfect witness and testimony of His own infinite love. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John iv. 16).

He gives us the Holy Ghost to dwell in us, the seal of His love, and of the redemption that He has accomplished. He makes our bodies the temple of the Holy Ghost; and while this is the measure and test of all that is according to God by His own presence, that presence is the expression of God's perfect love; for His love "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. v. 5).

And here he appeals to them as to not sinning. How can you go on and sin, with a body that is a temple of the Holy Ghost? It is not merely breaking such a command, or the like; but the motive here is, "What! know



## HOLY SPIRIT DWELLING IN THE BELIEVER. 181

ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? ” Are you going to commit sin with it?

All exhortations are founded upon the blessed place into which He has brought us. “ Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God? ” God Himself has given the Holy Ghost, to put you in connection with Himself; and are you going into connection with sin and vileness?

It is applied to purity of life. The body is the vessel of the presence and action of God by the Holy Ghost. We do fail; but that is the power; and we are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him (Col. iii. 10).

What a place we are set in! It makes us feel our wretchedly low ways and short-comings; and so much the better. If we are humble, we do not need to be humbled. If a man is not humble, he needs to be humbled; if he is humble, he is the recipient of grace; for “ God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble ” (James iv. 6). And wherever a person is really humble, he may have a great deal to learn, but at any rate he is in his right place with God. Instead of His having to contend with us, we are the objects of His blessing. If it is not so, humbling must come in.

Then comes the second motive. "And ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." It is a motive, not simply power in the presence of God, but a positive motive from the perfect work of Christ; we are not our own. If we were, we were lost. If we are to have blessing, to be a blessing, it is in this, that we are not our own at all.

Wherever I act in my own will in anything, I am wronging God of His own title through the blood of Christ. We are not our own. Christ is ours; but there is the second thing, not only that Christ is mine, but that I am His; and the heart delights to be His, and not its own, because it has learnt His love to us, who has loved us, and given Himself for us (Gal. ii. 20).

Therefore, in knowledge of this eternal love, our delight is to belong to Him; and this, too, as to practice. "Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." It is not merely saying, Do right; but He puts us at once in connection with God. Think of our glorifying God! Christ could do it as a man; but can I, wretched as I am, glorify God?

Yes. If I am walking in the Spirit, and having no motive but Christ, it brings in the power of God, which the world knows nothing about. We are called to glorify God in our body: it belongs to Him; it is God's; and

## HOLY SPIRIT DWELLING IN THE BELIEVER. 183

what a relief it is when I think that this body, which was the wretched slave of sin, now belongs to God! It is His property. It has been taken out of its old condition entirely, and it does not belong to my corrupt will at all. I am not a debtor to the body, but it belongs to God.

This is an immense joy; and it shows that everything has been done for one; for even this poor wretched body belongs to God; and I am to use it thus, to glorify God.

Here we have the two great leading motives and springs of conduct which the apostle sets before us as to our faith and conduct; namely, that our "body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," which we have of God; and that we are "bought with a price," and belong to God.

The power, intelligence, and all, is that which we have of God. It is the Holy Ghost, of which our body is made the temple; and when I look at the body in itself, it now, through the work of Christ, belongs to God. The Holy Ghost dwells in me in power and intelligence; my body is made His temple, and I must use it according to that presence which I thus have of God. I am not my own at all; I am bought with a price; I belong to God.

The Lord give us joy of heart, in unfeigned, deep thankfulness of spirit, to know that, on the one side, our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost; and, on the other, that these

bodies are bought with a price, and that they belong to God!

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### **The Lord's Supper.**

“ For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body ” (1 Cor. xi. 23-29).

**I** BELIEVE that the bread remains simply and absolutely bread, and the wine, wine; that, physically, there is no change whatever in the elements.

To seek for material and physical things in such a precious institution of the Lord is, to my mind, a poor and miserable manner of regarding it.

I have a charming portrait of my mother, which reminds me of her just as she was. If I am told of the canvas or the colouring, I should feel that those who spoke thus knew nothing about it. That would not be my mother. That which is precious in it to me is my mother herself; and they turn my attention from her to the means employed to recall her to me; and the reason is, that they have no idea of what my mother is to me.

The portrait has no value except so far as it is a good representation of her who is not there. I say, It is my mother. I could not throw it aside as a mere piece of canvas; I discern my mother in it. I cherish this portrait; I carry it with me; but if I stop at the perfection of the painting as a work of art, the link with my heart is lost.

There is more than this in the Supper of our Lord, because the Lord is really present *with us* in it, in spirit, according to the intention of the institution; and this is very precious. But it has pleased Him to give us a physical means by which we may be reminded of Him; so that I am authorized to speak of a portrait by way of comparison.

I have still further authority to repel the

idea of any physical change in the bread and wine, in that the Lord has said, in the 6th of John, which you have quoted, "The Spirit quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (v. 63).

The verses of this chapter, however, which speak of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, do not speak at all of the Lord's Supper, but of Christ: I am, I do not say *persuaded*, but *sure* of this.

The Supper speaks of that of which the chapter speaks; but the chapter does not speak of the Supper (the symbol), but of the thing symbolized. This is perfectly evident; one has only to read the chapter to see it.

If the application that has been made of it to the Supper be correct, then not one of those who have partaken of it would be lost; and he who had not partaken of it would be lost, whatever he might be; and those who partake of it would not only be blessed, but they would be eternally saved (vv. 53, 54).

Further, the Saviour says that it is of Himself, come down from heaven, that He speaks (not of the Supper); of the same Person who will ascend up where He was before in heaven (vv. 35-41, 48, 51, 58-62).

The Supper presents Christ in only one of these conditions, but in that which is, so to speak, central. It presents to us a dead Christ. But this foundation of all this precious truth,

which could be a motive even for the Father Himself to love Christ (John x. 17), this fact that it is a dead Christ which is presented to us, is the proof that we could not have a living Christ presented to us in the elements. This would be to deny the state of death, and to destroy the object and intention of this institution.

This institution presents to us the death of Christ, a dead Christ; His body broken, and His blood shed; but there *exists no dead Christ*. He desires that we should *remember Him*, "This do in remembrance of Me" (Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24), but I do not speak of the remembrance of Christ living in heaven. I live by Him; He is my life; I enjoy communion with Him; I dwell in Him; He dwells in me: there is no separation (Gal. ii.; Col. iii.; John vi. 56; Rom. viii.).

If, through my folly, communion is interrupted, it is no question of remembering Him, but of being with Him anew, with a Saviour who manifests Himself to us as He does not to the world.

. . . . .

We are united to a Christ glorified; this is the point of departure; there is no longer a dead Christ; death has no more dominion over Him. I enjoy communion with a glorified Christ; I am one with Him; I shall be like

Him. I rejoice; my heart is full of love at the thought of seeing Him, at the hope of the glory of waking up in His likeness.

Shall I, therefore, forget His death and His sufferings? God forbid! It is precisely this which unites us to Christ by the most tender affections. There, where He had to suffer and to do everything, He was alone; my heart at least will be with Him. He does not ask me to be one with Him there; I could not have been. There He was willing to be alone (blessed be His name!) and He has accomplished all.

But the heart which would give itself for me there, is the same which thinks of me now, and which loves me. In remembering His death, His love, His sufferings, what shall I say? Divine, though human! I am united in heart with Him there, where He is, on high; it is not another person, another love.

Whether in the Supper, where we remember Him in such a peculiar and touching way, or whether at other moments, when I think of His death, when I eat Him as dying for me, I am in communion with Him living, and I realize the love of Him who lives; that same love, that same heart of the Saviour: I dwell in Him, and He in me.

It is not said exactly, "This do in remembrance" of My death, but "of Me." Still we remember Him on the earth, in His incar-



nation, in His life of humiliation, and finally and specially as dead on the cross. I remember *Him*. Not Him in the heavens, but Him who lives in heaven as once humbled and dead for me. There is also a certain action of the heart; we eat.

In John v. the Son of God quickens whom He will : here (John vi.) we eat the bread come down from heaven ; we eat His body, and we drink His blood.

It is most important to understand that it is a dead Christ, who in this state exists no longer, because we cannot have any relation with a Christ living on the earth. If even as Jews we had had this relation, we should have been obliged to say with Paul, " Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more " (2 Cor. v. 16).

Death has put an end to all the relations of Christ with the world, according to the flesh, and He lives now as Head of a new race, the Second Man. Thus then, in John vi. 53, the Lord lays down, as a necessary condition of life, the eating of His flesh, and the drinking of His blood, receiving Him in His death. Hence we remember Him before His resurrection ; we are united to Him, as living, after His resurrection ; as He has said, " Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it *abideth alone* ; but if it die, it

bringeth forth much fruit " (John xii. 24).

Thus our union is with a Christ glorified; we do not know Him otherwise : but the most powerful spring of affection for the heart is a Christ, Man in the world, and a Christ dead. I am nourished by this; I eat it, and I live by this. But if we wish to bring back, so to speak, a Christ such as He has been in this world, as present, we overthrow entirely the intention of this institution, and even Christianity itself.

Every time that we eat this bread, and drink this cup, we show the Lord's death till He come. But if we will introduce a living Christ to animate this dead one, so to speak, we destroy Him.

Why, then, is it said, " They discern not the Lord's body " ? (1 Cor. xi. 29). What body? His dead body. A perfect love, His accomplished work, an obedience which was arrested by no difficulty, present themselves to our eyes! Is there anything else there but a dead body? . . . If so, I know not where I am, nor what the Supper means.

Do not animate it with the life that Christ had before death! His obedience was not yet finished, nor His work accomplished, nor His love perfectly demonstrated!

Do not animate it with the life of a Christ now risen! You take Him from me as dead; death is no more there, death which is the

basis of salvation, the proof of obedience, the glorification of God.

Take not from me this death, this body broken, this blood for ever shed, which tells me that all is accomplished, and (through the love of my Saviour) that sin is put away for ever.

If you can lead me to grasp yet more firmly what is precious in this dead Saviour, in the death of Him who is the eternal Son of God; if you can make me eat Him with more faith, more spirituality, more divine intelligence, more heart; ah! I shall be very grateful to you; but let it be my dead Saviour that is left to me!

When one is in communion with Him living, there is nothing so precious as His death; yes, precious even to God: "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again" (John x. 17).

For my spiritual intelligence it is the end, or rather the proof and the consciousness, that I have done with the first Adam; that the first creation no longer exists (blessed be God!) for faith. For the heart it is the tender and perfect love of the Saviour.

I am no more either Jew or Gentile, or a man living on the earth; I am a Christian. The death of Christ, Head of all, has put an end to the first creation. He has introduced us into the new creation, as first-fruits united

to Him (2 Cor. v. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 23; James i. 18).

I discern, then, the body of the Lord, but the body of the Lord broken; His blood shed; His death! It is not an ordinary repast, a simple remembrance, if you will, but an institution that Christ has given to His own; not that they may find in the elements anything else than the bread and the fruit of the vine, but that their faith may, in the sweetest way, by the power of the Holy Spirit, nourish itself by Jesus, by that which He has been for them when He died upon the cross; a work of which the efficacy remains eternally, even to the Father's eye, but of which the love is all for us.

If I treat this memorial with lightness, I am guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; for it is that body and blood which are presented to me in it.

I doubt if there is any one in the world who enjoys the Lord's Supper more than I do (though I doubt not that there is with many more piety); but that which makes me enjoy it is that it presents to me the body and blood of my Saviour dead, and consequently a perfect love and a perfect work.

But He cannot be in His dead body, which I discern there by faith. He is in me, that I may enjoy Him. If He is introduced living, that which I ought to discern no longer exists.

All this is in connection with the fact of the

entirely new position of the living Christ; a doctrine which Paul presents to us with such divine energy, and which the enemy has sought to hide, even under the form of piety, and for the preservation of which Paul had so struggled. What anguish he suffered from the efforts of the enemy to draw souls back to Judaism, as if they were still living in the world! "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii.).

May God give us to discern yet more the body of Jesus, to eat His flesh, and to realize His death more! Yes! this death is precious. It meets us in our need, just as we are; and it delivers us from it by introducing us there, where He is, in the power of a new life, which by His death knows not the old.

I have written you at much length. I could willingly enlarge on this subject, for instead of thinking lightly of the Supper of the Lord, it is of all institutions the most precious to me; only to be so it must be a dead Saviour that is presented to me in it. I am living with Him now in heaven (Eph. ii. 5, 6).

There is another aspect (the unity of the body) which I have not touched on, though it be a precious side of the truth of this institution of the Lord; but it is outside your question. I hope you may, at least, apprehend the ground of my thought, though I write in great haste.

## **Martha and Mary.**

READ LUKE X. 38-42.

**T**HE little scene which closes this chapter is peculiar to Luke, serving his general purpose of instructing us in great principles of truth. The two sisters here introduced were differently minded; and, being brought to the trial of the mind of Christ, we get the judgment of God on matter of much value to us.

The house which we now enter was Martha's. The Spirit of God tells us this, as being characteristic of Martha; and into her house, with all readiness of heart, she receives the Lord, and prepares for Him the very best provision it had. His labours and fatigue called for this. Martha well knew that His ways abroad were the ways of the good Samaritan, who would go on foot that others might ride; and she loves Him too well not to observe and provide for His weariness.

But Mary had no house for Him. She was, in spirit, a stranger like Himself; but she opens a sanctuary for Him, and seats Him there, the Lord of her humble temple. She takes her place at His feet, and hears His word. She knows, as well as Martha, that He was wearied; but she knows also that there was a fulness in Him that could afford to be more wearied still. Her ear and her heart,

therefore, still use Him, instead of her hand or her foot ministering to Him.

And in these things lay the difference between the sisters. Martha's eye saw His weariness, and would give to Him; Mary's faith apprehended His fulness underneath His weariness, and would draw from Him.

This brings out the mind of the Son of God. The Lord accepts the care of Martha as long as it is simple care and diligence about His present need; but the moment she brings her mind into competition with Mary's she learns His judgment, and is taught to know that Mary, by her faith, was refreshing Him with a far sweeter feast than all her care and the provision of her house could possibly have supplied.

Mary's faith gave Jesus a sense of His own divine glory. It told Him, that though He was the wearied One, He could still feed and refresh her. She was at His feet, hearing His word. There was no temple there, or light of the sun; but the Son of God was there, and He was everything to her.

This was the honour He prized, and blessedly indeed was she in His secret. When He was thirsty and tired at Jacob's well, He forgot it all in giving out other waters, which no pitcher could have held, or well beside His own supplied; and here Mary brings her soul to the same well, knowing that, in spite of all

His weariness, it was as full as ever for her use.

And oh, dear brethren, what principles are here disclosed to us! Our God is asserting for Himself the place of supreme power and supreme goodness, and He will have us debtors to Him. Our sense of His fulness is more precious to Him than all the service we can render Him. Entitled, as He is, to more than all creation could give Him, yet above all things does He desire that we should use His love, and draw from His treasures.

The honour which *our confidence* puts upon Him is His highest honour; for it is the divine glory to be still giving, still blessing, still pouring forth from unexhausted fulness. Under the law He had to receive from us, but in the gospel He is giving to us; and the words of the Lord Jesus are these: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35). And this place He will fill for ever; for, "without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better" (Heb. vii. 7).

Praise shall, it is true, arise to Him from everything that hath breath; but forth from Himself, and from the seat of His glory, shall go the constant flow of blessing, the light to cheer, the waters to refresh, and the leaves of the tree to heal; and our God shall taste His own joy, and display His own glory, in being a Giver for ever.



## **Treasure in Earthen Vessels.**

READ 2 CORINTHIANS IV.

*(Concluded from page 124).*

**W**HERE we are seeking to serve Christ we have to learn our own lesson; but where there is not that dependence there will be failure. In small things or in great things we cannot do anything without Him, and we are not to do good in the strength of our own thoughts. We are slow to learn it.

There are two remedies for this. First, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus" (v. 10). The apostle applies it to himself, and that goes very far, though it is not all; but if you applied the cross to every thought that arises in your heart, you would find how many thoughts the cross would crucify. The flesh would never put up a thought at all. What thought could a dead man put up?

Of course, we have to be gentle and courteous as Christians; but the old man has been put to death, and I have to reckon myself dead. Here he is carrying it out every day. I might fear there are many here who do not so apply it to every thought and feeling and purpose; who do not so distrust the flesh, and everything in mere human nature. If I let my body live, there is flesh. But he says, I bear about in the body the dying of Jesus,

that the life also of Jesus may be manifest in my body. In order to manifest Christ always, I hold the flesh dead. That is his part in faith.

Then comes the second thing, God's part. "We which live are always *delivered* to death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." However faithful he was, God had to help him. He could not trust him, and He cannot trust you. He puts you through circumstances where the flesh comes out, and then says, There now. Paul could say all this trial and exercise was for Christ's sake. With us very often it is for flesh's sake.

The fulness of the glory is ours. The glory has shone into our hearts; but He puts it in an earthen vessel, because our hearts have to learn what we are. No will can be allowed; no self-stirring, no flesh, no thought from the vanity of this world can be allowed, nothing that does not suit this treasure. But do not thoughts come into your mind, and allowed there, that do not suit the treasure of heaven? Things that do not take the form of gross evil, but a quantity of things that are not *Christ*? Take the day's conversation. Has there been no vanity, no idleness? Is your speech "always with grace, seasoned with salt"? If you take up a newspaper, and read of the vanities of the world, do you then turn to read of Christ and His glory, and not find

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your heart dull? If you do not find it out, you may be sure it will get duller and duller. It hinders the preciousness of Christ to you. You have lost power. You do not go and read your Bible and pray with the same freshness.

When I apply the cross of Christ, it stops the moving of my heart. The Lord puts me through circumstances that put me to the test. If death came, and found me a dead man, what effect would it have? What is killing a dead man? With the apostle the flesh was kept down, and he was looking to God. He says, "We were pressed out of measure, beyond strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life"; but we trusted in God, who raised the dead. Would their killing him prevent God's raising him? It would bring it nearer. We can bless God for it. He puts down the flesh that *wants* putting down. "Death worketh in us, and the life in you." Death was working in Paul, and nothing but life worked as regards others. Oh, that it were so with us!

The practical effect of it is, "All things are for your sakes." When self is down, I begin to think the thoughts of God, and every thing is for us. I see "all things are yours, life, death, things present, things to come, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Do you believe that "all things are for your sakes"?

that all that happens in the world, no matter what the motives that govern men in it, every thing is for your sakes? He makes every thing work together for your good, every circumstance in your life. They may not be pleasant, but we have not to be occupied with them as the world is. God overrules all. He lets man go on, but "makes the wrath of man to praise Him." Peter says, in Acts ii., You, by wicked hands, crucified and slew Him; but it was by the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."

We want only to have confidence that He has a purpose, and that purpose is to glorify His Son. Whatever is needed for that He will do. If my eyes are straightforward to glorify Him, every thing goes right. If I go against His path, He will knock me over. If I am in His path, He helps me on; but I must be there with *His strength*. Paul says, "We faint not." I do not go on in *my own strength*. I may be weary or weak, but it is *God*. I may be faint in my mind; but "when I am weak, then am I strong." "The inward man is renewed day by day." Dependence is *renewed*. You never get in the grace of to-day strength for to-morrow. If I have learned in it more of Christ, it is profit for eternity, of course; but if the manna was kept a day it stank, it became self-righteousness. You must be dependent every instant (*v. 17*). Every

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trouble gives the apprehension of what is to come. "Never mind," he says, "it is a 'light affliction.'" The inward man is not touched, it is "renewed day by day"; and we get blessing by these very things.

I would ask you, Are you ready to take this place, willing to be under God's hand, cleaving to Him with purpose of heart, saying, "I want to get Christ, to win Him, and here I have one thing to do, to manifest Christ"? Are you willing to have your flesh put down? It is singleness of eye.

What Satan is at is to get us to have, if it were ever so little, confidence in the flesh. Do you say, "Let the vessel be dealt with as He will, in whatever He sees needed, so that Christ may be manifested, whether by life or by death"? Is that the desire of your hearts?

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## The Link between Heaven and Earth.

READ ISAIAH VI.

**T**HE link between heaven and earth has been signified from the beginning in various ways. Visions, dreams, and audiances, introducing the spirit of man to unseen regions, did this in their way. Angelic visits did it still more palpably. But more strikingly still, the appearances of the Son of God at all

times; in patriarchal days very specially, but also in the days of the nation of Israel.

The translation of Enoch told of this link between heaven and earth; and so did that of Elijah, leaving behind him, as he became the heavenly man, his mantle, with its mystic virtues, for the use and endowment of one who was to know his place only in the earth.

Moses, too, called up to the elevation of the Lord of Israel, and there, as with the eye of the Lord, surveying the tribes of Israel (the citizens of the earth) beneath him. All this tells the same; and all this tells the nearness of these different regions of the divine presence. They are but the several parts of the same temple, and, though separated, it is but a veil that lies between. And all this (in figure) teaches the mystery, even "the mystery of His will, which He hath purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him" (Eph. i.).

But if the passage be short, the title to make it is simple. The link between heaven and earth is seen; the descending of the Prince of life, who is the Son of man, has made it so. But the link between the glory and the poor sinner is seen also, the blood of the same blessed One makes it so.

Isaiah is brought into the presence of the

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glory. The throne of the Lord is seen, and His train fills the temple, while the seraphim, with veiled faces, worship. Nature in the prophet is overwhelmed. He takes knowledge of the glory and of his own uncleanness, but of nothing else. This was nature, and it is nature still. Nature does not rise out of these thoughts, it comes short of the glory of God. It takes knowledge of the two things, the *divine presence*, and *our unfitness for it*, like Adam; but that is all, and the distance is felt to be infinite.

But there was an *altar* in the scene to which the prophet was led, as well as a *throne*, and the Lord's train, and the seraphim, and the smoke that filled the place, and the angelic worship. But the prophet knew nothing about it; and yet its virtue was such that, in the twinkling of an eye, it links what had been felt to lie at infinite distances.

The live coal touches his lips, and there is no longer any mention of his uncleanness, no longer any sense of distance, no dismay of soul, no amazement, but such full and entire liberty, that the prophet forgets himself altogether, save as one who was now *free to serve*. "By faith he is free, by love he is subject." "Here am I, send me," says the delivered prophet, having boldness in the holiest; for "by faith the Christian rises to God, by love he descends to man."

These fine conditions of soul Isaiah here represents, and we learn in him, as in a figure, that there are links between the glory and the sinner which can stand and answer the shock and the trial which conscience and the law and the accuser may occasion.

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## **“Purged with Blood.”**

READ HEBREWS IX.

“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (v. 22).

**I**N the latter part of this text we find an exclusive and distinct proposition; namely, that without shedding of blood there is no remission.

In the flaming sword placed in the garden of Eden, after man's disobedience, we find his positive exclusion from the presence of God. In our being out of paradise, we see the existing fact, that we are in a state of exclusion from God. And the question now is, Have we any access to God; to that which is far above paradise?

It is not only that we are out of paradise, but that we stand in all the accumulation of our transgressions. In the first act of sin we find



that the will of man is disobedience to God; and every act of his since has been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

When our conscience is awakened, we learn how productive of fruit our evil nature is, and whenever we see that all is gone (for innocency once lost is lost for ever), then we find there is no competency in us to enter into association with God.

That which was man's privilege in paradise has been lost, and we find ourselves not only evil, but daily accumulating transgressions. And can we then enter into the place of God's holiness? This is the only true question.

Let me ask you, Is there nothing your consciences own as needing remission? Murder and theft, etc., which are the consequences of the condition man is in, through transgression, are owned by all as evil. The natural man may see the blessing of moral conduct as giving happiness on earth, but can discern nothing beyond. But when we look within the veil, it is altogether another thing.

Our not wronging our neighbour may produce temporal happiness; but the revelation of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ awakens the mind to a new inquiry [as to] its fitness for the presence of such holiness. And this question is soon settled: we find it utterly impossible. It is not fitting us for the world as it is (that is not the question); but making us com-

petent to be associated with Christ in the glory He is in when He appears.

Does the world know anything about it? Is this what they look for? Do they not rather say it is presumption to think any can have association and fellowship with God? The world is a witness to itself that it presumes no such thing.

God's testimony is that there are none righteous, none who understand, none who seek after God (Rom. iii. 10, 11). But suppose we have received an understanding to know Him that is true (1 John v. 20), then still the question is, How are we to stand in the presence of the glory? Can one in a sinful condition abide in His presence? Can we say we are fit to be partakers of the glory?

There is nothing in the world fit for this. It is vain to plead the highest morality, or the most refined amiability; they are not the things to qualify us for heaven. We may find the character of evil all around: all are guilty, for all come short of the glory of God (Rom. iii. 23). The evil of the root from which it springs may be easily discerned in the fruits.

Now, there must not only be a renewing, but a complete purging of the conscience. And I plead this, that "without shedding of blood is no remission." All other ways are the efforts of man to depreciate the righteousness of God, the substitution of something instead

of God's way of salvation ; which is most presumptuous, and subversive of the great testimony of God, that “ without shedding of blood is no remission.”

The accumulated sins of our evil nature must be put away. The Spirit of God can have no part but bringing us to the knowledge of the hatefulness of sin, and the necessity of the blood shed ; and whenever the soul is awakened to what sin is in God's sight, there cannot be peace until the Spirit which shows the necessity of holiness, and reveals that of God, thus teaches us that nothing but God's own efficient act can put away, by the shedding of the blood of Jesus, that which God testifies against.

The shedding of the blood brings it to the actual power of death ; the taking away of the life of him whose life is given. And why ? Because there is the forfeiture of life, and therefore the necessity of the life being given, the blood shed, to blot out the sin ; and here we find Christ stepping in, and all the believer has entirely shut up in Christ, in whom we have a new nature whereby we can delight in God, and not forgiveness only. And this [is] the consequence of the work of Christ alone, shedding His blood before God, offering His life as a ransom to God, presenting that which was adequate for the purpose, but without which there is no escaping the consequences of

sin. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him" (Isa. liii. 10). The blood was shed, but it is manifested as His own voluntary act. At the same time His side is pierced that we might know the act complete.

This is presented to our faith as a thing requisite, which could be done in no other way. Christ had no associate, no companion; but once, alone, and for ever, the thing was done; and the revelation of it by God to the soul is salvation. This is a transaction between God and the Son; the thing done is the ground of remission of sins to every one who believes (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

I have not peace in anything in which I take a part, but peace in that in which Christ acted alone. Man's part in it was only stretching out the sinful hands which crucified Him; and this is all he had to do with it. Is it, I ask, by any act to be done now that peace is obtained? No; it is simply by the blood which has been shed, the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of His death, which can give peace through faith (Rom. iv. 25; v. 1).

If once we see ourselves morally dead in trespasses and sins, and that without the full forfeit of life there is no remission, we shall see, as regards the cleansing of the conscience, there is nothing but the blood for us. But who did this? It is the act of God to provide Himself a Lamb, by the shedding of whose blood

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the conscience of those admitted into the holy presence of God is effectually purged.

Can you say, Paradise is lost, and disobedience and sin are here, and yet I shall force my way back to God? What hope can those have who are not washed in the blood, taking a worse ground than that which excluded them from paradise (with thus accumulated sin upon them), treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and despising that blood which cleanses from all sin, counting it an unholy thing?

He who seeks God's holiness, and passes by Jesus, going to God in his sins, passes by the blood, rejects the testimony of God, and despises Jesus.

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### **In what Name are we gathered?**

“Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.”  
—Matt. xviii. 20.

**T**HIS is the only place in Scripture where these precious words are found. The Lord was speaking of the Church, or Assembly.

Matthew's Gospel is the only one which mentions the Church. The reason is obvious. Matthew's line of truth treats of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. This is why His title to the throne, birth in Bethlehem, and some other testimonies

of the prophets, are exclusively found there; and why the sermon on the mount, parables of the kingdom, and the prophecies as to the future of the Jews, Christendom, and Gentiles are here so fully given.

In a word, Matthew's Gospel sets forth in detail that Jesus "came unto His own," gave continual proofs of His Messiahship, and was there able to bring in the kingdom; but "His own [the Jews] received Him not" (John i. 14). Instead of the nation welcoming Him, only a few fishermen and women, and some others, received Him as the Messiah; they were thus on kingdom ground, and partakers of His blessing.

The people held a council to destroy Him, so that He eventually gave them up as "a wicked and adulterous generation" (Matt. xii. 14, 45; xvi. 4). Such being the case, it seemed a fitting time for our Lord to bring out what had been "kept secret since the world began," that He purposed to bring in another order of blessing, quite distinct from Judaism; namely, His Church. He said therefore to Peter, "Upon this rock I will" (not I *have* built, or I *do* build, but I *will*) "build My Church."

What the Church is, was not made known until revealed to the apostle Paul (Eph. iii. 5); but, on the giving up for a time, under the governmental dealings of God, of the Jews as a people, Christ would do another thing, [as

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He said] “ I *will* build My Church ” (Matt. xvi. 18).

Whatever types and shadows of the Church there may have been in the Old Testament, this is the first time in Scripture that it is plainly spoken of. Afterward, in the eighteenth chapter, when speaking of one brother having trespassed against another, He again mentions the Church (or Assembly) as being in the place here, not of infallibility, but of authority as to discipline. In this the Lord clearly teaches that the power of all authority in the disciplining of erring ones here, as well as the secret of success in united prayer, is His being “ in the midst of them.” “ For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them ” (Matt. xviii. 15-20).

It is important to observe that, though these words are found only here, there is a remarkable allusion to them in reference to a case of assembly discipline at Corinth : “ In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together,” etc. (1 Cor. v. 4).

Perhaps few passages of Scripture are more frequently quoted throughout Christendom than the verse we are now considering, though apparently by many little understood. It is often misquoted. We have heard it said, “ Where two or three are *met* together in My name,” but it is not Scripture; and it is some-

times added, as if it were part of the verse, "and that to bless them."

Again, referring to this verse, one has said, "We meet in the name of Jesus"; another, "We meet simply in the name of Jesus"; or, "The name of *Jesus* is sufficient for our meeting"; but none of them are scriptural statements.

Jesus said, "My name." The question therefore is, "What is *now* His name?"

Some also begin a letter with "Dear Brother in Jesus," and end it with "Yours in Jesus." And though we do not doubt that such mean well, yet a little reflection on the truth of Holy Scripture would show that we were not in Him in the days of His flesh, but are in Him risen and ascended; and, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, we are united to Him there who has been made both Lord and Christ.

We never read, therefore, in Scripture of our being in Jesus, but in "Christ Jesus," or "complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power." We do read of "them which sleep in Jesus," but it should be "through Jesus" (1 Thess. iv. 14).

It is a point of great importance to souls as to whether their thoughts are continually revolving on Jesus as He was on earth (most blessed in its place), or occupied with Christ Himself glorified, our life and righteousness, and in whom we are,



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through marvellous grace, accepted and blessed.

Instead, therefore, of its being said, *Met* together in My name, our Lord said, “*Gathered* together in My name.” For us to *meet* together implies the activity of our wills; to be “gathered together” implies the putting forth of the power of another, a Gatherer; and so it is.

The Holy Ghost on earth, during our Lord’s absence, draws us unto His name, giving us the sense and enjoyment of being around Him who is in the midst. It is not a voluntary association of men, but a distinct action of the Holy Ghost drawing our hearts to that most precious name, to which we who have received eternal life delight to come, under the guidance of the Spirit, and the word of truth. How solemn, and yet how unspeakably blessed it is, thus to have the consciousness of being “gathered together” by the Spirit of God! But while this action of the Holy Ghost in gathering together would include those who are in Christ, it necessarily excludes all who are not in Christ; for how could they be truly gathered together in His name in whom they have not believed? What an untrue thing it would be! How this one scripture demolishes every idea of mere human confederacies and associations for the Lord’s work! Surely the Holy Ghost is the Testifier and Glorifier of the

Lord Jesus during His absence, and thus, to those who know Him, His "name is as ointment poured forth" (Song of Solomon i. 3).

Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in *My name*." The question for our hearts is, Are we gathered together *in His name*? for this surely excludes every other name. How solemnly and sternly did the Holy Ghost, by the apostle, rebuke the first sound of one believer saying, "I am of Paul," and another, "I of Apollos"! He appeals at once to them as members of the body of Christ, and asks, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. i. 12, 13). It was not that they purposed to give up meeting in the name of the Lord Jesus, but only to adopt another name, perhaps as a mark of respect to Paul or Apollos. This, however, is decidedly resented, and declared to be carnal, and not spiritual. Some might not have apprehended the satisfying and true blessedness of being gathered to His name, and others might have lost the freshness of it. It is difficult to understand how any Christians, who have tasted the comfort and power of being gathered together unto His name, could tolerate the substitution or addition of another name. Did we not know that schism, or sectarianism, is a work of the flesh, we should have thought it impossible. Alas! what is man?

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When the Lord mentioned His Church (or Assembly), He was referring to what was future, well knowing what would take place as to His death, resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Ghost. Immediately after saying, "I will build My Church," etc., it is said, "*From that time forth* began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matt. xvi. 21). It is said, "From that time forth," because the Church could only be founded upon His death and resurrection, and formed by the descent of the Holy Ghost after His *exaltation to the right hand of God*. This change as to the calling, standing, and essential characteristics of the Church of God, in contrast with Israel, is why the place of worship, whether Jerusalem or any other place, is no longer the question, but whether we are gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It must have appeared strange to Jews to have heard the Lord thus speaking of His own name as the centre of gathering. They might have thought, "Why such silence about the gorgeous temple, and all its imposing ceremonials? Why is all this passed by?" Little did they imagine that their beautiful temple was so soon to become a heap of ruins,

and a desolation. "His own" nation having rejected Him, "His own" would thenceforward be those few who had "received Him"; and the beautiful house of God on earth being desolate for Judah's sin, the "Father's house" would be that which would henceforth engage their hearts. Everything is thus changed. Instead, therefore, of being gathered together in the place of goodly stones, as God's house on earth, a spiritual order of things has supplanted the worldly sanctuary; so that now those who are truly gathered according to the Lord's mind are gathered together in (or to) His name.

What are we to understand by "My name"? For now He has a name above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. His name is now no longer "Jesus only"; for Peter said to the Jews, "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36). This is why, in 1 Cor. v., it is not, as we have sometimes heard, "gathered in the name of Jesus," but "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 4).

The difference is of immense consequence to souls; for those who speak of "meeting in the name of Jesus" have Christ as He was on earth before them, and are like His disciples on earth, who were really on kingdom ground, which is not where the truth has put us. The

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being gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ connects our hearts with Christ in glory, where He now is, and where only He is now known; and there the Holy Ghost, the Glorifier of Christ, directs us. Judaism having been laid aside for a time, this new order of things, formed by the coming of the Holy Ghost, and energized by His indwelling power, is brought in; so that now the name of the Lord Jesus is to be associated with everything. We are gathered together in His name. We are in prayer to ask in His name. Whatsoever we do in word or deed, is all to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus. The apostles wrought their miracles in His name; and by-and-by, at the name of Jesus every knee in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, shall bow, and to Him every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (John xvi. 23; Col. iii. 17; Phil. ii. 10, 11).

*(To be concluded, D.V.)*

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God is a present God with us. He did not bring us out of the Red Sea to meet us again at Jordan. No; He will mark out all the wilderness path. He Himself is with us all the way.

## Remarks on Preaching the Kingdom.

**A** QUESTION has been put into my hand as to preaching the kingdom.

Paul says to the elders from Ephesus, in Acts xx., "Ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God" (v. 20); and you will find it elsewhere as well.

You have it in John iii., which is often overlooked: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (v. 5).

I have no doubt it is an important point, too. Other things were preached; but it was testified by the prophet that God was going to set up a kingdom (see Dan. vii.). When the Lord came, He, in a certain sense, preached nothing else. As to that point, at least, John the Baptist and the Lord exercised the same ministry. It was testified then, and ought to be so still.

Another thing has come out, the gospel of our salvation (Eph. i. 13); a thing that was not promised or spoken of before the cross. While there were the prophecies that Christ should come, the grace that should be brought had not appeared. There was a testimony to its appearing from Adam on; but the importance of the statement of the kingdom lies in this, that it is not simply persons must have a

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change in them in order to be happy, but that God was setting up something. God did not own the world at all, but was setting up a kingdom, into which man could not enter if he was not born again.

Now-a-days, Christianity is so reduced to the idea of being safe (leading people to look into their own hearts to see if they are), that the object of testimony is gone. It has come down to this: a certain few outward things, and then there is nothing positive or substantial at all.

But there were two testimonies: the Lord's own, upon which He was condemned (He was not condemned on the testimony brought against Him, for the two false witnesses did not agree), and which before Pilate was, that He was a King: "Thou sayest that I am." That was the "good confession" that He witnessed. And the other testimony was that God was setting up a kingdom. There are other things; the Church, and so on. One of the great mischiefs done is the confounding of the Kingdom and the Church of God. But still the kingdom is there as the subject of preaching.

In Matthew you get things brought out more in order, and there you get the rejection of Christ, and upon that three things are substituted for what He was down here (founded, though, upon His work), the kingdom of

heaven, in chap. xiii.; the Church, in chap. xvi.; and the coming in glory, in chap. xvii. (that is, the transfiguration). These are very distinct. You could not call the kingdom "the bride" or "the body of Christ." There would be no sense in it. The setting up of a kingdom is seen in the authority of a king, and he has his subjects; but in the idea of a body, or of a bride, you cannot talk of a king. If you do you lose the whole idea.

The kingdom of God had been spoken of [in the Old Testament], and the Messiah was to come, but the Church never at all. That was hidden from ages and from generations, but is now revealed (Eph. iii. 5). We have now the key to it. We may understand certain things, but it is declared that there was no kind of revelation of the Church in the smallest degree until Christ had come, and died. It would have upset all that God had revealed, for the middle wall of partition was not taken down before (see Eph. ii. 14).

But the kingdom was testified of; only when the King came in person (Christ) He was rejected, and so the personal thing was not set up; for the King was gone away to heaven. He was rejected, and taken up to heaven. Nor does He sit upon His throne yet, but He says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His



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throne ” (Rev. iii. 21); as had been said to Him, “ Sit Thou on My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool ” (Ps. cx. 1).

And presently, in the Revelation, it says, “ We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned ” (chap. xi. 17). And so He will reign; but, of course, those who are faithful to Christ, own Him now as the true King; and His kingdom will be set up openly. There are other and better things for those who have believed; but the kingdom will be set up. Say, as when Charles the Second was not in the country, those who were loyal owned him as the king, though he was in France. So now the King is sitting at the right hand of God, until His enemies be made His footstool. When the time comes, He will leave His Father’s throne, and His kingdom be set up.

Meanwhile, you get the parables of Matt. xiii., giving the state of the kingdom during the absence of the King. It does not look a bit like a kingdom to the eye now; it is not yet manifest. The devil is able to sow tares in the world; not in the Church. It is clearly said, “ The field is the world,” and here the tares are sown. That is the devil’s work, and he has done it plentifully. In the last three

parables you get God's intention about it. He took the world for the sake of the treasure; then He is seeking goodly pearls; and then you come to that which has a certain analogy to the tares, though: they take a net, and cast it into the sea, and it gathers of every kind. They put the good into vessels, and cast the bad away. All this is the kingdom; only it is the kingdom while the King is not there.

The actual establishment of the kingdom in power is yet to come; but, meanwhile, let Him at least gather those who are to reign with Him. It is not the setting up of the kingdom yet, save in a mysterious way; but when He comes we shall be with Him upon thrones; for we are made kings and priests unto God and His Father (Rev. i. 6).

Well, if you want the kingdom in its manifestation in glory (which is not the highest thing) you get that in Matt. xvii. In all three Gospels it is the next week that the Lord takes the three disciples up, and shows them Moses and Elias in the same glory with Himself upon the mount. He had said, "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom"; and the account of the transfiguration follows. Now refer to 2 Pet. i.: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord

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Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount" (*vv.* 16-18).

There we get Peter's account of Matt. xvii. The "Son of Man coming in His kingdom" is "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Three disciples went up, but they are not allowed to tell it until after He had been raised from the dead.

If you look at Luke ix. it comes out even clearer, with a blessed testimony to the Lord's grace. But in Matt. xvi. Peter had said that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God (that is, the King, of course), and the Lord charges them to tell no man that, but began to show them that He must suffer, and be killed, and rise again the third day; and adds that we must take up our cross and suffer with Him. Six days after He takes them up into the mountain; and of that Peter tells us that it was the "power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In Luke there is a difference. The cloud came, which, according to Peter, was the excellent glory, and then the Father's voice came out of the excellent glory, and then

Moses and Elias go into it; that is in Luke. Now that is not the kingdom, it is the Father's house; it is the better part. There was the revelation of the kingdom, and then glorified saints with Christ and like Christ, and saints living on the earth.

The kingdom is set up in glory in this vision of it, after the declaration that He could not be received as Christ. He ought to have been, but that was all over, and the Son of Man must suffer. When ultimately He does come, the kingdom is set up, He gathers out of it all things that do offend; and the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. That is, I get the upper part of the kingdom, which is separated, like Luke's cloud, and the Son of Man setting this earth right in the power of the kingdom.

When the Jews were taken captive to Babylon the great fact that took place then was, that God's throne went away from the earth. The Lord had a throne, sitting between the cherubim, and when the Jews' captivity took place that was over. When I say God's throne went away, I am not speaking of Providence. There is Providence in a sparrow that falls. That is another thing. But when the Lord came He says, "The kingdom of God is among you"; here it is, if you will have it. But they rejected Him, the King.

*(To be concluded, D.V.)*

## **The Love of the Father.**

READ JOHN XVII.

**W**HAT I want to press on you, my brethren, is the distinct present blessing (which it is our privilege to enjoy) resulting from the knowledge of the love wherewith the Father loves the Son.

Well might it make the soul stagger, to hear that the love wherewith the saints are loved of God is according to that with which He loves Jesus: "As Thou hast loved Me" (John xvii. 23).

Our companionship with the Lord in glory will be the manifestation of this. Then even the world shall know it; but, without waiting for that day of manifestation, Jesus speaks here of ministering to us, by the Spirit, the present joy and comfort of it.

How is the love of the Father toward us shown, my brethren? In giving His Son to be "the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10). Who amongst us does not know this? But it is quite true that we can go on further, and speak of the Spirit's enabling us to believe on and prize the Son. Who is there would set so little value on the power of believing in the Son, as to say that it could arise from the human heart? It is not in the capacity that at all belongs to "the spirit of a man" to appreciate that best and blessed gift of God, "the

Son." We little prize as we ought the grace which has led us to believe.

But let us go on further still. All of us know that this was not of human origin, that it came whence Jesus came; it followed the gift. But are we not accustomed to stop there? I would speak to you of that love of the Father to the Son, in which we partake through union with the Son. My brethren, let us recollect that the grace which led us to receive the Son has only put us on ground where we have to learn more of the fulness and depth of love. The special love of the Father is ours. I am not speaking now of Christ being ours, but of that which is Christ's being ours.

Observe John xvii. 25, 26. Is there not here a love spoken of as resting upon us because we have believed on, and love, Jesus? We all acknowledge, of course, that we could not love the Lord Jesus but by the Spirit; but when we have met Him as our Saviour, when we see that beauty in Him in which the Father can rest with delight and favour, the heart that rests thus on Jesus meets the full love of the Father. My brethren, have you thought of this, that resting on the Lord Jesus you are to expect a fuller manifestation of the Father's love?

We read, "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me,

and have believed that I came out from God ” (John xvi. 26, 27). What is the meaning of this? Is it to take from us the comfort of the intercession of Jesus on our behalf? No; but it is intended to remove from the heart the feeling that the Lord Jesus is the originating cause of the Father’s love. He has only given liberty to that love, made the way for it to flow out.

It is a most mistaken, a most mischievous notion, that the standing of the Lord Jesus toward us is that of averting the judgment of an angry God. The love of God could not, it is true, flow out fully till the work of the Son was perfected; but the gift of the Son originated in the love of God.

Again, “ If a man love me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him ” (John xiv. 23). Here we see communion with the Father and the Son connected with obedience; a further joy of the Father’s love consequent upon obedience. Obedience itself must be the result of love; but then it introduces us into a fuller sense of the Father’s love.

Now, was not this the particular kind of love in which Jesus Himself dwelt when here? As He says, “ I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love ” (John xv. 10). What is this but the plainest

announcement that we likewise, by virtue of union with Him, may so walk, as to enjoy this full manifestation of the Father's love?

But then the question may naturally arise in the mind, What amount of disobedience will hinder? and I would say, that I believe this manifestation of the Father and the Son unto our souls will be just in proportion to our obedience. The realization of our union with Jesus at the right hand of God will work obedience in us. Then every step that we take, every act of love, every expression of love in intercession for others, makes way for this further manifestation of the Father's love. The soul, urged forward by love to Him who has loved it with such a love, is introduced into a further enjoyment of love. It is one act of God's grace to urge forward the soul to obedience, another act of the same grace to meet and bless it in obedience.

We see that the burden of the commandments of Jesus Christ is, that we should love one another. What, then, is the character of that love which we are now to manifest towards one another? That of the love of Jesus; self-denial, self-sacrifice, becoming poor to enrich others, forsaking things, not merely that are criminal, but, it may be, even those that are in themselves most innocent. The happy, holy course of a Christian is to forsake anything and everything, if by the denial of



it to himself he can minister life, or strength, or obedience, or blessing to another. This is the course in which alone he can expect that which met Jesus (the manifested love of the Father) to meet *him*.

You will not mistake me when I say, that it was here that the blessed Son of God learned what He never could have learned so fully elsewhere, the love of the Father. It was here, in circumstances of weakness and trial and suffering, He learned it so as He never could have done at the right hand of the throne of God. And it is here, too, in the midst of the storm and trial, that *we* are called upon to learn the peculiar character of the Father's love. Do you think that a man that is standing alone, who judges the course of the saint to be one merely of uprightness and blamelessness, and not of self-sacrifice, do you think he will be learning the love of the Father?

No! it was in the death, the sorrow of heart, the self-sacrifice of the Lord Jesus that He learned this peculiar love of the Father; and it is only as we, through grace, are led along in His path that the soul can understand and know experimentally the peculiarity of the love which rested upon Him. It is just so long as we forget ourselves, speak not of ourselves, are willing to be weak that others may be strong, to die for others, to be despised for

others, that the way to the deeper understanding of the Father's love opens to us.

But how is it possible that our souls can be happy in trial, if not along with Christ in the trial? And do not our trials, beloved, often arise from the lack of that which should result from communion with Christ? If so, they are not those in which we shall be enabled to look up, and expect the Father's approval of love.

My brethren, the amount of the joy which our souls should crave is nothing short of the full shining of the Father's love which rested upon Christ.

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### **God's Beginning assures God's End.**

**F**AITH counts upon the end from the beginning, as our hymn has it:

“The guilt of twice ten thousand sins  
One moment takes away;  
And grace, when first the war begins,  
Secures the crowning day.”

This calculation upon the *end* at the *beginning* is found in Moses' song (see Exodus xv. 17-19). It is a fine exercise of the soul. Faith knows what the end *must be*, from what the beginning *has been*.

The whole journey, as we know, is finely

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pictured in Israel from Egypt to Canaan, or from Exodus xii. to Joshua iv. It begins with the settlement, the full and perfect settlement, of the greatest question of all, the question of our relationship with God.

In Exodus xii. that is the matter. It was no time of conflict as between Israel and Egypt, but as between the judgment of God and Israel found in the place of judgment. It was like the question between God and our souls, and the blood on the door-post settled it, and settled it for ever.

“The guilt of twice ten thousand sins  
One moment takes away.”

The destroying angel is turned aside by the blood on the door of that house, where most surely he would have entered, carrying death with him, but for the blood. That blood was God's provision for settling matters between Himself and Israel in the doomed land of Egypt. It effectually blunted the sting or power of death, and it did it all alone, in great ease and simplicity. Nothing else could have done anything at such a moment; but that blood alone did everything that such a moment needed, a moment that was to decide whether Israel were to live or die, to be saved or to perish.

In such a character Israel starts for the journey. The greatest of all questions was

settled, *their relationship to God*; and this being so, they begin, as it were, to live; so that the very month in which all this took place was to be to them the beginning of months.

And well is it when the soul owns that *this* is the first great principal question; that others, be they what they may, are but, can be but, second to this: "Have I found it between God and my soul?"

Thus at peace with God, Israel moves onward. Soon they find themselves at their wits' end; the strength of Pharaoh is behind them, and the Red Sea in front; and it seems as that it was only a choice of deaths, the slaughter or the flood.

But He who was in Egypt with them yesterday, is to-day with them on the road out of it. The pillar can do its business as effectually as the blood. It may be, and it is, a different business, but it is disposed of with equal ease. The blood is not in use now; but the pillar serves, because the blood had already served; the pillar defends, because the blood had already redeemed.

Simple and precious! the blood, as I may say, pledges the pillar, pledges *all* that Israel may need; for

"Grace, when first the war begins,  
Secures the crowning day."

Accordingly the pillar comes between the

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two camps. It is darkness to the one, and light to the other, so that Egypt does not touch Israel; and the host of Israel go on, and through the sea, when the host of Egypt, in all their strength and flower, perish in it.

Thus is the journey begun. It was as blood-bought people they were taking it, and it is now seen that *such* a people shall be a defended and a conquering people. The blood pledged the pillar.

The song declares this. There had been no song till now. Fitly so. The hour of redemption from the judgment of the Lord had been enjoyed in silence: this hour of deliverance from Egypt was celebrated in a song. The silence may have been of a deeper tone than even the song, but it was also a fitter expression of the joy of the moment. Israel enjoyed the thought of the blood that was redeeming them from the righteous judgment of God by feeding on the paschal lamb, and all in silence: they now enjoyed the sight of the vanquished enemy in the lifting up of their voice in a shout of praise.

These distinctions are full of beauty. The silence of the paschal hour was of a *deeper* character; but it was fitting that it should not have been after the manner of the fervent, triumphant hymn of the Red Sea.

Redeemed from judgment, and conquerors of the enemy that would have overwhelmed

them, Israel proceed on their way. And a chequered scene they pass through. Necessities call for supplies, and infirmities and trespasses need forgiveness and healing.

The Lord is present; He proves His resources and His grace. He feeds, He disciplines, He rebukes, and yet pardons. And be the demands on Him what they may, or be they repeated as they may, He never leaves them. If Israel bring a pilgrimage of forty years upon themselves, the Lord will be in the wilderness with them for forty years. As God over all, blessed for ever, He is seated between the cherubim, in the sanctuary, the Lord or the glory of the very holy of holies; but the same glory abides as continually in the cloud outside. The God of the camp is the Guide and Companion of the camp; and though He may be grieved, and have to express His displeasure, He never leaves them. His hand is not shortened, nor is His ear heavy.

Say, is Israel a *happy* people still? Is Israel a less happy people than at the beginning, when in Egypt they abode under the covert of the blood?

Circumstances have changed, but God has not. They are in the very heart of the wilderness. It is wilderness all around them, while in Egypt it was only the wilderness before them.

But are they a less happy people *now* than

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then? Can any argument be drawn from the pillar to prove this?

They have been made to know trial and need, and weariness and enemies, and, through the betraying of their foolishness again and again, *the rod and the discipline*.

But are they less happy than they were? Have they any reason to be so? Are they more straitened in God now than then? Is the pillar the witness of another than the blood or the song had given them?

No, beloved, this is not so. They are not straitened in God. And if they loved Him, the movement of the pillar would be as welcome as the hour of the song. The very wilderness, in all its circumstances, is given to them to this end, to prove whether they would indeed obey the Lord, and thus to know what was in their heart towards Him (Deut. viii. 2).

Was such an opportunity ungrateful or unwelcome to them? Would it be to us at this day, if indeed we loved a person? Should we resent some call to serve, some occasion to give proof that we had him in our heart, that there was something there for him?

We know we should not. We know that we should rather give place to such opportunities, if *indeed* we loved him. And the wilderness to Israel was all that; and life to the saints in this world is all that. As far as we are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God," we shall be

uneasy and fretted, and impatient and disappointed; but as far as we love, anxious to prove that our hearts are with Christ, these times of journeying, through abounding and through need, through good report and through evil report, through humblings and changes, through weariness or solitude, will not be resented.

In themselves they are not joyous. Nothing can make them in themselves other than they are, grievous. But the pillar tells us of the presence of a glorious Friend, who condescends to be our Companion from first to last, though the way always witness our exile, and at times our shame and weakness. It is a *happy* people we are to be all along the road.

The blood, the song, the pillar, are only different tokens of the very same Jesus in whom we are never straitened. Just at the end of the way there was a confederacy on the heights of Peor against Israel, as just at the beginning there was a confederacy on the borders of the land at the Red Sea. The Lord has a great occasion to prove Himself the very same to Israel after forty years' sore trial with them as He had been at the outset. And so He does. However we may entertain such opportunities, we may say He welcomes them to prove what is in His heart towards us.

He meets Balaam and Balak, and all their attempts (their altars and their enchantments



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on the heights of Baal and of Peor), all alone. Israel is stretched out in the valleys beneath, their very rest there not being allowed to be disturbed by even a report of what was going on; a moment, as it was in one sense, full of imminent peril to them. The Lord meets the confederates all alone. As in the day of Pharaoh and the sea, Israel had not to raise a hand or strike a blow; and all the tokens of the liars are frustrated. There is no enchantment against Israel. The Lord lets the Moabite and the Ammonite know this, and Israel may stay on, and take their rest, when the question is raised.

Can anything erase them from the palms of the hands of the Lord? When the occasion is set for the proving whether indeed He still had them in His heart, all the attempts and powers of darkness shall learn the secrets of that bosom.

If we did but value what we have in Him, if we but estimated our condition in relation to the Lord, and not in relation to circumstances, all would be joy in the spirit. It is *there* we fail. We love circumstances, and not the divine favour. We live in the power of circumstances, and not in the light of the Lord's countenance. And we are dull, and low, and half-hearted. That is the secret of *our* bosoms, though we know the secret of *His*.

Were it not so with us, the journeys under

the cloud, chequered as they are, would find us as happy a people as the hour of the song had witnessed. It is *one* Jesus throughout, whether it be the day of the blood, of the song, or of the pillar; one and the same Jesus, who was here with us amid the circumstances of human life, died for us on the cursed tree, now lives in heaven for us, and will give us His unchanged Self in glory for ever.

But further (for there is a stage beyond the heights of Peor in the journey of Israel), there is the passage of the Jordan, the moment when for ever the wilderness is to be put *behind* the back of Israel, as there had been in Egypt the hour when the wilderness was all *before* them, and, after they crossed the sea, the times and the seasons when the wilderness was all *around* them.

And now it is not the *blood*, or the *song*, or the *pillar*, but the *ark*, and the *feet of the priests*. New occasions bring out new agencies. Other necessities display other resources, but the same Lord; different administrations, but the same Jesus. The hand is not shortened, and the help of Israel for the Jordan is as perfect as was the help for the Red Sea. Not a wave of the swellings and overflowings of the river touch the sole of the foot of the feeblest or most distant of all the tribes. The waters are again a wall on the right hand and on the left.

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The ark stations itself in the very midst of the river, and there it stands till *all* had gone clean over. Its presence more than encourages them, when nature might have sunk, and have had a thousand misgivings. Would not these watery walls give way? Would not the river from above assert its right, and claim its possession of a thousand years? Would not the source of that river force its title on the trespassers?

The calm and assured aspect of the priests, as they bore the ark, and stood with it there in the very place of the river's height of pride and strength, gave all such questionings their answer, and stilled every misgiving.

The people all passed over dryshod; the ark gave them its presence till all was done. The waters would have been first overwhelming the ark, had they been able to touch even a sole of the foot of the feeblest of the tribes. And all this crowning mercy visits them without the Lord for a single moment calling to their remembrance a single evil they had committed all the journey thitherto. He gave them indeed liberally, and upbraided not. He sees no iniquity in Jacob, no perverseness in Israel.

Everything that is done is done by an arm of conquering strength, and by a heart of perfect, unupbraiding love; and Israel pass on to their inheritance under the very same God of grace by whom they had passed out from the

place of death and judgment. The earliest pledge is redeemed at the latest moment; and the song, which in spirit we had at first, is sung again under a fresh breath in the power of the truth of it:

“ And grace, when first the war begins,  
Secures the crowning day.”

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## **In what Name are we gathered?**

*(Concluded).*

**W**E have dwelt a little on being gathered together in His name, because of the careless way in which many seem to regard these words of our blessed Lord; and because we judge it necessary that their true meaning should be apprehended, if we would really enter into what follows, “ There am I in the midst of them ” (Matt. xviii. 20).

It is only when truly gathered in His name that we are really able to count upon His presence. His being “ in the midst ” is something special; it is more easily realized than expressed. The eye of faith discerns Him; the unbelieving see Him not.

His being “ in the midst ” of a company so gathered must not be confounded with the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. All who have the Spirit have Him for ever. “ That He may

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abide with you for ever" (John xiv. 16). He is always dwelling in us individually, and in the Church on earth, even when not assembled together. It is a mistake, then, to suppose that the Holy Ghost is present only when believers are gathered together in the Lord's name. No doubt He is there, and is the power of all ministry and worship. But "there am I in the midst of them" is a conditional fact, and not the Lord (as some have said) present by the Holy Spirit, but the Lord in the midst *in spirit*, though personally seated on the Father's throne. It is most happy to enjoy His presence thus. Is there anything of a collective character at all comparable to it on earth? Is it not the most heavenly kind of collective blessing that we can know on earth?

In order to our being gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the full enjoyment of His presence "in the midst," we must know Him (1) as the One who has accomplished our eternal redemption; (2) as the One who has sent down the Holy Ghost; (3) as the One who is the Head of the body, one body; (4) as the One who is walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, to whom we are individually and corporately accountable; (5) as the One who is soon coming to receive us to Himself.

There are other aspects of our Lord which might be added to this list; but those would

be recognized by such as are in any measure settled in the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ.

1. What liberty of soul it gives us to know that He who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, is "in the midst"! Those who look at such gatherings as a means of grace in order to obtain salvation are wholly wide of the Lord's mind. Knowing that we *have redemption* in Christ, and through His blood, we joyfully remember Him who redeemed us at such a cost; and being assured we are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and having received the spirit of adoption, we "worship the Father in spirit and in truth." We *remember* that Jesus *was* for us on the cross; we see that He *is* for us in the glory, and we *look* for His *coming again*, when we shall be for ever with the Lord (1 Thess. iv. 17). How is it possible that unbelievers could share in this, however amiable they may be? Scripture rather contemplates "an unbeliever" coming into such an assembly, and being so struck by what he sees and hears, as to fall down, "and report that God is in you of a truth" (1 Cor. xiv. 25). This we know has sometimes been the happy testimony of such.

2. The One who said, "There am I in the midst of them," has sent down the Holy Ghost. Before He left the world Jesus said, "When the Comforter is come, whom *I will send* unto

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you from the Father," etc. (John xv. 26), thus promising to send the Holy Ghost; and in Acts ii. we read, Jesus "therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (v. 33).

The Holy Ghost, then, has been "sent down from heaven," consequent upon the finished work of Jesus, and His being glorified, to abide with us for ever. This is not merely a spiritual influence, or an emanation from God, but the Holy Ghost Himself, who is one with the Father and the Son. We are builded together (not gathered together, but builded together) for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22). God is dwelling in His people on earth. Individually, the Holy Ghost dwells in our bodies, and has been sent into our hearts; collectively, the Church is "the temple of God" (I Cor. vi. 19; Gal. iv. 6; I Cor. iii. 16). What a wonderful fact, that a divine Person dwells in us! God's presence, therefore, being with us, what gravity, what obligations as to holiness, and what devotedness, are necessarily involved! How is it possible that any could be truly gathered together in the Lord's name, who are not conscious of being cleansed from their sins by His blood, and, consequently, being the present abode of the Holy Ghost?

3. The One who is in our midst is the Head of the body, the Assembly. As risen and ascended, He is seated at the right hand of God, who "gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 20-23). How can we, then, be rightly thinking of Him now as in the midst, without "holding the Head"? This was the cause of so much failure with the Colossian saints. The apostle referred to some who were vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind, "and not holding the Head, from whom all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. ii. 18, 19). Thus the One who is in our midst draws out our hearts, while adoringly occupied with Himself, towards every member of His body on earth, and makes us sensible of our own place of privilege and service as members of the "one body," and of one another. Thus "holding the Head," each member of His body becomes an object of our interest and love.

Every circle narrower than this is refused by the faithful as sectarian, and every circle larger than this plainly bears to them the character of a mere human association and confederacy. To such also the loud boast of usefulness fails to beguile the heart from fidelity to Him who is "in the midst" of those thus



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gathered to His name. So weighty is this in the light of Scripture, that the "one loaf" on the Lord's table is the standing witness of the "one body." "For we being many are one bread [loaf], and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread [loaf]" (1 Cor. x. 17), and elsewhere all saints are enjoined to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness, and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep *the unity of the Spirit* in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit" (Eph. iv. 1-4).

We find, too, that our Lord, in His commendatory prayer to the Father just before going to the cross, earnestly desired that all who should believe on Him through His disciples' word might manifest unity. He said, "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (John xvii. 20, 21). Above all, we know that one object of the Saviour's death was, that He might "gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John xi. 52).

Thus the prayer of Jesus, His death on the cross, the place of headship given to Him in ascension, the action of the Holy Ghost sent down to baptize all believers into one body, and His operation in us for keeping the unity of

the Spirit in the bond of peace, all show that the One who is "in the midst" of those gathered together in His name has the highest interest in our practical acknowledgment of "one body" and "one Spirit." How else could we be intelligently gathered around Him who is the "Head" of this "one body"?

Is not, then, the abandonment of "the name of the Lord Jesus," as the only centre of gathering, for that of an ecclesiastical building, the very rejection of Christian ground, for the adoption of a Jewish order of things? How dear to the heart of Jesus, and how precious to Him the relationship of those must be, who are spoken of by the Holy Ghost as "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones"! Need it be added, that there is no other membership recognized in the teaching of the apostles?

"One Spirit with the Lord;  
The Father's smile of love  
Rests ever on the members here,  
As on the Head above."

4. If the Lord be thus known as "in the midst," and the power of the abiding Spirit duly regarded, how could there be in those so gathered the absence of dependence, reverence, and the consciousness of being under divine guidance? Who, if summoned by the Queen to a favoured audience, would dare to prescribe what should be done during the honoured

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interview? And could we render less homage to Him who is "in the midst" were our souls in the realization of this gracious fact? Impossible that there could be room for any arrangement of man in such a presence. Nothing is more clearly revealed than that He, as Son over His own house, the One whom John saw "in the midst of the seven candlesticks," holds us accountable to Him in a *corporate* as well as in an *individual* capacity.

Almost all the epistles, but especially the second and third chapters of Revelation, show this. To those gathered together in His name He looks for conduct suited to Himself; and that prayer, worship, ministry of the Word, or whatever takes place, shall be according to His mind, and in the power of the Holy Ghost, who divideth "to every man severally as He will" (read 1 Cor. xii.)

There is no room here for fleshly wisdom. Man in the flesh is not recognized; only saints in Christ. The first is entirely unknown here. This marks the holiness of the ground, as well as its dignity. Had we a truer, deeper sense of the Holy Ghost's dwelling in us, of the Lord Jesus being in our midst, and of our being a new creation in Him, members of His body, what reverence, and what felt weakness and utter helplessness in ourselves, would there be; and what power of the Holy Ghost would be realized, while He takes of the things of

Christ, and shows them unto us ! Whether it be a question of personal conduct, or of edification, or of discipline, the one thought of paramount importance must be as to what suits Him, "the holy and the true," who is in our midst.

If, in dealing with others, both as to binding and loosing, we have His mind, how can it be otherwise than that we have also the fulfilment of His word, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"? This, our Lord's wonderful way of ratifying in heaven what is thus done on earth according to His will, not only brings us into very close association with Himself, but cannot fail to invest us with a most solemn sense of the holiness of the ground on earth, on which He has graciously set us during His absence. May the Lord give us all a deeper sense of His own mind in all these things !

5. That He is coming again must ever be the recurring thought and expectation of those who are consciously gathered together in His name. His thrice-repeated, "I come quickly," in the last page of inspiration, must make us sensible of the possibility that each time of being so gathered on earth may be the last, or that our gathering together unto Him at His coming may take place the next moment.

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When Jesus presents Himself as “the Bright and Morning Star,” we know that “the Spirit and the Bride say, Come!” (Rev. xxii.)

These are only a few of the many lines of instruction which we believe are comprehended in our Lord’s words, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” They are of growing importance, because of the bold and appalling way in which Christendom is appending His precious name to accredit most unscriptural doctrines and proceedings.

Those who are spiritual, and are kept in the love of God, will perceive in this brief scripture that there is not the least recognition of man in the flesh; the all-attractive Object is Christ. “*There am I in the midst of them*” is all that is said; and this is enough for faith; for faith always takes hold of the truth of God, and “we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. v. 7).

Observe that this inestimable blessing, and the power, too, in dealing with others, are for even “two or three” thus gathered together. How encouraging to those who desire to be here for the Lord in these last days! What a clear line of demarcation it lays down between being thus gathered together according to the Lord’s mind, and being occupied with mere traditions and confederacies of men! May we, through grace, be true to our Lord, “till He come” (1 Cor. xi. 26).

## **Remarks on Preaching the Kingdom.**

*(Concluded).*

**W**HEN Babylon was set up (the golden head), God's throne was taken from the earth, and Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem.

God had been there in the cloud of glory between the cherubim; but that rises, goes to Mount Olives and away. Then the thrones of the four Beasts were set up; and ever since that it has been the government of the last Beast. God in providence has been working (I do not now speak of that or forget it), but all the Beasts had been brought out before the Lord Jesus appeared on the earth. The Roman Beast was there then, and, ruling in Jerusalem, was joined with the Jews against Christ. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together [as Herod and Pontius Pilate] against the Lord, and against His anointed" (Ps. ii.). They joined to reject God's King, and Christ testified to Pilate that Himself was God's King. And so it came about, that the establishment of the kingdom in power was put off until the Lord comes again. And when next He comes He will be King of kings and Lord of lords.

Meanwhile, all is now going on rapidly to

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judgment; I believe, as rapidly as ever it can; what between Babylon and infidelity. The will of man and the power of the Beast are gathering strength every moment. But when Christ comes, and establishes His kingdom, He will put down everything else, and will have (if you look at Psalms ii. and viii.) a much wider dominion than anything Jewish. Those who repent when they see Him will be reigned over; but we shall reign with Him, because we own Him when He is not seen; and we get more than that, for we shall be with Him, and like Him (1 John iii. 2).

In Peter you have [the expression] "a more sure word of prophecy"; but it is literally, "the word of prophecy *confirmed*"; that is, they had seen Christ in the glory, and that confirmed the prophetic word. And, he says, Ye do well to take heed unto it, "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."

It shows that all around us is going on to the judgment of the Beast. But for us, Christians, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is the Bright and Morning Star, and when the Sun of Righteousness arises, it will be judgment on the earth.

If you look at the end of Malachi you will find it is not the gospel that is there spoken of at all, but He discerns between the righteous and the wicked, for the day cometh that will burn as an oven; and the rising of the Sun of

Righteousness is Christ appearing in this world, and putting down the wicked under the soles of His people's feet.

Before that we get the Morning Star (a heavenly Christ), that weans us out of this world, and that is our own proper portion; and when He appears afterwards we shall appear with Him. Our privilege is that of complete, thorough association with the Lord Jesus Christ. [He is] the firstborn among many brethren, and He takes nothing that He does not take us into. If He is a Son, we are sons; if He comes in glory, we come; if He makes peace, "My peace I give unto you." Has He joy? He would have it fulfilled in us. The words God gave to Him He has given us.

And He declared the Father's name: "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." All is to bring us into the same place with Himself.

The coming is still preached, and wherever the coming of the Lord is set out it is still the kingdom. Poor sinners want to know what forgiveness is, surely; but it is well there should be positive testimony to the coming. We cannot tell the moment; but while there is a joint-heir to be gathered in He does not come. And when He does come, then (as we saw in Luke) we go into the cloud where the Father is.



## **Some Last Words of an Aged Pilgrim.**

My pilgrim days are waning;  
The voice of Him I love  
Has called me to His presence  
In my Father's house above.  
Long, long, by faith, I've known Him,  
But now I'm going to see  
The One that sits in heaven;  
The Man that died for me.

But, ere I left the desert,  
I longed that I might know  
What joy His blessed presence  
Could give me here below.  
A few more fleeting moments;  
Oh, I would nearer be  
My precious, loving Saviour;  
The Man that died for me.

He gave me all I asked for,  
And more than I can tell;  
He filled my heart with rapture,  
With joy unspeakable!  
The loving hand of Jesus  
Seemed gently laid on me;  
I had for my companion  
The Man that died for me.

The glories of the kingdom  
 Are coming by-and-by;  
 And I shall see my brethren;  
 Be crowned with them on high.  
 I know that I shall reign;  
 But, before it all, for me,  
 There's a time *alone with Jesus*;  
 The Man that died for me.

To fall asleep in Jesus,  
 'Tis what I think of now;  
 To be for ever with the Lord,  
 Before Himself to bow!  
 Oh yes, *with Him* who stayed to call  
 Zacchæus from the tree;  
*With Him* who hung upon the cross;  
 The Man that died for me.

It is the Man Christ Jesus,  
*With Him* I'm going to dwell;  
 The very Man of Sychar,  
 Who sat upon the well;  
 Whose matchless love filled that poor heart,  
 And gave her eyes to see  
 That He was God's Anointed;  
 The Man that died for me.

To leave this world that cast Him out,  
 And be with Him up there,  
 Before the kingdom-glories  
 Or the many crowns appear!

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Oh, the Man of Sychar!  
It is HIMSELF to see;  
PERFECTION OF PERFECTIONS,  
*I long to be with Thee!*

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## **Dead with Christ; Risen with Christ.**

COLOSSIANS II. 20; III. 1.

**T**HE Christian's risen life is exhibited in two things: (1) death unto that which is here, and (2) heavenly mindedness.

“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ,” writes the apostle, “from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?”

The expression “rudiments of the world,” goes a vast way. I am to be dead, not only to sin, but to all the religiousness of human nature. A Jew has this religiousness, and it was cultivated of God; but it brought not forth good fruit, it produced nothing but “wild grapes.”

Now, if we do not see that we are risen, we shall be cultivating human nature for God. He Himself has tried this already; and He says, that not anything could have been done more than He has done (Isa. v.). But man would still, still be striving to cultivate the religiousness of human nature, and introduce

sinner into heaven otherwise than by death. We are dead and risen again, and it is simply heavenly.

In this is the real power of our living above sin. It assumes death, it goes upon the principle that we are "dead to sin" (Rom. vi.). We get a blessed liberty in seeing and accounting ourselves dead.

We have a new life. Christ has taken His place where death and resurrection have put Him. And there I am, where Christ is. It is altogether another life. And this life has its own world, and its own sphere of affections. "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" (Rom. viii. 5).

Resurrection life is manifested in walking through this world as abstracted, withdrawn from, unactuated by, the motives of the world. A Christian has new motives. If I see a man walking through the world without things here affecting him, I say, "He is either mad, or risen with Christ."

Alas! we are not as consistent as madmen. All the motives in the world never touch the new nature. Do you think it could be thinking about friendship with the world? could be seeking riches, or honour, or power? The motives which actuate men have no influence upon it.

Perplexity comes in by our having a motive

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which is not drawn from heaven. Whenever I see myself, or another, in difficulty, I may be quite sure some other motive is at work.

There is always a tendency to decline from this singleness of eye.

When we first receive the knowledge of life in Christ, we are absorbed, we readily admit all else to be "dung and dross" (Phil. iii.). But when decline comes in, we get old motives into action again. Little by little, we are not absorbed, and then a hundred things begin to be motives, things of which I took no notice, which did not act before.

People say, "What harm is there in it?"

When I begin to inquire, "What harm is there in this, or in that?" there is the tendency to decline. There may be no harm in the thing, but the thought about it shows that I am not absorbed with that which is heavenly. "Thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. iii.).

It is not in great sins, but here, that decline in the saints is manifested.

When the sense of grace is diminished, we decline in practice. Our motives must be in God. Sometimes, effort is made to press conduct, works, and practice; because (it is said) full grace was preached before; now, that there is decline in practice, you must preach practice.

That which is the rather to be pressed, is grace, the first grace. It is grace, not legalism, will restore the soul. Where the sense of grace

is diminished, the conscience may be, at the same time, uncommonly active; and then it condemns the pressing of grace, and legalism is the result.

When conscience has been put in action through the claims of grace, that is not legalism; and there will be holy practice in detail.

We may fall into either of two faults: that of (because fruits have been produced) preaching fruits; or, that of getting at ease, when certain things come to have influence over us again, through thinking that what we approved of before was legalism.

We shall not get back by dwelling on detail. CHRIST IS THE GREAT MOTIVE FOR EVERYTHING; and we must get up into the knowledge of resurrection in Christ, to remedy detail. Here there is wonderful truth, and wonderful liberty.

Another very important point is, the tone and spirit of our walk. Confidence in God, and gentleness of spirit, is that which becomes the saint. For this we must be at home with God. The effect of thus walking in Christ, setting the Lord ever before us, is always to make us walk with reverence, lowliness, adoration, quietness, ease, and happiness.

If I go where I am unaccustomed to be; if I get, for instance, into a great house, I may have much kindness shown me there; but when I get outside again, I feel at ease; I am glad

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to be out. Had I been brought up in that house, I should feel otherwise.

The soul is not only happy in God for itself, but it will bring the tone of that house out with it. Because of its joy in God, anxieties disappear, and it will move through the ten thousand things that would trouble and prove anxieties to another, without being a bit troubled. No matter what it may be, we bring quietness of spirit into all circumstances whilst abiding in God.

If a man be risen with Christ, if he be dwelling there, it will show itself thus. We shall not be afraid of the changes around. We shall live, not in stupid apathy and listlessness, but in the exercise of lively affections and energies towards the Lord.

One great evidence of my dwelling in Christ is quietness. I have my portion elsewhere, and I go on. Another sign is confidence in obeying.

This connects itself with fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ; fellowship, not only in joy, but in the thoughts of the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost, the *third Person of the blessed Trinity*, is our power of entering with the affections into the things of God. "The Father loveth the Son." What a place this puts me in, to be thus cognisant of the Father's feelings towards His beloved Son!

In our proper place, we get our mind filled and associated with things that leave this world as a little thing, an atom, in the vastness of the glory which was before the world was.

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## “Building up Yourselves.”

READ JUDE 20 TO 25.

**B**ELIEVERS instinctively feel the need of being edified, or built up. Their souls look for food, and they are conscious that their inward man requires renewing. They therefore desire to know the things of God, as set forth in the Scriptures of truth for their profit and blessing. But all have to learn on the principle that God is the Giver, and that we are only receivers; that we have nothing in ourselves, and yet possess all things in Christ (1 Cor. iii. 22).

There are three ways in which edification, or building up, is presented to us in the epistles.

1. We have gifts of teachers, pastors, etc., from Christ in ascension, for the perfecting of the saints, with a view to the work of the ministry, with a view to the edifying, or building up, of the body of Christ (Eph. iv. 12).

2. We have the healthful exercises of the



different members of the body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply as from the Head, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (Eph. iv. 16).

3. We have self-edification, or building up, *on our most holy faith (Jude 20)*.

It is this third character of building up which we judge to be of such importance at this time, and on which we propose to offer a few remarks.

It is often the case that where there has been the most faithful and most spiritual ministry of the truth there are those who have profited but little by such advantage. Now, why is this? Is it not because they, if exercised about it, have trusted to be built up by others, and neglected self-building up? Few of us gather up lasting profit from any ministry, however excellent and spiritual, unless we receive the truth, not as we would an ordinary matter of instruction, but from the mouth of God, after having been assured it is according to His word.

When there is the absence of such exercise of soul before God, it not only betrays a *serious lack of spiritual-mindedness*, but also that there is no small amount of carnal confidence, a self-sufficient competency for attending to the things of God, instead of a lowly state of dependence on the Lord. We do well to lay it to heart as to whether we are *intel-*

*lectually* dealing with divine truth, or being led and taught by the Spirit of God, and hearkening to what He says.

It should be a daily question as to how much we are occupied in building ourselves up on our most holy faith. We all know as regards our bodies the need of continual cleansing, taking in frequent supplies of nourishment, protecting ourselves from bad external influences, and of availing ourselves of seasonable refreshment and comfort.

But what about our souls? Are we hating the garment spotted by the flesh? Are we carefully seeking to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and purposing not to touch the unclean thing? Is self-judgment before God habitual with us, because we exercise ourselves to have always a good conscience, void of offence toward God, and toward man? Do we go to the word of eternal truth morning by morning; read, meditate on it, in dependence on the Spirit; pray over it, and take it in as food for the renewal of our inner man?

Do we hide the word of God in our hearts, that we may not sin against Him? Do we thus have to do with God, and the word of His grace, which is able to build us up, and thoroughly furnish us unto all good works? Do we seek in this way to gather strength, so that *faith* may grow, and *hope* be increasingly

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brightened? If so, then it may be that we are building up ourselves on our most holy faith. And we may be quite sure that those who are building up themselves will greatly value being built up by others, and be profited by their divinely given ministrations.

Moreover, this exhortation as to building ourselves up, occurring in Jude, seems to carry with it a loud voice to such as, in these last days, have taken the way of faith in a day of evil; for Jude traces the ruin of the Church from its commencement, leaving it as God's corporate witness on earth going on to judgment, without the smallest hope of reconstruction, or of general recovery; and, at the close, he addresses himself to such as are standing for God in this time of declension and failure. He says, “Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith.”

A people true to the Lord in an evil time are thus recognized, and called to be diligent in building up themselves. The faith, too, is not spoken of here, as at the beginning of the brief epistle, as “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” but as “your most holy faith.” Yes, it is that divine revelation of truth which specially refers to *us*. It is *your* faith, and it is “most holy.” It is not merely that we should be holding a set of principles or doctrines; but taking into our hearts the ministry of the exceeding riches of

divine grace, the actings of divine righteousness, and the almightiness of divine power, which are to us-ward in the death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification of Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit to abide with us for ever.

We are thus delivered from the authority of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love, and by the Spirit united to Him where He now is. A work has been wrought by Him who not only died for our sins, but died to sin, which has set us free for ever from the guilt of sins, and also from the dominion of sin; has delivered us from our old standing in Adam, and has made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (we are thus brought into a totally new position); *in* whom we have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins; so that now, in Christ Jesus, we who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ, brought into favour in the Beloved, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ; so that we are always before God in the cloudless favour, nearness, and acceptance of Christ.

Brought into relationship with the Father, as His children; with Christ, as members of His body; and with the Holy Ghost, as His temple; our fellowship by the Spirit is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

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The nature of God being now revealed in light and love, we walk in the light as He is in the light, where His eternal redemption has brought us. How true it is that we have received abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, and shall reign in life with Christ!

From this mere glance at the truth, is it any marvel that it is called “ your most holy faith ”? Can any blessing known on earth exceed this? Every step, too, of our onward path has been considered, and every possible contingency provided for in the accomplished work and present offices of Christ; so that we can rejoice in hope of glory as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, and wait for God’s Son from heaven.

No doubt “ the faith ” is the common property of all believers. “ The faith which was once delivered unto the saints ”; not even delivered to apostles, but delivered unto the saints, for their common blessing. And it is *our* faith, that which more particularly concerns us, and ministers to us; “ *your* most holy faith ”; that wonderful revelation of divine grace, which could not have been made known till Jesus had come, and declared the Father, and, according to His counsel and purpose, had accomplished redemption, and had gone back to the Father; and, in ascension as Man glorified, been given to be Head

over all to the assembly, which is His body, and had received and sent down the Holy Spirit to form the assembly on earth; for "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13).

It is then on our most holy faith we are to build ourselves up, by meditation on the word of God, under the guidance and teaching of the Spirit, and making it our own, by mixing faith with this divine testimony. The oft-repeated question therefore should be with every believer, "How much have I been occupied this day in building up myself?" for "the inward man is renewed day by day."

No doubt such will be prayerful too. Hence it is added, "Praying in the Holy Ghost"; for they own the Spirit. And where there is reality, those who pray will be satisfied with nothing less than praying according to the leading and desires of the Holy Spirit, which we know will always be according to the truth. Keeping ourselves also in the love of God is indispensable; for all our peace and strength flow from the consciousness that we are objects of divine love; and, while thus exercised, we can be looking for mercy till the Lord come: "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Where there is the absence of building up ourselves, we must not be surprised if prayer declines, if the enjoyment of the love of God be little

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known, and the expectation of our Lord's mercy becomes dim. It is easy to go on in a routine of outward order, and thus have credit among Christians; but what is it all worth if the Lord has not our hearts, and we are not building up ourselves on our most holy faith? How ready every believer must be in the contemplation of these things to cry out, “ Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe ” !

We can scarcely think of any who are really building themselves up who can be careless as to obedience to the word of God. How could it be, if we are going on with God? For have we not conditional blessings set before us in Scripture? For example, are not those who, because they are God's children, refuse to be yoked with unbelievers, and are separated from what is “ unclean ” for the truth's sake, taught to look for the Father's care and blessing? But what of those who do not take this place of separation in obedience to His word, but are more or less “ yoked ” with those they know are “ unbelievers ”? Is it not often manifest that they have not in their souls the joy of relationship with the Father; and, instead of God's blessing, find many of their plans frustrated, and their expectations never realized? They have been hoping to have the Father's blessing without walking in obedience to His will.

The same thing is true as regards the world.

We are told, "If any man love the world, the love of *the Father* is not in him" (1 John ii. 15). Even a child of God will not have the enjoyment of this precious relationship with the Father, if his heart goes after that which is contrary to His mind, and loves that which is under His judgment; for Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world." But where there are those who refuse to be "yoked" with unbelievers, not only as regards marriage, but also as regards everything else (while always ready to do good unto all men), but come out from among them, and refuse all unclean associations, *then* such consciously fall into their Father's arms, enter into this most dear relationship, know that He receives them, and taste and enjoy His blessing. They find those precious words fulfilled in their happy experience, "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 14-18).

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### **The Father's Grace dispensed by Jesus.**

**I** HAVE just been reading again that lovely fourth chapter of John. What a little heaven it is to sit, in spirit, there, and be in company with Him who is the Eternal Life,



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in full grace dispensing Himself to one of the degraded captives of pollution and death.

The *satisfying* water springs from that grace in the Son of God which reaches and *quiets the conscience*; and it was such that Jesus here dispenses to her. Till our need as *sinner*s is met and answered, we must be thirsting again, let us get what we may, because the soul is not at rest with God. But Jesus came to repair the breach in the conscience, to give rest before God, and in God, and thus to impart the satisfying water of life, through the Holy Ghost.

And when this is done, in a great, divine sense, the *end* is reached, God is glorified, the sinner made happy, and entrance into the places of glory becomes a *necessary* result.

This *end* is beautifully shown in this same exquisite and marvellous chapter, for the woman goes away with a spirit in deep refreshment because of conscious acceptance and life, and the Son of God Himself is so satisfied in the fruit of His own way, that He has had that which sets Him above the thirst He had been feeling and the food He had wanted. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of" (John iv.).

It was as *manna* to Him. What a thought! The Son of God comes down to our degraded earth to find *His* manna, His strange mysterious food and satisfaction of heart,

bread which He could never have known in heaven, a joy that He could never have tasted amid the glories of His unfallen creatures. But here, on earth, among sinners, He finds in the dispensing of the Father's grace, the deepest and fullest answer of all the longings of His divine love.

When a sinner is happy in Him, His end is reached, and so is ours, and all that remains is to spend eternity in the glory that becomes such an end as this: His joy in us, and ours in Him.

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## **The Shadow and the Substance.**

READ LEVITICUS VIII.—X.

“All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me” (Luke xxiv. 44).

**T**HE eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters of Leviticus should be read together, as forming one connected subject.

Aaron enters upon his office of high priest, as the type of the Lord Jesus Christ, our great high priest (Heb. v. 1-7).

We then have a history of what was done during the eight following days, which are divided into two periods; the first seven days

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forming one period, and the eighth day another.

The first seven days were occupied with Aaron and the sons of Aaron; but the eighth day is taken up with Aaron, the sons of Aaron, and all the congregation.

For the first seven days, the glory of the Lord did not appear; but on the eighth day, the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people.

For the first seven days, the sons of Aaron were at the door of the tabernacle; but on the eighth day, they were brought into the tabernacle.

We can learn, in the Lord's mercy, what the Holy Ghost signified by these things, which were the shadows of good things to come.

The sons of Aaron, few in number compared with all the congregation, represent the little flock of the Church of God.

The blessing of the sons of Aaron was very peculiar; the whole congregation were left at a distance until the eighth day; but the sons of Aaron were brought to the door of the tabernacle for the entire seven days, to be there day and night. So now the world is at a distance from God, and lying in the wicked one; but believers in Christ are brought nigh through His blood, being reconciled to God through the death of His Son. God deals not

with them as with the world, but is gathering them out of it.

The sons of Aaron were not dressed like all the congregation, but were dressed like Aaron. Even so we are called, not to be like the world, but to imitate Christ. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. xiii. 14).

But on the eighth day we read of other things. The eighth day is the first day of the week. It was on the first day of the week that the Lord arose, as the first-fruits of them that sleep. They that are Christ's will be raised at His coming (1 Cor. xv. 20, 23).

On the eighth day, sacrifices were offered for all the congregation, as well as for Aaron and the sons of Aaron. In this we see how the whole creation will be delivered when the Lord comes (Rom. viii. 21). The blessing of the *one* offering of Christ, *once* for all, will be universally known and enjoyed in that day, when the creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Rom. viii. 21); and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Isa. xi. 9).

On the eighth day the promise was made, "To-day the Lord will appear unto you"; and again, "The glory of the Lord shall appear unto you." But before the glory

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appeared, two things were done : (1) the sacrifices were all offered ; (2) Moses and Aaron then went into the tabernacle. The Lord Jesus Christ has done these two things, as we read in Heb. ix. 11, 12 : “ But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building ; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.” The atonement has been made ; and Christ has entered into the holy place.

Moses and Aaron next *came out* of the tabernacle ; and when they came out, *the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people*. We wait to see this fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ ; for the Scripture says, “ Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry ” (Heb. x. 37). And again the promise is given, “ He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you ; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began ” (Acts iii. 20, 21).

The apostle Paul explains this type, and connects these three acts of Christ : (1) the offering ; (2) the going into the holy place ; and (3) the coming out. He marks the first two as fulfilled, and the third as unfulfilled.

“ For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 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 ” (Heb. ix. 24-28).

He *is* entered into the holy place. He *was* once offered. He *shall* appear the second time. This connection is full of comfort; for why was Christ once offered? *To bear the sins of many.* And what is Christ doing in the holy place? He is appearing there in the presence of God *for us.* All whose hearts know this are believers; and Christ is coming to be admired in *all* them that believe (2 Thess. i. 10).

It is the effort of Satan to make a believer afraid that the Lord Jesus Christ should come back very speedily; because a believer has nothing to fear when He comes; the one offering has settled everything. It is also the effort

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of Satan to hinder a believer from loving the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, because that will be the day of the believer's glory. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4).

If we do not believe that Jesus has delivered us from the wrath to come, then, of course, we ought to be afraid of the wrath to come, and, therefore, to be afraid that the Lord should come; but if we believe that Jesus Christ has died for sinners, we may believe that He has died for us: and if we believe that any of our sins are pardoned, we may believe that they are all pardoned. The gospel is indeed glad tidings of great joy. It is very simple; but Satan tries to corrupt our minds from the simplicity that is in Christ. May the Lord give His children full confidence in His great love.

This is of great importance, because of the numbers who appear among the children of God, who really have no faith at all. Of the ten virgins, who all took their lamps and went to meet the Bridegroom, five were foolish, and without oil; of the two men in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left; of the two women grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left; and of the four sons of Aaron, two were cut off, and two were brought into blessing.

But why were two of the sons of Aaron cut off? Because they took not the fire for their censers from off the altar on which the fat that was burned sent up a sweet savour unto the Lord; and they burned their incense with a strange fire, which the Lord commanded them not. They knew not the value of the burnt offering, the efficacy of which was to enter the holiest (a type of the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ); and therefore the fire from the Lord devoured them.

The Lord showed His value for the burnt offering, when the fire came out from the Lord, and consumed it on the altar; but He showed His indignation at any other way of approaching Him, when the fire came out from the Lord and devoured Nadab and Abihu, for offering strange fire, which the Lord commanded them not to offer.

The same thing was shown in the offering of Cain and Abel. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord; Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect (Gen. iv. 4, 5). The Lord valued the offerer according to His value for the offering. How great then must His value be for a poor worthless sinner, whose offering is the Lord Jesus Christ! for the Scripture says, "Christ also



hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour ” (Eph. v. 2).

## True Worshippers and Spiritual Worship.

**T**RUE worshippers must worship the Father “in spirit and in truth,” for the Father seeketh such to worship Him (John iv. 23, 24).

If worship and communion be by the Spirit, it is evident that those only who have the Spirit of Christ, and also have not grieved the Spirit (and thus rendered the communion, which is by the Spirit, impossible by the defilements of sin), can participate.

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

Apart from this, then, our worship falls back into the flesh; our prayers (or praying well)

form what is sometimes called a gift of prayer, than which nothing often is more sorrowful (a fluent rehearsal of known truths and principles, instead of communion, and the expression of our wants and desires in the unction of the Spirit); our singing, pleasure of the ear, taste in music, and expressions in which we sympathize: all a form in the flesh, and not communion in the Spirit. All this is evil; the Spirit of God owns it not; it is not "in spirit and in truth"; it is really iniquity.

In worship we may begin in the Spirit, and pass into the flesh. Thus, for example, if I continue to sing beyond the real operation of the Spirit, which happens too often, my singing, which at the beginning was real melody in the heart to the Lord, will terminate in pleasant ideas and music, and so end in the flesh.

The spiritual mind, the spiritual worshipper, will discover this at once when it happens. When it does happen, it always weakens the soul, and soon accustoms to formal worship and spiritual weakness; and then evil through the power of the adversary soon makes its appearance among the worshippers.

The Lord keep us nigh to Himself to judge all things in His presence, for out of it we can judge nothing.

Let us remember that all our worship pertains to God; that it is the expression of the

excellency of Christ in us; and so our joy, as by one Spirit, with God. He in the Father, we in Him, and He in us, is the marvellous chain of union which exists in grace as well as in glory: our worship is the outgoing and joy of heart founded on this, towards God, by Christ.

So, as Himself ministering in this, the Lord says, "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee" (Heb. ii. 12). He surely is in joy, and knows redemption is accomplished. May we be in tune with our heavenly Guide.

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## Our Present Path.

READ 2 TIMOTHY II. 15-26.

**O**UR present path is a very simple one. There may be all sorts of evil here and there; and even God's people are so mixed up with it that we may not be able to say who are His, and who are not.

"Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His."

But we have also a word to act upon the conscience: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

If you say, I know what I am in is unscriptural, and I am constantly involved in what is

wrong; but I see nothing better; I answer, You must not go on with that: "depart from iniquity."

We are told to purge ourselves from vessels to dishonour; that he who does "shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Then, it may be urged, you will have to go alone, or lead in some new thing.

But not so; I have to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace *with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*"

In these days, however, a great deal of patience also may be needed, as indeed Paul proceeds to remind Timothy in his day.

Jeremiah was indignant at the state of things he saw around him, but he received the word, "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth" (Jer. xv. 19).

So, at present, one might be provoked to abstain from having anything to do with persons in the sects, etc., but we have to remember that there are true saints of God in these associations, whose good we are to seek for the Lord's sake, and deliverance from all that is offensive to Him.

If it be urged that, in this case, we ought to go with them, the answer is, "Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them" (Jer. xv. 19).

## **Change in Dispensation.**

“**I** SÈE it now, I see it clearly,” said a Christian, who had long had confused views of the truth; “I see now there is a change in dispensation.”

Before this, he did not clearly distinguish between the law and the gospel, Israel and the Church, things earthly and things heavenly: but now he learned from the Scriptures that there was a change in dispensation.

And so there is.

While God changes not, He is pleased in His sovereignty at one time to give a holy law from the burning mount, and bid all, under penalty of death, to keep far off; and at another time to send forth His beloved Son with words of pardon and blessing to all that come to Him.

God chose the former to show how great a sinner man is (Rom. iii. 20); He chose the latter to show that He loved him, though a sinner, and could save him (1 Tim. i. 15).

It was once God’s good pleasure to call an earthly people, the nation of Israel, to serve Him on earth; but now it is God’s sovereign will to call sinners (in grace) into relationship with Himself in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

In this dispensation He is calling out of the Gentiles “a people for His name” (Acts xv. 14): in the next dispensation He will “gather

together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth" (Eph. i. 10).

The great changes between the past and present dispensations are plainly set forth in the New Testament in different points of view. Let us look at some of them.

1. AS TO SACRIFICE. In the last dispensation, there were many sacrifices, and often repeated. They were the remembrancers of sins, but never "took away sins." They could not "make the comers thereunto perfect," nor enable them to "draw near" to God, as having "no more conscience of sins." In this dispensation, we have one sacrifice, once offered, never needing to be repeated. Blood so precious, and so entirely taking away sins, that God says, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more"; thus purging the conscience, and enabling the worshipper to enter with boldness into the holiest of all. The change of dispensation is so marked that we are told that "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second." In the former God had no pleasure; with the latter He is well pleased (Heb. x. 1-22).

2. PRIESTHOOD. The apostle says, "The priesthood being changed," etc. How is it changed? The Aaronic order of priesthood was of the tribe of Levi, appointed without an oath, did not continue, passed from one person

to another; the high priest was obliged to offer for his own sins, was always standing, because his work was never done, and had to remember the sins of the people over again once every year.

The Lord Jesus, the High Priest now, was of the tribe of Judah, and is of the Melchisedec order, was appointed by an oath, continueth for ever, and is unchangeable. He had no sins of His own to put away, because He is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens"; and so perfect is His work, that after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. i. 3, vii., viii., x. 11, 12).

3. WORSHIP. In the last dispensation, Jerusalem was the place of worship; the thick veil excluded the worshipper from the presence of God, and no one could enter into the holiest of all but the high priest once a year, and that only with blood and incense. In this dispensation, worship is purely spiritual, no earthly place of worship is recognized, the veil is rent, we enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

All believers now are priests. The Father is the object of worship, Jesus the new and living way, and the Holy Spirit, who now dwells in every believer, the power of worship. The Lord Jesus so marked the change in worship, that He said, "The hour cometh, when

ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John iv. 23. See also Heb. x. 19-22).

4. **CALLING.** In the last dispensation, God called a people from Egypt to Canaan, with a promise of earthly inheritance. Now God calls, by His gospel, with a high, holy, and heavenly calling, blessing us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, having quickened us together with Him, and raised us up together; and made us sit together in heavenly places in Him (Eph. i., ii.).

5. **HOPE.** The true hope of the last dispensation was Messiah, the Son of David, coming to set up His kingdom on earth, and reign before His ancients gloriously. The blessed hope of this dispensation is that Christ will come, change our vile bodies, and raise us up to meet Him in the air, to be for ever with the Lord (John xiv. 3; 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17).

These are only some of the points of difference, but enough has been advanced to show that there really is a change in dispensation.

May the Lord help His children rightly to divide the word of truth, and serve Him acceptably.



## **Christ a Sweet Savour to God for us.**

READ LEVITICUS I., II.

**T**HE first sacrifice offered was one of sweet savour. For this there had to be taken of the cattle, from the herds or the flocks, a male without blemish, representing Christ without sin.

On its head the offerer laid his hand, when brought before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, that it might be favourably received for him before Jehovah: not taking from the offerer his iniquities, but transferring to him its sweet savour when wholly burnt on the altar; yet making atonement for him.

If of fowls, the offering was to be of turtle-doves or of young pigeons.

In chapter ii. we have a meat or, rather, cake-offering of fine flour with oil poured on it, and frankincense, which, like the burnt-sacrifice, was consumed on the altar, though not wholly, for the priest took from it his handful of the flour, and of the oil, with all the frankincense. Christ alone is unleavened. He was conceived of the Holy Ghost as well as Son of Mary (Matt. i.; Luke i.).

God has accepted the offering that Christ presented to Him; not only the sacrifice for sin, which comes afterwards in chapter iv.,

etc., but also the sweet savour of His life, which was perfect.

Christ accepted the will of His Father in all its extent, going down, so to speak, from humiliation to humiliation, going on from obedience to obedience; always perfect, but perfect as He grew up a man. He advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men (Luke ii.). Not that His obedience was ever less than perfection, but that it became ever more painful and difficult, till it went even up to death, the death of the cross. The world rejected Him always more and more. There was found in the world only a sepulchre for Him.

Christ perfectly glorified His Father. He rendered testimony to the holiness of His will by accepting it altogether. We, on the contrary, seek but too often to exalt ourselves, even among our brethren; we want their esteem and their respect. Christ sought but "one thing," the glory of His Father, and not His own. For it, and so for us, He always went lower and lower down in this world. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him" (Phil. ii. 9).

He is accepted fully, and on high; and if God is satisfied with Christ, we also ought surely to be satisfied with Him. We can find all repose for our hearts in Christ. Are you tired of the world, weary of the desert of sin,

of strife? Well, then, look to Christ, where only is rest, perfect rest for conscience and heart. He is the sacrifice and the offering of good savour.

Christ was perfectly holy, though He took part in blood and flesh (as the children had their common lot in the same), and was tempted in all things (sin excepted) in like manner with us (Heb. ii.). He fulfilled all righteousness (Matt. iii.). He had Himself baptized, when the penitents flocked to John, confessing their sins. If He thus put Himself on a level with John the Baptist ("Thus it becometh *us*," etc.), He puts Himself also on a level with Peter (Matt. xvii.) when the temple tribute was demanded, whilst displaying His divine wisdom and power in making the most unruly and inaccessible of creatures serve His good pleasure.

But it was not allowed to burn cakes which contained leaven or honey (Lev. ii. 11). Oil was there, [representing] the Spirit of God, and also the salt of His covenant; but leaven represented the sin we have in us, which gives its character to our bodies as they are; and God could not accept it, as being corrupt.

Neither could honey any more be offered, representing the sweetness of nature which God gives to us by the way, in which our hearts can find some refreshment. So literally did it happen to Jonathan when faint.

All that man has at his disposal is spoilt, and cannot be offered to God; nothing can but the life of Christ as the meat-offering, and His death as the burnt-sacrifice, to say nothing here of His sufferings for our sins and trespasses. In His perfection throughout God the Father finds His pleasure. "Christ is all, and in all" (Col. iii. 11).

As a new creation in Christ we are called to manifest what God is, not in miraculous power, but in doing and suffering all the will of the Father, owning and proclaiming it as alone good in obedience. It is only Christ who has thus absolutely glorified the Father. Even when He poured forth His deepest expressions of grief, such as He alone knew, not a murmur escaped Him. Yea, when forsaken of His God, and acknowledging it, He adds, "But Thou continuest holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Ps. xxii.).

Job, on the other hand, though he had not his equal on the earth, could only say, "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. . . . Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul, which long for death, and it cometh not?" etc. (Job iii. 17). Such, on the one hand, was a perfect and an upright man; not such, on the other, was Christ. In all things He has the pre-eminence.

## A Good Lesson.

ONE of the leading effects of sorrow and bereavement is to cast a veil over things present, and to bring us into the presence of God and eternal things in heaven.

The result of this is that we are astonished to find how strange we are to the things of God and of heaven.

To know what faith in Christ secures to us, and to be practically in the familiar use of it, are two very distinguishable things. I know that faith in Christ makes me His for eternity, and makes His Father to be my Father, and the Spirit to be Comforter to me. It gives me eternity and heaven, and cuts me off from earth. But, alas! the being so blessed, and knowing it too, and the being able to act upon it, are two very different things, more so than having learnt a language theoretically and thoroughly, and being able to speak it.

Now, when sorrow and bereavement come, things present for a time fade, and things heavenly and eternal assume more substance to our minds. The object of your love gone to heaven and God and Christ, there is a void down here. The place that was ever full of refreshing water is dried up. *You are left*, and your mind in grace follows the one you love upward.

But then, perhaps, you find how little you

know of the God he has gone to, of the Saviour who is there, of his present state, of the connection of the pool down here, and the grace that gave it to you, and the present bereavement of his presence in the pure light above, and of the restoration in the end to God's glory and his own profit.

How often have I learnt in such a season that I had not been living to the glory of God; that, "Lo, I come to do Thy will," to suffer Thy will, had not been my principle of conduct; and God in such hours has seemed a strange God, a God I had neglected, and practically been living without.

*Self-ignorance*, too, giving Satan power against us at such seasons; for if we do not attribute to our own sin the having been living practically so far from God, not to be *at home with His ways of dealing* and with *Himself*, Satan will boldly inspire not only hard thoughts of God, but hard words against Him too. Now, it is clear that God is perfect in wisdom, love, power and goodness. It is only because I, His child, am not in the light of His plans and wisdom that I think I could have done better for myself than He has done. He gave me a pool, and I thought of its suitability to myself and others more than of Him who gave it; and when He took it away, then I found that I had not been thinking of *Himself*, but of His gifts, like Job.

Poor Job, self-ignorance led him to mistake God for Satan, and Satan for God! I have known this lesson too, and how, if I did not see the hardness of my own heart, *God seemed hard*; and how, if I had been living at a distance from God, and did not confess it, God seemed at a distance; and how, if I did not confess that the selfishness of fallen humanity had led me, a saint, to walk as if there were a veil between God and me down here, I felt as if the heavens were brass, and that *He* made it so.

I had not leaned upon the arm of God; and to confess this according to the Spirit, or to leave Satan to suggest that God's arm was raised against me, was the alternative; to confess that I had forgotten God, or that God had forgotten me.

But then it is love divine which, having made us to be everything to Christ, insists upon teaching us now to make Christ EVERYTHING to ourselves down here. The jealousy of His love who, as the Father, is not satisfied that we take or have anything but Christ as the portion of our souls or our joy, and the jealousy of Christ's heart cannot be satisfied that we should have anything but His Father as our choice.

These lessons break us, and let God and Christ into our souls, and make us feel our need of them.

## **The Presence of the Spirit in John xiv. compared with Chapters xv., xvi.**

**T**HERE are three things quite distinct from each other : Conscience, life and power.

There may be conviction of conscience, as in Herod when he heard John preach ; but he was not converted. A man may know he is doing wrong, but this does not give him power against it.

Life, a new spiritual being, is another thing. It gives activity to the conscience. A new nature is there, with its feelings, desires, affections ; but without power.

There will be less peace, perhaps, than before there was life, because there may have been false peace before. The state is, of course, better than that of the mere natural man ; there will be no levity in that state.

The third thing alluded to is the power of the Spirit of God. We must distinguish between gift for service and the power which gives enjoyment. There will be peace. In order to our having the power, Christ has " made peace through the blood of His cross " (Col. i. 20). " There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus " (Rom. viii. 1).

We want this power. It could not be con-



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ferred on man in the flesh. Divine righteousness must be there, or God could not put His seal on man. Can God put His seal on a person full of the sense of sin; in conflict about his sin; say such a state as Peter's when he said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"?

There may be good desires, and tenderness of conscience, but it will run into legality, because not as yet resting in the favour of God.

These experiences may be all very useful in their place, but they are not peace. We have peace made by the blood of His cross, and divine righteousness wrought out in Christ. I can now look up to God without hiding my sin.

The way I come at the sense of the immensity of sin is by the immensity of the grace that has met it.

The reality of the presence of the Holy Ghost, who has come down, and dwells in us, is most important. The Holy Ghost is given us as a seal. Christ said, "If I depart, I will send Him unto you" (John xvi. 7). The Comforter brings to me the fulness of His grace, being the witness of accepted righteousness to our hearts. He convicts, demonstrates, of righteousness, and this righteousness is mine. I stand in it. He convicts the world of sin, of unbelief; but the demonstration to me is of righteousness, righteousness wrought out for

me, which God has accepted. Now He is perfectly free to bless.

My thought now is not, I am so full of sin that He cannot bless me; but, God has accepted the righteousness, and I stand in it. We are of God, and Christ is made unto us righteousness (1 Cor. i. 30). We are born of God, and as such we need something to bring to Him. It is all furnished in Christ. There is not only peace as to the past, but I have Christ's standing in the presence of God. We stand in Christ, the Second Man, and have the Second Man's place in virtue of redemption. So sure as I have the first Adam's place, as turned out because a sinner, so I have the last Adam's place according to the counsels of God in Christ (1 Cor. xv.).

At the end of John xvii. we have Christ's righteousness title (v. 22) and His personal title (v. 24) spoken of. He is bound to bless. "I am glorified in them" (v. 10). He could not bless in sin; but now, righteousness being perfected, all the purposes of His heart in love can flow out to us, because we are the righteous ones. Whatever the love of God, the righteousness of God, all that by which He stands in the presence of God, because of His work and person, we have, and are blessed in virtue of it.

The Spirit is the seal and the earnest, the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of adoption, the

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Spirit of truth. All that God can give we are made possessors of by the Holy Ghost, and our "bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. vi.). How do I know Christ is in the Father, and myself in Christ? The Holy Ghost has come down, and as Christ said in chapter xiv., "In that day," referring to the present time, "ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii.). "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. v.). He makes us the servants of Christ, and all is founded on the work of Christ, but realized by the presence of the Holy Ghost. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you."

He tells them that all they had before, it was a good thing for them to lose, because we have got more by the Holy Ghost being given. Christ's humiliation, did they understand? "Be it far from thee, Lord" (Matt. xvi.). Would a Christian say this now? They could not think what it could mean, that He should die, and rise again.

Christ is the object, and the Father's love too is; but the Holy Ghost is the power by which I see Christ, and realize the Father's love. Christ being gone, and there being nothing visible, my affections are more drawn out and exercised; and this is blessed. He

does not say, Blessed are they that have seen and believed, but, "Blessed are they that have *not* seen, and yet have believed" (John xxi.). Divine affection for Christ is much more drawn out by Christ being absent; and yet we long to see Him. That part is true too. While we are going through a world always so luring us to forget this blessed One, the Holy Ghost is in us to keep Him the object dear to our hearts.

There are three ways in which the Holy Ghost is spoken of in these three chapters. In chapter xv. Christ is the One who sends. (v. 26); in chapter xiv. the Father sends (v. 16); in chapter xvi. He is come as a Person on earth (v. 13).

The difference between chapters xiv. and xv. it is important to notice.

In Acts ii. 33, where the Holy Ghost is given at Pentecost, there was power acting on them. "He hath shed forth this" (v. 13).

That was not all, but very blessed. Christ was to baptize with the Holy Ghost, not with water. And this was fulfilled. Power was given, and this was needed to go through a world of wickedness and unbelief. If you have only to be faithful in witnessing for the Lord one day, you want power, or you would be like Peter in the judgment-hall cursing and swearing.

"Greater works than these shall he do, be-

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cause I go unto My Father ” (John xiv. 12). He bestowed these gifts.

When Christ is spoken of as giving the Holy Ghost, it is always for service, witnessing for Him; and (when this is the subject) reward is spoken of in other places, and the appearing and manifestation of Christ are connected with it.

God said to Christ, “ Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool ” (Acts ii.). The Holy Ghost acts in power till Christ comes in power. Everything will be displayed when He comes in His kingdom. Everything will then be set right; crowns given, etc. Christ is exalted on the right hand of the Father, and received the Holy Ghost afresh, as Head of His body, and thence sent Him forth.

This is not the same as chapter xiv. True, every word would fall dead; we should have no right word to speak, if the Holy Ghost did not give the thoughts, words, etc. This is all connected with service; but our proper portion we get in chapter xiv. There is the very out-streaming of the Father’s love. “ I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.” He will not leave you, as I must. *I* cannot stay with you. *I* am about to work the redemption, and going up on high, but He will come, not merely to make apostles, and

give power for service, but to remain with you.

It is He who now gives me the consciousness of God's loving me as He loves Jesus. I have more or less joy, but it never leaves me. I have the love of God shed abroad in my heart (Rom. v.). How do I know God is love? I have it in me. The proof is that He sent His Son the propitiation for our sins. This is what the conscience wants; but as to the enjoyment of it, I have it, because God dwelleth in me, and I in God. "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." It is proved in the Word that God is love by what He has done, and you have it in your hearts.

Christ said, "I have declared Thy name unto the men which Thou hast given me out of the world" (John xvii.).

I have the relationship; I have the Spirit of adoption, crying, Abba, Father. I have the consciousness of being in the same relationship as Christ Himself is. "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." I have and know the blessedness of His person. No one could be in the Father who was not God. He was God: "I in you." The reality of that I know by the Comforter dwelling in me. Then I have done with myself. When I think of my blessing, I think of Christ, a deliverance from self.

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That is our place in Christ, and [we are] conscious of it too, because the same Spirit who is in Him is in me as a believer.

The Holy Ghost, while He is the Spirit of power, is, then, He who gives me the consciousness of my blessing. This is not merely union with Christ, but Christ in us. "I in you." All the blessedness in Him is in us.

What is in me? Christ is in me. "Because I live," He says, "ye shall live also." All that He has is mine. This has a threefold bearing on our hearts. There is the dwelling in the consciousness of God's love in my soul. Then I look back, and feed on the humbled Christ. What love in Him! What divine perfectness! What a thing to feed upon! There are streams in the saints, but there was the thing itself. Divine love was moving through this world. "I am the living bread," come "down from heaven" (John vi.). "This do in remembrance of Me" (Luke xxiv.). I remember because it is past, as to fact; not as to my affections, but as to the fact. "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (John vi.). There is everything in Christ which can assimilate in the heart of man.

Then there is another thing. I am to be in the same glory with Him. What can I ask Him for more? He is God, and He must make us as happy as Himself. He says, "My peace I give unto you." Not something like

it, but the thing itself, "My peace." Thus meanwhile He fills one's heart with the joy we are to have by-and-by.

In chapter xiv. there is nothing about being heirs and joint-heirs, the place in glory, but all as children are to be where He is. "If I go" away, "I will come again . . . that where I am, there ye may be also." It is not here reward for service, when He comes, spoken of, but to be received to Himself. If we have found delight in Him here, we are going to be with Him for ever. 'If it were not so, I would have told you.' This world is not good enough for them, though He has manifested His grace here. He gives the assurance of His coming again to associate their hearts with the Father's love.

If His love is not filling my heart, I shall go to some vanity in a shop to satisfy me. My heart will get into my business. If my spirit is wrapped up in the love of Christ, there will be rivers of water flowing out. There is no effort in showing forth the love of God, if my soul is dwelling in it. If I am weak, and try to lift up this table, I make a great effort; if I am strong, it needs no effort. So, if there is power through love dwelling in us, there is no effort. If I am not in communion, it is for the Holy Ghost to speak to my conscience, instead of using me. If I get knowledge merely to communicate it, I shall be as dry as



a millstone. When we enjoy Him for His own sake, it flows forth to others. So as to His coming again.

The Holy Ghost is come, and, associating our hearts with Himself, takes us up victorious. As He has overcome the world, so have we. The victory is gained; and the way we enjoy the victory now is by the Holy Ghost taking of these things, and associating our hearts with Him on high. The Holy Ghost associates our hearts with the Christ to whom we are united. This makes the heart perfectly free. What a blessed thing that there is this living power of the Holy Ghost for the saints; and, in this poor, tried, and oppressed world, to be able to bring in streams of God's love!

This can only be as the Holy Ghost is the witness in us, and as He associates us with the perfect love of God.

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### **The Unity of the Body.**

READ I COR. XII. 12, ETC.; EPH. I. 22, 23, IV. 4.

**T**HE unity of the body is so great a truth, and is connected collaterally with so many other truths of deep and vital moment, that we need not wonder (in a day of so much ignorance of Scripture, and worldliness, as the present) if the enemy should succeed in leading many to deny and pervert it.

“ A holy unity in the Spirit,” and such it is, can be denied in more ways than one.

Readiness of separation may mark in some the self-will of the flesh, which can never apprehend either the holiness or the unity *of the church of God*, or the Spirit's presence with the body.

Worldliness in others may appreciate *union*, for, according to the world's motto (and motto for the day), “ union is strength ”; but the largeness of its tolerance will, before God, amount to unholiness; and the presence of the Spirit it must surely practically deny; for it sees Him not, nor knows Him.

If Satan be more immediately at work, there will be a holiness according to the letter of Scripture, perhaps, admitted; but unity will be so put as to shut out grace, or truth, or the Holy Ghost.

A basket of good fruit, however precious, is not the emblem by which the church's unity could be illustrated; but the branch (a fruit-bearing) is rather the picture. In vain will man essay to make *that*. God, and God alone, can do it.

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### **Remarks on Romans vi., vii., viii.**

**I**N the sixth chapter, I understand the apostle to be reasoning upon the claims which sin has on the believer. And the apostle tells us that sin has been disposed of.

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Sin was once the master, or king, holding dominion. It issued its commands through all the members, which were thus instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.

But sin has now, as such master, paid its wages. Its wages was death, and we have died with Christ; and thus sin is disposed of; or, we have done with it, for Christ has done with it: when He died, He died unto sin.

It is true He had to do with sin in His death; for His death owned the dominion of sin, being the wages it paid. But in resurrection Christ had to do with God, and not with sin. He was raised by the glory of the Father, and by resurrection lived unto God, as in His death He had died unto sin. So that the believer, now one with Christ in His death and resurrection, has done with sin, and has to do with God.

Sin, in its wages, is disposed of, and so should it be in all its claims; for if we no longer receive its wages, so no longer are we to do its service. It is as those who are alive from the dead that we should walk; and if that condition be rightly apprehended (alive from the dead, or risen), continuance in the doing, or service of sin, will be found a thing not even counted upon, or reckoned. Such indeed have rather to reckon themselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ. Such truths their baptism reads to

them. If, indeed, sin be willingly served, we own that sin is still alive, and not thus disposed of; and we deny the whole of this truth, and our standing in Christ: for when we died to sin, that is, when sin paid us its wages (in Christ put to death) then "the old man" or the "body of sin" was destroyed; that is, all our members and faculties, once the sphere and instruments of sin's dominions and service, in that character were put to death also; so that all our members and faculties now should own, assert, and exercise themselves in a risen character.

NOTE. I judge that sin itself must be distinguished here from both "the old man" and "the body of sin." These words "the old man" and "the body of sin" rather signify the scene of the dominion of sin, or the strength of instruments in which and by which sin ruled and exercised authority.

In the seventh chapter, the apostle in like manner entertains the claims of the law upon the believer, and in like manner he shows that they also have been disposed of.

He does this very simply. He says that the authority of the law addressed itself only to a living man; that is, a man in the flesh, or man as born of Adam; that the law was given to him as such, but the believer has ceased in this sense to be a living man, has ceased to be of Adam, inasmuch as he has died, and risen

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again; and, consequently, being a dead and risen man, and not a living man, the law does not address its claims to him; he is not the object for the law.

But in this, the law is not spoken of in the same relation to us as sin had been. Sin had been spoken of as a master, or a king; but the law is here spoken of as a husband: and the result of our being dead to sin was life to God; but the result of our being now dead to the law is marriage with Christ, as here shown. These distinctions you will find have their beautiful moral forms and meaning.

Then in the close of the chapter, having shown how that sin and the law have been disposed of, or set aside (the one as a master, the other as a husband), the apostle tells us at the same time, that they have been discharged with very different characters.

Sin has been discharged with as bad, the law with as good, a character as ever the pen of an apostle could write for them. All evil in us is said to have come from the first; while, from the other, nothing proceeds but that which is "holy, just and good"; and the moment that the real character of the law was understood by the quickened soul, this grievous state of things arose: the commandment came, sin revived, and the man died.

The law was felt to urge one thing before the conscience; sin was felt to exact another

thing in the old man, or the members; and this state of things drew forth the sense of death in the soul, and the cry for deliverance. And the answer came in Jesus, revealed in the power of His death and resurrection.

NOTE. The law, being good, has not been discharged in the way that sin has. It has been discharged as a husband only, as that to which the soul was debtor, and with which it was in union. Because we are no longer living, but dead and risen men, its holy and good words, as expressive of God, are still delighted in, and allowed.

In the eighth chapter of Romans we get the believer escaped thus from sin as a master, and the law as a husband, and in his new place in Christ. Being *in Him*, the believer has become a spiritual person, no longer in the flesh. Thus the flesh is discharged, as well as sin and the law, that is, we are neither under the old master, with the old husband, nor in the old nature.

And by the way the apostle shows that the flesh, thus discharged, could never (let God have done with it what He might) have yielded any fruit or allegiance to Him. So that, as we speak, "It was sad rubbish in itself, and to be free from it, is good riddance."

Having thus cleared his way to look at the believer in his new place in Christ, the apostle

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then with delight traces the holy prerogatives of such a one.

1st. He is nothing less than a son, having the spirit of adoption; and not the spirit of bondage, as a servant.

2nd. Being thus a son, the Spirit, the Holy Ghost is in him as at home.

3rd. Being thus a son, he is also an heir, having an heirship of God, with Christ Jesus.

4th. And as the great principle of this co-heirship, he is to shine in the same personal glory by-and-by as Jesus, on the hope of which manifestation of glory in us the whole creation now waits.

5th. And though all this condition of the believer may cause him to groan under the sense of his present state in the body, and that he is still only in hope, like the whole creation; yet the Spirit given to him, and being in him, groans also, and groans with so pure a groan, that God has entire fellowship with it.

6th. And even more than this. God in His sovereign rule of all things constrains them all to work together for the believer, that without, as well as within us, He may be for us.

7th, and finally, the one great original purpose of conforming the believer to the image of the glorified Son, is that which has been the spring, and is ever the constant and abiding spring, of all the divine procedure and action.

This is the train of glorious privileges which flow forth from the believer's union with Christ. Nothing is too excellent for God to do, or devise, for such a one. All the joy that the fullest love can inspire, all the dignity that the brightest glories can put on us, are ours thus according to the counsel of God in Christ Jesus. God is for us; who can be against us? This can easily account for all this train of joys and glories. But if He is for us, who can be against us? Is there an Accuser, a Judge, or an Executioner still standing out?

The first may go away rebuked by this, that God has justified us.

The second may go away rebuked by this, that Christ has died, has already suffered the judgment, and His work has been accepted to the full heaven itself.

The third may go away rebuked by this, that all the malice of earth and hell together shall never drag us from the embraces, the firm embraces, of our God in Christ Jesus our Lord. And if there is neither Accuser to charge, nor Judge to condemn, nor Executioner to punish, the court is cleared; we have left the scene where, as sinners, we had been righteously dragged, in the grasp of the law, to meet Him who has delivered us in other scenes altogether, not as a judge, but as a Bridegroom, to enjoy a Husband in a Saviour for ever and ever.



## **The Bitten Israelite.**

NUMBERS XXI. 4-9.

**A**ND they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom, and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us.

And Moses prayed for the people.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

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Very happy it is to be discovering the glories of Scripture; especially in days when

the infidel insolence of men is challenging it. Amalek, of old, dared to come out, and withstand the camp of Israel, though at that moment the cloud which carried the glory was resting on the camp; and, by and by, the great infidel confederacy of the last days will rise so high in pride and daring as to face the army of the white-horsed Rider descending from heaven (Exod. xvii. and Rev. xix.).

In like spirit is the heart of man now challenging the Book which carries the precious and mysterious glories of the wisdom of God. It is therefore good service to draw forth these glories, and let the oracles of God speak, in their own excellency, for the confusion of this iniquity. And one of these glories, a part of this excellency, is this, that it is found to be one breath that animates, one light that shines, one voice that is heard, in all the regions of this one divine Volume.

In turning now to the narrative which this scripture gives us, we shall see this illustrated. We find, in the first instance, that the Lord refuses to cancel the judgment He had pronounced. The camp had sinned, and fiery serpents, messengers of death, were sent among them, and though Moses may pray, and the people cry out in anguish of heart, the Lord will not remove those executioners of His righteous judgment.

And this is His way in the Gospel. The

sentence of death pronounced at the beginning on sin is not reversed. That could not be. That would be the acknowledging of some mistake or infirmity, and that could not be.

But God has His provisions in the face of the sentenced death. This is His way. Wonderful to tell it, He provides the sinner with an answer to His own demands in righteousness! At the beginning this was so, and so has it been again and again; so is it in the gospel, and so is it in this narrative.

God brought the bruised Seed of the woman into the death-stricken garden of Eden; and Adam, the self-ruined sinner, is provided for. Noah got from God the ark in the day of the Flood; and Israel the sprinkled lintel in the day of the judgment of Egypt. David was told to raise an altar in the despised threshing-floor of an uncircumcised Jebusite; and that altar there had virtue to quiet the sword of the angel of death that was travelling on high over the doomed city. As the blood of Calvary had virtue to rend the vail from top to bottom, and open the high heavens to the captives of sin and death.

This is one of the beautiful unities in the revealed way of God. It is not God cancelling His judgments, but providing the sinner with an answer to them.

This little narrative finely and vividly exhibits this. Israel had sinned, as we have

seen, and fiery serpents were sent into the midst of them. They prayed that the serpents might be taken away; but no such prayer could prevail. The executioners of righteousness must remain in the camp; death must follow sin, for God had said at the beginning, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." But the Lord commands Moses to make a serpent of brass, and set it on a pole, and then proclaim, as in the hearing of the whole camp, that every bitten Israelite who looked to that uplifted serpent should be healed, and live.

This was life confronting death; a secret spring of life and healing in the midst of the powers of death. It was as the revelation of the bruised Seed of the woman in the freshly death-stricken garden of Eden. But this was not the withdrawing of the fiery serpents, as the camp had craved; it was not the cancelling of the sentence which had been passed upon their sin. It was another, a different and a higher thing; it was enabling the Israelite in the wilderness to triumph over that miserable estate in which he had involved himself. This is what it was. It was not simply an escape from it, but a triumph over it; for an Israelite bitten by a fiery serpent, if he but looked at the brazen serpent, might then smile at the fiery serpents, though still abroad in the camp. Just as Noah, long before, on the vantage-

ground where grace and salvation had put him, might have smiled at the waters as they were rising around him; or as the Israelite in Egypt, under the sprinkled lintel, might have smiled at the sword of the destroying angel as he was passing through the land.

How excellent all this is! And this is still the gospel; so consistent with itself is the way of God, and shadowed in like beauty in the story of Noah in the Flood, or of the Israelite in Egypt, or of the bitten man of the camp in the wilderness who had looked at the serpent of brass. Such a one could not be bitten a second time; the sin against the Lord of the camp which had quickened these ministers of death, had been met by the provisions of that same Lord of the camp Himself, and this was his security and his triumph. He was now in a better state than if he had never been bitten. His state was then vulnerable, now it is impregnable; then he might have been wounded by the messenger of death, now he could not. As Adam clothed of God is beyond Adam in the nakedness of innocency; and as Adam the pardoned and accepted sinner is beyond Adam the upright creature.

God's riddle, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness," is expounded again and again. We have seen it before, and we see it here again. And in connection with all this, giving

another look at Adam, I may say that when his lips were opened over the woman the second time, they uttered a happier word than they had uttered the first time. "She shall be called Woman," did not express a joy equal to that which he tasted when, as we further read, "he called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living." To celebrate life from God in the face of self-wrought death, is a far higher occupation for the heart than to celebrate even the closing, crowning gift of God in creation or in providence.

Now, all this which we have here traced in this little narrative in Numbers xxi. is, again I say, *the gospel*. This is *as the salvation of God*. Nothing that was threatened has been cancelled. All, by the process of ruin and redemption, is met and answered and satisfied. The blood of the everlasting covenant has given "the God of peace" to raise from the dead, Jesus, as "the Shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. xiii.). God Himself is righteously, gloriously justified, and the sinner victoriously brought into a condition of certainty and impregnableness, and of holy, thankful defiance of all the enmity and the attempts and the resources of the old destroyer.

But there is this further feature of the gospel impressed on this little narrative. The life or healing was to be *individual*; the bitten

Israelite must look himself to the uplifted serpent. “*Every one* that is bitten, when *he* looketh upon it, shall live,” said the Lord to Moses; and then the history tells us, “If a serpent had bitten any man, when *he* beheld the serpent of brass, *he* lived” (*vv.* 8, 9).

So is it now as between us and God personally and individually in the gospel; and we may deeply bless Him that it is so. He individualizes and separates us to Himself, to talk to us about our sins, and settle the question of eternity with us. He sits with us alone at the well of Sychar; or sees us, our own very selves, under the fig-tree; or feels our own touch in the midst of the busy crowd; or looks up to the sycamore-tree to catch our eye; or meets us alone outside the camp, or on the floor of the temple.

His word in John iii. is like His word in Numbers xxi. : “Except *a man* be born again, *he* cannot see the kingdom of God.” A look will do it; but the look must be a personal, individual act. Faith is the act of the soul in immediate dealing with God. Another cannot believe for me, nor can ordinances or human religious provisions take God’s place in relation to me. I must look, and Christ must be lifted up. Blessed to tell it, He and I are to have to do with one another.

Thus is it, as reflected in this little narrative; and thus is it in the world-spread gospel.

And surely these are wondrous witnesses of the way the grace and salvation of God have taken with us. God did not prevent sin. Nor has He cancelled the judgment which He attached to it. Nor has He simply made things again as once they were. He gets out of the ruin something better than that which had been ruined, and He has accomplished this in a way of unsullied righteousness, and of infinite display of His own name and glory. It is redemption and resurrection, life in victory, life won by Himself from the power of death.

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### **The Word and the Spirit.**

**O**NE of the greatest errors of the day is the practical separation of the written word of God from the teaching of the Spirit of God.

Let the Christian reader ponder it well; for it is a mistake so common and so serious as to be fatal to true spiritual-mindedness, and demands our constant care and watchfulness.

The insubjection of the mind of man to God, and confidence in his own competency to deal with the truth, have so largely set aside the habit of dependence on the divinely given power of the Holy Spirit that "the last days,"



according to Scripture, are now clearly marked by "having a form of godliness, but denying *the power* thereof" (2 Tim. iii. 5).

No doubt man has natural ability for understanding the things of earth, and for adapting them to his own advantage; but we are told that "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God"; that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii.).

Nothing can more clearly show our entire dependence on the Spirit of God, either to know, to receive, to discern, or, we may add also, to communicate, "the things of God."

It is easy to understand that Satan would always seek to set aside, if possible, whatever may be the *present* work of God on the earth. When it was a question of owning the only true God as Jehovah, then he brought in idolatry, for which God had to send His people into captivity. Now that the Holy Ghost has come to bear witness to Christ and His finished work during His absence in glory, the competency of man is vainly asserted as able to receive, discern, and minister the things of God. The coming down from heaven of the Holy Spirit to abide with us

for ever, consequent upon Jesus being glorified, which is the great characteristic of Christianity, is therefore, in His present activities, not owned, but practically set aside.

Not that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is not held in some measure, but His present offices are so little regarded that He is both grieved and quenched. It is this practical acquaintance with Him, as the Teacher and Guide into all the truth, the Glorifier and Testifier of the Son through the written Word, to which we now refer. Nor have we a doubt that the chief reason why His power is not more known publicly and corporately is because He is not better known by us personally and privately.

Some, however, have gone into the other extreme, of professing to have the guidance of the Spirit *apart from the Word*, and have therefore fallen into ways of the most extravagant folly and error. But to have "an ear to hear" what God says in His Word, in conscious dependence on the teaching and guidance of His Spirit, is clearly what Scripture enjoins. To separate therefore the Word and the Spirit must be fatal to a true and happy apprehension of the mind and will of God.

All through Scripture, not only in type, but in the plainest possible instruction, we find the two so joined together that we "hear what

the Spirit saith ” when we hearken to “ the word of God ” (see Rev. ii., iii.).

In the very opening of the sacred writings we have the Word and the Spirit. God spake, and the Spirit of God moved (Gen. i.). Then, for many generations, the word of the Lord, by Moses and the prophets, was both written and spoken by the Spirit; for “ holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit ” (2 Pet. i. 21).

The tabernacle and its furniture, vessels, coverings, and priestly vestments, with their precious stones, so typical of Christ, were made by Bezaleel when “ filled with the Spirit of God,” according to the word of Moses, which he had received from Jehovah, who showed him the pattern in the mount (Exod. xxxi. 3).

In the wilderness journey the manna in the morning fed them, while the springing water from the rock which had been smitten satisfied their thirst (Exod. xvi., xvii.). All through God dwelt among them, and ministered His word to them; and neglect to hearken to His word was soon followed by forgetting God.

In the land, if God’s glory filled the house, the ministry of His word by prophets every now and then was given. Like the widow’s cruse of oil and barrel of meal, both continued, and could literally sustain the prophet in his ministration of God’s word by the Spirit.

Nor can we fail to notice what a careful return there was to act on the word "as it is written," when the gracious revival of faithfulness to Jehovah occurred in those who came back from the captivity; while the prophet assured them that God would be faithful to His word, and that His Spirit was with them, as when they came out of Egypt (Haggai ii. 5).

It is interesting, too, to observe, that the faithful remnant, in Jerusalem and around, before our Lord came, who looked for redemption, were clearly occupied with the word of God, and under a great power of the Holy Spirit. Their fervent utterances, according to Scripture, show this; and here, as all through, we find those who were occupied with the Word, and in the path of the Spirit, were taken up with Him of whom the Word and Spirit so abundantly testify.

In Simeon's case he not only looked for the Redeemer, according to the testimony of the prophets, but it was revealed to him by the Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. We therefore see him "led by the Spirit into the temple," where the Saviour was. He recognized Him at once, took Him up in his arms, and bowed in worship to Jehovah. The utterance of the heart, therefore, of this Spirit-led servant of Jehovah was, "Lord, now lettest

Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to *Thy word*” (Luke ii.).

We cannot contemplate such a scene, or ponder the statements recorded of Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, and Anna, without noticing how frequently that which is written was on their lips; while we are told again and again that it was the power of the Holy Spirit upon them which produced such fervent utterances.

We cannot fail to mark how constantly Scripture presents the Word and Spirit in this near connection. When the Holy Spirit came down, as recorded in the second chapter of Acts, we read that those who were filled with the Spirit not only declared with intense earnestness to those around the wonderful works of God, but so much were they occupied with the word of God that it is added “they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine.” Again, in the fourth chapter we are told “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness”; and often after this it is said they were led of the Spirit, and *the word of the Lord* was published by them.

We need scarcely remind the Christian reader that in our Lord Himself we have the perfect Exemplar of One being always led by the Spirit, and on every occasion walking in the truth, and contending for the divine authority of the written Word. He whom

God the Father sealed, on whom the Spirit came down, and in whom He took up His abode, was wont to say, "It is written," and put His adversaries to silence by a sentence of Holy Scripture. When speaking, too, of the new birth, He so connected the Word and Spirit, that He said, "Except a man be born of water [the Word, see 1 Peter i. 23] and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii.).

As we have seen, the testimony of the apostles, both in their oral ministry as recorded in the Acts, and their written ministry in the Epistles, was always to the divine certainty of the Word. They often referred to the personal actings, indwelling, anointing, and operations of the Holy Spirit; while they themselves were taught and led and filled with the Spirit, and were constantly quoting from the written Word.

In the Apocalypse, John is said to be "in the Spirit," in order to enter into the divinely given lines of truth which were communicated to him. And in the last page of the Inspired Volume we have the Spirit and the Bride saying, "Come," to the Lord Jesus; while the most solemn warnings are given against adding to or taking from "the words of the book of this prophecy."

Nor should we overlook the precious and soul-stirring fact that there is almost always

a third truth connected with those testimonies to the actings together of the Word and the Spirit; namely, their ministrations of Christ.

Who does not see in the first man a figure of Him that was to come: His death, resurrection, and the presentation of His Bride which follows? And why was the third day's work twice pronounced "good," when living things sprang up where previously there had been barrenness, but to tell us of the goodness of God in creation, and also of resurrection on the third day in reference to redemption?

In the vast variety of types and shadows which God has given us by Moses, most are familiar with the precious instruction as to the person, sacrifice, and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor were prophets and the writers of the Psalms failing in testifying of Christ, as our Lord informed us; for after His resurrection from among the dead He said, "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me" (Luke xxiv. 44).

In the Acts, also, it is said of those who were filled with the Holy Spirit, not only that "they spake the word of God with boldness," but, it is added, "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts iv. 31, 33). Stephen, too, full

of the Holy Spirit, went largely through Scripture in addressing his angry hearers, and died under their wicked hands testifying to his being so occupied with Christ in glory that, like Him when suffering on the cross, he could pray for his murderers; while in all the writings of the apostles we find them unable to write many verses, whatever the subject, without recurring to the personal, moral, or official glories of Christ, or the glory of His path of humiliation, or His perfections either toward God or for us: in some way or other Christ is presented to us in the Word by the Spirit. This surely is a threefold cord, which cannot easily be broken. May we mark it well, and hold it fast.

Now, what are we to gather from what Scripture teaches as to the Word and the Spirit? Among other lessons that the written Word having been indited by the Spirit, we need His power to bring it home to our hearts, and reveal and minister to us the deep things of God. Can we fail also to notice that when the Spirit acts by the Word in us, it will be connected with the ministry of Christ, and produce in us conduct according to Him? If then we in self-sufficiency allow the intellect without the Spirit to work on the word of God, we may be puffed up with knowledge, and manifest a low walk while professing to hold the highest doctrines. But when we are



occupied with the Word, as subject to its divine authority, in dependence on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, then shall we care, not only for one or two particular lines of truth, but for all it teaches. There will be consistency in every path we are called to walk in. We shall heed the Lord's mind as to our relation to Him in the assembly, as to our personal conduct and private walk, and shall have a conscience, too, as to honouring God in our family relationships and duties.

When a believer is not consistent as to general conduct, it may, we believe, be often traced to the practical separation of the word of God and the Spirit of God. If our habit be to pray over the Scriptures, to ponder them in dependence on the Holy Spirit, and thus they become food to our souls, how is it possible that our conversation and written communications could be without the ministry of Christ?

May the Scriptures we have looked at as to the word of God and the Spirit of God, connected, as we have seen, with the ministry of Christ, so exercise our hearts and consciences as to give us fresh delight in turning prayerfully and humbly to the written Word, and in looking for the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

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**“Then will I make this House  
like Shiloh.”**

JEREMIAH XXVI. 6.

**T**HE question, I apprehend, which is troubling many minds now is suggested in this denunciation of the prophet Jeremiah.

The breaking up of formal unity, the breaking up of a testimony really coming in a great measure from God, troubles saints. They are not prepared for it. They count it a strange thing. Yet let us look at God's ways, He guiding us.

The general truth of the failure of every dispensation in man's hands used to be very familiar with us. We begin with the first, “Man made upright” (Eccles. vii. 29), and we find in Gen. vi. 6, “And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart” (because of man's corruption). And then comes the Flood.

But without going into the great outlines of dispensation, let us look more intimately into the record that Israel affords us.

In Numbers xiii., xiv., we find that God, having brought up Israel out of Egypt, next year orders spies to be sent up to search the land. They are to have definitely before them what is the nature of the land they are going to possess. Ours is a reasonable hope. God

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likes us to know what we are labouring for (Heb. iv.). They do learn this: it is a good land; but they despise it. They deliberately turn back in heart into Egypt. Well, God says, “ As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you. . . . Doubtless ye shall not come into the land . . . your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness . . . and ye shall know my *breach of promise* ” (vv. 28, 34).

So then there is such a thing as a *breach of promise* with God. In one sense we know with joy, His gifts and calling are without repentance (Rom. xi. 29). But as to testimony and blessing upon earth, there is such a thing as those entirely failing to whom that testimony and blessing is committed, and God committing it to others, that His purposes may be accomplished. “ Your little ones . . . they shall *know* the land which ye have despised ”; and by them was God’s purpose really fulfilled.

Look onward, as to Eli: the question, I suppose, of priesthood. What says the Lord? “ The Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before Me for ever; but now the Lord saith, Be it far from Me; for them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed ” (1 Sam. ii. 30).

And mark how searching is that question of honouring : " And honourest thy sons above Me," etc. The Lord's quarrel was against " the iniquity which he [Eli] *knoweth*; because his sons made themselves vile, and he *restrained* them not " (iii. 13).

He did speak, and speak *very solemnly*, to them. He said, " If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, *who shall entreat for him?* " (ii. 25).

Still he did not use the proper means and authority which God had given to him as a father, and a priest, to *put down* the evil, which he knew, which was deeply dishonouring God. God will be dealt with in a true, *bonâ fide* way. Words, even felt in some measure, will not do when actions are called for. We may make light of sin; but He never does.

In this breach of promise, we see again God's substitution, to carry out His own testimony, etc. " And I will raise up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in Mine heart, and in My mind " (v. 35).

Heavily, therefore, I apprehend, would this denunciation come upon the ears of Israel by the prophet Jeremiah : " Then will I make this house like Shiloh " (see ch. vii. 12-15). It was a national witness to them, that whilst they were resting in the external thing,

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as though it was theirs by right; clinging to their land, though but a *waste*, and saying, as man ever does, “ Abraham was *one*, and he inherited the land; but we are *many*; the land is given us for inheritance ” (Ezek. xxxiii. 24); I say it was a witness to them that God had once before given up His own house, “ the tent which He placed *among men* ” (Psalm lxxviii. 60).

Affecting thought! He had given up His own glory apparently because of the iniquity of those to whom it was committed. They might send, in bold and unprecedented self-confidence, for the Lord’s ark from Shiloh; but “ the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were *there* with the ark of the covenant of God ” (1 Sam. iv. 4).

This is the Spirit’s record, and a preparation for all that followed. “ The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away ” (Jer. vi. 29).

How unaccountable, doubtless, has it often appeared to many souls, that God can so let His name be dishonoured by His own people, who should testify for Him! And yet so it is. God would rather give up His own glory for the present, and give up His strength into captivity, in the words of Psalm lxxviii. 61, than His children should go on unrebuked, and suffer damage. He loves their profit

better than His own present glory, though all will finally be to HIS glory.

In pressing on to our own dispensation, I only remark that *our* standing is simply and entirely that of *faith*. We have no other. We are Gentiles, the wild olive-tree. The moment that we begin to think that we have a standing-place, apart from faith, we forget the fundamental principles of our calling. "Thou standest by faith," Paul said at the first to the church (Rom. xi. 20). And so the first word of Jesus to the church at Ephesus, when He found it had declined from its first love, was, "Repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy *candlestick* out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. ii. 5). The candlestick, the glory, could not stand apart from faith.

In conclusion, I would just say, Let these things speak for themselves. Alas for us, if we will not let God's word speak to us simply, nakedly, and by its own power! Only one thing I would say, surely it says to *all*, "Be not high-minded, but fear." However free we may be, by grace, from the present condemnation of such truth, still the *lesson* will surely be of little value to us, if we affix it upon others, and neglect to apply it to ourselves. Sweet to be driven from "confidence in the flesh," yet know whom to look to in

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the sustainment of our responsibility (Rom. xvi. 25).

And yet one word further. Whilst thus seeing the incompatibility of God's presence and blessing with evil, let not these things make us *careless* about separation. Separation is never the thing that God loves, unless it be forced upon Him by man's evil. Especially is it needful to dwell upon this now, because Satan's aim always is, *whatever* truth God is working upon, to throw us into the extreme of it. I doubt not this is an *invariable* wile, and one just now to be guarded against.

Let us not forget that though faithfulness *must* be used when called for, yet *love* still has its own indispensable place in the Church. It is the cement of God's habitation by the Spirit. We may mistake a quick finding-out of others' faults and weaknesses for spirituality. It is not so. Love still “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth *with* the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things; hopeth all things” (1 Cor. xiii. 6, 7). Love will cover a multitude of sins, though it will not *cloak* any.

I say these things, yet let the solemn passages adduced leave that thought upon the mind, that there can be no trifling with positive evil. May we still maintain our true standing as *unleavened* in connection with the Paschal Lamb. May we still eat with it the

bitter herbs, and thus know all the better the pure joy and blessedness of that paschal feast, "until the day break, and the shadows flee away" (Song of Sol. ii. 17).

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### **Wherein and Whereon.**

*"And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke"* (Numbers xix.).

**W**HEN, with the eye of faith, we gaze upon the Lord Jesus, we not only see Him to be the spotless One in His own holy person, but also One who never wore the yoke of sin.

The Holy Ghost is ever the jealous guardian of the person of Christ, and delights to present Him to the soul in all His beauty and preciousness.

Every type and every shadow, designed to set Him forth, exhibits the same careful guardianship. Thus, in the red heifer, we are taught that, not only was our blessed Saviour intrinsically pure and spotless, but that He



stood perfectly clear and free from every mark and trace of sin.

No trace of sin ever came upon His sacred neck. When He speaks of "My yoke," it is the yoke of implicit subjection to the Father's will in all things. This was the only yoke He ever wore, and this yoke was never off for one moment during the whole of His spotless and perfect career, from the manger to the cross.

But He wore no yoke of sin. Let this be distinctly understood. He went to the cross to expiate our sins, to lay the ground-work of our perfect purification from all sin; but He did this as One who had never, at any time during His blessed life, worn the yoke of sin. He was free, and as such was fitted to do the great work of expiation.

To think of Him as bearing the yoke of sin in His life would be to think of Him as unfit to atone for it in His death. "*Wherein is no blemish, and whereon never came yoke.*"

It is as needful to remember the "whereon" as the "wherein." Both expressions are designed by the Holy Ghost to set forth the perfection of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who was not only internally spotless, but also externally free from every trace of sin. Neither in His person nor in His relationships was He in any wise liable to the claims of sin or death. He entered into all the

reality of our circumstances and our conditions; but in Him was no sin, and on Him no yoke of sin.

“Touched with a sympathy within,  
He knows our feeble frame;  
He knows what sore temptations mean,  
For He has felt the same.

But spotless, undefiled, and pure,  
The great Redeemer stood,  
While Satan's fiery darts He bore  
And did resist to blood.”

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### **The Scriptural View of a Christian.**

**W**HEN we speak of a *Christian*, we speak of what a Christian is in Scripture, and Scripture always speaks of him (of a believer in any state) as to his standing.

It is very necessary to see this.

We must not confound the exercises of a Christian with the standing of a Christian. The ground of his standing is God's work. In his exercises there comes in himself; his flesh; his ignorance; and many other things, alas! may be working. But it is entirely according to God's thoughts, and not according to my thoughts, that my standing is to be judged of.

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Moreover, the exercises of my own soul are never the same as God's judgment about them. When I am thinking of these, it is my actual state that occupies me; but were God to take notice of my actual state, He must condemn me.

What He has regard to is the work of Christ for me, and my union with Him, not in this respect my actual state at all. It is always important to recollect that; because my own judgment of myself ought to be as to my actual state.

Whatever his exercises, however these may vary, the Christian, in one sense, is just the same, because he is in God's sight as Christ (1 John iv. 17). Christ being the perfectly accepted Man at God's right hand, the Christian is looked at by God in the same position, sitting in heavenly places "in Christ" (Eph. i. 3; ii. 6).

In that sense there cannot be any difference; and the ground of our acceptance cannot ever be imperfect.

I repeat, we must not confound the movements of life with the ground of our acceptance. We can never have this too simple or clear. It does not make one despise the first actings of life, its first movings and breathings, however feeble and imperfect. I do not despise my child because he is not a man.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians (where what

a Christian is is fully brought out) men are viewed as the "children of wrath" in their very nature; necessarily heirs of wrath, because God is what He is, and man is what he is.

Every other distinction is lost sight of, because in his character of a sinner, man is brought fully into the light of God.

But having thus told us what man is, the apostle does not stop with man. He turns round, and begins at the other end. He now tells us what God is, that He is "rich in mercy," and (as the effect of this) that He has set us in heavenly places in Christ.

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"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. vi. 13-18).