

# CHRISTIAN FRIEND VOLUME 13

by Unknown

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*A collection of articles and writings from Christian Friend Volume 13, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.*

96 Chapters

# Table of Contents

0. Christian Friend Volume 13
1. Separation and Worship
2. Holy Convocations
3. Bread Cast Upon the Waters
4. A Perfect Christian
5. Extract from Letter
6. The Book of Ezra, Chapter 9
7. 1 Thessalonians 2:8-12
8. Matthew 27:50-54
9. The Servants' Rest
10. The Queen of Sheba and the Eunuch
11. The Eternal Life and Fellowship
12. The Book of Ezra, Chapter 10
13. Jotham; or, a Word on Faithfulness
14. 2 Kings 4:1-7
15. Hebrews 12:23
16. The Manner of Love
17. Fragment: Dependence on God
18. Simple Christian Truths: Forgiveness of Sins
19. Paul as a Pattern
20. Responsibility and Life
21. Fragment: The World Will Not Have Christ
22. Numbers 27- 36
23. Leviticus 23:9-20
24. Ephesians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18
25. Evermore
26. On the Ground of Grace
27. Choosing the Chief Rooms
28. Fragment: Nigh to the World
29. Do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus
30. Simple Christian Truths: Cleansing and a Purged Conscience
31. Hebrews 9:26, 28
32. 1 John 1:8-10
33. 2 Corinthians 12
34. Fragment: No Rights but Christ's
35. The First Sunday
36. Ruth
37. Simple Christian Truths: Justification by Faith
38. Fragment: Salvation

39. He Led Them Forth by a Right Way
40. Judges 5:12
41. Romans 12:2
42. 1 Corinthians 15:29
43. Fears, Cares, and Hope
44. Trial and Temptation: God's Object in Bringing us into Them
45. Simple Christian Truths: Repentance and Faith
46. The Word and Spirit
47. 2 Samuel 23:20-21
48. Hebrews 4:3
49. As Dear Children
50. Simple Christian Truths: The Person of Christ
51. A Meditation on Song of Solomon
52. Fragment: Atonement
53. Fragment: The Person of Christ
54. Romans 14:5-6; Galatians 9:10-11; Colossians 2:16-17
55. 2 Timothy 2:20-21
56. Matthew 28:19
57. 2 Kings 2:12
58. Treasure in an Earthen Vessel
59. Brotherly Care and Personal Trespass
60. Two Letters on Worldliness
61. Fragment: The Lord is Enough
62. Building up Yourselves
63. 1 Kings 21
64. Isaiah 29:13-14
65. 1 John 5:18
66. Tarry Ye Here, and Watch with Me
67. The Firstborn
68. Letters on Worldliness
69. A Marriage Address
70. Psalms 45-48
71. 2 Timothy 2:7-8
72. 1 Corinthians 9:27
73. Simple Christian Truths: The Work of Christ
74. Wells of Salvation
75. Simple Christian Truths: Reconciliation
76. Fragment: The Blood
77. Possession
78. Psalm 67
79. Isaiah 60:1
80. Fragment: Christ's Love

- 81.** Fragment: Occupation with Christ
- 82.** The End of the Lord
- 83.** Risen with Christ
- 84.** Under His Wings in Lovingkindness
- 85.** Fragment: Knowing His Love
- 86.** Three Things
- 87.** Fragment: Perseverance and True Faith
- 88.** 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:1-10
- 89.** 1 Peter 1:10
- 90.** The Life of Christ in the Believer
- 91.** Simple Christian Truths: Prayer
- 92.** Fragment: Jesus Is Sufficient
- 93.** The Father Loveth the Son
- 94.** Fragment: Discovery of God's Will
- 95.** 1 Chronicles 21:15-27

## Christian Friend Volume 13

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## Separation and Worship

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In order to give Egypt such a character before God as would allow the display of His judgment, Egypt must have the blessing through Joseph; for it is despised or neglected blessing that matures sin. As the Lord says, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father;" i.e. they had despised the riches of love and goodness. So Judas perfected his sin by remaining unmoved at the gift of the sop, the token of personal kindness. Thus another king arose, "which knew not Joseph" The goodness of God towards her by Joseph Egypt had forgotten, and thus her sin was full, and she was ripe for judgment. Without the previous ministry of Joseph, therefore, the fullness of her sin could not have come, as now the world is convinced of sin, because they did not believe in Jesus. This makes Egypt a sample of the world.

The Exodus is the separation of the people of God from the world. And I was lately struck with this feature in the scene, that Israel was to go out of Egypt in order to serve, or hold, a feast to the Lord (Exodus 5:1; 3:18; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3, 9); for they could not serve Him or do sacrifice to Him in the land of their bondage and before that people. (8:25-27.) Their religious service was of such a character that Egypt would not tolerate it. It was something that so entirely went across all the thoughts of that people that they would persecute and destroy them if they were the witnesses of it. They must therefore go forth.

Now, what a character does this simple fact give Egypt or the world! God had no sanctuary there. The thoughts and ways of that land were so opposed to Him that He could not set His name among them. His people must go forth ere they could open His temple or raise His altar, because the very things which Israel would, as it were, sacrifice or crucify, Egypt was wont to worship. (8:26, 27.) Israel must therefore be separated from Egypt before they could hold their feast to the Lord.

And so it was afterward. There was a fence all round the Holy Land, a wall of partition that separated Israel in Canaan from the nations. No stranger could eat the Passover, no uncircumcised one could hold the feast of the Lord. And so is it still. We must worship "in spirit and in truth." No man can call on God aright but by the Spirit which gives adoption, nor call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost. It is still on the principle of separation that God is to be served or worshipped, as much as when Israel had to go into the wilderness, out of Egypt, to do so, or to distinguish themselves from all the nations by circumcision to do so.

The wall of partition is different, it is true; the place outside the land is not a mere desert, it is true; but the place of service is as distinct as ever it was. "Ye must be born again." This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone... ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood." Here is the desert, the separated place, the sanctuary of God, within the partition-wall. The Holy Ghost raises it now. Union with Christ forms it; and within that place the abominations of the world are sacrificed now, as the abominations of Egypt were sacrificed in the desert of old. The lust of the flesh, the lust of

the eye, and the pride of life, are to be crucified there, though they are all of the world.

And what was the full feast which Israel held to the Lord when they got out into the desert? Why, it was actually furnished to them by Egypt herself. As soon as they stood on the banks of the Red Sea, they began to hold their feast. They did not wait to reach the mountain. (Exodus 3:12.) It is quite true under that mountain they did afterward serve, or do sacrifice, to God. (Exodus 19-40; Leviticus 1-9) But Egypt herself gave them a song before they reached the appointed place. Egypt was bold enough so far to resist them as to follow them into the very jaws of the Red Sea. Her enmity was perfect; but all this ended in giving Israel a song of triumph over Egypt. (Exodus 15) Before they reached the place to which they had been called this joy was theirs. And so with us, beloved. Satan has done his worst, but Jesus, by death and resurrection, has overthrown him. Had not Satan drawn out his chariots and his horses, all the strength and power of his kingdom, to the hill of Calvary, the song which the resurrection puts into our mouth would not have been ours. But it is ours now, and he can never silence it. It has been raised by himself, and he can never silence it; and we too have the echo of it in our hearts all through the place, till we reach the mountain of the Lord. In this sense Egypt gave Israel that song, in this sense the god of this world gives our hearts this song; for the eater himself yields meat, the strong man himself sweetness.

And, let me add, that what livingly and practically separates us day by day from the world is communion with Jesus. Faith, or the Spirit, or the new nature, is the first great exodus—our first going into the wilderness, out of Egypt, to hold our feast to the Lord, our act of separation from the world; but that place of separation can be maintained daily only by communion with Jesus, through the same Spirit who first drew us out. J. G. B.

## Holy Convocations

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It is very blessed when the soul, delivered from its own fears and anxieties, is free to apprehend the unfoldings of the thoughts of God Himself, by the Spirit, in the Word. To be occupied with the good pleasure of His will is an immense gain, because thus we can learn in some little measure, through grace, to answer to His mind concerning us. What a difference it must have produced in the heart of a godly Israelite, whether he regarded the times of assembling before the Lord mentioned in Leviticus 23 as feasts of Jehovah, or whether they sank in his estimation to his own level, and so were regarded merely as feasts of the Jews (John 5:1;6: 4;7: 2); whether they were moments which told of the delight of their God in gathering His people round Himself in connection with the special dealings of His own grace with them, as the prodigal found himself in the joy of the father's house, or whether, like the elder son, their own joy, characterized by the self within, and a kid to make merry with their friends, had possession of their hearts. We may well pause to ask ourselves whether we apprehend these outgoings of the heart of our God, made known to us in Him who came to us in a manger that He might be with us in humiliation, who spoke of them in the parables of Luke 15, who gathered the repentant remnant of Israel around Himself, and drew publicans and sinners by the attractions of His grace, who as the lifted up Son of man now draws all men to Him, and who is waiting to gather us together to Himself in the clouds according to His own word— "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

These times which Jehovah called "my feasts" —moments which foreshadowed the fuller revelation made to us in such words as "let us eat and be, merry" —were seven. They were 'holy convocations, holy seasons of the calling together of the people of God; but of these there were three which held the principal place, while the others may be regarded more as accessories to them. They were the passover, the feast of weeks or Pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles. At these three feasts the people were convoked) and assembled before Jehovah on certain known grounds. With respect to Israel, the passover, with its accompanying feast of unleavened bread, told of their redemption from Egypt on the ground of the blood which sheltered them from judgment. (Exodus 12:42;13: 9, 16; Deuteronomy 16: 1-3) Pentecost, with the previous waving of the sheaf of first-fruits, spoke altogether of a new ground of assembling, of God's harvest time begun after the corn of wheat had fallen into the ground and died; while the feast of tabernacles was a feast of ingathering consequent on the trumpet summons on the first day of the seventh month, followed by the solemn day of affliction and atonement on the tenth.

While we have noticed that the first and leading thought in these feasts is that the Lord called the people around Himself in the delight of His own heart, yet on their part these times were to be characterized, secondly, by an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Details of these offerings are given in Numbers 28:29. They were thus seasons of approach to God in holy solemnity when they were before Him on special grounds, but in all the value of the sweet savor of the appointed offerings. Thirdly, in Deuteronomy 16, we are further told in connection with these three feasts of the—state of heart and conduct which befitted them in the worship on these occasions. Let us note

then these three points which we may not disregard, though one may be more prominently before us at any given moment than another; viz., the varied grounds on which it pleases God to gather a people around Himself. This we have in our present chapter; then that part in their worship which is specially for the Lord. "My offering, and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savor" (a savor of rest; marg., compare Zephaniah 3:17) "unto me." This is mentioned here, but fully developed in Numbers 28:29 and lastly, the worship as it affected their own souls in connection with the special ground on which they were gathered before the Lord in each feast. At the passover they were to turn in the morning and go unto their tents; then they were to eat the bread of affliction for seven days. At Pentecost they came with a tribute of a freewill-offering of their hand according as the Lord had blessed them, and to rejoice before the Lord; and at the feast of tabernacles they were to rejoice in their feast, because they were blessed in their increase, and in all the work of their hands, what is figured by the passover eternally abides as the first ground on which. God could gather a people around Himself. The passage of the Red Sea was the power, the means by which He brought them to Himself on the ground of the sheltering blood of the passover Lamb. There was no memorial feast kept of the passage of the sea. They themselves as a delivered people were the memorial of that. It was the passover which was celebrated as a night much to be remembered with its feast of unleavened bread. There could have been no succeeding ground on which to be gathered apart from the redemption by blood figured in the passover. The Pentecostal ground of gathering, and the subsequent convocation of the great congregation when they will "joy before thee as in the joy of harvest," are as added stories to the foundation work of redemption by the blood of the cross.

It must also be remembered that these are "seasons" (Leviticus 23:4), and therefore connected with the ways of God, and not with His eternal counsels, though these may be shared, as they certainly will, by those gathered on Pentecostal ground. Still the point before us in this chapter is the development in the ways of God of the successive grounds of convocation; for they reach from the first redemption out of Egypt to the full gathering of the peoples to Shiloh in millennial days, though Israel will then have a joy peculiarly their own, when their long wilderness-history of sorrow shall have closed in a sabbath of rest.

We need not ask on which of these grounds God has gathered the saints at this time; for surely, we know well that the day of Pentecost has fully come, while Israel's repentance and subsequent rest and joy are still future. But we may well ask ourselves whether we apprehend this Pentecostal ground on which God is now gathering, according to the desires of His own heart.

We have already noticed that the waving of the sheaf of first-fruits was a prelude to the feast of weeks, and that it was the beginning of God's harvest time in the land of promise; nor could any of the fruits of the land be enjoyed until it and its accompanying offering had been presented. It is evident that we are altogether on new ground here. In the passover feast they were gathered on the ground of redemption, but that could take place in the wilderness. (Numbers 9) The waving too of the Levites (Numbers 8:11, margin), as a wave-offering before the Lord by Aaron for service, was on the same ground. (vv. 16, 17) But in the wave sheaf, man is presented to God, not for service in a worldly sanctuary, but in a wholly new way, as an offering to God in resurrection. The sheaf was waved on the morrow after the sabbath, even as "Christ, the first-fruits," rose from the dead on the morning following the sabbath—the morning of the week's first day. The Pentecostal ground of convocation must accordingly be resurrection ground. God's gathering a people round

Himself in the present time is based upon the wondrous truth, that He who was and is always the object of eternal favor, in grace knew the hiding of God's face and tasted death, that, having thus gone into the place of distance which was ours, He might bring us in the power of resurrection into that wondrous place of nearness and acceptance in which He now is as the blessed risen Man, with His God and Father. Aaron therefore had to "wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you," or more correctly, "for your acceptance." We have thus a new place of acceptance in resurrection brought in; and on the ground of this the assembling at Pentecost takes place, for the fifty days were reckoned from the waving of the sheaf. The new meat-offering then presented is said (Numbers 28:26) to be brought "in the day of the first-fruits." It is called new, because no such meat-offering had before been presented to God. A meat-offering with leaven in it had never before been offered. The Levites had, indeed been waved before the Lord and given to Aaron and his sons for service; but that was not on resurrection ground, nor was it exactly the presentation of man to God, but of his service based on redemption. But now that it is the day of the first-fruits, and the wave sheaf has been offered for our acceptance—the day of Pentecost being fully come—this new ground of God's gathering around Himself is disclosed, and men having sin in them are shown to be accepted in. Christ's acceptance by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them. When the tabernacle of boards and curtains was set up, the glory of the Lord filled and took possession of it. Now men assembled on the ground of resurrection are taken possession of and sealed by the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:2-4) Thus God has a new meat-offering for Himself and His people gathered round Him as "a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (James 1:18), according to His own counsel. The loaves baken with leaven are "first-fruits unto the Lord." Will the reader note this? These are first-fruits of His creatures-loaves, the first-fruit produce of His land. The blessed Lord even when on earth was "the Son of Man who is in heaven;" and as the first man is out of the earth made of dust, so the second Man is out of heaven. But further, as is the heavenly One, so are the heavenly ones—these first-fruits of His creatures, though there be leaven in them, are of the same order as the wave sheaf, they are the produce of His land.

We have remarked that, besides each feast having a special ground on which the people were assembled, in this case the waving of the two loaves each had also its accompanying worship. With the wave sheaf there was simply a burnt-offering to the Lord with its meat-offering and drink-offering, but though the loaves are of the same order, yet, leaven being present, a sin-offering was needed, because the soul can only enjoy this blessed position of acceptance truly as it enters into the fact that sin—my sin, for I am a sinner—has been dealt with by God, in the person of Jesus. Here also there are peace-offerings, not with the wave sheaf, where the worshipper is occupied with what Christ is to God as an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savor. At Pentecost there is the joy of communion; we taste in spirit of the joy that can say, "Let us eat and be merry." This joy is more fully developed in Deuteronomy 16. They were to keep the feast with a tribute of a freewill-offering of their hand which they were to give "according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee." This connects the saints of this Pentecostal period with Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." As the soul enters into these blessings so it rejoices before the Lord, and renders the worship of a willing heart. If the Israelite's blessings were supplied from "a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills," the saint now can say of the heavenly city of God, "All my springs are in thee."

The Spirit of God is come to take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us, "All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

Who shall to me that joy

Of saint thronged courts declare?

What eternal springs are there! They are ours, though we taste them so feebly. Yes, they are ours—though we were bondmen in Egypt. As we remember this, do we not say that it is all "to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved?" This 'contrast between being bondmen in Egypt and the blessings enjoyed in the land is vividly portrayed in Ephesians 2:1-4! "And you... dead in trespasses and sins. But God, who is rich in mercy...hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ." It was a marvel of grace that, consequent on the death of Christ, a thief could go from the depth of human degradation to be "with me in paradise;" but now in resurrection we are brought into the acceptance in which Christ is before God. One more contrast may serve to show what the present favor is in which the saints stand in this Pentecostal 'period. Ere Israel can enjoy the blessing which is peculiarly theirs, and which is figured by the feast of tabernacles, they will have to pass through that character of the day of atonement which is spoken of in Leviticus 23—a special moment of affliction of soul. It is doubtless more or less true in the history of every awakened soul; but we are now speaking of its dispensational import. It will be the moment spoken of in Zechariah 12— "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn, for Him;" when they will mourn "every family apart, and their wives apart;" when "whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people."

Here we have the effect of looking on Him whom they have pierced. It is the result of their rejection of grace. Contrast this with the moment when He, who knew the forsaking of God and those unutterable depths of anguish consequent thereon, was heard from the horns of the unicorns. (Psalms 22:21) At once He says, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." This is not the same as the whole land mourning. Consequently, when, on the evening of the first day of the week, He stood in the midst of the disciples, and spake peace to them, and then as the pierced One showed to them His hands and His side, we read, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." This is the special grace and joy of the Pentecostal time, the blessing of those who have not seen, and yet have believed. No doubt, as we have said, the individual passes through more or less of affliction of soul ere it reads its title to peace in the blood of the Lamb, and it should be so. But the dispensational grace of this period has its own character, and according to its own riches reveals the favor into which He who suffered could bring those whom He calls His brethren with. Himself after He had been heard from the horns of the unicorns.

This feast then is indeed a holy convocation to us, a day of worship as the Lord hath blessed us, and of rejoicing before Him. Israel will wait for their moment of blessing until the harvest is gathered in, and the vintage trodden. It is our privilege to keep this Pentecostal era with the joy of a worship which Christ Himself leads, as in grace He gives us to enter into the sense of being. Blessed in the springing wells of eternal life, the heavenly things brought to us by the Holy Ghost sent down, by an exalted and glorified Christ.

T. H. R.

## Bread Cast Upon the Waters

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“Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.”—(Ecclesiastes 11:1)

If I am walking with God, I shall know something of this blessed life of a Christian in this world. In John 21 how different we find it. The disciples there are seeking their food from the waters, communicating of their own abundance. This, is just the, opposite to this exhortation in Ecclesiastes 11. In the one case I am seeking something from this scene for myself, in the other I am seeking to communicate to others from my own abundance. The difference is immense. Man is so constituted that he is always of necessity a giver or a receiver. And if I launch out upon the troubled waters of this life, seeking to get something from them, I must learn, as all of us will have to sooner or later, that John 21:5 has a lesson in it for me. (I am only speaking of Christians) I shall find that when the Lord asks me, after the dark night of my toil, “Have you any meat?” that I have only one answer to give Him, as they had. And they answered Him, “No.”

This world—the moral scene through which I am passing—does not contain CHRIST. It had no room for Him when He trod it in grace, and it has no room for Him today, Hence, if I am a Christian, it cannot satisfy me; for it cannot minister Him to me, and nothing can feed the soul that has once tasted of life but the “bread of life.” (John 6) Bread is often referred to in Leviticus as the staff of the natural life (Leviticus 26:26; Psalms 105); and in like manner Jesus only is the manna that came down from heaven—the spiritual food—the “Bread” for His people today, the Giver of life too to those that have it not. What then has satisfied you, that which you daily find to be enough, learn to distribute to meet the needs of those around you. Christianity is never selfish—it always thinks of others. Whatever the need or the sorrow may be, there is relief. Jesus is the “bread of life.” (John 6:33,48) “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.”

It is only the ministry of Christ that will meet and alleviate the sorrows all around you. This will minister to all earthly sorrows, and will lead on the soul to what is eternal and lasting—“Having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” “Give a portion to seven” (the complete number), “and also to eight” (that is, God's grace goes beyond all evil, and thus is without, limit), “for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.” “They need not depart give ye them to eat.” (Matthew 14:16) But before you give it, it must be “thy bread;” that is, it must be what you live upon yourself, of which you minister. Nothing else is really yours. If Christ is not your daily portion—the satisfying One for you—how can you speak of Him or minister Him to others? Your words will seem to them but as “idle tales,” for the Spirit will not add the unction of His power to words that are not true and real as to yourself.

But the privilege and responsibility remain. Christians are directly addressed, in the words at the head of this paper; nor do I admit that they have no application to us. If powerless to minister Christ, what then am I living upon day by day, since it is “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh?” The Lord Jesus died to give me all I needed, to satisfy me as a poor sinner, and to fill me as a saint. “Children, have ye any meat?” Am I filled, satisfied, fed day by day? If so, “out

of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (John 7) So that I may communicate to others. “Freely ye have received, freely give.” Is my Christianity then marked by this exercise of it? “Upon the waters”—restful or restless— “bread” is to be cast, reminding one of Revelation 17, “The waters which thou sawest...are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.”

Such then is to be your life and mine; and if we enter into what Christ is, it will be so spontaneously, daily, a life of casting our “bread upon the waters,” only doing this in perfect rest and contentment of soul. This marked His life on earth. The people—everybody, the place—everywhere; for we are told, “In the morning sow—thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand.” (that is, go on, continue): “for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that.” May we live day by day in perfect rest of heart; experience what it is to have Christ with us, the only changeless, great, and satisfying reality in this changing scene, brightening and gladdening the house or the business, and therefore ministered in all our footsteps, “until He come.”

H. C. A.

## A Perfect Christian

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A perfect Christian is a full-grown man in one sense; it is the same word as the “perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” And what is that? It is certainly not being like what Christ was when He was down here, for there was no sin in Him; so the thought of being like Him thus is a mere delusion. He that gazes on Him up there walks like Him down here; but to be like Him as He was down here is not possible. To walk like Him, I repeat, is said; but to be like Him would be to be absolutely sinless. To be conformed to Him in glory—that we shall be, and therefore the heart desires and runs after it now; and that is what is called a perfect Christian. It is not one who knows what it is to have got the sins of the old creation cleared away; it is not merely knowing the work of Christ which puts away sin, hardly measured either by the sin, for it is the whole state of the nature. All is settled, and I know that “by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified;” that there is no more a question of anything to be settled—between me and God, and I have liberty before Him in the sense of His favor. But then I say, Is that all? All my debts paid; but am I to have nothing to go and buy anything with? Am I henceforth to starve without possessing a farthing? Then it is that the believer comes to see, that having part in this forgiveness he has also part with the last Adam: he has got hold by grace of this Man in the glory, and knowing this, say ray whole soul is in that I have seen the excellency of Christ Jesus my Lord, and it has set aside everything here; I have done with it all; I belong to another place, and no longer own the old man.

It is then the Christian has got to be what he calls a perfect man. He has this object before him; he has got Christ’s place before God, and Ire grows up into the stature of Christ, not that he has not much still to learn, but he has got into his place; he is of full age; he discerns good and evil; he has got hold of his place in Christ, and he knows it. This sets aside the flesh altogether, and also that which is a deceptive thing to many—perfection in the flesh; for Christ in glory is my only perfection. In the world I am running a race I have not attained yet; but Christ has laid hold of me for it.

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

J. N. D.

## Extract from Letter

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"I used to think that I had lively faith, communion, and hope; but as I get older I find myself more like a babe, faithfully watched over by a mother's eye, and seem to get more satisfied to see what His thoughts of today are about me, and what His plans for the morrow. Less account made of my feelings, more of His; less notice of my faith, more of the fact that He died in my stead. More consciousness of the worth of His presence in heaven as a fact, than of the feelings which the knowledge of it produces in me—more counting on the certainty of His coming back in order to put the finishing stroke to what He has wrought, than of the flutter of expectancy. Not that the work wrought in us by the Holy Ghost has sunk in value in my thoughts, but that I look more at the outgoings of that work in me. 'To me to live is Christ.' 'The life I live in the flesh 'I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Individual attachment of the soul to the person of the Lord seems of growing importance. He bares the wrath in our stead; He has confessed in heaven above His love to us; He means to come and fetch us home. How can I say such things, and not want to see Himself—His own very self? True, when He comes the scene will be surpassingly grand and blessed—Himself, the resurrection and the life, coming out from God to turn the low estate of those who have trusted in Him to an occasion in which to show forth the glories of His own divine person as the resurrection and the life. He will come, and call up out of the grave all that believed in Him; and then, standing on the cloud, will cause the life wherewith He will have quickened those that are alive, and remain to His coming, to burst forth; and then body and spirit shall be as instinct with His life as the souls of His people already are; and He will catch them away to be with Himself forever in the Father's house. Most blessed as this, the doctrine of 1 Thessalonians 4, is, my soul seems to find its deeper, more individual portion in chapter 1. I appreciate Him, and do so in the very presence of God. He loves me, and I love Him; and I wait for Him to come from heaven. The individuality is so blessedly seen on the one hand, and the contrast on' the other between this divinely-wrought love to Himself and the poor world all around. It is, too, one's portion for today just where we are now."

G. V. W.

## The Book of Ezra, Chapter 9

Whoever seeks the welfare of God's people must, expect a path of trial and sorrow; for, with the affections of God Himself actuating him, the servant will, in his measure, identify himself with their state and condition while laboring for the glory of God in their midst. This was perfectly exemplified in the life of Him who was able to say, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;" and also, in no mean degree, in His servant Paul, who says, in the power of the Holy Ghost, "I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." (2 Timothy 2:10) It was the experience also of Ezra in the opening of this chapter. Filled with a holy zeal, he had been moved to come up to Jerusalem, that he might "teach in Israel statutes and judgments;" and he finds at the very outset that many of the chosen people had already sunk nearly as low as, if not lower than, the Canaanites, whom God had cast out before them. He says: "Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass." (vv. 1, 2) Such is man's nature, such are the people of God when following the inclination of their own hearts, instead of walking in obedience to His word. 1 Remark, moreover, that when the saints fall into sin, it is often into worse and grosser forms of sin than those committed by the people of the world. It is as if Satan, having gained the advantage over them, would mock at and triumph over them by displaying the most horrible forms of 'the flesh. In the case before us, it was not only the abominations of the Canaanites, &c. (the former inhabitants of the land), but also those of the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites, into which the children of the captivity had fallen; i.e., into every possible form of corruption. And all this had taken place in so short a time—within a few years of the completion of the temple. Objects of the special grace of God in their deliverance from their Babylonish captivity, they had turned His grace into lasciviousness. What forbearance and long-suffering on the part of Him who had restored them once again to the land of their fathers, in that He did not instantly deal with them in judgment! But if His people are ever the same in their backsliding and sins, He is also unchangeable in His mercy and grace. Hence the gifts and calling of God are without repentance; and therein, and therein alone lies the security of His people.

The special sin here mentioned is, that "the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands;" i.e., by inter-marriages. This had been expressly forbidden. (See Exodus 34:12-16) It was therefore in willful disobedience that they had contracted these shameful alliances with the world; for this is what these marriages typify—the besetting sin of God's people in every age. The apostle James thus says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (chapter 4:4); and the apostle Paul cries, "Be ye not unequally yoked together

with unbelievers: for what fellowship, hath righteousness with, unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?, And what concord hath Christ with Belial?" &c. (2 Corinthians 6: 14, 15) For if Jehovah deigned to say that He was married to Israel (Isaiah 54; Jer. 2), believers now are said to be married to Christ. (Romans 7; 2 Corinthians 11) Whether for the Jew therefore or for the Christian to unite himself with the world is both unfaithfulness—and sin, as well as to forget the holy place of separation, into which the former had been, and the Christian is called.

Nor was this sin confined to any one class of the people. "The hand of the princes and rulers had been chief in this trespass," and the priests and the Levites, as well as the people, are distinctly named. It would seem then that the princes and rulers had first set the example, and that the others had only been too ready to follow. "One sinner destroyeth much good," especially when that one has a place of position and influence. As when a standard-bearer fainteth in the day of battle, the soldiers are often discouraged and so easily defeated, so after Satan has succeeded in entrapping a leader in the Church of God, he often finds it easy work to ensnare many who are less conspicuous. On this account the sin of a ruler or priest under the law needed a larger sacrifice than that of one of the common people. It is therefore a solemn thing—solemn for himself and for the consequences entailed— when a "prince" or a "ruler" becomes the leader of God's people into the path of worldliness and idolatry.

Such were the heavy tidings brought to the ears of 'Ezra soon after his arrival in Jerusalem; and in the next verse we have the effect produced upon this pious and devoted soul. He says, "And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished." (v. 3) He was thus smitten with a great and unspeakable grief because of the sins of his people, and the secret of the intensity of his sorrow, expressed in all these outward signs of humiliation before God, was that he felt in his inmost soul the dishonor done to Jehovah's holy name. It is comparatively easy to feel for God's people when they are dishonored by their sinful conduct in the eyes of the world; but it is only those who are, through the power of the Holy Ghost, in communion with, the, mind of God, those who share in His affections for His own, those therefore who first and foremost are filled with zeal for the maintenance of His glory, that can estimate their sin as it affects the holy Name by which they are called, can go down, take up, make the sin their own, and tell it all out before God. Moses, Nehemiah, and Daniel are examples of this in their several measures, as well as Ezra; but all these, with others that might be named, are but feeble foreshadowings of Him who so identified Himself with His people that in confessing their sins He said, "O God, thou knowest my foolishness and my sins are not hid from thee." (Psalms 69:5)

The grief and humiliation of Ezra were used to teach the consciences of others, or rather to attract to him all who in any degree had mourned over the condition of the people; for he tells us, "Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away." (v. 4) "To this man," says the Lord, "will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word;" for trembling at God's word is the evidence of a tender conscience, of one walking in the fear of God, and desiring to be found in His ways. Blessed was it therefore that there were still such among the children of the captivity, though it would seem their trembling sprung rather from an apprehension of the consequences of the transgression of their fellows, than from a gracious fear of offending their

God. However this might have been, where had they been, and where their testimony before the arrival of Ezra? But that their hearts were true is shown by their taking their stand at this critical moment with him; and we learn at the same time that we have no power to help our brethren until we distinctly and openly take our stand, against the evil by which they have been ensnared. Faithfulness to God is the first qualification for helping others.

Ezra retained his place in the dust-borne down by his inexpressible sorrow—the evening sacrifice. If on the one hand he was heart-broken on account of the people's sin, on the other he discerned, in the exercise of faith, the only ground of approach to God concerning it. In a word, he laid hold of the efficacy of the sacrifice as the foundation on which he could appear before God to spread out before Him the 'iniquities of the children of Israel. (Compare 1 Samuel 7:9; 1 Kings 18:36, &c) The evening sacrifice was a burnt-offering, all of which, consumed on the altar, went up as a sweet savor unto the Lord; and when once Ezra was before Him in the value of this—in all the value typically of what Christ was to God in His death the success of his intercession was assured, The Lord Himself could on this account say, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John 14:13) It was then, as understanding the value of the sacrifice, that Ezra rose up from his heaviness,, and having rent his garment and his mantle, he fell upon his knee's, and spread out his hands unto the Lord his God, and confessed the sins of his people. Let us examine a little these outpourings of his burdened heart.

Remark, first, how completely he takes the place of the people before God. He says, "O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens." (v. 6) Not even in spirit does he separate himself from those who had sinned; he and they—indeed, all the people—are one, corporately one before God. It was so in the eyes of God Himself; for when Achan transgressed, He said to Joshua; " Israel hath, sinned," Ezra understood this, and was thus qualified to become an intercessor for the people with God; for unless we apprehend our oneness with God's people, that their sin and sorrow are our sin and sorrow, we cannot truly bear them on our hearts, before the Lord in the time of their need. Having—thus taken their place, Ezra confessed that nothing but sin had marked them from the days of their fathers, and that all God's judicial dealings with them, in delivering them "into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day," had been on account of their iniquities. He justified God in all His past dealings with His people. And then he owned the grace that had been shown to them from the Lord their God in bringing back a remnant, "and to give us a nail in His holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage." For, he adds, "we are (not were, as in our version) bondmen—, yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem." (vv. 8, 9)

The order of Ezra's confessions is most instructive. Having owned the sins of his brethren, and justified God in His ways with His people, he in the next place magnifies the grace which had visited them in their low estate, and had brought them—a remnant—back to the land, and permitted them once again to set up the house of their God. But why does he recite this proof of Jehovah's grace and mercy? It was to show the character of His people's sin; for he proceeds, "And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken thy commandments;"

and then he confesses that they had sinned against both light and grace. He conceals nothing, and extenuates nothing, but spreads all out before God, whilst he owns that if, after all the mercy they had received (v. 13), they should again break God's commandments, and "join in affinity with the people of these abominations," God might well be angry with them till He had consumed them, "so that there should be no remnant nor escaping." (v. 14) He then concludes' by once more justifying God, and by taking His part against himself and the people. He says, "O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous; for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this." (v. 15)

There is much in this inspired confession to commend to the attention of the Lord's people. Its main features have already been indicated; 'but we desire to emphasize the fact that Ezra from first to last justifies God, and lays bare the iniquities of his people. This in itself is not only a proof of the work of the Holy Spirit, but also a promise of blessing. The place of confession is always the place both of restoration and of spiritual power; and hence it is always a sign of a bad condition when that place is rarely taken, Let us then for a moment challenge ourselves. We have more than once pointed out the correspondence between "this remnant and that gathered out to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in the present day. Is there no correspondence between the sins of the two? Is it not the fact that we have largely "joined in affinity" with the people of the world? Have we not submitted ourselves to their habits, ways, and customs? Is not worldliness our bane? Are not traces of Egypt to be seen everywhere in the assembly? Do we not think more of riches and social position than of the fruits of the Spirit? Moreover, is it not seldom that our sins (we do not mean our individual sins, but the sins of God's people) are really confessed in our meetings? Nay, is there not an unwillingness on our parts to hear our sins spread out before the Lord? If, for example, our departures from the word of God are owned, our setting aside "the authority of Christ, our coldness, our unfaithfulness to the Lord. and His truth, our want of separation—if these things are told out in our meetings for prayer, is,) there not often a manifest impatience, a feeling like that expressed in Malachi, "Wherein have we done this or that?" But we cannot too—soon learn the lesson that the Lord will have reality; that, if we are blind to it, He sees our condition, and that until we are brought to own it, like Ezra in this scripture, He must from His very love to us deal with us in corrections and chastisements.

It should also be observed that Ezra does not once pray for forgiveness. Nay, with any intelligence of the mind of God, it was impossible that he should do so. When there is known evil in our hearts or in the assembly, our first responsibility is to judge it, not to pray for forgiveness. Thus, when Joshua lay on his face before the Lord, after the defeat of Israel by the men of Ai, the Lord said, "Get thee up; wherefore rest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned," &c. And yet how often does Satan beguile the Lord's people, in a time of manifested evil, by suggesting through one or another, Let us pray about it. Confess our sins we surely should, but even then only as seeking grace and strength to deal with the evil, and to separate ourselves from it; for if Ezra lay before the Lord in this chapter owning his people's guilt, we shall see him in the next energetic in dealing with the sin he had confessed, and resting not until it had been put away.

E. D.

## 1 Thessalonians 2:8-12

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The apostle lays bare in this scripture his inmost heart in regard to his work in preaching the gospel, and exposes all his motives both before God and man. Living and laboring in the light he had nothing to conceal, and, led of the Holy Spirit, he speaks thus of himself in order that all who serve in the ministry of the Word may profit by, his example. He goes at once to the root of the matter in pointing out that he had been “allowed (approved) of God to be put in trust with the gospel.” (v. 4) Recognizing this, he adds—would that all who claim to be sent of God could use the language— “Even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth (or proves) our hearts.” The faces of men are before the preacher, and every servant has known the temptation of seeking to please his audience: the antidote to the snare lies then in the remembrance of the source of the service, and of the consequent responsibility of pleasing Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. (2 Timothy 2) Then he will be enabled to speak as from God, in the sight of God, in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:17); for man will disappear, and God alone will be before his soul. It was so with Paul, and he could therefore affirm that he had not at any time used (1) flattering words (and he appeals to those to whom he was writing in confirmation of the fact), nor (2) “ a cloak of (or with a pretext for) covetousness” (and of this God was witness), nor (3), though an apostle, and he might have pressed his official claims, had he sought glory of men, neither of them nor of others. He had no desires whatever for himself in his work. On the other hand, he was (1) gentle among them “as a nurse cherisheth her children” (v. 7); then (2), so large was his heart for them that he was willing to have imparted to them, not the gospel of God only, but also his own life, because they were beloved of him. Moreover, he reminds them that he labored night and day that he might not be chargeable to them in his work, and he appeals both to them and God, as witnesses of his manner of life, “how holily and justly and unblameably” he had behaved himself amongst those that believe. Lastly, he had “exhorted, and comforted, and charged” every one of them, “as a father doth his children,” that they might walk worthy of God, who had called them unto His kingdom and glory. (vv. 11, 12)

What a picture of a faithful, unselfish, devoted, and loving servant! And how it rebukes many of us as we gaze upon it!

## Matthew 27:50-54

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Without attempting, at this time, to enter into the meaning and character of this wondrous scene, we desire simply to call attention to the threefold testimony C which is here. given to Christ and His work the moment He had cried with a loud voice, and yielded up the ghost, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. This was a divine action, God's own interposition, the significance of which may be gathered from Hebrews' 9 and 10. It proclaimed that God was now free in righteousness as well as in grace, 'on the ground of what had been accomplished on the cross, to go out after the sinner, and that the sinner was also free, on receiving the testimony concerning that finished work, to go into the holiest of all, into the immediate presence of God. The rending of the veil was God's own testimony to the efficacy of the blood of Christ. We also read that "the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection." There was therefore a three days' interval between the rending of the veil and the resurrection of the saints, but the Holy Spirit has connected the two because both alike are the fruits of the death of Christ. If the rending of the veil speaks of the efficacy of His precious blood, the raising of these saints tells no less clearly of Him who is the resurrection and the life, and it was thus a testimony to the power of life in Him as risen from the dead. (John 11:25; 2 Corinthians 5) In the last place the centurion, and those who were with him, convinced by what they had seen, "feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God." This was a testimony, whether rendered intelligently or otherwise, to the truth as to His person. If therefore Christ stood alone, no one raising his voice on His behalf before His persecutors, if He were forsaken by God in His death, as He must have been as made sin, no sooner has His mighty, work been accomplished than God steps forth and raises a powerful and glorious threefold testimony to the efficacy of the atonement, to the power of His resurrection, and to the fact that He who had died on that shameful tree was no less than the Son of God.

E. D.

## The Servants' Rest

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"Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." (Mark 6: 31)

" Come ye yourselves apart, an rest awhile;

I would not always have you in the strife

That follows in the track of desert toil,

And fills with care the hours of desert life.

" Come ye yourself apart, and rest awhile,

Repose thy head upon my loving breast,

Nor fear to leave thy labor and thy toil

To taste the joy of solitude and rest.

"I know thy labor, and will ne'er forget

Aught that is done in faith and love to me;

Fruit shall be borne, and I will never let

One grain be lost throughout eternity.

" I do not value faithful service less—

My joy 'twas once in service to be found—

But I would have you know the blessedness

Of leisure and of rest from all around.

" Come ye then to the desert here alone,

And taste the joy of fellowship with Me;

Here at my feet lay every burden down,

And breathe the air of rest and liberty."

" Yes, precious Lord, with gladness I would hear

The loving word that bids me come to Thee,

And would exchange the toil, however dear,

For the deep joy of Thy blest company."

H. A. C.

## The Queen of Sheba and the Eunuch

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These two narratives, found in distant parts of the Word, in common illustrate truths which are, as clear and important to us in this distant age and place as ever they were, whether in the time of 2 Chronicles 9 or of Acts 8. In the queen of Sheba and the Ethiopian eunuch, who belonged it may be to the same country, though at such different times, we find dissatisfaction in the best things short of Christ; but rest and fullness in Him, be He known by us, whether in grace or glory.

The queen of the south had all royal honors upon her, and all royal resources around her; she could command the delights of the children of men, and evidently had health and capacity to enjoy them. The world was at her disposal, but the world had left her with an aching, craving heart, and she found no satisfaction in her royal estate, and, ill at ease, she took a long, untried journey from the uttermost parts of the earth to Jerusalem, because she had heard of the wisdom of the king there “concerning the name of the Lord.”

She reached Jerusalem, and there ‘she found all and more than she had heard of or calculated on. Her spirit was filled; her eye saw something in everything there that possessed her soul with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; for Christ was there. He shone in those days, in His image and reflection—Solomon, and she was brought into communion with Christ in His glory in the city of the great king, called, as it has well been, “The heaven below the skies.” The world had left her heart— an aching void, and Christ had now filled it to overflowing; she counted this merchandize better than that of gold and silver, better than that of riches, and getting her questions answered, her soul satisfied, her eye filled with visions of glory, of glory according to God, she presented her gold, her frankincense, her precious stones, the wealth of her kingdom, as a small thank-offering.

The eunuch was a great man under Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians; but he had long since, I may say, proved that the vanities of the Ethiopians would not do for him. He appears before us as one who—had already cast the idols—of that land to the moles and to the bats, and taken up the confession of the name of the God of Israel. In the obedience of this faith he had just gone, where first we see him, to Jerusalem, the city of solemnities, where the worship of the God of Israel was conducted, and he had gone there as a worshipper. But he had left Jerusalem dissatisfied; he was on his way home to the south country with a craving, aching heart; he was still an enquirer, as surely so as the queen of Sheba had been in her day, when she left her’ native country for the same city Jerusalem—and the contrast here is vivid. Jerusalem had satisfied the spirit of the queen, but it had left the soul of the eunuch a barren and thirsty place.

These are among the things which show themselves to us in these most interesting pieces of history. But why this? Why would not Jerusalem do for the eunuch, what it had done for the queen? Christ was not there in this his day as He had been in her day. Jerusalem was not now the city where the king of glory, in His beauty, was seen and reflected, and where some image of Him, and some token of His presence and magnificence, might be traced everywhere. It was no mount of transfiguration to him as it had been to her. Religiousness was there, but not Christ; the observances and ceremonials of a carnal worship, the doings of a worldly sanctuary, were there,

but not the presence of the Christ of God.. This made all the difference, and tells us why the eunuch left that very same Jerusalem with an aching heart, which had filled the spirit of the queen of Sheba with an abounding, overflowing joy.

His heart however is to be filled as well as hers, and that too out of the same fountain—Christ; only it is through the prophet Isaiah that Christ is to fill it, and not through Solomon. In a desert spot, on the journey which was taking him back from Jerusalem to Ethiopia, Philip, the servant and witness of Jesus, is directed by the Holy Ghost to meet him. He addresses himself to him in the aching, craving state of mind to which I have already alluded; it possessed him thoroughly, so that no strange circumstance, such as that of meeting a stranger in that desert place, and being addressed by him, has power to move him. The whole scene bears this character—there was the absorbing presence of one thing in his soul, “the expulsive power of a new affection” there. He was reading Isaiah with emotion of heart under the convictions and awakenings of the Spirit of God; but Christ was soon to be introduced to him, and the desert should then rejoice, and in the thirsty land springs of water should flow. “Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.” And the eunuch then “went on his way rejoicing.” Joy did in him and with him now what in earlier days it had done in and with the queen of the south. She trafficked for wisdom, and counted the merchandize of it better than that of gold and silver and precious stones, and she was willing to part with the wealth of her kingdom for it. He now can part with Philip, since his spirit is filled with the joy of the Lord, and he has got the Christ of God as she had got Him.

Precious and beautiful illustrations of these like weighty truths, only we make certain differences. It was the world in all its royal splendor and resources which had left her heart a beggar, as she had tasted it in her own country. It was religiousness which had left his heart a beggar, as he had proved it in the city ‘ of solemnities; but whether it ‘be this or that, the splendor of the world, or the religion of the world, the heart is but beggary and drought without Jesus.

And then again there is this further difference—it was Christ in the glory that was introduced to the queen, it was Christ in grace and humiliation that was introduced to the eunuch. Solomon reflected the King in His beauty to her, Isaiah preached the Lamb in His blood to him; but no matter, both were satisfied. Christ, in the dispensation of present grace and blood-sealed salvation, gives satisfaction and rest to the sinner. Christ, in the display of coming glories in the kingdom, will give satisfaction to the natives of the world, and to the whole creation of God. It is Christ, whether as the Lamb of God on the altar, or as the King of Glory on the throne; and His people are satisfied, their searchings and inquiries are over. The sinner goes—, away with the Lamb satisfied and at rest; the creation of God will rejoice in Him of whom it is written, “Glory and honor are in His presence, strength and gladness ‘are in His place.” The whole creation, in all its range of manifold regions, shall share in the power of that, day. The daughter of Zion, the natives with their kings, the beasts of the forests and the cattle of the hills, the floods and the woods, the hills, the valleys, shall there in their several ways taste and witness this universal joy, the deep satisfaction in which the creation of God shall then repose.

But once more, and I will notice another difference. In the day of the glory the king must ‘be sought—the queen of the south went up to wait on the king in Zion. In the day of grace the Saviour seeks—the Ethiopian nobleman was sought and found by the servant and witness, of Jesus the Saviour. How fitting! how beautifully correct though various all this is How all commends itself to

our souls, telling us something of the perfections which shine in the ways of Him with whom we have to do!

J. G. B.

## The Eternal Life and Fellowship

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It is a wonderful way in which the apostle speaks here. He brings down to us the reality of “that eternal life which was with the Father,” and manifested here in this world, that life “which was from the beginning,” and the greatness of His love, His interests, what God has before Himself with regard to His people. You may say, “We do not see the energy of the Spirit.” One indeed told me lately he believed the epistle, to the Ephesians was written to the Ephesians only, and that the clay for it had gone by, that it was impossible nowadays to understand it, or put its precepts into practice. Are we to lower the standard because of the failure? Do you believe His love to you is, that you are to be like Christ in glory? That is God’s purpose; and His fulfillment too. We shall be with Him, and like Him. Unattainable for us so long as we are in the body, but sure and certain prospect; and, by the grace of God, we are striving, after it. It is what we are going to be, in all the blessed fullness and reality of it, one, day. How soon may that not be!

The apostle speaks of “that which we have handled of the word of life,” actually handled and declared unto us, that our joy may be full; brought so near, made so manifest to us! The Spirit of God remains—to make all this good to us. I was struck with one thing as to the remnant of Israel. They say, “I will wait upon, him that hides his face from the house of Jacob.” What God is doing now is, He is exercising our faith in Himself, He is exercising our souls in His grace, blessed be His name. He is not making much of us, but He is making much of Christ. He is exercising our faith in Himself, whether we really have confidence in Him to put into practice that which He has given us, that which remains to the end. The same Holy Spirit remains—outraged, ignored, thought to be a mere influence, His personality denied; still that same, Holy Spirit, before whom Ananias fell down dead, that same Spirit remains, the same truth of God remains. Are our souls in the enjoyment of it? Our hearts? Feeble we may be; feebleness is no sin. Thinking we have strength may lead to sin. I don’t think any of us can say weakness is a hindrance. What is the hindrance is being a little off dependence upon Him.

Notice the word “fellowship” in this chapter. We talk of fellowship so often on a lower platform altogether than what God speaks of. God knows no fellowship out of the light. He recognizes no such thing as fellowship which is not in the light. “These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full”—that the heart and soul may be fed and nourished with what God alone, in the power of His Spirit, can impart and enable us to receive, “that your joy may be full.” If we look around, what is it characterizes the people of God generally? A poor joyless set! Occupied with the sorrows and trials and difficulties of the way, instead of with the grace of God. Not only being at the Fountain-head, but not drinking into what He could give and does give, and what, by His grace, He means us to receive. He goes on to the most wonderful statement as to us: “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” One can never read that verse without wondering at the little apprehension we have of how “He is in the light.” If it speaks of God Himself, “He dwells in the light to which no man can approach.” If it speaks of the Lord Jesus, He is ‘at the right hand of God in heaven. Well, there is nothing dark there! nothing covered up, nothing concealed, nothing but what

is wholly to His mind and heart, according to what God is in Himself. “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light”—that is the place in which fellowship exists, according to God. We may try to get up a sort of fellowship among ourselves, but it is a poor spurious thing. God knows no fellowship but “in the light, as He is in the light.” No reserve there at all, no keeping things back, no hiding up things, but being in our own souls in the light—simple, transparent, cloudless. We cannot be that, if we have not in our own souls the apprehension of what He is in grace. “We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin”—that is the blessed remedy for everything the light makes manifest. It will make manifest all kinds of things, but the blood answers to and blots out everything that the light makes manifest.

God gave His Son. I am brought back again, not to the forgiveness of sins—blessed reality as that is—but, when brought back to “God gave His Son,” I have come to the ground on which I can look up to God, and delight in Him. I do not fear the light. To a soul that has apprehended this, it becomes a pain and a grief to excuse, anything that the light makes manifest. The light manifests it, to have it removed between the soul and God; and the soul goes out in all the blessed light of His presence towards Him, and towards one another down here. I do not know any word in the word of God, as to the walk of His people down here, that conveys to my own soul such a solemn and blessed reality as “fellowship.” It is “in the light, as He is in the light.” This is where it exists, where we learn all about it, where we enter into and enjoy it. We speak of this or that person’s temper, or peculiarities, or shortcomings, &c.; but the question is, Does the person apprehend the light so far as to judge what the light discovers? for that is what the light does—it “makes manifest.” It is not the light you have got, or I have got; it is that we are set in the light. It is our place, in which we are set before God Himself. What he speaks of here is the place in which God has set us before Himself, God is light. It is a wonderful place to be set in.

That is what God speaks of as fellowship—“Fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Now look at a verse lower down—“If we confess our sins.” Look at this word “confession.” There is a great deal of difference between confessing and asking for forgiveness. In confession we do not excuse ourselves. In asking for forgiveness we may say, and think too, things might have been different, and if they had been we should not have fallen in this way into the sin. Now the first thought in the soul of the one that is confessing is not the thought of forgiveness. Forgiveness comes to the one who confesses; but we have to do with the Father Himself, with the One against whom we have sinned, and we have sinned in spite of the grace that would have kept us. The first thought is, “I have sinned—sinned in spite of the grace, the blessed grace, that would have kept me from it.” It is deeper, far deeper, than merely asking forgiveness. Grace would keep us. If we were always dependent on His grace, we should never sin; grace would keep us. But if we have sinned, what are we to do? “If we confess our sins”—come before Him without making, any excuse whatever, the soul laying itself before Him in all the blessed realization of what His love is, His grace is—acknowledging His grace would have kept us; but we have sinned. Well, I can come and tell Him all that without any thought that anything can change His love to me, and I do thus tell it all out to Him. This is confession, and far deeper and more searching than merely seeking forgiveness. Indeed, not to tell it is a pain, a sorrow, a burden.

I think what we have to look for is, more individual walking in that way with Himself. It is very individual here, “If we confess our sins.” It is the individual walk that is lacking so in each one of us; in the secret of our souls we know something of that. It is the being before Him according to His

grace. You see people so often measure the grace by the way in which their needs have been met. We must surely know, and do know, how they have been met—this is how we first learn grace—but to stop there is not stepping over the threshold as it were. In Timothy we have: “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”—in Him, not in what you have experienced. That will never fail. You and I may fail to understand it. There may be trials of all kinds for His people while here in the body; but, no matter how great the difficulty, His grace is sufficient. Look at the wonderful way He helps as to the grace! Look at the thorn in the flesh Paul had! People tell you, “My grace is sufficient for thee” means that the grace of the Lord was sufficient to enable Paul to bear the thorn in the flesh. Why, beloved brethren, the thorn in the flesh was grace; it was the Lord enabling him, helping him, to keep the old man in its right place, to walk according to the grace He had set him in His own nothingness. He begins to say, “I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” We are set in the light, not according to our measure of light, to have every single bit about us made manifest—a poor, hell—deserving sinner, as to the old man, with the grace and the power of Christ upon us—His grace toward us, His power upon us, and His grace sufficient for us to help us to be here for Him, to His honor and glory.

It is that He may fill our hearts with joy; out of such hearts as ours produce heavenly music that He delights to hear. He can bring us, even at the very last, in spite of all our failures—nay, through them—to delight in His grace, which is sufficient. We need to be broken for this, to be emptied and searched out; and to find our thoughts even are no good at all. ‘You may say, perhaps, “I do not see this or that;” then you are going wrong. You see something that hinders you from seeing what He puts before you. Here, in the light of His presence, all is transparent, “if we walk in the light.” May God in His mercy give us to understand it better, and to, learn what the greatness of His love is, the greatness of His interest in us, His sympathy with us in all our trials and sorrows, all His wonderful interest in us. We go on handling things so often in our own strength, then we give it up because we make such a dreadful mess of it—we do not know at all what to do—and then we find He is there, and He has been waiting for us.

Well indeed may we all thank God. If we look up to Him, there is no difficulty, no trial, no hindrance there. People say, “Oh, but then you must look at the consequences!” Consequences! I have nothing to do with them, they are His care, and He alone can manage them. I believe it is one, of the devil's choicest weapons to hinder souls from acting for Christ by occupying them with the consequences. I have nothing to do with the consequences. I am responsible for this one thing—to be subject to Christ and to the Spirit, to be by His grace true to Him; He will settle the consequences. May we all be, according to His grace, and by His grace, open-hearted with Him, and subject to Him.

P. A. H.

## The Book of Ezra, Chapter 10

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The Lord used the sorrow of His servant to reach the consciences of His people, who had been guilty of transgressing His commandments; for, in truth, the sorrow of Ezra was no common sorrow. Every indication is given of the intensity of his grief. 'When he "had prayed, and, when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God." By his prayer, confessions, his tears, and his prostration before God, he had told out his grief or the sins of Israel; and he had done so publicly "before the house of God." It became known therefore to those for whom he had been pleading; and "there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore." (v. 1)

It would seem that the tears of the people proceeded either from contrition, or from fear of the consequences of their misdeeds. Ezra was armed with authority (see chapter 7:25, 26), and his zeal for his God was manifested; and they therefore knew that he would proceed to separate them from the evil for which he had humbled himself before God. This would entail upon many of them the most bitter consequences. Though they had acted in self-will, in disobedience, their hearts might have been truly upon the wives they had married, and upon their children. To separate from them might thus involve the rending of the most affectionate ties, a prospect which might well cause them to weep. That this is the explanation of their tears seems plain, from the fact that women and children were found with the congregation that had gathered about Ezra. Alas! how hard it is to retrace the steps of unfaithfulness and sin! And how often the bitter fruits of it remain for the rest of our lives!

There were some, however, who saw the necessity of proceeding at once to act in the matter, at whatever cost, knowing, as they must have done, that Jehovah could not bless them, or prosper them in the land, as long as they were living in open violation of His commandments. "Shechinah the son of Jehiel," we read, "one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, we have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put, away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it." (vv. 2-4)

Several points in this address of Shechaniah may with profit be noticed. First, it is worthy of attention, as noticed in the last chapter, how the Lord uses the faithful zeal of one to arouse others to the sense of their condition. Before the advent of Ezra, the consciences of all seem to have been deadened. Not even Jeshua or Zerubbabel appear to have been troubled because of the prevailing sin. Ezra was alone, and alone he would be, if necessary, in taking the part of God against the transgression of the people. But it needed courage and a single eye, and both these things Ezra, by grace, possessed. And he had God with him in the part he was taking; and now we see the effect. Shechaniah; comes forward on behalf of the people, owns their sin, and accepts

the necessity of subjection to the Word; and besides him there were those who trembled at the commandment of God (those alluded to in chapter 9: 4), who had been drawn to the side of Ezra. In times of evil, the only path of blessing—and even of success, in its divine sense—is the path of fidelity.

Secondly, it may be observed, that both wives and those born of them were to be put away. The wives, not being of Israel, were unclean, and the children, the fruit of the mixed marriages, were also regarded as unclean. This was under law; but now under grace all this is reversed. Not that a Christian is at liberty to intermarry with the unconverted; but, as the apostle teaches, “the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” (1 Corinthians 7:14) That is, if either husbands or wives, converted after their marriage, find themselves linked up with the unconverted, the above instruction applies to their case. Under law, as in the scripture before us, the heathen wife and her children were to be sent away; but under grace the unbelieving wife is sanctified by her husband, and the children are holy. It will be readily understood that the sanctification referred to is of an external character, as well as the holiness of the children. The wives and children were dismissed under the law because they were unclean, and as such could not be admitted into the congregation of Israel; but under grace the unconverted wife is sanctified through the husband, and is thus considered as set apart for God with His people on the earth. So also the children, they are holy; separated off from the world through the death and resurrection of Christ, and reckoned therefore on earth as belonging to His people. If this holiness is purely external, and carries no saving power with it, as it surely does not—for salvation is ever connected with the personal exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—it yet bestows the inestimable privilege to be in the place of blessing, the sphere where the Holy Spirit dwells and acts. Grace could not be confined within the narrow limits of the law, even as our Lord taught when He said, “No man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.” (Luke 5:37) And how precious to us to learn that the heart of God is interested in all who are linked up by natural ties with His people on the earth!

It may also be pointed out that Shechaniah owns the authority of the Word. “Let it be done,” he says, “according to the law.” The restoration of the authority of the law over the ways, if not over the hearts and consciences, of the people was the object of Ezra’s mission (chapter 7:10), and God had now provided him with a helper in Shechaniah. There is, in truth, no other way of reformation amongst God’s people. In the course of time, as may be seen in every dispensation, customs, human maxims, traditions, &c., are adopted to the neglect of the written Word (see Matthew 15; 1 Timothy 4 &c), all of which are the fruitful cause of corruption, both in heart and life as well as in the government of God’s house. The only remedy therefore in times of departure is the rigid application of that Word which is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and the refusal of all which it condemns. Thereby—also the people themselves are brought into the presence of God, and His claims, and are encouraged to hear what “the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Individual consciences are aroused and enlightened, and, acted upon by the Spirit of God, all who tremble at the word of the Lord (chap 9: 4) are drawn together in the common desire that the Lord’s name may be vindicated and His supremacy be restored. Shechaniah’s counsel was thus of God, and sprang from a true perception of the cause of Israel’s sins, and what was due to Him whose name had been profaned—by the transgressions of His people.

Finally, he urges Ezra forward. “Arise,” he said; “for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it.” How grateful these words must have been to the burdened heart of Ezra! And doubtless he would see ‘in them the interposition of God in answer to his prayers. He, had indeed learned the source of all wisdom and strength; and thus he turned to the Lord before he sought ‘to rectify the abuses which were prevalent in the midst of Israel. Hence the Lord went before him prepared the way and inclined the people to confess and put away their sin. It is an immense thing to learn, as Ezra had done, that nothing can be accomplished for God by human energy, that it is only as He gives wisdom and strength, discernment and opportunity, that anything can be accomplished.

Ezra redeemed the opportunity which the Lord had thus made for him, and he “made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word and they swore.” (v. 5) He thus bound them by a solemn oath to do what they had promised. One cannot but be struck with the spiritual power thus exhibited by one man. The secret of it was, that he was in communion with the mind of God, was standing in faithfulness for God in the midst of common unfaithfulness; and thus God was, and wrought, with His servant. To the outward eye, Ezra was almost alone; but the truth is, it was God and Ezra; and thus it came to pass that the hearts of the people were bowed before him. What a difference it makes when God is brought in! Many a servant might well be daunted when he views the opposition and difficulties by which he is confronted; but the moment he raises his eyes to the Lord, he measures everything by what He is, and immediately the obstacles he deplored become to his faith but occasions for the display of His power in whom he was trusting. Our only concern therefore should be—to see that, like Jonathan, we are working with God.

The work, however, was not yet done, and the sorrow of Ezra continued as long as the sin remained; for he felt in his inmost soul the dishonor done to the name of his God. He thus, we read, “rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib: and when he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.” (v. 6) Ezra felt the sin of his people according to God, and it was in this way God qualified him to separate His people from their sin. When the Lord came down from the mount, and cast out the demon from the afflicted lad, His disciples asked, “Why could not we cast him out?” The answer was, “Because of your unbelief;” and then, after declaring the efficacy of faith to remove mountains, He added, “Howbeit, this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” And surely we may say that an unclean spirit had entered into Israel at this time, and it was precisely because Ezra had been before God with prayer and fasting that he could be used to cast him out. Yea, is it not the secret of all spiritual power—to be thus alone with God? There is indeed no power without it, and hence the want of it betrays the fact that we have been so little like Ezra in this scripture.

Proclamation was thereon made “throughout Judah and Jerusalem” that all the children of the captivity should come within three days to Jerusalem, under the penalty for disobedience of the forfeiture of their substance and excision from the congregation. (vv. 7, 8) All came, “all the men of Judah and Benjamin,” in the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month. It must have been a striking scene, one easily recalled,—as here described—“And all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain.” Their bodily discomfort did but add to the sorrow within. Ezra rose and addressed them. First, he charged them with their sin

(v. 10), and then urged them to confess “unto the Lord God—of your fathers, and do His pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.” (v. 11) His first thought therefore was concerning what was due to Jehovah; but if they confessed to Him they must submit themselves to His will. Too often the soul deceives itself even by confession—confession without judging the sin. Ezra was too well instructed in the word and in the ways of God to permit this; and hence there must be self-judgment and separation from the evil as well as its confession. The order of the separation too is most instructive— “ From the people of the land, and from the strange wives.” As marrying the strange wives had been the sin, it might be thought that these would be mentioned first. But what had led to these marriages? Association with the people of the land. This was the root of the mischief, and Ezra thus deals first with ‘it. So in all departures from God, until the root is discovered nothing is gained, and restoration is impossible. The Lord Himself has given a perfect illustration of this in dealing with Peter. Not until He, had asked him three times, “Lovest thou me?” (once, “Lovest thou me more than these?” for confidence in his own love to Christ—a love, as he affirmed, greater than that of the rest—was the cause of his fall) did He effect his restoration. It was on this same principle that Ezra acted when he demanded separation, first of all, from the people of the land.

The power of God was still manifestly with His servant. The people assented to his demands, for they had been made to feel that “the fierce wrath of their God was upon them because of their sins. They answered, “As thou hast said, so must we do.” They only pleaded that, the work could not, be carried out there and then; for they said, “The people are many, and it is a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without, neither is this a work of one day or two: for we are many that have transgressed in this thing. Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us.” (vv. 12-14)

The plea and counsel of the people were accepted, and we have in the next place the names of those who were employed about the matter. (v. 15) Further we are told that “Ezra the priest, with certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them: by their names, were separated (i.e., set apart for this work), and sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter. And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.” Thus in two months the work was completed. Thereafter is given a list of the names of those who had transgressed, concerning which there are two or three remarks to be made.

First, the names of the priests who had fallen into sin are recorded, and these are divided into two classes. In verse 18 there are “the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren;” and in verses 20-22 other priests. (See chapter 2: 37-40) The former was held, it would seem; to be the more culpable, and with reason; for Jeshua had been associated, in the grace of God, with Zerubbabel, as the leaders of His people in building His house. It shows how that all conscience had been lost) as to the character of their sin. “The priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they (the people), should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts;” but in this case the priests had corrupted the people by their evil ways. But now being dealt with “they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass.” This, it will be observed, is only said of the kindred of Jeshua. The names

of the rest, priests, Levites, singers, porters, and Israel are singly given.

This leads to our second observation — that nothing escapes the eye of God. By Him all our actions are weighed and recorded, one day to be produced either to magnify His grace, or (if we include unbelievers) as the ground of righteous judgment. “We must all,” says the apostle, “appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Finally, it may be pointed out that while Ezra, as may be seen from Nehemiah (chapter 8:1), continued to labor in the midst of his people, he no longer appears as the prominent figure—as the leader. Together with this chapter his special work was done, and he discerns it. For this great grace is needed. The temptation, when the Lord uses one of His servants for some particular and public service, is to think that he must continue in a foremost place. If he yields to the temptation, it brings sorrow to himself, and failure for the people. The Lord who uses one today, may send another tomorrow; and blessed is that servant who can recognize, as Ezra did, when his special mission is ended, and who is willing, like John the Baptist, to be anything or nothing if so be His Lord may be exalted.

E. D.

## Jotham; or, a Word on Faithfulness

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Wise and seasonable is the counsel of Jotham, son of Jerubbaal, that fruitfulness is better than honor, and to be well-pleasing to the Lord than to be highly esteemed amongst men.

Jotham might as fairly as Abimelech have claimed to rule the people after the death of his father, but he had learned that to abide humbly with God, in the place He may have given, is far more blessed than to aspire to a path of dignity in the sight of men. God does give honor, but not to those who seek it. He does make one and another to be highly esteemed; but it is because they have not made it their object, but counted it their greatest privilege to bear fruit in which the Lord was glorified, and His people cheered and helped. Abimelech may have his dignity. Jotham values a better portion, and besides this he was alive and the low and unsatisfactory state of the people, and the miserable end which would surely follow; and he, stands apart, and is able to look on all from the “top of the mountain,” and view it in the light of God. Let us read his parable. The trees put the tempting honor before the olive, “Reign thou over us.” Men feel their need of rule, though nothing is so rebellious against it when established as the human heart. This honor has no temptation for the olive; beautifully it replies,

“Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?” There is no selfish consideration here; it is enough that God and man are honored, and the one by whom the fruit is borne is willingly left in his obscurity. This may well remind one of Philippians a chapter of utter self-forgetfulness, from the blessed Master Himself down to His lowly saint Epaphroditus. Oh that “this mind” were more found in each one of us the fig tree next is tried, with “Come thou, and reign over us;” but replies, “Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?” It is sufficient that others have been gladdened and strengthened by its fruit, the tree that bare it may be forgotten. Next the vine is sought, “Come thou, and reign over us.” No; “Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?” The bramble has nothing to leave, and is easily tempted with honor; and we know the sad end, the invariable end, of such beginnings—both people and ruler destroy each other.

We all must surely feel how much better a thing it is to be fruitful and happy than to be exalted before others, but what is the secret of fruitfulness John 15 answers Christ. “I am the true vine.” “From me is thy fruit found.” (Hosea 14:8,) We are the branches, true, and it is on the branch the fruit is seen—immense privilege for us—but it is only as the life and sap of the tree itself flows unchecked through the branches that fruit is borne; and here the question is not simply whether we are vitally linked with Christ by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, though this must of course precede all, but whether we keep so near to the Lord in our hearts, and walk so dependently on Him as having all our springs in Himself, that His grace practically works in our souls, His strength becomes perfected in our weakness, and His life practically manifested in our mortal bodies, and this is fruit.

No doubt certain Christian knowledge must precede this, for I shall not intelligently abide in Christ until I have experimentally known the worthlessness of all that I am in myself. "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing;" so that all life and energy must entirely come from another source. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is a very real and profoundly blessed thing, familiar as the words may be to us. Fruit then is the reproduction of Christ in our ways. It refers not to gift by which one may preach or labor; there may or may not be this, but all may bear fruit. Acts of service after all are but incidents in our life. Life itself is made up of countless thoughts and feelings, words, looks, ways, and in all these Christ, and not the flesh, is to be the motive power, and this can only be as we keep near to and dependent upon Him. Oh, beloved, what a privilege! How precious was the fruit He bore when down here! Fatness, sweetness, and cheer marked all His lovely ways. The hearts of God and man were gladdened by it, and it is our loving Father's purpose that some of this divine beauty should re-appear in the lives of His children. Let us too remember, that just where God has placed us is the very spot where the fruit is to be manifested. However lowly and unnoticed may be the sphere in which we are called to move, let us not think we could be more fruitful elsewhere. No, the Lord has Himself allotted us our paths, and if we do but let His fatness drop in them, the lowliest path will be illumined, and the humblest thing ennobled; for the manifestation of Christ makes everything great that may have no greatness in itself, and all life will have a charm, however dull and monotonous otherwise it may seem, if we but learn to look at everything as a means by which Christ may be expressed, and our Father therein glorified. The gracious Lord awaken in us all a true desire for this.

H. A. C.

## 2 Kings 4:1-7

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The mantle of the ascending Elijah fell upon Elisha, and he received a double portion of his predecessor's spirit. This explains the typical character of his ministry—that it was in resurrection power. It is needful to bear this in mind in interpreting the beautiful incident brought before us in this scripture. But first of all it is necessary to understand the circumstances of the widow. Her husband—one who feared the Lord—was dead, and he had left his widow so hopelessly in debt that the creditor claimed her two sons as bond men. Who then was the creditor? It was, we judge, the law, which, as it contained no mercy, ever rigorously exacted its penalties and claims. It had therefore brought death in upon the husband (compare Romans 7), and was now seeking to reduce his two sons to bondage. What wonder was it that this poor widow groaned under her intolerable burden, and that she should be constrained to seek for deliverance? To whom then does she have recourse for help and succor? It is to Elisha, type of the risen Christ. He responds immediately, and says, "What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil." Mark the difference between man's thought and God's. The pot of oil was as nothing to the poor widow. She had not anything, "save a pot of oil." This was everything in the eyes of God, and the question of Elisha was intended to elicit the fact that there was this pot of oil in the house. Now oil is ever in Scripture emblematical of the Holy Spirit; and, as we shall now see, the possession of the Holy Spirit (we say nothing here of the necessary experiences before the goal is reached) is the only way of practical deliverance from the yoke of the law. The widow, up to this point, was ignorant of the value of the only possession to be found in the house; and indeed she was not yet in the condition of soul to use what she really possessed. Elisha therefore said, "Go, borrow the vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and thy sons, and shall pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full." Faith at once was called out into lively exercise. She obeyed the prophet, and she discovered that the supply of oil was illimitable, or rather only limited by the capacity of her empty vessels; for when the vessels were full, she said to her son, "Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed." She still was unable to avail herself of her treasure, and hence she went once more to "the man of God: And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest." She thus discovered that it was the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that could make her free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2), and also that she must continue to live in the Rower of the same Spirit. (Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:25)

There is another teaching lying more on the surface, and yet of the highest consequence. The widow in her sore distress found, as taught of the Lord, that she was not straitened in God, that there was an abundant outflow from His resources more than equal to all her need, and that faith brought her into living connection with the fountain of all relief and succor. We too thus learn that God is never weary of meeting our need, that our demands (as represented by the empty vessels) can never be too many. Come as often as we may, and with as many vessels as our faith can

bring, we also shall find that His fountain of grace and blessing can fill them all. Surely then we may open our mouth wide, that He may fill it.

## Hebrews 12:23

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This is the only place where the term “church of the firstborn” is found. While it undoubtedly springs from the association of the church with Him who is the Firstborn from the dead (Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5), it is yet interesting to notice that God in His grace has always had the firstborn before His mind. Thus no sooner had He sheltered His people from judgment in the land of Egypt by the blood of the passover lamb than He claimed all their firstborn as well as the firstborn of their cattle. (Exodus 13) “All the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.” (Numbers 8:17; also chapter 3: 12, 13) The Levites were afterward taken instead of the firstborn, and given to Aaron and to his sons to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation. Representing thus the firstborn of Israel, they were associated with Aaron, who himself was a firstborn, and they thereby became a shadow, if not a type, of the church of the firstborn. This will be more apparent-if it is remembered that even Aaron’s sons as well as the Levites derived all their privileges from being adjoined to Aaron. For example, Aaron, as a type of Christ, was clothed and anointed (without the sprinkling of blood, because a type of Christ) in the first place alone, and afterward with his sons, when it is through association with Aaron they become a figure of the church as the priestly family. Now inasmuch as through all these types and figures God always had Christ in view, it is in Christ all these things find their fulfillment. When Christ therefore, the Firstborn from the dead, took His place at the right hand of God, the Holy Spirit was sent down to gather out those who should be heirs of God, and Christ’s co-heirs; all of whom in virtue of their association with Him are firstborn, inasmuch as He deigns in His grace and love to share with them all that He Himself inherits by virtue of redemption. We, according to the purpose of God, are the brethren of Christ, and He will ever have the preeminence as the Firstborn amongst the redeemed; but at the same time they, together in their association with Him before God, will form the church of the firstborn. What can we say in the presence of such unfoldings of the heart of our God but, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end? Amen.

E. D.

## The Manner of Love

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I suppose we all know that in the gospel of John we have the manifestation of the divine life here on earth in the person of the blessed Lord, while in the epistle it is the manifestation of the same life in us. It is easy enough for us to see and understand that the life is manifested in Him; but when we come to the same life in ourselves, we turn in upon ourselves to see what is the effect produced in us; and such is the human heart that we judge of the thing by the effect produced in us. Now God puts before us the thing itself in all its reality. It is most wonderful to think of the divine life in us when we look at ourselves. People are almost afraid nowadays to speak of it; yet if we are born of God, what life have we? We are converted, saved from wrath, it is true, but we are in possession of something that has been imparted to us by God Himself in His own sovereign grace and power. He has given us that life—"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us."

Most wonderful and blessed when by the grace of God, we can think of what God has done and is doing, and learn from God Himself how He handles the soul. We make such mistakes, and are so short-sighted and clumsy too, as we always are in our ways; but the way God handles us is a way that produces in the soul what answers to Himself and to the glory of Christ. He always gives us the thing, makes it good to us, before He speaks of the responsibility connected with it. It is a great thing when we learn this; it is the beginning of really learning God, to learn the principle on which He is acting toward us. We having nothing, possessing nothing, He in His own sovereignty, grace, and love begins with what He is, and He ends with what He is. Everything of the old man begins to cry out when grace comes to the soul, and the soul apprehends that grace. When Aaron's rod blossomed and bore fruit—priestly intercession in grace—God had said He would thus make the people's murmurings to cease, they begin to cry out, "We die, we perish, we all perish. There is an end of us now." We at once discover that the old man, the flesh begins to discover, that everything in us has to go because of grace. God is for us, "working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." That is the sovereign act of God in His sovereignty. It comes in wonderfully in connection with that. It is not the amount of our sins forgiven, not what the style of His love is, what sort of love He has bestowed upon us. Is it to blot out all that is against us? No! The character of His love is, that He brings us into relationship with Himself. Nothing will satisfy, nothing does satisfy, the heart of God, as to me individually, but bringing me into relationship with Himself. Apply that to yourself, and you will see how it searches you out. If by the grace of God I have got hold of it, I say, "Marvelous love." I cannot find any reason in myself for it, but I find the cause in God Himself. One verse we so often pass over so quickly and carelessly is this, in John 4, "The Father seeketh such to worship Him." All the activities of the divine nature are here in this word seeking to satisfy itself. Has it ever occurred to you that this is what is going on now? Divine love has satisfied itself in bringing us to Himself, making us His children, honoring the work of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and so placing us in that blessed relationship with Himself that He may have His love satisfied in such things as you

and me. It is of great importance in this day, when people try to satisfy their minds with all sorts of things, to see how God deals with the heart and conscience.

“That we should be called the children of God.” What is the consequence? Why, the world does not know us, does not know us any more than it knows the Father— “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee.” I do not ask how much you know of the world—it would not be very edifying for any of us to give his experience about that—but how much does the world know about you and me? How much are you and I living in the power and reality of that of which the world knows nothing? We have something beyond the understanding of the world; that is the first statement made as to it. “It does not yet appear what we shall be,” because Jesus has not yet been manifested in glory. If you read that over and over again you can find no argument in it; it is a statement of the greatest blessedness and the most complete sovereignty— “We shall be like Him; we shall see Him as He is.” We shall not see Him as the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but as the Man of glory, and yet the One who for our sakes was the Man of sorrows and grief. We shall be like Him then—inwardly and outwardly like Him. Do you think we have the bare idea of that in our hearts, in our souls now? We are going to see Jesus there in the glory, and when we see Him we shall find ourselves inwardly and outwardly like Himself. Now all we can discover, I think, is unlikeness to Him, and the Spirit of God will occupy us with plenty of that, so that by His grace we can judge and get rid of it; but we shall see Him as He is, there in the center of all that heavenly glory, and when we see Him we shall be like Him. What is so important in both these verses is the soul’s possession of the truth, and the practical expression of it in this world. Why are the people of God worldly, so familiar with the world, and the world with them—why? Because we have not really got this hope in Christ as a practical living reality in our souls; that we are going to be with Jesus in the glory, to be like Him and with Him. We have the truth without the power of it; it has passed away as to the power, and the reason of this is in ourselves.

P. A. H.

## Fragment: Dependence on God

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“With respect to myself: in many conflicts and troubles of soul I have consulted many masters of the spiritual life; but divine mercy did not, does not, suffer me to rest on the word of a fellow-creature. The best advices have often increased my perplexities, and the end was to make me cease from human dependence, and to wait upon God. To Him therefore I desire to point you and myself, in the person of Jesus Christ. He receives weary, perplexed souls still, and gives them solid rest He teaches as no man ever taught; His words are spirit and life; nor can He possibly mistake our case.”

## Simple Christian Truths: Forgiveness of Sins

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The first anxiety of the awakened soul—a soul convicted of guilt before God—is to know the way of forgiveness. Every other consideration is subordinated to the pressing and all-absorbing question of its relationships with God, of the method of obtaining pardon and peace. Coming to the Scriptures, and listening to its teachings, there is really but little, if any, difficulty; but unhappily at such a time the eye is so often directed within, in the vain hope of discovering there some ground of approach to God, that the soul becomes self-occupied, and consequently the prey of every passing emotion; and Satan, who is no uninterested spectator of the conflict, watches for and seizes his opportunity of entangling such a soul in hopeless perplexity. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the clear and simple teaching of Scripture should be presented to any in this state of mind, as nothing else will defeat the subtleties of the evil one, or guide the feet of the anxious to the immutable and immovable rock, and put into their lips the song of salvation. What then—for this is the question proposed for our consideration—has the word of God to say on the subject of forgiveness of sins?

The most simple and concise statement on the subject is found perhaps in one of the addresses of the apostle Paul. Speaking in the synagogue at Antioch, he says, “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.” (Acts 13:38) There is another quite as simple, though it takes its form from the audience he, was addressing, by the apostle Peter: “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” (Acts 5:31) Now, taking the first of these scriptures, and examining the context, it will be readily perceived that “this Man” is Christ. The apostle had been showing that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, and proving that His resurrection had been foretold by David. The death and resurrection of Christ had been his theme; and, as soon as he had proclaimed a risen Christ, he turned to them and said, “Through this Man the risen Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.” Bearing this in mind, the reader will easily apprehend the truth on the subject, if he will but carefully, and looking up for guidance, follow what is written.

First, then, forgiveness of sins is founded upon the death of Christ, upon His finished work, that is, changing the form of the expression, the foundation on which God is able, righteously able—able in consistency with all that He is—freely and fully to forgive the sinner, is the work of atonement, which was accomplished on Calvary. In the Old Testament it was taught in every possible way—by type and figure, by constant sacrifices ever repeated—that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission. (Hebrews 9:22) The reason was that sin had entered the world, and death by sin; and so death had passed upon all men, for that all had sinned. (Romans 5:12) The life of every sinner was, and is, therefore forfeited to God; and hence it is written, “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” (Hebrews 9:27) Mark well these two things—death, and afterward judgment, for the sins committed during life. Such is the awful prospect before every unsaved soul. Both these things were shadowed out in the olden sacrifices. It will amazingly help the reader if he will give his earnest attention to this. Look then for a moment at what was done

when a Jew brought a sacrifice for sin. First, he laid his hand upon the head of the animal about to be slain, which signified the transfer of his sin to the animal; so that the animal from that moment stood before God charged with the offerer's sin, in the place and stead of the sinner. Observe what followed. The animal was slain—death, the penalty of sin, was brought in upon it—and the blood was sprinkled (for the life is in the blood) in the appointed place before God, in token of life rendered up in answer to His claims: afterward, passing over details, the carcass was totally consumed by fire. And what did this signify, dear reader? It told of the judgment after death; of that lake of fire in which all the unsaved, alas I will find their portion throughout eternity.

If my reader has understood so far he may now accompany us to the cross of Christ; for we shall discover there that the sacrifices of which we have spoken were but outlines of the character of the death of Christ as the great sacrifice—the sacrifice for sin of God's own providing, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29) It should, however, be observed, first, that He alone could be this sacrifice, that He alone possessed the necessary qualifications, whether to meet the claims of God or the needs of sinners. He only amongst men was “without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19; Hebrews 9:14); and He only, being what He was, both God and man, could stand for men, stand in the breach which sin had made between God and man, and offer a sacrifice of such infinite value as could avail for the whole world. God alone knew what was requisite for His glory in making atonement for sin, and hence it was, acting from the love and pity of His own heart, that He gave His only begotten Son. Wondrous grace! adorable love! We may now inquire what it was in the death of Christ that constituted the atonement. Reserving details for another occasion, we call the reader's attention to two points, the two essential points. As in the sacrifices in the old dispensation, so on the cross there was the yielding up of life (and this was testified to by the blood and water that flowed out of the Saviour's side when pierced by the soldier's spear); only it must be carefully remembered that He yielded up His own life, “He gave up” (or delivered up) “His spirit” (John 19:30; 10:17); and there was the bearing the whole weight of the judgment due to our sins, bearing from God what His glory demanded as an atonement. In other words, He suffered death, and He passed through (in His case before death) what answered to the fire that consumed the carcass of the sin-offering; viz., the wrath of God against sin. But passing through the holy fire of judgment was a transaction between God and His own soul. (2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:6)—a transaction veiled from all mortal eyes by the darkness which descended on the cross and on the earth, and of which the only outward expression was that agonizing cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46) For it was then that God in His holiness was dealing with that holy Victim instead of sinners for whom He died, when all God's waves and all His billows rolled in upon and over the holy soul of Jesus. Thus, dear reader, our blessed Lord met both death and judgment, and wrought out that finished work in which God can rest in satisfaction (for indeed He was abundantly glorified in it), and on which too, blessed be His name, sinners can rest in unshaken confidence and security in the presence of God and the prospect of eternity.

There is another thing to be remarked. The reader may perceive that the apostle Paul took great pains to prove from the Scriptures, and from the testimony of eyewitnesses, that God had raised Christ from the dead. (Acts 13:30-37) And with reason; for the resurrection of Christ was the evidence of the completion of His work of atonement to the satisfaction of God; nay, it was God's own demonstration that He had been glorified in the death of His Son, and that the question of sin

had been once and for all settled. For it was God Himself that stepped in—stepped in in the abounding joy of His own heart—and lifted out of the grave the One that died upon the cross; and, moreover, He set Him down at His own right hand in heaven, as the expression of His estimation of the value of the work which had been finished on the cross. The resurrection of Christ first is therefore of the highest value, It proclaims, on the one hand, what God's thought is of Christ, of the crucified One; and it assures the sinner, on the other, that Christ is the only Saviour, that the burden which He bore on the cross has been left forever behind in His grave. Hence the apostle says, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15: 17); for the clear proof that the sins of believers are gone is the fact that He who bore them on the cross is now seated in the glory of God.

Let us advance a step further. The reader will now apprehend, we trust, without difficulty (at least if he has understood the foregoing remarks) the meaning, of the apostle when he says, "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." We may, however, examine it a little more closely. Two things are contained in the statement. First, that God proclaimed, and still proclaims, or announces, in, the gospel the forgiveness of sins, and that this forgiveness is declared through Christ. It means, in other words, that through the death and resurrection of Christ, He having satisfied all God's claims concerning sin on the cross, and vindicated His name and glory, God is now able, in consistency with all that He is—His holiness, His righteousness, His majesty, His truth, as well as His tenderness, mercy, and love—to satisfy His own heart, in freely—freely, without money and without price, without any demand whatsoever—offering the forgiveness of sins to any and all who come to Him in the name of His beloved Son. Forgiveness of sins is thus offered through Christ—offered gratuitously to sinners anywhere and everywhere throughout the wide world. This is God's message in the gospel, that forgiveness of sins is His free gift, on the ground of what Christ has done and is, to all who will have it.

The reader, however, may say, Is there no condition whatever annexed to such a gift? The words of Scripture are plain—"Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." This much will be noticed by all, that no one will be disposed to accept the gift unless he first believes that he needs forgiveness. The announcement is made to sinners; that lies on the surface. Does my reader therefore, if he should be one who knows nothing of this blessed gift, place himself before God amongst this class as a sinner? Does he acknowledge 'that he is verily one that needs forgiveness? If he can answer these questions in the affirmative, there remains but one other, and it is this, does he believe God's testimony to the death and resurrection of Christ? Does he receive the truth that God preaches forgiveness by the mouth of His servants through the risen and glorified Saviour? If he does there remains nothing more, nothing whatever; for as the apostle Peter also says, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." This is God's own word, and on it we may rest both for time and eternity. Forgiveness of sins is thus freely presented to every poor sinner who comes to God as a sinner in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

There remains but one point more, which concerns the character of the forgiveness. Does it relate only to the past or the present? What has Scripture to say on this subject? It teaches in plain and unmistakable language that the benefits resulting to the believer from the death of Christ are eternal, that his sins are removed forever from the sight of God. It says that by His own blood Christ has entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption; that, having

offered one sacrifice for sins, He forever sat down on the right hand of God, in token that His sacrificial work was finished forever; that by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified; that the Holy, Ghost has borne this testimony —“Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” (Hebrews 9: 10) If the ‘reader ponders these statements, and asks himself what God intends them to convey, he must see that they have but one voice—that they unite to declare that when God forgives He forgives once and for all, on the ground of the eternal value and abiding efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ.

Does anyone still object, But what of my sins since conversion? Let such a one consider for a moment that he had not been born when Christ died on the cross. How then could it be our past sins only that were there laid on Him? No, blessed be His name, He bore our sins, all our sins, made atonement for all, the sins of our whole lives; so that the forgiveness God bestows is an eternal forgiveness. It should be remembered, moreover, that if Christ had not endured the judgment due to all our sins, if one single sin had been excepted, He must have returned to the earth and died a second time before that sin could be forgiven. But the word says, “Where remission of sins is there is no more offering for sin.” As enduring, therefore, as is the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ before God, so enduring is the forgiveness which God presents to the sinner who comes to Him through Him who was delivered, for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. Let the reader then rejoice, if he is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the assurance that God has forgiven his sins absolutely and forever, and that never more can a single sin be imputed to him as guilt; for he has been brought, in the mercy of God, under the everlasting value of the one offering of Christ.

E. D.

## Paul as a Pattern

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The apostle Paul is the pattern of all who are called and converted now, though they may not come up to the pattern. All the feebleness of Christian life is traceable to want of perfectness of foundation—it is not according to the pattern. A great many saints who are wishing to get on and do not, would find out why if they would compare their foundation with the pattern. They are satisfied with an acquisition that meets their own necessities.

That is a poor thing. I want to reach that which it is the mind and purpose of the living God to give me. Paul and Paul's gospel are the pattern of that. You become partakers of the grace that would make you up to the pattern, or you are not a Christian at all. That grace, if you did not hinder it, would work you up to it.

Turn to Acts and you will see what Paul was appointed to do—to be a minister and witness of those things which he had seen. On his way to Damascus a light shines suddenly round him, and Jesus was revealed to him in the glory. That is what he had seen—Jesus in the glory. Simple it is, but its reception involved the most wondrous consequences. We all admit that man is naturally at a distance from God, not on terms of intimacy, and that he ought to be. Nothing is so condemnatory to man, the first creature of God on earth. A conscience awakened wants that distance removed, and the first thought is that of Cain—"I must repair it." Of course, the offender is the one who ought to do so, but man cannot. It must be done by one not under the penalty which is on him. God can do it through the intervention of Christ; but the intervention, even of Christ, must be from God's side, not man's. Do you understand the nature and object of God? Christ came out to declare it. Satan has been trying to darken the knowledge of God from the beginning. Until you know what God is in His own essential nature you are not on the right foundation. Having to do with God in His own nature is the only solid, unshifting foundation for a soul. "The only begotten Son, He hath declared Him"—disclosed an unknown subject, the heart of God. God in His own nature is essentially love. Who knew it? No one but His own Son, and He came to do His will, and He knew His heart towards poor, lost sinners in the world; and what was His will? That His heart should be set free to take His prodigals to His arms, to express itself in its own mighty love. He was found in fashion as a man, and as the exponent of the heart of God He carried out His love, which was a love forever. Like the good Samaritan, he to whom he became neighbor needed no other neighbor after—he took the whole charge of him. Now God is free in the strength of righteousness to open His heart.

God gives me the gift of eternal life. Not merely does He bring me to heaven, but that gift is the expression of the love of God. The glory is opened, and the one who has accomplished the purpose of God in redemption is seen in it. God's satisfaction for sin altogether is thus revealed to Paul, and the glory shone out on Paul, and not a word is said of the sort of man he had been. Had he been under the law, that glory would have destroyed him; but in another place he says that the more he looked into it the more like it he grew. Remember, Paul is the pattern, and we have to look at Jesus as Paul saw Him. Every one of you who knows Him at all, knows Him in the glory, for

it is there He is. There is not a particle of light that has reached the soul that is not the light of the glory of God. We ought to have the sense of it; but whether we know it or not does not change the wondrous fact. What is the gospel way, that you have a Saviour in the glory. Where will you get rest to your soul? Go to the glory. Where get full satisfaction for your soul? Go to the glory, for you have a Saviour there, and only there. If Christ had done only all that was required of me, it would have been but human righteousness.

But He: did the Father's whole will and finished His work. (See John 4)

It was God's work that Paul should be saved. We have such a low idea of what the gospel is. We think it is merely that Christ has come to save from judgment. That is not it; but God desired to have such as I am in the very nearest circle of glory to Himself, and none but Christ could bring it about, and He was ready to do it. After conversion Paul was a pattern still. (Philippians He wanted to get back to the sphere, of what he had seen— "I press toward the mark for the prize," &c. Where my history began, there it ends. The Lord grant that your hearts may be exercised to know what God is in Himself. His heart has been satisfied to the full by His own Son. It is easy for me to travel into all the regions of the glory of God if I have entered it from the right side—the love of God. All Christian truth is compromised if you have not the full foundation. The Lord rests in the magnitude of His love.

G. V. W.

## Responsibility and Life

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In the garden of Eden were planted two trees— “the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge, of good and evil.” (Genesis 2:9) Looked at separately, they bring before us those two of whom we read in 1 Corinthians 15:47— “The first man (Adam) is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.”

From the position in Paradise of the tree of life (for it distinctly states that it grew “in the midst of the garden”) we learn that CHRIST has always been God’s center, although the six days of creation, with Adam as its head, were first developed. But along with the tree of life (and in the same place) is found the “tree of knowledge of good and evil;” for Eve says, speaking of this ‘tree, that its place too is “in the midst of the garden.” (Chapter 3:3) As to the “tree of life,” it is clear that it could only refer to Christ (Revelation 2:7); and in the fact that both are “in the midst of the garden” we see that both are united in Him. Our responsibility, as of Adam, has been taken up, and met in Him and by Him. He is thus God’s center, and life is His by acquired right. Around Him, as the tree of life in the eternal state, God will group, as He did in type in Eden, “every tree that is pleasant to the eye, and good for food.” While for Adam (Christ) himself there will be found one (Eve) of himself too (type of the Church) to enter into, and to share with him in all that he has, as thus set in enjoyment over all things. For it was in the garden, before man fell, that Eve was brought to Adam. The creation in Genesis is God’s picture, in type and shadow, of the purpose of His heart concerning Christ—a purpose hidden in the past ages, but existing there from all eternity, long before the foundation of the world, and now made known to faith. (Ephesians 1:9,10; 3:9-11) God will presently act in power to bring out into full display His own original thought; and it is to this He refers when, in the view of all that sin, sorrow, and death have done in the first creation, we read, “And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.” (Revelation 21:5) And “for eternity” attaches to all, since all is based, not on the first man, but on the second.

It does not appear that the “tree of life” was forbidden to man before he fell. He was set up in Paradise in life, and with this word, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (2:16, 17) God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” The man lived. As long as he ate of every tree of the garden, save the one forbidden, he continued to live; i.e., in partaking of the tree of life, as well as of the other trees. He continued in that state in which God had at first created him. This does not seem to me to shut out his then eating of the “tree of life.” He was responsible to live (and the means to live were around him) in that state in which God had created him; that is, he was to know nothing more, neither good nor evil. It was innocence; for he was not to know anything in addition to that life in which he stood with God. But this was responsibility, and on this ground all was lost. Sin entered, and the law proved it, and only showed how complete the ruin was. Death was upon all.

For the first time then after the Fall it appears the “tree of life” was forbidden to man; a most gracious provision on the part of God. Man had acquired the knowledge of good (and God was its

source); without power to act upon it or to please Him. (Romans 7:18) He had also acquired the knowledge of evil, and along with that a nature always prone to follow it. Now God speaks, and He says, "The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest be put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." To eat, and by thus eating to live forever as long as he ate, in that state of innocence in which God had first created him, would have been right and simple obedience; but to eat, and live forever in the garden, with the knowledge of good and evil (good to which he could never attain, and evil to which he was always prone), in misery therefore, God could not have; "so He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." This was grace, not judgment; the judgment was pronounced before, both on Adam and his wife, and on the serpent too. Life then is distinctly refused to a responsible but a fallen race in that condition.

But Jesus, standing in perfect grace in the place of the responsible man at the cross, glorifies God. Tried and tested in every way all through His life, which ended in the cross, all that man should have been for God HE WAS. it is true that all was over for the first man, for all the race of Adam, and that life is refused to everyone on that ground. The "flaming sword" is the sword of judgment to any advancing to take of life. But now, with all my responsibilities met, with the first man ended in God's sight (even in the bringing in of a second Man, "the Lord from heaven," who has glorified God), He only—the second Man—now stands before God; and He who in Himself has met all the claims of justice for the responsible man, and who has also as man perfectly met the heart of God, has it as His right to take of the "tree of life" in the midst of the garden. Can the partaking of the "tree of life" (His by this acquired right to it) be withheld from Him who has thus, as Man, perfectly gauged and answered while under it, all the responsibility of the first man? No; and at the solemn moment of yielding up His life on earth in Psalms 16 —He thus speaks; "Thou wilt show me the path of, life;" and again, "I lay down my life that I might take it again." (John 10:17) Thus we see in this God's one central thought—to establish everything in heaven and earth upon CHRIST. God will have HIM as the center of all His ways of grace to man throughout eternity. All therein is for His enjoyment, and He in perfect grace hands these things to us, associating us with Himself; for Eve was co-sharer with Adam in it all.

Moreover, the duration of the life is, in Christianity, first unfolded as "eternal" (Titus 1:2); for it is the life of Christ Himself as the risen One out of death. Life, if it could have been continuously sustained in Eden by their eating of every tree in the garden (save the one forbidden), would have been endless, and therefore "eternal" in that sense. But it would have depended on man's continuous obedience; it would have been a dependent life. Now we have the obedience (His) absolutely perfect at the beginning, tested as He was in every possible way, and life as the result. (Romans 5:19) So it will be seen that it must necessarily be "eternal;" for the value of the work done always abides before God.

In Psalms 21 also Jesus is before us as the One who has acquired, as Man, the right to life: "Thou hast given Him His heart's desire, and hat not withholder the request of His lips... He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it Him, even length of days forever and ever." To this the apostle refers also in Hebrews 5:7. But being heard (as in Psalms 22) "from the horns of the unicorns," He associates us in all that blessing into which He then enters as Man. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee" —fulfilled in John 20:17. In that song grace

has given us the privilege to join; nor can we fail to do so if we see the perfect way in which all has been done, and the perfect place of rest, before God, into which He has entered now, along with those for whom He has secured it.

It is a relief to the heart to expand, and thus to turn away from its little self, and to see God working for the glory of His beloved Son, to whom we are necessary, as a part of that glory into which God will bring Him. (Ephesians 3:21) To see thus everything established on an immutable basis, the first man no longer before God, but the second, to whom the name "The Eternal Life" now attaches in a twofold way; to know that, through grace, we are eternally united to Him, since (as the apostle says) "This is the testimony, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." "He that hath the Son, hath life." To look back along the dim vista of the ages, and to see this His purpose shining brightly in the "garden of delight," which sin spoiled, and to look forward to what it will yet be, when all shall be in divine order around Him who is, to all eternity, to be the center in the midst of the "Paradise of God." (Revelation 2:7)

H. C. A.

## **Fragment: The World Will Not Have Christ**

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There is only one object the world will not have; namely, Christ, and the revelation of God in Him, though it be a revelation of love,

## Numbers 27- 36

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A beautiful illustration of the ways of God with His people—of His readiness to meet their every need—is found in the combination of these two chapters. In the first, the daughters of Zelophehad came to Moses with a complaint. Their father had died leaving no son, and they asked, “Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us, therefore, a possession among the brethren of our father.” (27: 4) Up to this time there had been no provision for such a case. The son or sons were to inherit the patrimony, but nothing had been said concerning daughters where there were no sons. Moses did not act upon his own view of the case, nor upon what others might deem fair and equitable principles, but, owning that he had of himself no wisdom, he laid the matter before the Lord. Would that we all might follow his example when we fail to discover the mind of God in any special perplexity. The Lord vouchsafed an answer immediately, saying, “The daughters of Zelophehad speak right;” and He directed Moses to “give them a possession of an inheritance among their father’s brethren,” taking occasion at the same time to announce a statute of judgment for the children of Israel upon every such case that might arise.

Passing now to chapter 36 we find that another perplexity sprang out of the settlement of this question.

The chief of the families of the children of Gilead come in this instance to Moses. Their concern was for the inheritance of the tribe; for if these daughters of Zelophehad “be married,” they say, “to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance;” and furthermore, they proceed to say, when the jubilee arrives, the inheritance, so taken away, will be finally added to that of the tribe into which these women had married. Once again, Moses receives directions from Jehovah, who commands that the daughters of Zelophehad shall marry “to whom they think best,” only it must be to those of their own tribe; and in this way was the difficulty, both on the present occasion and for all future time, completely removed.

There are some important principles connected with these histories worthy of indication. The first is obvious; viz., that nothing in relation to the people of God can be settled by human wisdom. Every difficulty or perplexity must be laid before the Lord. The second is, that if we lack wisdom the Lord is ever ready to give, and to give liberally. Nothing that affects the welfare of His people is too trivial to bring before Him; and for us to attempt to act, unless we have His mind, is to usurp His place. Then, thirdly, observe that the Lord did not anticipate the difficulty. He knew it would arise, but He waited until His servant brought it to Him before He gave His mind in the matter; He foresaw the second question equally with the first, but He would have His people in constant dependence, and thus only gave the word for the moment—the wisdom as it was needed. In like manner, if we would be imitators of Him, we shall never seek to forestall a difficulty. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Lastly, it is beautiful to remark the ready obedience of all

concerned to the word of the Lord. His word was all they craved, and obtaining it they yielded to it a willing subjection. The chief of the fathers of Gilead, the daughters of Zelophehad, and indeed the whole of Israel, obeyed the word of the Lord they had received through Moses. Truly the path of obedience is the only way of blessing!

## Leviticus 23:9-20

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The distinction between the sheaf of the firstfruits and the two wave loaves, which are also called first fruits, is exceedingly beautiful. The former is Christ, for the priest was directed to “wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath” (the first day of the week) “the priest shall wave it.” (vv. 10, 11) Thus it is that Paul writes: “Christ is risen from the dead, the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20)—the first sheaf to be waved before the Lord before the ingathering of the harvest. And of what a harvest is He, as the first fruits, the pledge! Concerning Him in this character, another has written, “It” (His resurrection) “was the beginning of the true harvest—harvest gathered by power outside and beyond the natural life of the world. According to the Jewish law, nothing of the harvest could be touched before. Christ was the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. With this first of the firstfruits were offered sacrifices for a sweet savor, but not for sin. It is clear there was no need for it. It is Christ who has been offered to God, quite pure, and waved before God —placed fully before His eyes for us, as raised from the dead, the beginning of a new crop before God; man, in a condition which not even innocent Adam was in, the man of God’s counsels, the second man, the last Adam. Not all hanging on obedience, which might fail, and did; but, after God had been perfectly glorified in the place of sin, past death, past sin (for He died unto sin), past Satan’s power, past judgment, and consequently by this, wholly out of the scene where responsible man had stood, on a totally new footing with God after His finished work, and God perfectly glorified. Such a work too as gave Him title to say, “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again,” and made it God’s righteousness to set Him at His own right hand in glory.

Following upon this, they were to number fifty days unto the morrow after the sabbath, and offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord, composed of two wave loaves, of two tenth deals of fine flour, baked with leaven, “the firstfruits unto the Lord.” “It is no longer Christ here, but those who are His, the firstfruits of His creatures. (See James 1:18) They are considered as being on earth, and leaven is found in them. Therefore, though offered to God, they were not burned as a sweet savor (Leviticus 2:12), but with the loaves was offered a sin-offering, which answered by its efficacy to the leaven found in them. They are the saints of which Pentecost commenced the gathering.”

Once more we find the expression first-fruits in the Scriptures. Of the hundred and forty-four thousand who will stand on Mount Sion with the Lamb (Revelation 11: 5), it is said, “These were redeemed from among men, the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb.” (v. 4) These. are the first-fruits of the earth, after the Church has been caught away to be with the Lord, and will be gathered from among the two tribes who will be in the land during the sway and power of antichrist. They will pass through the unequaled sorrow of those days (See Matthew 24:21,22), and the Lord will give them a special place with Himself in the kingdom—they will follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. As the ingathering at Pentecost was the first-fruits of the church, these will be the first-fruits of the kingdom.

## **Ephesians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18**

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These two scriptures, often classed together, are yet very different in their significance. The latter is plainly an exhortation: "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." It is not, as the reader will observe, for everything, but in everything, give thanks. And there are few Christians who would not acknowledge, we will not say their obligation, but rather their privilege, to render thanksgiving to God in all their circumstances and trials. They may, be passing through deep sorrows or severe sufferings, and yet, viewing these in the presence of God, they will find abundant cause for praise. Not only so, but, as the apostle here says, "it is, the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us." This puts the matter on another ground, revealing what is acceptable to God, and, if it may be so expressed, how grateful to Him are the thanksgivings of His people. Turning now to the former scripture, it will be as plainly seen that it is not an exhortation. Let the reader note well the context We are bidden not to be "drunk with wine, wherein is excess," but to "be filled with the Spirit;" and then three things are indicated as the consequence. First, our hearts will be overflowing with praise, "speaking," as it is said, "to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" then we shall, besides this, be "giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and, lastly, we shall be "submitting ourselves one to another in the fear of God."

We are not then expected—and this is the point to be noticed—to give thanks always for all things, as a matter of subjection to the will of God, as in the case of giving thanks in everything; but the former of these two things will only flow out as fruit of being filled with the Spirit. If therefore we desire—and what believer would not desire to be in such a state—to be giving thanks always for all things, we must first seek to be filled with the Spirit. Now it is precisely here that the difficulty meets us; for is it not true that few of us are willing to be so filled? For indeed it involves much; even the constant refusing of self, and the daily bearing of the cross—inconstant watchfulness that we may not be drunk with wine, i.e., seeking to be exhilarated with any of the joys of earth; and ever bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. But He giveth more grace, and sufficient grace even for this; and surely none of us should have any lower object than this which the Word sets before us of being filled with the Spirit. What a change would be then wrought in our daily lives 1 and what power, too, would characterize our walk and service I Even, therefore, if we can already give thanks in everything, we should also seek grace to be in that state in which " giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord JESUS Christ" would be its expression in the power of the Holy Ghost.

E. D.

## Evermore

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(From the French)

BLESSED, only Son of God

Evermore,

Soon by heaven and earth adored

Evermore,

Gladly now we own Thee Lord

Evermore.

We shall see Thy radiant face

Evermore;

Thou alone wilt fill each place

Evermore

In our hearts, constrained by grace

Evermore.

Of Thy sufferings infinite,

Evermore,

Of Thy death, which won the fight,

Evermore

We shall tell with deep delight

Evermore.

In Thy body and Thy bride

Evermore,

Like Thee, with Thee glorified

Evermore,

Lord, Thou wilt be magnified

Evermore.

## On the Ground of Grace

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It is a wonderful thing for us really to be on the ground of grace. That, I think, is what is specially brought before us here—what God is in Himself, and what He is towards us. He has been manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ. God loved, and God gave; that is the beginning of the reality of it to our souls. But when we have that, we have set before such hearts as ours what God is in Himself, in His resources for us, and in the activities of His love; giving the most precious thing God has to give, that we may delight in Him. We bless Him and we praise Him as our Saviour; and so He is, but He is the blessed Son of God Himself—the Son of the Father—and by the grace of God, and in the power of the Spirit of God, that is what we have discovered—what He is in Himself. And it is in the measure in which the soul has apprehended that grace, and what He Himself is personally, that the soul counts all things but loss for what the Lord Jesus is in Himself, “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”

We have a wonderful expression of that here, “Six days before the passover.” (v. 1) The Spirit of God settles the date for us, that we may have all the surroundings before our hearts, our consciences; that we may be, as it were, in the very midst of the scene itself. “He came to Bethany,” the Spirit tells us. That is where Lazarus was, whom He had raised from the dead; the mighty power of God interposing on behalf of the little family at Bethany. Death had come into the home there. Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life, calls Lazarus back out of the grave. In the face of that—in the face of the manifestation of the power of God bringing that one back from the dead—there is one in that house who sees something more—the Life-giver Himself must die. Where had she learned it? She had sat at His feet, she had heard His word, and this is what she had learned for herself. When, through grace; we have reached this, we have reached the blessed foundation of everything God would enable us to be in this world for His glory. Mary knows Him to be the Life-giver Himself, but the Life-giver must die. It is not the soul measuring grace by the way in which its own needs have been met, but we learn what it is to be before Him in His grace; not according to what there is in us, but according to what there is in Him. Learning that there is not one thought in His heart toward us of giving us anything on the ground of reward, but everything on the ground of grace, in the fullness and greatness of Himself.

We have then the one that sees, and the one that does not see—Mary and Judas. The one that does not see leads away the others after him; the one that sees had discovered that the Life-giver Himself must die, and she just goes and expresses that in a way that shows how she had been reached in the inmost recesses of her heart. She takes all that is precious, all that she could pride herself upon, and she places it at the feet of Jesus. Only think what it is! All that was most precious in her sight! Are you and I in that state of soul now? If we are not, we shall not see clearly the right way—the path. Further down in the chapter the Spirit of God shows us how clear that is for us now—Jesus glorified. Mary had heard Him; she knew Him as the dying One. Thus she has no reserve. She does not care what others may think, or may say. She does not say a word; but she takes precious ointment of spikenard, all that is costly, and lays it at the feet of Jesus. The one with the natural heart—the one who does not see—finds fault. He says, “That is waste, that is waste.”

It is the natural heart coming out, indignant at the idea of all this being bestowed on Jesus. "Oh," says the natural heart, "that is waste; consider the poor, consider the poor." Then the Spirit, of God stops to tell us what the natural heart really is, and here we have a wonderful principle brought out. In Mary there was no such thing as covering up. She is not occupied with what she is doing, but with the One to whom she is doing it; and the whole house was filled with the odor of the ointment. What do you think delights the heart of God in this world? Seeing a number of the Lord's people together, and happy together? No. At the very last a few gathered round the Person of the blessed Lord, and appreciating Him through grace. That is what the Spirit of God will produce and keep here in this world—keep alive and responsive to Christ—until the very moment when He comes.

Now in Judas we have the very reverse of all this. He covers up, and the Spirit of God uncovers, and shows it to us. He did not care for the poor; he cared for the bag, he cared what was put therein. In the blessed scene the Spirit of God comes down to what the natural heart is, trying to cover up its distance from Him, and using what in itself, is a good object to do so. Nearness to Him is the heart uncovered in His presence because satisfied with Himself. There is no seeking to make a good appearance when we have Himself before us. We do not think of it then. It is not what we are doing, but He is there to whom we are doing it. What always strikes the heart so in this chapter is, that what was outside, what was seen outwardly, was not what the Lord was doing; what He was doing lay beneath the surface. He was drawing the 'heart to Himself, and the blessed Lord was on the way to, the Cross. He takes upon Himself Mary's cause; He answers for her. She shall not be disturbed; He takes it all in hand. Then He makes His entry into Jerusalem, and the people begin to sing; they begin to treat Him as a Conqueror, according to Psalms 118. "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." They were all wrong, not seeing the ground on which alone victory could be based. "Thy King cometh." But how? With no earthly power and majesty; nothing that the eye could see, nothing that could carry captive the natural heart of man; but, with His heart yearning over them in a way wholly divine. There was the secret of it in what He is in Himself. The secret had been discovered by Mary. How had she learned it? In her own soul first—her own need. Here is the Life-giver Himself; He has brought Lazarus back from the dead; but He must die, or He will abide alone. When by grace we have apprehended the Lord of glory as the dying One, we are on the road; we have touched the head and spring, the fountain of all the grace of God toward us. He enters into Jerusalem in this spirit: "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just; and having salvation, lowly," etc. (Zechariah 9:9)

The next thing the Spirit places on record is the coming of the Greeks to see Jesus: "Sir, we would see Jesus"—Jehovah saving His people. So Andrew and Philip bring them to Jesus; and, He says, "You must see Him as Mary has discovered, Him—the corn of wheat that falls into the ground and dies." Now let us go back to the entry into Jerusalem, and read it in the light and spirit of this, and what a wonderful insight we have below the surface. The people shout and sing, and strew, palm branches, before Him; they celebrate victory, but victory for them can only be through His death. We have before us what was in His heart in the midst of their shoutings. Wonderful and most blessed!

The whole secret comes out to the Greeks, but Mary had discovered it beforehand. She had herself anointed Him for the burial; she had learned that He must die; and He discovers to the Greeks the very thing she had learned and had anointed Him for. Wonderfully blessed this oneness of thought between Mary and Jesus. It is what you and I can have, and by the grace of

God do have oneness of thought with our Lord Jesus Christ. But some may say, "I see all that, but how am I to get along down here? How are we to find the way through all the troubles and difficulties and sorrows down here?" Well, the way is Christ Himself. If we can only bring all the troubles and difficulties, the things that distress us, into the light of His presence, we discover the way directly; the Spirit of God enables us to look at them in the light of His presence. The darkness of the path has been turned into light by looking at it in His presence. What is for the glory of Christ? What will glorify Him? Ah I but we have so much to get rid of, many of us. The darkness lies in the state of our own souls towards Himself; the defect lies there. Mary was counting all things but loss for Himself. The soul may be a little away only from Him, the eye a little off Him; it is quite enough to make one dark. If we are not looking at Christ, not considering Him, darkness comes. in.

The Lord goes on to speak of the denial of self, the judgment of this world, and His being lifted up and drawing all to Him. The people answer Him, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever. Who is this Son of man?" He says, "Walk while ye have the light with you." That is all. There was an opportunity for Him now to make a great display of His glory. Not a word of it. He appeals to the heart and the conscience: "Walk while ye have the light." There is one of the children of light in the chapter; it was the one that sat at His feet and heard His word. That was the one that spent all that was precious upon Him, that abased herself, emptied herself at His feet. "Who is this Son of man?" they say. "Walk while ye have the light," He says, "that ye may be the children of light." Oh, beloved brethren, it is really a great thing to be searched out. We do not know much of it, but that is what we have come to—really and truly to be searched out in ourselves. We see the needs be of this really individual searching out, in order that we may be fit to be here in this world for God and for Christ. Paul learns it, and says, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing." We are really before God now on the ground of His grace. We know all our needs are met; but to know God is for us, that He is towards us in His grace, everything we hold to of the old man we have to let go, and to learn what real dependence on me and my grace is. (See 2 Corinthians 12) Look again at Peter on the housetop. Alone with God; a wonderful place to be in. And what has God to say to him? He lets down the sheet from heaven: "Arise, Peter, slay and eat." "No," says Peter, "nothing common or unclean has ever entered into my mouth," forgetting what had come forth from his poor lips—the cursing and swearing and denying His blessed Master. Have we learned this lesson, the lesson of His grace? Peter had well-nigh forgotten even the grace that had met him in his need, and there, alone with God, he had to learn this; and so at Jerusalem he says, "The lesson I have learned is this: God hath cleansed." That is what God gave him. God spoke to him, distinguishing between what God was in Himself and what He had done, and what Peter was in himself and what he had done. And that is how God speaks to us now. Peter could now go forth. Who could he reject now? It is just a question of God and His grace. "What God hath cleansed, call not thou common."

But to return to our chapter. In all this that went on there is this wonderful apprehension of this child of light shown forth in her actions; she says not a word, but actions speak louder than words. Then the entry into Jerusalem. These things, the Spirit of God says, His disciples did not understand then, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered, Him; i.e., when the Spirit of God is down here, He brings to remembrance all things that had taken place or had been spoken. When this chapter is before us, we bless God for this wonderful apprehension of. Jesus

as the dying One here; but we have higher ground, the Holy Ghost is here. Now we begin to think about subjection to Him, really entering into the mind of Christ. It is not merely light on the way here, it is the way itself; it is the Spirit of Christ, and learning what it is that glorifies Him. We have the Spirit of God; the Spirit of God always leads according to the mind of Christ. When you hear people say, "I do not see," why do they not see? No mortal man can give them eyes; but if they have the Spirit of God, how is it they do not apprehend? It is no light thing now not to see, and see clearly too. The hindrance is always oneself. Search your own heart and soul before God; set your own conscience before Him, and you will discover it.

The reason of all the inability to apprehend, and I act for God, is distance of heart from Himself; that is the real, true secret of it all; and if of the grace of God, we really search ourselves out, and get near to Himself, we shall have the blessed knowledge of, His mind, of Himself. The power of evil is conquered, under His feet. You go to people and say, "God has put all things under the feet of Jesus." "Oh," say they, "we do not see it! What confusion and distress there is around —the power of evil rising up. I say, "God has done it now." Where do I look? I see Jesus, and have faith through grace; all things are put under His feet, everything, everything the souls of people can be led astray by, everything is under the feet of Jesus. I look to Him. I see not yet all things put under Him, but I see Him under whose feet they are put. Mary saw Him here the dying One; we see Him the risen One, sitting at the right hand of God in heaven. All things are working out His mind and will, conducing to further His glory; and the question for us is not, "Where is power?" but, "Where is subjection to Himself?" That is where power lies. If you say, "Where is power?" I say, "Where is subjection to Christ?" It is the having to do with Himself, the heart satisfied with Himself, contented that Jesus should, be glorified, and really thankful to be in this world only for Himself, for His sake. The Lord grant us to know more of it.

P. A. H.

## Choosing the Chief Rooms

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It is just the place that nature likes. The world which has no relations with God delights in exalting self and shutting Him out. Self gets for self what it likes, and forgets God. Man is always setting up self, pushing for self against God. He does not think so; for he says he is only using his faculties. But so Adam did to hide himself from God. Do not we use our faculties to please ourselves, rather than for God? While the master is away the servants go on in their own way, and do their own will. A man is naturally hurt when he is put down in a corner and despised. Flesh does not relish being thrust aside; but this seeking for a place is to seek for it where Christ had none. Therefore He says, "When thou art bidden to a wedding, sit down in the lowest room."

The point of this parable is seen in verses 8-11. It refers the heart to the master, to "Him that bade thee." If I am conscious of being a sinner, and therefore deserving no place, I shall take none, but wait till God bestows one on me. I shall have honor indeed, when God gives me a place. The point is, what He does and bestow upon me. Having the eye upon God, and referring to Him, seek for the lowest place as Christ did. It will not do to say, "I will not have a place in the world." The great thing is, the heart resting on God's place in the world. When the eye is thus upon God, self is forgotten; if not, I am thinking of the slights I receive, and neither faith nor grace are in exercise. If I could think nothing of myself I should be perfect. The man—who bade the guests has the right estimate of each, and the honor due to them. The evangelist's place, the pastor's, the apostle's, will all be appointed by God. When God gives me a place, it is one of power and nearness to Himself; but when a man takes a place for himself, it is one of weakness and alienation from God, because self is the object.

Then, again, we must guard against the mere refusing to take a place in the world because we know it is wrong, as followers of Him who has been rejected. A mere legal estimate of what is right can never last. A thing may be very right; but there is no stability in pursuing it, because there is no power to subdue the flesh in merely doing what one knows to be right. There was the sense of obligation with the law; but the law did not set an object before me to attract my heart; it did not bring God to me nor me to God. That lasts which feels we are nothing, and that God is everything. Many have begun very energetically, and taken a certain place, right in itself; but if legality be the source of it, there will be no power of perseverance; for that which is taken up under law will be sure to be lost in the flesh. When God is the object, the low place here is sufficient. He Himself carries me on; and whatever it be, if the mind and affections are upon Him, what was hard at first is no effort as I proceed. His love, which attracted and gave me power at first to take such a position, becomes brighter and brighter when better and longer known; and what was done at first tremblingly, is easy with increasing courage. The only thing which can enable me thus to go on is to have CHRIST the object before me; and just in proportion as it is so, I can be happy. There may be a thousand and one things to vex me if self is of importance; they will not vex me at all if self is not there to be vexed. The passions of the flesh will not harass us if we are walking with God. What rubs we get when not walking with God, and thinking only of self! There is no such deliverance as that of having no importance in one's own eyes. Then one may be happy indeed

before God.

If we look at Christ, we learn two principles.; first, that He humbled Himself because of the sin of the world all around Him; second, the world did all they could to humble Him; for the more He went down, so much the more they sought to pull Him down.

No one cares for another; so that if a man does not care for himself, he will be sure to be pushed down low enough. Then, again, so deceitful are our hearts, that it is possible we should be willing to humble ourselves, if we could get anything by it, even the approbation of men, on the other hand, if we, in the usual sense of men, merely seek to imitate Christ in this, it will be but legal effort. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." He humbled Himself. First, "He made Himself of no reputation;" that is, He emptied Himself of His glory, to become a man. In doing this, He left the Father's glory to become a man. This was a great descent (though we think a great deal of ourselves). But was that all? No; He humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross. It is the same principle which is put before us in this chapter in Luke. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Real lowliness is being ready to serve any and everybody; and though it may to the eye of man look low, it is in reality very high, being the fruit of divine love working in our hearts, God, operating in our hearts, makes us unselfish; The only thing worth doing in the world is this service, except it be enjoying God. We should be ready to serve ones enemies. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." This is not only being humbled, but humbling one's self, and not doing it before those who would honor us all the more for being humble. Paul could say of himself and others, "Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." He felt they had a title to serve in grace; and in, portion as he took the humble place, he will be exalted in the day that is coming.

J. N. D.

## Fragment: Nigh to the World

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We may draw nigh to the world, because the flesh is in us. The world cannot really draw nigh to the children of God, because it has only its own fallen and sinful nature: The approximation is all on one side, and always in evil, whatever the appearance may be.

## Do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus

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It is certainly important, when meditating on any portion of the word of God, to trace its connections, in order to apprehend the meaning intended in the passage by the Holy Spirit. For instance, looking at this verse alone, it would, appear to set before us a hard task, which after all may be but feebly accomplished by us, and thus turn the mind in upon itself, and bring us into a legal state. On the other hand, to be occupied only with the grace side of divine teaching, most blessed as it is, to the neglect of preceptive truth, will generally be connected with a low and careless walk. In our Lord Himself, the perfect One, grace and truth, were always fully manifested and perfectly acted out. He was “full of grace and truth.” A considerable part of this epistle to the saints at Colosse was written before this precept was given. In the portion which precedes it, blessed truth had been set forth to engage the believer, and to cheer and exercise his heart before God. Let us briefly look at a few points.

In the first chapter, those who had faith in our Lord Jesus and love to all saints, the two marks of genuine conversion, were enjoined to be “giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” who has delivered, translated, redeemed us, &c. Being now children of God, knowing God as their Father, they were to approach Him as His children, and give thanks to Him for having made them fit for glory; to praise Him for “redemption,” for having “delivered” them from the power of darkness, “translated” them into the kingdom of the Son of His love, and made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. What holy liberty is found here! What an unending source of joy objects of the Father’s love, the costly work of eternal redemption wrought by the only begotten Son, and brought into such new and endearing relationships, they were to know that the Father loves them as He loves His Son. How fruitful in blessing to our souls to be thus consciously set by divine grace, divine righteousness, and divine power on the ground of never-ending thanksgiving before God our Father! Is it then our habit thus to, be before God? Because, if we have not accepted and made our own by faith the instruction of the first chapter, how can we possibly carry out the precepts of the third chapter? How can we, walk as God’s children unless we know we are His children? And how can we be giving thanks to the Father for our new position, relationships, security, and meetness for glory, unless we have received as from the mouth of God His own precious and infallible word as to these things? When everything else is discarded as authoritative but the word of God, and faith is mixed with it, as giving us divine certainty, then we prove the fulfillment of our Saviour’s words, “The truth shall make you free.”

Again, in the beginning of the third chapter, the apostle teaches these young believers that they are “risen with Christ.” Now what do we understand by this? Is it not that, having been quickened and associated in life with Christ, who is here spoken of as “our Life,” we have the life of One who is risen from among the dead? Is it not thus a new and an eternal life, the free gift of God to us in our Lord Jesus Christ? Not, surely, a prolongation or an improvement of natural life, but a new and risen life, which is totally outside the old creation. 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 12:24); that is, that

blessing to others in living association with Himself must follow His death, for until that He was alone. "Thus we are plainly taught that, though He was that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us, He was alone till after His death, even as the grains in the ear are the result of the corn having fallen into the ground and died. So Christ, as He now is risen from among the dead, is our Life; for "God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son," so that believers are "risen with Christ."

Happy are those who have accepted in simple faith this revelation of divine grace! To such it becomes easy and natural to have their minds set "on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." It calls for no effort; for being set thus in association with Christ forever by God, who raised Him up from among the dead, and assured too that when Christ, who is our Life, is manifested in glory we shall be manifested with Him, our minds and hearts are attracted by such love and blessedness to where He, our Life, now is. The important question, therefore, for each of us is, Have I accepted as God's truth such wondrous blessing, and thus made it my own for present enjoyment? What a precious thing for the soul to know, on the authority of the word of God, and entirely of His own free grace and power, that I am connected with Christ in resurrection life, and, we may add; forever united to Him where He is by the gift and indwelling of the Holy Spirit!

In the second chapter, another view is presented to us of the present blessing into which the believer, through grace, has been brought. In the ninth verse, the glory of the person of the ascended Saviour is presented to us as Man, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead, bodily dwells—man surely glorified and sitting on the Father's throne, yet verily and, truly divine in the absolute sense, the very "fullness of the Godhead," yet one glorious person who is spoken of as "Him," and that He as to His exaltation is "the head of all principality and power." And—marvelous as it is, we are told that, as redeemed ones, our present place before God, given us by His grace, is filled full, or "complete in Him." Observe, it is whith we are, not in ourselves, but "in Him." As another has said, "The fullness or completeness of the Godhead is in Christ, as toward us; and, we, as toward God, are complete in Him." Into what an amazing position of blessing the grace and power of God have thus brought us, as true of us now, in all the acceptability and nearness of Christ—filled full in Him who is sitting on the Father's throne, angels, authorities, and powers being subjected to Him. Let us ponder this heavenly position and blessedness well, and instead of reasoning about it, and missing its everlasting consolation, receive it with faith, and enjoy this present nearness and blessing God has given us. Does the Word say you shall be, or you may hope to be, filled full? Nay; it says, "Ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power." And so true to faith is this new place before God in Christ risen and ascended, that before our verse occurs the believer is spoken of as having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new; that is, the old man (not the sins, but sin,, or the old nature that bore the corrupt fruit), having been substitutionally and judicially put off in the death of Christ, when we died with Christ, and God having, as we have seen, given us a new place through the resurrection of Christ, and a new nature, or life in Christ, we cannot be other than in Him who is our life. Hence it is said, "Ye are complete in Him," and faith takes it, and knows no other life or position; therefore we are spoken of as having put off the old man and put on the new.

But the point of such moment at this time is, have we received these precious truths into our hearts in faith as divinely-given communications for our present comfort and profit? It is one thing

for the reader to be so struck with them as to admire them, but it is a totally different thing to receive them without any hesitation and have the certainty that these blessings are ours now. Almost everything around is being shaken, and questions on every hand are being raised as to the divine and eternal verity of Holy Scripture, so that multitudes of professing Christians are indulging misgivings, and having almost endless disputes, when, if the word of God were simply bowed to, there would be certainty and rest. Unless one has the assurance founded on the work of Christ, and confirmed by the unalterable Word, that he is a child of God, how can he be giving thanks to the Father, and walk as a child of God? And unless he has to do with the Lord Jesus Christ on the right hand of God, as the One in and through whom he has redemption, and in whom he is filled full, how can He so be the central object of his thoughts and affections as to say and do all in His name? We hold it to be simply impossible: But being consciously before God as His child, filled full in Him who is seated on His own right hand, He in us, our life and we risen with Him, who has redeemed; delivered, and translated us, and who is made unto us righteousness, it becomes quite intelligible that those who are thus abiding in the cloudless favor of God will be giving thanks to the Father, the source of all, be having their minds set on things above, where Christ sitteth, in whom and through whom they have all, and happily fall in with the suited exhortation, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." What we cannot truly associate the name of our Lord Jesus with must therefore be avoided.

Let none of us imagine, that because we see the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to be the only scriptural center of being gathered together, we are therefore out to Him. When He is really the central object of our hearts, how can we desire otherwise, as constrained by His love, than to do all in His name? Is it not our chief joy that He should be magnified? And will not "giving thanks" accompany such service? For how can we be taken up with Him, without praise and thanksgiving going up from our hearts "to God the Father by Him?" May the Lord keep us, and be our constant helper.

H. H. S.

## Simple Christian Truths: Cleansing and a Purged Conscience

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Sin may be viewed in two ways, either as an offense against God, or as defilement to the sinner. God has His sovereign rights and claims over all His creatures, and it is this fact that constitutes sin a wrong done to Him, an outrage upon His majesty and glory. Sin in this aspect needs forgiveness, the way of which has been shown in a former paper. But sin also is in its very essence and nature defiling, polluting; and it is to this allusion is made in that striking entreaty in the prophet Isaiah: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1:18) There is also a recognition of this by the psalmist when he cries, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Psalms 51:7) The word guilt perhaps combines these two aspects of sin, because it tells of the soul's sin against God and the effect upon the soul itself; and the first question for our consideration is, the method God has provided for cleansing the guilty soul from its deep-dyed iniquity.

There are several scriptures which state this method clearly and explicitly. "The blood of Jesus Christ His (God's) Son cleanseth from all sin." (1 John 1:7) Again, "Unto Him that loved (or loves) us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Revelation 1:5); and the sprinkling with blood of the priests at their consecration, and of the leper on his restoration, proclaims the same truth, that cleansing from sin could only be effected by the precious blood of Christ. And let the reader mark the word "only" in the last sentence; for it was penned with the object of calling attention to the fact that there are not two modes of cleansing from guilt; that God's way is the only way; and that, therefore: the sinner is shut up to it; so that, if this be refused, there is no other remedy, no other agent in the universe, which can rid the sinner of his sins. No; the blood of Christ being refused, the sinner must remain in his guilt throughout eternity. Let us then examine the teaching of Scripture as to how it is the blood of Christ cleanses from sin.

If now we turn to Leviticus 17, we read, "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your Souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (v. 11); and in the previous chapter, which contains a description of the rites of the great day of atonement, we find that the blood of the sin-offering was carried into the holy of holies and sprinkled upon the mercy seat and before the mercy-seat, the mercy-seat being God's throne (for He dwelt between the cherubim) in the, midst of Israel The blood of the sin-offering was first of all for God, and hence put upon the mercy-seat in acknowledgment and satisfaction of His claims upon His guilty people, But this blood was only a type, a foreshadowing of the infinitely precious blood of Christ, " who by His own blood (and not by the blood of goats and calves, as did Aaron) entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." (Hebrews 9:12) This blood—the blood of Christ—presented before God, constituted the propitiation which He made for sins; for it was the all-sufficient answer, being what it was, to all the' claims of a holy God upon sinners; yea, it was of such value in the eyes of God that He could, having been glorified by it according to all that He is, righteously offer salvation to the whole world.

Such was God's part in the precious blood of Christ, and thereon follows the question of its application to the sinner, and the effect of the application. The types, whether of the consecration of the priests or of the cleansing of the leper (Exodus 29; Leviticus 14), will make this part of our subject very plain. The reader will notice that in both cases washing with water preceded the sprinkling with the blood of the lamb. This simply means that the two things were connected in that order; viz., the new birth (for the washing with water was an emblem of this) and the application of the blood of Christ. To be even more simple, the moment a sinner believes in God's testimony concerning Christ's death he is under all the value of His precious blood. We thus read in the Romans, "Whom (i.e., Christ) God hath set forth a propitiation (or mercy-seat) through faith in His blood" (chapter 3: 25); so that when the sinner, in confidence in this testimony, approaches God, he finds that the blood of Christ has made a full and an all-sufficient atonement for his sins. This indeed was the meaning of the blood being sprinkled seven times before the mercy-seat (Leviticus 16), this action teaching us that as soon as we come into the presence of God, believing in His witness to the death of Christ, we find there a perfect testimony, symbolized by the seven times, to the fact that our sins have forever been put away. In one word, and even a child cannot fail to understand the statement, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, faith in what God, says concerning His death, links the soul with all the value—the value as reckoned by God—of His precious blood.

It will not now be difficult for the reader to apprehend the effect of the application of the blood of Christ to the believing soul. Identified With its value before God through faith, he, as to his guilty state, is seen by God with all that value resting upon him; and where God sees the blood He sees no sin. There is indeed a twofold effect: First, it removes all guilt from the sinner—i.e., from the one who believes in Christ—cleanses from all sin; and secondly, it brings the sinner under all its positive value. This may be illustrated by a reference to the sin and, the burnt-offerings., The efficacy of the sin-offerings cleared away the guilt of the one who brought the sacrifice; but though his sins, regarded as transferred to the victim, were gone, the man remained as he was before—neither better nor worse—excepting that the sins he had committed were now gone. When, however, he had brought a burnt-sacrifice to be offered for his acceptance, he stood before God in all its positive value, a value represented by the words, "an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord." (Leviticus 1:9) And if the reader will turn to the chapters already spoken of (Exodus 29; Leviticus 14), he will see that the invariable order was: first, the sin-offering, by which guilt was taken away; and then, the burnt offering, by which the offerer was invested before God with all the acceptance of Christ. So is it now. The effect of the application of the blood of Christ (and every believer is under its value) is to cleanse away every trace of guilt even before the all-searching eye of God, and also to bring the soul into His presence in all the sweet savor of Christ Himself. Nothing less than this is meant by the cleansing which is effected for the soul through the blood of Christ; for nothing less would fit us to stand before God. But everyone who is cleansed is brought into the light as God is in the light. That is his place while in this world; and—he is therefore fitted, if called upon to die, to depart immediately to be with Christ. The blood thus not only shelters us, as it did Israel in the land of Egypt, from judgment, but it makes us whiter than snow, white as the pure light of the holiness of God; so that we are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, even while passing through the defiled scenes of this world.

We now pass on to the consideration of a purged conscience, concerning which instruction is given in the epistle to the Hebrews. Cleansing is, so to speak, a work without, a judicial work on

the part of God by which we receive qualification and title for His own presence. Purging the conscience is that work made good within us; so that our sins are as completely gone from us, in our apprehension, as they are from before the eye of God. Cleansing removes all our guilt, purging the conscience takes away the sense of guilt from our own souls. The former gives us the title to stand before God, the latter gives us liberty and happiness in His presence. This will be readily understood by the reader if he will carefully read Hebrews 10. We may call his attention to two or three important points.

Remark, however, first of all, that the sense of 'guilt, when under conviction of sin, troubles the conscience. It is the conscience that bears the burden of sin when the soul is awakened; and an uneasy, a bad conscience often condemns the soul as distinctly as the word of God. Remembering this, the statements in the above-mentioned chapter will at once be understood. The first point then to be noticed is, that the worshippers under the old dispensation were never made perfect as to the conscience, that they never obtained the priceless blessing of "no more conscience of sins." (vv. 1, 2) This is shown in a twofold way. The fact that sacrifices were continually offered proved it, because "in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year." (v. 3) The worshipper might indeed feel, in a certain measure, that the sins he had already committed were removed; but no sooner had his sacrifice been offered, then he began to sin again, and every fresh sin needed another sacrifice. He was therefore never free from guilt before God or in his own conscience. Then we are also told that it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. God passed over the sins of His people, because these sacrifices shadowed forth that of Christ; but they had no virtue to purge the conscience, though they might have sanctified to the purifying of the flesh. (Hebrews 9:13) The burden of sin was thus never wholly removed from the conscience of a Jewish saint.

The writer then brings out in contrast the eternal efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ, and bases it on a threefold foundation—the will of God, accomplished by our blessed Lord and Saviour through the offering of His body (on the cross) once; the work of Christ, seen to be a finished work, from the fact that He has " forever sat down on the right hand of God" —sat down in perpetuity—in contrast with the priests of old, who stood " daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;" and finally, the testimony of the Holy Spirit, which runs, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (vv. 5-17) Summing up this divine argument, we have two things—the eternal value of the one offering of Christ, and the consequent abiding efficacy of His sacrifice for every believer; so that, as we read, "By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." The result is, that the sins of the believer are gone forever—gone completely from the mind of God, no more remembered. And when this truth is received—made good in the soul by the Holy Spirit—they are gone also as completely from our conscience. We have no more conscience of sins; for having learned the value of the precious blood of Christ before God, as a full atonement for our sins, we recognize that our guilt is gone; and that because of the abiding efficacy of that one sacrifice, guilt will never more be imputed. We are therefore free; our conscience is no more disturbed as to guilt. This is the Scriptural meaning of a purged conscience.

It may be needful to add, for the help of some readers, that this truth in nowise touches the question of indwelling sin—the evil nature. That remains in us, and will remain, until Christ comes for His people, or until death. But the knowledge that we have sin within us will not, and should not,

affect a purged conscience. If that evil nature should, through unwatchfulness, break out into sin, our communion with God will be disturbed; and the sin must be judged and confessed before communion can be restored. If, however, we have known the true character of the one sacrifice of Christ, and the virtue of His precious blood, we shall not—even while we are mourning over our failure, and feel it all the more deeply because it is sin after we have known the Lord—lose the enjoyment of no more conscience of sins. To suppose that sin could be reckoned to us as guilt, after we have once been purged, would be to slight the eternal value of the death of Christ. As indeed we read, the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins. “If,” then, “the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:13,14)

E. D.

## Hebrews 9:26, 28

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It is of moment to see the difference between these two verses. Sin had to be put away abstractedly out of God's sight, and hence He had to be perfectly glorified in respect of it, in that place where sin was before Him. Christ was made sin, appeared to abolish it out of God's sight, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Besides this, our sins (guilt) were in question, and Christ bore them in His own body on the tree. The sins are borne, and Christ has them no more. They are gone as guilt before God forever. The work for the abolition of sin in God's sight is done, and God owns it as done, having glorified Jesus who has glorified Him as to it when made sin. So that for God the thing is settled, and faith recognizes this; but the result is not produced. The work is before God in all its value; but sin still exists in the believer and in the world. Faith owns both, knows that in God's sight it (the work) is done, and rests as God does in it; but the believer knows that sin is still in fact there and in him, only he has a title to reckon himself dead to it, (knowing) that sin in the flesh is condemned, but in the sacrifice for sin, so that there is none for him. The "putting away" of sin is not accomplished, but what does it is; so that God recognizes it, and so does faith, and stands perfectly clear before God as to sin and sins. He that is dead (and we are, as having died with Christ) is justified from sin. Our sins have all been borne. The difficulty partly arises from "sin" being used for a particular act, and also abstractedly. In the word "sins" there is no such ambiguity. A sacrifice for sin may apply to a particular fault; sin entered into the world is another idea. This ambiguity has produced the confusion.

J. N. D.

## 1 John 1:8-10

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When speaking of sin, the apostle speaks in the present tense, “we have;” when speaking of sinning, he speaks in the past. He does not take for granted that we are going on doing it. It has been a question whether the apostle speaks of first coming to the Lord, or subsequent failures. In answer, he speaks in an abstract and absolute way: confession brings through grace forgiveness. If it is our first coming to God, it is forgiveness; it is the full and absolute sense—I am forgiven with God; He remembers my sin no more. If it is subsequent failure, honest of heart always confesses; then it is forgiveness as regards the government of God, and the present condition and relationship of my soul with Him. But the apostle, as everywhere, speaks absolutely, and of the principle.

J. N. Darby

## 2 Corinthians 12

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As to the thorn in the flesh—the Lord was dealing with Paul in grace, and had apprehended him for glory. Paul was now to walk with the Lord on this new ground; but he did not know his own weakness, nor the power of the flesh in him, that would boast itself of the revelations made in grace. The Lord therefore gives him the thorn in the flesh—an aid from Himself to keep the flesh in its right place. Paul did not at first apprehend this, and three times prayed for its removal; then the Lord tells him, “My grace is sufficient for thee: my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Then Paul says, “I (will boast) take pleasure in my infirmities.” Through grace he ranges himself on the side of the Lord’s grace and strength, and takes pleasure in the thorn—that which shows his infirmity— instead of struggling against it, and praying for its removal.

P. A. H.

## **Fragment: No Rights but Christ's**

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The thought that good is to have its rights in this world is to forget the cross and Christ. We cannot have our rights till He has, for we have none but His!

## The First Sunday

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It is worthy of notice, that neither the end of John 19, nor the beginning of chapter 20, makes any mention of the day intervening between the crucifixion and the resurrection of our blessed Saviour. It was, however, the sabbath day, so important both to the Jews and to the disciples. Doubly solemn, too, on this occasion; for it was coincident with the feast of the passover, and it is said "that sabbath day was a high day." (John 19:31)

The Jews, scrupulous observers of forms, even in putting the Son of God to death, had not been willing to enter the judgment-hall the night before, for fear of defiling themselves and thus being unable to eat the passover. (John 18:28) Then, in the evening, after having got rid of the One who was the light of the world, and whom they had crucified in company with two criminals, they requested Pilate that the bodies might not remain on the cross during the sabbath, which began at six o'clock in the evening. They would have liked to avoid putting the Lord to death during the feast, not because of their own consciences, but so that there should be no tumult among the people (see Matthew 26:3-5); for doubtless there was a vast assemblage from different places to celebrate the passover. But the rulers were unable to carry out their designs, because, unknown to themselves, they were accomplishing the purposes of God. And, alas! no one among the people raised a voice for Christ. On the contrary, the multitude, led on by their chiefs, chose that He should be crucified and Barabbas released. (Mark 15:11-14)

The Saviour then passed into the grave on this high day of a sabbath, without the Word making mention of this day in relation to Him. What a seal upon the reprobation of the Jews, for whom the sabbath was the sign of their alliance with God! The death of Jesus was the end of all that which had gone before, as His resurrection was the beginning of a new order of things. Someone has said, in speaking of the moment of the Saviour's death after crying with a loud voice, "All was over the atonement, perfect as to God, the work of redemption, all prophetic circumstances had been accomplished, whether with regard to man or God. Then with a cry, showing both bodily strength unimpaired and perfect confidence in His Father, He gave up the ghost, at the moment when death had, but henceforth lost, all its terrors, at least for the believer. With this cry, which announced the termination of all human relationships with God, except in judgment, and the end of all the means which God could employ to re-establish such relationships with the children of Adam, Jesus died."

But the Scriptures also speak to us of the burial of the Lord Jesus. Paul mentions it in 1 Corinthians 15: 3, 4, and the gospels give details on this point which are in accordance with prophecy. The earth would receive, the body of God's Son, but His sepulcher should be with the rich. "He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death." (Isaiah 53:9) He would doubtless have been interred in the public burying-place destined, according to Jewish custom, to criminals, and it is probably there that the bodies of the two thieves were thrown. But now that man had fully gratified his hatred, God takes care of the One who had glorified Him even unto death. At this solemn moment came Joseph of Arimathea, a counselor, and a good man and just, who

obtained permission. from Pilate to take the body. Nicodemus came also; and these two men of high rank among their nation, but who hitherto had been timid disciples, gave to the Lord an honorable resting-place. At all events, we may observe, that the sabbath day being at hand, the burial was of necessity only provisional, and was to be accomplished after the sabbath. This we learn from chapter 19: 42: "There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulcher was nigh at hand." The women who loved the Lord also prepared to embalm Him at a future moment. Mark tells us (16: 1), "And when the sabbath was past" (after six o'clock in the evening), "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him." The same thing is recorded in Luke 23:55, 56.

The disciples, really attached to the person of the Lord Jesus, at the same time, as faithful Jews, slave in heart and conscience to ordinances. This hindered them from completing the burial of their loved Master, which their affection for Him would have desired. Let us note what a revered servant of the Lord has said of the burying of the Lord Jesus: "In the invisible world Jesus was in paradise; as to this world, all that He had was an interrupted funeral. Sin, death, Satan, the judgment of God, had done all that one or the other could do; His earthly life was ended, and with it all connection with this world and man, as far as belonging to this world. Death reigned externally, even over God's Son; serious souls who were aware of it were confounded. But the world went on its way; the pass-over was celebrated with its usual ceremonial; Jerusalem was what it had been before. Society, that had satisfied its selfishness, and been ridded of two thieves, cared little what had become of either of them, while the absence of another whose presence had embarrassed it was a further relief. But appearances are not always the truth. One of the thieves was in paradise, with Christ; the other beyond hope; while the Lord Himself was in all the repose of perfect blessedness in the bosom of His Father. And as to the world, it had lost its Saviour, and was to see Him no more."

When the disciples had fulfilled the commandment in observing the sabbath, they hastened, at least the women devoted to the Lord, to come at dawn of the first day of the week to do honor to the body of their loved Master by finally embalming it. But they arrived too late; the power, righteousness, glory, and love of the Father had anticipated them in raising Christ from among the dead. What a glorious morning! The beginning of an eternal era for the redeemed.

As to the sabbath, it is the end and not the beginning of a thing. God had consecrated the seventh day, after having finished the work of creation. On that day He rested from all His work which He created to make.

It is a type of the glorious millennial sabbath, which will terminate the existence of the present earth and heavens. (Revelation 20) Each time that Jehovah prescribed to Moses some new statute the sabbath was named. In Leviticus 23 it even heads the solemn feasts of the Lord. Among the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) its observance is pointed out in detail, and supported by motives. In Exodus 31:12-17 it is solemnly ratified. There and elsewhere it is called a sign between God and the children of Israel. But early in their history the Israelites had neglected and abandoned this holy ordinance, and they had borne the consequences of it (see Ezekiel. 20:12-24; 22:8, 26, 23:38); among His people, they had begun again to keep it strictly, all was not the less in ruins. Tradition and a legal observance of ceremonies, carried out in minutiae, had taken the place of "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." Pride and

hypocrisy characterized the leaders of the people; they did not wish to recognize Him who was Lord of the sabbath. Thus He could not recognize their sabbath, and He had to work in grace with His Father, even on the sabbath-day. (John 5:9-18; 9: 14; see also Matthew 12:1-15; Luke 13:10-17; 14: 1-6)

The body of our Saviour then remained in the grave during the solemn day of the sabbath, and He rose again "the first day of the week." The Jews, against their intentions, had been led into putting to death the Lord on the day of the feast of the passover, which this year fell on the day before the sabbath, in order that, in view of consequences precious to us, He should rise the first day of the week. This fact has consecrated this day as "the Lord's day," the day of the resurrection, the commencement of an eternal era for us believers. It is thus that it has become the solemn day of Christianity; not as an imposed ordinance, but as a day of privilege which the conscience of a spiritual Christian recognizes. Christians delight to observe this day, not, I repeat, as an ordinance, but as being the Lord's day. (Revelation 1:10) The spiritual Christian understands that he cannot dispose of this day according to his inclinations, for his own affairs, for journeys of pleasure or other amusements, because it is the Lord's day. The day when the Lord came out of the grave was not only the first of the week, in contrast with that which preceded it; but the fact of the resurrection set apart this day as "the first Sunday." Up to this moment, Sunday, the Lord's day, had not existed.

What a glorious day was that of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus! It is for us the end of death, and the introduction to life eternal. For the Christian, eternal life has its starting-point in the Saviour's resurrection. His death is the end of our life in Adam; His resurrection is the end of death. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life," not "the life and the resurrection." He must deliver us from our first life, as well as from the death which characterized that life, and was its judicial end, in order, by His resurrection, to begin our new life in union with Him. The resurrection of Christ has then left behind it, for us, our Adam-life and death; and this new life which succeeds death is necessarily eternal life, but eternal life in resurrection, life "more abundantly." (John 10:10) We possess life, life forever, in present enjoyment, and soon on high it will be life in glory. We have for "the end everlasting life."

It is easy to understand why, from the time of Paul, Christians chose the first day of the week, the day of the Lord's resurrection, to come together for the express purpose of the breaking of bread. (Acts 20:7) No one besides had meetings on that day. The Gentiles knew nothing of it; the Jews, scattered everywhere, had their synagogues wherein to assemble on the sabbath-day, the day before Sunday. Paul took advantage of this day to preach Christ in the synagogues; but on the morrow, the day that only Christians knew and celebrated as that of the resurrection, he was found with them at the breaking of bread. By comparing John 20 with the accounts given in the other Gospels, we see that after the early morning of that remarkable day the risen Saviour had appeared to one and another of His own. In John we find recounted His interview with Mary Magdalene, so full of interest, whether on account of the touching way in which the Lord dissipates Mary's anxiety, or because of the message with which He charges her for His own, announcing that they were now in the same position as He is before God, and in the same relationship as He to His Father.

But on the evening of the same day we have something quite special. The occasions when the Lord had showed Himself during that day had had a character more or less individual; but in the evening we see the disciples gathered together. Whatever may have been the motive or character of their meeting—though doubtless they were occupied with what they had seen and heard—the fact remains that they were gathered together. How many things had occurred during the day! What words they had to recount to one another! John tells us (verse 19), “the same day at evening, being the first day of the week.” Yes, the first Sunday. They had shut the doors for fear of the Jews. It was not well on that day to be openly on the side of the crucified One. The rulers of the Jews might well be exasperated against their colleagues, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who had so boldly acted against them in going to beg of Pilate the body of Jesus for burial. It is pleasant to think that these two faithful and devoted men were among the gathered disciples on that night. The Jews had received from the guardians of the sepulcher the overwhelming news that the body of Jesus was no longer there, and they had listened to the recital of the marvelous circumstances that had occurred. (Matthew 28:11-15) One can understand that their hatred was unmeasured, and that the timid disciples should have been together with closed doors.

When thus assembled “came Jesus” —in spite of closed doors— “and stood in the midst.” No longer now a manifestation to Mary, to Simon, to two disciples; it is His presence in the midst. It was the risen Saviour, ready to ascend to glory— “the glory that He had with the Father before the world was,” but into which He was now going to enter as Man. He was in a body of resurrection, which was superior to matter, so that, whether eating fish and honey, or entering through closed doors, all alike were acts of power. He was no more a Man of sorrows, He was no longer “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” (Romans 8:3) “The days of His flesh “were over. (Hebrews 5:7) And He expresses this change when He says to His disciples, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you.” (Luke 24: 44) It is this risen Saviour that the world neither can nor will see till He comes in glory, who is found in the midst of His gathered ones, sanctioning thus by His presence the first assembly of His own after His resurrection on that day—the first Sunday.

It was in their midst that He said, “Peace be unto you.” What words to proceed from the mouth of the One who came from the cross, where He had made peace! Who came in all the power of resurrection, a proof of the full acceptance of His sacrifice by God; for when the disciples were yet in their sins, it could not be a question for them of peace with God. Then the Lord shows them in His resurrection body the marks of the death to which, in grace for them, He had subjected Himself.

Following this, let us remark an important statement—“Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.” The sight of the risen Lord in their midst is the subject of their joy. Thomas was not with them; and when the other disciples saw him, they gave him, in five words, a summary of that remarkable scene “We have seen the Lord,” The following Sunday—the second Sunday—the Lord is again in their midst. We cannot doubt but that during those intermediate days the Lord manifested Himself in some way to His own; but, at all events, on the evening of the second Sunday He was amongst them again when gathered.

How many principles are to be found in these verses! (John 20:19,20) What a beautiful type of our present gathering in the name of and around the person of the Lord! Let us remark four things which are unfolded successively here. First, the presence of the risen Lord in the midst of His own

when assembled; second, the peace which He announces to them on His road from the cross by the way of the resurrection; third, the marks which He shows them in His resurrection body, and which witness to the fact that He has been down into death for them, but with that death now behind Him (see Revelation 1:17,18); fourth, the result produced in the heart of His disciples after the unfolding of all these marvelous things, when they suddenly find themselves assembled around Him. "Then were they glad when they saw the Lord."

In our day, in spite of the evil which has come in, in spite of the ruin of the testimony of the church on the earth, in spite of the great weakness of those who by grace are gathered in His name on the ground and on the principles of the one body (Matthew 18:15-20 1 Corinthians 10:17), we can, on this same footing,, experience these four things which we have just considered.

What grace to us! When on Sunday we are gathered for the breaking of bread at the Lord's table, spread—need it be said — on the ground of the one body, we have (may we realize it more!) all that the disciples had when gathered that first Sunday. Yes, Jesus risen is personally present in our midst, although in a spiritual way. (Matthew 18:20) We enjoy the peace He brings and has made. (Compare Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:17) We have before us the touching tokens which remind us of His death for us; i.e., the Lord's supper, which corresponds so well with the third thing which we have considered; viz, Jesus showing His disciples His pierced hands and side. And if we know and appreciate all this blessing, the result will be deep joy. We can rejoice in having the Lord in our midst. How desirable it would be to realize this presence, so that we might be able to say to any absentees, "We have seen the Lord;" and not, such and such a brother spoke so well—useful and precious as such ministry may be when given to the Lord. The absent ones, on the other hand, would ask, did you enjoy the Lord's presence? not, What brother spoke?

May the Lord Jesus so attach our hearts to Himself, that our gathering together, having Himself for motive or object; may become increasingly what it really is, the most precious thing in the world for us collectively. May we know how to appreciate the mercy which, in a time of ruin, gives us the possibility of having a special meeting, as in Acts 20:7, to remember our precious Saviour together, and to enjoy His presence in the midst. How sweet to the heart of the Christian who comprehends the thoughts of God on this subject! In going to the worship-meeting, we may have the privilege of thinking that we do not go there for ourselves, but as being invited thither by the Lord, to remember Him while waiting for Him, and by Him to worship our God and Father, to whom He has brought us. Therefore, the intelligent Christian will not readily miss such a meeting, except for reasons which hold good before the Lord.

Yes, the Lord Jesus Himself is the motive and the end of our gathering together on the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection. The great thing is to be occupied with Him and not with ourselves; but if then our thoughts do turn to ourselves they should include all the members of the body of Christ on the earth, a body whose oneness is expressed at the Lord's table: "One bread, one body." (1 Corinthians 10: 17)

F. P.

## Ruth

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The book of Ruth, apart from prophetic interpretation, gives us in figure a word of encouragement for our own day. Naomi may represent the testimony of God as we now see it—bereft of its outward glory, walking solitarily in a strange land. Orpah and Ruth, those who stood in relation to it in the time of its wealth and prosperity, but now that all hope of outward restoration seems gone, Orpah, not without some affection, bids it farewell to seek a portion in her own place and amid her own natural surroundings, while Ruth, whose heart is attached to the testimony for its own sake and for the sake of its association with the Lord, abandons all her own hopes and prospects to identify herself with it. No entreaty can dissuade her, nothing can extinguish her affection, her life is bound up with it “Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following, after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord, do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. And when Naomi saw that she was steadfastly-minded to go with her, she left speaking unto her.” Nothing could be more beautiful as presenting a true idea of devoted attachment! All is desolate enough outwardly—nothing to minister to self-love, entreated too to return. All this strained to the utmost the affection of her heart, but served only as an occasion to manifest its sincerity and its undaunted courage.

Deeply interesting, too, is it to see how all this true heartedness is answered, and how by it God accomplished the purpose of His mind. No sooner is Bethlehem reached, than we find Ruth gleaning in the fields at the time of barley-harvest; for not only is the heavenly position accepted and known, but the actual health and growth of the soul is diligently looked to, and in this the Lord secretly overrules and guides to where the best food can be gleaned, and causes to “let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her.” Afterward all this is “beaten out,” and she returns laden; so that not only is the “diligent soul made fat,” but she brings home that which sustains and strengthens the testimony of God in the person of Naomi.

The beautiful story would seem to go further still in its applicability. The true heart goes on to learn and enjoy experimentally that most blessed relationship to Christ, in which the Church stands as His Body and His Bride, as we read: “Husbands, love your wives, even as 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.”

Then we see, in the close of the book, how God honors and blesses the heart that is true, when everything looks dark and lonely, not only in preserving the state of the soul in health, but leading it on to the enjoyment of its highest relation to Christ, and causing it to bring forth children, by whom the testimony is gladdened and strengthened, and the counsels of God accomplished.

The Lord by His Spirit teach us and lead us in this way of faith and love, and give us encouragement by the blessing with which He answered it.

H. A. C.

## Simple Christian Truths: Justification by Faith

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God being what He is—holy in His nature—must necessarily be righteous in all His ways. While, therefore, a sinner needs mercy and forgiveness because of his sins, the very pardon he receives on believing in the Lord Jesus Christ must be, if it is to be a secure and lasting one, grounded on righteousness. This is only another way of saying that God cannot in any age or dispensation act otherwise than in consistency or harmony with His own nature. And this is the scriptural sense of the term so prominent in the epistle to the Romans—the righteousness of God (see chapter 1:17; 21, 22, 25, 26)—and which, when once understood, is the simple key to the doctrine of justification.

Let us, however, first of all explain what is meant by justification by faith, the reader will perceive, if he reads Romans 3, that the apostle uses the expression in contrast with justification by works of law. Under the Mosaic dispensation the promise of life was not to faith; but to works— “The man which doeth these things shall live in them.” (See Romans 10:5) Hence we read in Deuteronomy, “It shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us.” (Chapter 6:25) But the Jew was a sinner already, when he accepted obedience to the law as the condition of blessing, and he turned his back upon Jehovah in shameful apostasy before even the tables of the law reached the camp; and the apostle overwhelms his nation with proofs from their own Scriptures, that they had been guilty of continual sin and iniquity, that there was “none that doeth good, no not one,” that they, equally with the Gentiles, were nothing but guilty sinners before God; and his conclusion is stated in these words: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight.” (Chapter 3:20) It was thus all over with the law as the way of justification, or as he states it in another chapter, Christ is the end (the termination) of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. (Chapter 10:4)

The apostle in the epistle to the Romans announces another way of blessing. God’s way of justification since the cross, a principle, indeed, on which He had acted in notable cases in former ages, but one which was never fully propounded until after the death and resurrection of Christ. We may cite two or three verses to explain it: “That He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Chapter 3:26) “Therefore being justified by faith.” (Chapter 5:1) “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Chapter 4:5) These scriptures set forth the principle of justification most clearly, teaching as they do that God now justifies not on the principle of works, but on that of faith, and that instead of works, He reckons faith for righteousness. This is the meaning, of the expression which the apostle cites from Habakkuk, “The just shall live by faith”—words which contained a blessed foreshadowing of God’s way of grace in redemption; for it does not say, as under the law, “The man that doeth these things shall live by them;” but, “The just shall live by faith.” It is therefore a total change of dispensation; for faith, and faith alone, is what God looks for, and that which He counts as righteousness.

If this is so far clear, before entering upon the object of the faith by which we are justified, let us consider the ground on which God acts. We read in chapter 5, "Being justified by His blood." (v. 9) To remove all misconception, it should be said that the word "by" in this sentence is not the same word as "by" in "being justified by faith." This latter may be taken to signify "on the principle of faith," whereas the former means "in virtue of" the blood. The blood of Christ, in fact, is shown to be what is often termed the meritorious cause of our justification; i.e., that which constitutes before God a ground of all-sufficient value for Him to justify us freely by His grace. A few words will set this in a clear light. Man had no righteousness for God, for all had sinned and come short of His glory; and hence, if God had acted in righteousness, in harmony with His holiness, in indignation against sin, He must have destroyed the sinner. But Christ died on the cross, took there the sinner's place, bore all the righteous need and doom of sin, met all God's claims—, upon the sinner, exhausted, in making a full and all-sufficient atonement, God's righteous judgment against sin. He thus glorified God concerning sin, and it was His precious blood that made the propitiation before God, which His holiness demanded; for it was the blood of Him who had passed through all the waves and billows of judgment, of Him who while truly man was also God. We thus read that God set Him forth a propitiation (or mercy-seat) through faith in His blood (chapter 3: 25), because He could now declare His righteousness—the death of Christ being the ground—both in passing over the sins of the saints of old, through His forbearance, and also that He might now be just and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus. In other words, God could now, in virtue of the blood of Christ, righteously show mercy to the sinner, and reckon faith instead of works for righteousness.

This truth cannot be too firmly grasped, for not only is faith now the principle on which God justifies, but, as pointed out at the commencement of this paper, God also acts on it in consistency with all that He is—with every attribute of His character, and this is His righteousness. There are some who teach that His righteousness means the obedience of Christ to the law which is put down to the account of the believer. Our object is not controversy, and hence we content ourselves with asking the reader to examine carefully every place in which the words occur, and to see for himself if there is a trace of this in the Scriptures. Surely it would read, if this contention were correct, the righteousness of Christ. But it is not so, and the reason is that the mind of the Holy Spirit is on another thing—even upon the glorious demonstration of the righteousness of God: first, in raising from the dead and setting on His right hand the One who had glorified Him in His death (for how could He but exalt Him who had suffered all to vindicate His glory?); and secondly, in justifying every poor sinner who should come to Him in the name of Jesus.

We may now examine a little more closely the object of the faith by which we are justified. At the end of chapter 3 it is the believer in Jesus who is justified. (v. 26) In chapter 4 it is, "If we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead," etc. (v. 24) The difference is both important and instructive, and may be more easily explained if we refer for a moment to what took place on the great day of atonement. (Leviticus 16) The reader will there see that Aaron was commanded to take two goats in connection with making atonement for the people; the one of which he was to kill as a sin-offering, and then to take its blood and sprinkle it upon and before the mercy-seat, while the other—the scape-goat—was to be presented alive before the Lord; and after Aaron had confessed over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, it was to be sent away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. The former of these goats' answers (as a shadow to its substance) to Romans 3:26, where God sets forth Christ a propitiation

through faith in His blood; the latter corresponds with Romans 4:24, where we see Jesus our Lord delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification—bearing our sins, and carrying them away, so to speak, into a land where they can never more be found. The first is propitiation; that is, the blood of Christ sprinkled on the mercy-seat, meeting all the claims of God's glory in respect of our sins. The second is substitution; that is, Christ taking our place, and bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. These two aspects show us in a word Christ meeting God's claims and the sinner's needs.

It will much help the reader if he will carefully consider this difference; and it will aid him at the same time to apprehend the character of the object of faith as presented in these two scriptures. Thus, in Romans 3 it is faith in the blood of Christ (v. 25), or believing in Jesus (v. 26); that is, the reception of God's testimony to the efficacy of that blood in making propitiation for sins. In this passage it is a question of the sinner's approach to God, and we find that the way is opened through faith in the blood of Christ; and coming in dependence upon its efficacy, as declared by God Himself, the sinner discovers that God is both just and the Justifier. In chapter 4 it is faith in God Himself—in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, and for this very reason that here is brought in the resurrection of the One who was delivered for our offenses. As our Substitute He bore our sins, and the resurrection is God's own demonstration that our sins are forever put away; for it was God who laid our sins upon Christ (Isaiah 53), and if He steps forth and raises our Substitute from among the dead, it is that He might show His abounding satisfaction with the work of atonement, and at the same time present Himself to us as the God of all grace in the gift of His own Son, and in raising Him from the dead. It is not only now that we believe in Christ, but through Him also, as Peter writes, we "believe in God that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." (1 Peter 1:21) Believing thus in God includes his testimony to Jesus our Lord as being delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification.; and it is to those who thus believe in God that righteousness is imputed. The reader will see at a glance that this goes further than chapter 3. There it is the efficacy of the blood in propitiation, here it is sins borne, and He who bore them raised up out from under the awful load which had been placed upon Him into a new place before God—a place which should henceforward belong also through grace to every believer. He was raised again for our justification, and it is therefore in a risen Christ that we are justified in virtue of His finished work on the cross.

Now let the reader mark the, sequence to this wondrous unfolding of truth: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Chapter 5:1) The believer is justified, his faith is reckoned for righteousness; yea, the righteousness of God (not the righteousness of man, which, if it were possible to obtain, would no longer avail, but the righteousness of God), which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all and upon all them that believe. (Chapter 3:22) And peace with God is the portion of the justified. The reader will observe that nothing is said concerning peace with God until after the resurrection of Christ is introduced; for it is this which proves, as already seen, that God has been satisfied, yea, glorified, by the death of the Lord Jesus, and thereon He presents Himself to us as the object of faith, revealing, as He has done, all His heart of love and grace in the death and resurrection of His beloved Son, Receiving His testimony then as to the complete expiation and clearing away of our sins, we can now also rest in Him, knowing not only that He has nothing against us, but also that He Himself has justified

us. We have, therefore, peace with God—with God according to all that He is as revealed in Christ, a peace founded upon the work of atonement, and which consequently is as immutable and everlasting as the value of that work before God. It is an eternal peace. Our feelings may fluctuate and change, our experiences may be of one kind today and another tomorrow, but peace with God ever remains the same. Once possessed, though from indifference, coldness, or inconsistency we may fail to enjoy it, it can never be lost. As the hymn says—

“‘Tis everlasting peace!

Sure as Jehovah’s name.

‘Tis stable as His steadfast throne—

Forevermore the same.”

There are other blessings pointed out as belonging to the justified. “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Chapter 5:2) First, we enter also, consequent on justification, through faith upon the full favor of God. Our sins gone, and peace with God made ours, God can now rest in us in perfect complacency; we stand before Him the objects of all His love, blessed with the full outshinings of His perfect favor. As we have peace with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ, so every cloud has been swept from the sky, and we bask in the perfect sunshine of His presence. As to the past, our sins are gone; as to the present, we stand in His full favor; and as to the future, we rejoice in hope of His glory—into which He will infallibly bring us; for if we suffer with Christ we shall also be glorified together. (Romans 8:17) What a heritage! Peace with God, His full favor, and the prospect of the glory. And let the reader carefully remark that this is not a heritage to be won by long years of Christian experience, but one that belongs to us the moment we are justified by faith. Experiences may, as they will, come after, as the fruit of the Spirit through tribulation, etc. (see chapter 5: 3-5); but all this wealth of blessing is connected, and immediately connected, with being justified by faith.

NOTE. —In Romans 5:18 we find the term “justification of life;” but it would be to go farther than our purpose to consider in this paper this branch of the subject. It will suffice to say that this justification is ours as being made alive in Christ, in Christ risen—risen up out of death into a new place where neither death nor judgment can come. It is therefore a positive justification, as we have elsewhere said, inherent in the very life we have in Christ; and it involves our dissociation from Adam, and our connection in life with Christ as the second Man, the Lord from heaven.

E. D.

## Fragment: Salvation

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Salvation has a divine as well as a human side. Nothing that God had created could satisfy Him, save to have Christ as man sitting on His throne. Ah! His ways are not as our ways. God's glory in redemption was to show how low He could let the Son of His love stoop—in letting Him go down to the death of the cross—break His heart in woe—and then to set Him as the center of a new system as the Lamb slain. Would that be according to man's thought of glory? But God would have His own way, and all His glory shone forth in redemption. His glory is to have heaven filled with poor sinners, brands plucked from the burning. And His Christ finds Himself sitting patiently waiting 1800 years for heaven to be so filled.

G. V. W.

## He Led Them Forth by a Right Way

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“He led them forth by a right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.”—Psalm 107:7.

“He led them forth” —no other guide Can lead the way, No other shepherd tend the flock From day to day.

“He led them forth”—the way was right When led by Him; He gently lures the erring ones From paths of sin.

“He led them forth” —they, trusting in His care, rejoice; No hireling, wolf, nor stranger heed; They know His voice.

“He led them forth that they might go” Unto their rest; Though rough the road, if following Him, It is the best.

“He led them forth,” and though they long To reach their home, In patience wait they for His voice— “Behold, I come.”

“He led them forth” —soon listening ears Will hear the shout, The city enter, and with Him “Go no more out.”

## Judges 5:12

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The history of the expression “lead thy captivity captive,” first found in this scripture, strikingly illustrates the remark of a well-known writer, that “he that does not see Christ everywhere in the Old Testament, sees Him nowhere.” It is here addressed to Barak. “Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song; arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.” After the victory over Sisera, the Holy Spirit put a song of celebration into the lips of Deborah and Barak, in which they are made to recall the former state of Israel, the gathering of the people, and the circumstances of the conflict. The words occupying our attention take the form of an exhortation in the prospect of the struggle, urging Barak to grapple with, and to bring into captivity, the power which had been holding Israel captive. Passing onward to Psalms 68, we read, “Thou hath ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men (or rather, as in the margin, in the man); yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” (v. 18) Here the conflict is over (see vv. 1, 2, 12); but the words are not, as in Judges, an exhortation, but a description—a description of the victorious issue of the conflict in the ascension and exaltation of Christ as Man. But there is more, as another has remarked, for. “He has led captive the power of the enemy who ruined all—conferred blessing, and as Man, and in His human nature, He has received gifts even for rebellious Israel, that Jehovah Elohim might dwell among them.” We learn, therefore, that the divine energy of the Spirit, that wrought in and through Deborah and Barak for the overthrow of the enemies of Israel, was but a foreshadowing of that divine power which was displayed in and through Christ in His conflict with the power of Satan in His death on the cross (compare Colossians 2:15), and which will be exhibited through Him when He returns for the deliverance of His people Israel in a later day. The psalm, though all is based upon and flows out from the virtue of His death, refers to the latter; but if we now turn to Ephesians—the last place where the expression is found—the reference is to the former—His overcoming the, whole power of Satan. “When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men,” etc. (Chapter 4:8) That is, He has brought to naught the power that held us captive; and Satan, as the enemy who has been worsted and overcome, now only waits for the execution of his sentence. (See Revelation 20:1,2,10) Not only so; but we, freed from our captivity (compare Hebrews 2:14,15), are brought into the’ enjoyment of the present fruits of the victory in the gifts bestowed by the victorious and ascended Christ. (Ephesians 4:7-14) The effect for Israel will be that their Lord God will once more dwell among them in power and blessing; while believers now have already entered upon the blessings won for them in the provision made “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,” and can joyfully anticipate the full result in the future glory of the victory.

E. D.

## Romans 12:2

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The word here translated “transformed” is only found four times in the New Testament. It is used both in Matthew and Mark to describe the change in the appearance of our blessed Lord on the mountain when “His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.” In these places it is rendered “transfigured.” It is met with finally in 2 Corinthians 18, where it is given as “changed.” Who can doubt that there is an intended connection between these scriptures? When the Lord was “transfigured” on the mount, God showed out, in anticipation, the glorified state on which His beloved Son would enter after His death and resurrection. (See John 17:5) But we believers shall, by His grace, be glorified together with Him. (John 17:22; Romans 8:17, etc); and we learn from the above scriptures how this will be accomplished. Romans 12:2 teaches that it is, first of all, a moral work within—a spiritual change effected by the renewing of our mind. From 2 Corinthians 3:18 we gather that while Christ in glory is the model to which we are to be conformed (compare John 17:19; Romans 8:29), it is by beholding His glory that we are gradually “transfigured” —from glory to glory— into the same image. God thus uses by the Holy Spirit the glory of the Lord to change us morally into the likeness of His beloved Son. But, as 1 John 3:2 tells us, we shall not be like Him until we see Him as He is. We wait, therefore, until His coming for the full accomplishment of the counsels of God, when our bodies as well as our souls will be conformed to the image of His Son. (See Philippians 3:21) In the meantime our moral growth in His likeness will be ill proportion to our present occupation with Him in the place where He is.

“And is it so? I shall be like Thy Son;

Is this the grace which He for me hath won?

Father of glory, thought beyond all thought,

In glory, to His own blest likeness brought.”

E. D.

## 1 Corinthians 15:29

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It should be carefully noted that this verse is connected with verse 19, the verses between—from verse 20 to verse 28 —being a parenthesis. “If in this life only,” says the apostle, “we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable,” if there be no resurrection of the dead; and further, he goes on to say, “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?” etc. It were folly to take the place of danger and liability to death through persecution (see vv. 30-32) if there be no prospect of resurrection. It is this which gives the key to the difficult expression “baptized for the dead.” Through the perils incident to the confession of Christ in these early days martyrdom was of frequent occurrence. The ranks of the Christians were thus continually thinned; but through the grace of God converts were constantly added, and, in this scripture, they are regarded as filling up the vacant places of those who had departed to be with Christ; and thus, when they entirely went across all this thoughts of that people that they would persecute and destroy them if they were the witnesses of it. They must therefore go forth.

Now, what a character does this simple fact give Egypt or the world! God had no sanctuary there. The thoughts and ways of that land were so opposed to Him that He could not set His name among them. His people must go forth ere they could open His temple or raise His altar, because the very things which Israel would, as it were, sacrifice or crucify, Egypt was wont to worship. (8: 26, 27) Israel must therefore be separated from Egypt before they could hold their feast to the Lord.

And so it was afterward. There was a fence all round the Holy Land, a wall of partition that separated Israel in Canaan from the nations. No stranger could eat the Passover, no uncircumcised one could hold the feast of the Lord. And so is it still. We must worship “in spirit and in truth.” No man can call on God aright but by the Spirit which gives adoption, nor can Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost. It is still on the principle of separation that God is to be served or worshipped, as much as when Israel had to go into the wilderness, out of Egypt, to do so, or to distinguish themselves from all the nations by circumcision to do so.

The wall of partition is different, it is true; the place outside the land is not a mere desert, it is true; but the place of service is as distinct as ever it was. “Ye must be born again.” This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent. “To whom coming, as unto a living stone ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood.” Here is the desert, the separated place, the sanctuary of God, within the partition-wall. The Holy Ghost raises it now. Union with Christ forms it; and within that place the abominations of the world are sacrificed now, as the abominations of Egypt were sacrificed in the desert of old. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are to be crucified there, though they are all of the world.

And what was the full feast which Israel held to the Lord when they got out into the desert? Why, it was actually furnished to them by Egypt herself. As soon as they stood on the banks of the Red Sea, they began to hold their feast. They did not wait to reach the mountain. (Exodus 3:12) It is quite true under that mountain they did afterward serve, or do sacrifice, to God. (Exodus 19-40;

Leviticus 1-9) But Egypt herself gave them a song before they reached the appointed place. Egypt was bold enough so far to resist them as to follow them into the very jaws of the Red Sea. Her enmity was perfect; but all this ended in giving Israel a song of triumph over Egypt. (Exodus 15) Before they reached the place to which they had been called this joy was theirs. And so with us, beloved. Satan has done his worst, but Jesus, by death and resurrection, has overthrown him. Had not Satan drawn out his chariots and his horses, all the strength and power of his kingdom, to the hill of Calvary, the song which the resurrection puts into our mouth would not have been ours. But it is ours now, and he can never silence it. It has been raised by himself, and he can never silence it; and we too carry the echo of it in our hearts all through the place, till we reach the mountain of the Lord. In this sense Egypt gave Israel that song, in this sense the god of this world gives our hearts this song; for the eater himself yields meat, the strong man himself sweetness.

And, let me add, that what livingly and practically separates us day by day from the world is communion with Jesus. Faith, or the Spirit, or the new nature, is the first great exodus—our first going into the wilderness, out of Egypt, to hold our feast to the Lord, our act of separation from the world; but that place of separation can be maintained daily only by communion with Jesus, through the same Spirit who first drew us out. J. G. B.

## Fears, Cares, and Hope

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There are three things the Lord Jesus does in this scripture. First, He removes all fears; second, He removes all care; third, He implants a divine hope in the heart. Now, the way the Lord removes all fears is interesting. In verse 4 He says, “My friends, be not afraid,” &c. He says more in verse 7: “Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” No mother shows the same interest in her children as the Lord shows to us. Who ever heard of a mother taking her child on her lap and counting every hair of its head? Yet He takes us in the lap of everlasting love, and shows His love to us, His care and interest in us, by taking the pains to number every hair of our head. What interest! what care! what love! I want you to see that the Lord’s love to you cannot be surpassed. He will never love us more, and He will never love us less, than He does at this moment. His love is perfect. Oh, beloved I do you know that you are an, object of His love, His perfect and everlasting love? How do you know that you are friends of Christ? “He that hath friends must show himself friendly,” and He shows His friendliness to you. He is our friend, but we are His friends too, as shown in John 15:13. Not only He is my friend, true as it is, but I am His friend. Impress this on your hearts—we are His friends. Can you indulge in a fear? I am His friend—removes all fear. What are people most in fear about? The body. Now He says, “Don’t indulge in a single fear. I’ll take care of your body.” Now, instead of having fear, have faith. The Lord wants to expel all fear from my heart. Let us have faith in Him.

Second, He removes cares. (vv. 22, 30, 32) Here is a second thing— “cares.” And how does He take away cares from our hearts? By revealing the Father in heaven. He might have redeemed us and stopped there, but that would not set up relationship between God and us sins forgiven, redeemed by blood, saved by grace, but no relationship. You must get adoption into a family, or be a born child. We are born into God’s family. Adoption is putting us into relationship with Himself as children of God by Christ. We have got the place of children according to His will; and because we are children, He sends forth the Spirit of His Son to dwell in our hearts. Now, you have the saved, Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 1), brought into the family, looking up to heaven and saying, “Abba, Father.” How do you address God? As Jehovah, as God Almighty, or as Father? If you can address Him as Father, that shows you are in possession of the Holy Ghost. You can never forfeit the place of a child, no matter how naughty you are; but you can forfeit communion. We are separated to obedience as Christ obeys. Obedience is the source of enjoyment and of communion with our Lord Jesus Christ. There are many Christians who do not know they have a Father; but there comes a time when they are sealed by the Holy Ghost, and then they look up and say “Father,” and go on to know the Father’s heart. Why is it that the children of God have so many cares? Because, though they may know they have a Father, they do not know His heart. Now, I say to such as have cares, “The man that is most dependent on God is the man who is most independent of man.” We have no cares, because we know a Father’s love and heart; no cares, but unclouded faith in a Father’s love.

Prayer means dependence on God. How extremes meet in that verse: “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto

God.” (Philippians 4:6) You could not know the Father’s heart and have cares. His love cannot be more, and it cannot be less. Oh, you have a Father in heaven! rise up to the knowledge of Him. Every child of God can say, every day, “I know my Father cares for me, and I am one of His favorites. Come what may, I fall back into the arms of my Father. Though the storm roar and the vessel rock, I lie down on the vessel’s deck, and sleep because I know that I have a Father in heaven.” Now that is how Christ takes all fears and cares from our hearts. He removes fears by making us His friends, and He removes cares by showing us the Father’s love.

Third, the Lord implants a divine hope. (v. 3) There are three things He produces in the heart—waiting for Him, watching for Him, and working for Him. If you are waiting for Him, how are you waiting? Like the man in verse 36? He is coming Himself. (John 14:2,3) If you are expecting the Lord’s return before the day is over, you have a person before your heart (1 Peter 1:7,8), if not you are only believing a doctrine in your head, and have not reality in your heart. It is always the One who is coming that is put before us, never the thing that is to happen. Are you waiting as those in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, and Acts 1:10? They were not waiting for an event to transpire, but they, were expecting a person to come. When they went to bed they expected Him before the sun rose again on the world. Did you get up this morning expecting Christ’s second coming before night. If not, you are not waiting for the Lord’s return, you are only believing in a doctrine. John 14 speaks of the Person; not of the place, but of Himself. We want more of Christ. I don’t care how many mansions there will be there, I only care for the Person. In 1 Peter 1, when he speaks of the place, he says, “Ye greatly rejoice;” but when he speaks of the Person, it is “joy unspeakable, and full of glory.” No words can describe it. He went up personally, and He will come personally. He is coming. I don’t say the coming is near, but the Person who is coming is near.

In Revelation 22:7,12,16,20, four times He puts His own Person before the Christian as the One He expects us to be waiting for. What I press on you, beloved, is that we should be like unto men that wait for their Lord personally, socially, commercially, and ecclesiastically. It is our holy and blessed privilege to get up and go to bed expecting our Lord. I know nothing so likely to take place tonight as for the Lord Himself to descend from heaven. That is the blessed, near, purifying, and only hope put before us. You may believe a doctrine, but it will not affect your attire and practice. You must believe in a person for it to touch all the points of the compass. Obedience waits; but a heart is not satisfied only with obedience, it wants to show attachment to Christ by watching. (v. 37) Oh, beloved, it is not only that we are to be waiting, but we are to be watching for Him! (vv. 42, 43) My brethren and sisters, are you on the watch-tower? Oh, beloved, would you not ‘like to be the first to see the bright and morning star? The morning star is for the Church. The sun is what Israel is waiting for (Malachi 4); but we are waiting for the morning star. (Revelation 22) The star comes before the sun. Take care to keep out of evil ways, lest you be not practically ready for Him at His coming. Oh, let us not only be obediently waiting for Him, but let us be affectionately watching for Him! (vv. 42, 43) Now you have got works, devotedness works, works till He comes. He does not want you to sit down with folded arms, and say, I am waiting and watching. You are not like Paul if you sit with sinners round you, and are not trying to gather them in. Paul was ready, whenever he could get listeners, to tell them what the Lord had done for him. We can’t all preach, but everyone has his own work. One who loves us waits and watches for the first opportunity of finding what he can do; and I believe if there is a heart to do, we shall find something to do without any difficulty. If you sit at His feet, lean on His arm, and pillow your head on His bosom, you will

find out what He, likes you to do. There are young converts who need confirming and establishing in the truth; there are others to be told of a Saviour. Everyone ought to be able to speak to the anxious ones. Tell them where and how you got salvation, and where and how they can get it for themselves. If you have a heart for Christ, because He has taken away your fears, expelled your cares, and implanted a divine hope in your heart, then you will be obediently waiting for Him, lovingly watching for Him, and devotedly working for Him till He comes. May God make Him increasingly precious to each one of us for His name's sake!

H. M. H.

## **Trial and Temptation: God's Object in Bringing us into Them**

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We try various things with the object of displaying either their badness or their goodness, and thus God works oftentimes with men. When God allows special trials to overtake natural men, it is to lead them to turn to Him in them, to teach them that “the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will” (Daniel 4:17), and that He is able to abase him who walks in pride.

But trials of similar character to those found among the “children of this world” are found also among God's children. Oftentimes God's desire in thus dealing with them is to manifest to themselves the evil of their own natural hearts (but this is not always necessary); and what is always necessary and of far greater importance in God's sight is to make their faith shine more brightly. This was the desired end in His dealings with His servant Job, though in the same trials Job also learned deep lessons as to nature's (i.e., his own) vileness. (42: 5, 6) God sees faith in His children: this He values, and the trial is a trial of faith. Thus God takes the distinct ground in our trials of helping us. This is in order that faith (which, it may be, He sees is so feeble) may be strengthened. I believe there is no exception, but that every trial of a Christian is a trial of faith, (1 Peter 1:7)

It is evidently not always the desire of God to manifest to me (or to any one else) the evil that is in my nature—evil which always rebels against the trials He sends. For if I bow to the trials, and to the word of God, which tells me God is taking the ground of helping me in and by them, nature gets no place and no voice; that is, it is not displayed, though there.

These trials are called “chastenings” in Hebrews 12:5-8, and “purging” in John 15. In both we see that God is helping us dealing with us as with sons. Chastening is either to prevent or to remedy our running into evil. First, it is by the word of God, which runs always counter to my will; and second, where this fails it is by trials of various kinds, for God seeks to keep me in a right path, and to prevent me from going wrong. Both of these are chastening, but neither is because of any wrong doing. Then chastening and trial are for something wrong done. Then they are remedial, not preventive. I believe God always chastens to prevent before He chastens to remedy. But to be without that, “of which all are partakers,” would mark me as not of the family. If trials and chastenings to prevent my going wrong, as well as trials and chastenings to restore me when I have gone wrong, should both fail to effect this object, God may repeat them, or act in judgment. (1 Corinthians 11:30-32; 1 John 5:16) We have then to “count it all joy,” according to this chapter 1, “when we fall into divers temptations.” God sees in me something that He desires to help. Hence the trial, and hence also my joy. The trials are occasions of manifesting my faith, opportunities given to me to prove God in a way that I have not done previously. What is the meaning of verse 13? “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” I believe God's desire is by the trial to manifest the good that is in us; that is, to bring out that faith which He has given. (Ephesians 2:8) If the trial manifests only

the evil that is in me (rebellion, or plans of my own to get out of the trial), I am drawn away by my own evil lusts. But this was not God's first object in sending the trial. He may see it necessary to show me out to myself; but even with the ungodly their trials are allowed, in order to turn them to God. (See Job 33:19-29; see also Psalm evil) Trials test faith, or they stir up the evil (rebellion, &c) that dwells in my nature. The one casts me on God, the other carries me farther and farther away from Him, as to the experience of my soul. I believe that it means that God never tries a man merely to expose the evil that is in him to the man himself, as if this were the end, the prime motive of the trial, though this may come out (as with Job), in order that we may see what we are. God has a higher object than this, even our blessing. In this way I understand Genesis 22:1.

H. C. A.

## Simple Christian Truths: Repentance and Faith

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When the Lord Jesus commenced His ministry, He cried, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel," (Mark 1:15) The apostle Paul also said, when addressing the elders from Ephesus, that he had testified "both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21) The Lord's commission indeed to His disciples, after His resurrection from the dead, was that repentance and remission of sins (which could only be on faith in the message) should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:47) It is therefore according to the divine order that these two things should be conjoined in preaching the gospel to sinners; and it might be added, with perfect truth, that these two things are also connected, of necessity, in the soul that divinely receives the glad tidings of the grace of God. Whether repentance has been sufficiently insisted on, or whether the essential bond between repentance and faith has been maintained in modern evangelistic preaching, we do not here inquire, as it is our object rather to expound the meaning of these two things, and their mutual relationship in the word of the gospel.

The first thing then that meets the soul is the demand for repentance toward God. This very fact implies the condition of those on whom the demand is made. It for example, the Lord cried, "Repent ye," there was something in those to whom He spoke that needed repentance. It is evident, in a word, that such a message could only be addressed to sinners. The Lord speaks indeed, in another place, of just persons (if there were such) who need no repentance.

It is then because men are sinners that repentance is necessary, repentance toward God; for it is against Him that they have sinned, and under His just judgment that they have consequently fallen. The preaching of repentance is, on this very account, designed to awaken the sinner to a sense of his condition, by bringing before his soul the claims of a holy God, as well as the provisions of His grace. The presentation of God in the gospel as the One who so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life, is surely calculated to touch the most obdurate heart. A God coming in judgment to deal with sinners even the natural conscience could understand; for the soul, whatever its subterfuges, knows its deserts. But a God appearing in grace, sending His beloved Son into the world, making Him to be sin on the cross, and publishing the glad tidings of grate and salvation far and wide, is so contrary to all human thoughts that the sinner may well be arrested, and compelled to consider. Justice is a well-known principle even in this world; but grace is so beyond its experience that it can hardly fail to beget a desire to trace out its source and origin. If God then proclaims the necessity of repentance, He Himself seeks to produce it by bringing the soul under the appeals of His grace, in the gospel.

But let us inquire what repentance is. It is the more important to be careful as to this, owing to the loose and insufficient answers frequently given to this question. Some say that it is sorrow for sin; some that it is a change of mind, dwelling upon the literal meaning of the word; while others affirm that it comprises the determination both to forsake sin and also to do the will of God in, time to

come. In truth it is none of these, nor all of them combined together, though some of the things mentioned may constitute a part of scriptural repentance. That sorrow for sin does not amount to repentance is seen from the apostle's words: "Godly sorrow (sorrow according to God) worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." (2 Corinthians 7:10) Mere sorrow for sin may spring from the sense of shame, or from the bitter consequences which sin often entails, and may often have no reference to God; and even sorrow according to God, as in the above scripture, is not, though it works, repentance. Much less could change of mind, or the vain effort to forsake sins and to do the will of God, be accepted as answering to it. No; scriptural repentance is nothing less than our identification with God in His judgment of our sins, our taking His part against ourselves, and our consequent bowing in the dust before Him in true self-judgment. This involves our hatred of sin, inasmuch as the moment, through grace, we side with God in His judgment upon our deeds, we are so far in communion with Him, as to His thoughts and feelings, about our sins. When we thus repent, we justify God and condemn ourselves. This can never take place but in His presence, when His light, the light of His holiness, reveals sin to us as it appears in His sight; so that we are able to say with Job, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:5,6) Or again, with the psalmist, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." (Psalms 51:4)

The reader, however, must remember that we are explaining what scriptural repentance is, and that we are by no means affirming that even true repentance always answers to this description. There may indeed be but a feeble sense of sin, a very imperfect self-judgment, when the soul is first awakened; but let none on this account be discouraged, for God—who requires nothing, but gives everything in this day of grace—will deepen His own work in His own time, and give a truer estimate of sin to all who seek it. Peter thus proclaimed to his nation concerning Christ, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins." (Acts 5:31) So also, when Peter had explained to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem the reasons and the effect of his visit to Cornelius, they said, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." (Acts 11:18) If, however, repentance is the gift of God, it is a gift He is ever ready to bestow; and we learn from our Lord Himself that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Indeed, it is the father himself that says, concerning the returned prodigal, "Let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." (Luke 15:23,24)

Now, faith, as we have seen, is always conjoined: with repentance; and while repentance is toward God, faith is toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The explanation of this is very simple. It is against God we have sinned, and it is He who has passed judgment upon, our sins; so that, when we are convicted of our guilt, it is to Him we turn with confession and self-judgment: In this state our one need is to learn the way of salvation, just as when the jailor, conscience-smitten, rushed into the presence of Paul and Silas, and cried; "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Their answer was the presentation of Christ. "Believe," they said, "on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts 16: 30, 31) This, as the reader may perceive, is a summary of what was said; for we read in the next verse that they, spoke unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in this house. But the fact of the term—the Lord Jesus Christ—being used, shows that it was a full gospel they preached,—the gospel concerning His person, His death and resurrection, and

His present exaltation as Lord at the right hand of God. The jailor received, through grace, the testimony thus delivered, and there was therefore in his soul faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. He believed God's testimony to the finished work of Christ on the cross, to the value of that work before God as having made full and perfect atonement for sin, and also to the testimony to His resurrection; so that he could then say, "He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." And it is with faith, as so exercised, that remission of sins is always connected. This will be at once understood, if the reader will turn to the passage already cited from Luke 24, where repentance and remission of sins are linked together, both to be preached in the name of the risen Christ. For the moment there is the reception of God's testimony concerning the death and resurrection of Christ, forgiveness of sins is enjoyed. Repentance brings into a right state of soul before God; faith identifies the soul with all the value of the work of Christ. Both therefore are absolutely necessary for salvation.

The question, however, is often asked, whether repentance must always precede faith? The very form of the question, as a few words will show, is misleading. If the true nature of repentance has been apprehended, the reader will see that it cannot be dissociated from faith. For what produces repentance? It is God's testimony, received in power, concerning me as a sinner. Somehow or other light has entered into my soul, and convicted before God, I bow to all He says of me in His word, as a lost sinner. This faith—faith in God's word as to the truth of my condition—must always be connected with repentance. The two things are indissolubly united. But the soul may remain in a state of repentance, if it may be so described, a long time before accepting God's further testimony as to His Beloved Son; and it need scarcely be said that, as long as it thus continues, there will be no peace or liberty. Hence—repentance in such a case precedes faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, and this is undoubtedly the general order of the soul's experience.

We say the general order, for it cannot be denied that there would seem to be many exceptions. Repentance is so little preached, and the forgiveness of sins, or, in other cases, eternal life, without even raising the question of sin, is so often pressed upon souls—especially in so-called revival preaching—that many appear to be converted with scarcely any exercise as to the state, of their souls before God, almost without ever having had the burden of sin upon their conscience. Fully granting that there are genuine cases of this kind, it yet must be said that all such will have conscience-work as to sin sooner or later. With them, what answers to repentance will undoubtedly follow after their conversion. But the divine order is repentance toward God first, and then faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ; and wherever the truth of the gospel is proclaimed according to God, this order will be maintained in the experience of souls. Take, for example, the epistle to the Romans, which in an especial manner presents the gospel. In the first place, after unfolding his theme, the apostle proves that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, then—but not till then—made full and perfect atonement of God's grace for the sinner's guilt, and thereon he proceeds to explain how God has met also the sinner's state as well as the sinner's guilt. We do not here enter into this, beyond calling attention to the fact that the demonstration of our guilt precedes his description of how God has set forth Christ Jesus as a propitiation through faith in His blood. And wherever this divine order of the presentation of truth is followed, it must necessarily produce repentance toward God, though repentance will ever be connected with the reception of the Word, before faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

E. D.

## The Word and Spirit

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One 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 in-subjection 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.” 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 Corinthians 2) 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 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 discern, receive, and minister the things—of God. The coming down from heaven of the Holy Spirit to abide with us forever, 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.”

In the very opening of the sacred writings we have the Word and the Spirit. God spake, and the Spirit of God moved. 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.” 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. 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. 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 that when the gracious revival of faithfulness to Jehovah occurred in those who came back from the captivity, what a careful return there was to act on the word “as it is written;” 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 2:5)

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, whom he at once recognized, 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 2) We cannot contemplate such a scene, and ponder also 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 which was 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 the Acts, we read that those who were filled with the Spirit not only declared with intense earnestness to those around the wonderful works of Gods 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 1:23) and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

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 Revelation 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 added 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 given us with these 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 followed? And why was the third day’s creation 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 24:44)

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.” 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 indicated 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 honoring 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.

H. H. S.

## 2 Samuel 23:20-21

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While it needs great caution in the interpretation of the meaning of scripture names, there may yet be often found in them some very instructive lessons. In this passage the combination of the different names is very remarkable. Benaiah signifies, "Whom God has built;" Jehoiada, "Jehovah knoweth;" and Kabzeel, "God has gathered." Putting these meanings together, we learn that Benaiah was the son of one whom the Lord knew ("I know my sheep"), and had been built up in the truth by God Himself, and knew his place in God's assembly (Kabzeel). In the next place his—acts are described. He had slain two lion-like men of Moab. Moab means "progeny;" that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and inasmuch as the men were lion-like, it was the flesh under full Satanic energy. He also slew a lion in the midst of a pit in the time of snow. Satan is compared by Peter with a roaring lion, 'and thus Benaiah was enabled to overcome Satan himself in his own haunts. He slew, moreover, an Egyptian, a goodly man, the expression of the fairer aspects of the world; and just as David beheaded Goliath with his own sword, so Benaiah, having "plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, slew him with his own spear." The spear, like the sword, is a symbol of the power of death, and, as another has remarked, "Death is the best weapon in the arsenal of God when it is wielded by the power of life," and this was Benaiah's experience in his conflict with the world (the Egyptian). Taking then the whole history, we learn that this child of grace, built up on his most holy faith, and gathered out upon the ground of God's assembly, successfully meets and overcomes the flesh, Satan, and the world. This too was of grace; but, while of grace, it reveals the path and possibility for every believer.

E. D.

## Hebrews 4:3

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A whole system of erroneous doctrine has been built upon the words, "For we which have believed do enter into rest"—a system which is often named by its advocates "the rest of faith." That is, as it is contended, upon the exercise of faith in Christ in all that He is for the believer in his daily life, as a Saviour from the power as well as from the guilt of sin, the soul passes instantly into a region of perfect rest, where conflict is no more known. In its essence this teaching is the same as what is known as "holiness by faith." Now, that there are boundless resources in Christ for the believer in his daily path is unquestioned, and it is our failure that we know so little how to avail our self of them—of the grace, the wisdom, the power, &c., which are treasured up in Him; but the present question is whether this is the meaning of our passage. In answer to this, it should be first remarked that the rest spoken of is the rest of God. In the previous chapter we learn that God had sworn, concerning Israel, they should not enter into His rest; and the reason they could not enter in was unbelief. (v. 19)

The promise therefore of entering in was left over, "for unto us was the gospel preached (the gospel concerning God's rest), as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." This leads to the state, pent before us, that "we which have believed do enter into rest." The rest spoken of belongs therefore to those, and only to those,—who believe the gospel preached.

The further question now arises, Is this rest present or future? In verses 3 and 4 we have the character of the rest; in verses 5 and 6 the truth is recalled that Israel had been excluded through their unbelief, and hence that some must enter into the rest. Then it is said that He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, "Today, after so long a time for if Joshua had given them rest, then would He not afterward have spoken of another day." The conclusion is now drawn, "There remaineth therefore a rest (a keeping the sabbath) to the people of God;" i.e., it is yet future, being in fact the sabbatical rest of eternity, God's own rest, into which He 'in His grace proposes; as He ever has proposed, to bring His people.

That there is a present rest, both of conscience and heart, for the believer, needs ever to be insisted upon; but the rest here spoken of goes further, and points to the end and result of all God's purposes for, and ways with, His redeemed, just as the Jewish sabbath was the type and figure of the end of His counsels for Israel. We, as they in the wilderness; are journeying onward to the rest which He has promised; and "we which have believed" shall infallibly enter it, and then for eternity we shall, through infinite mercy, share in the sabbath of our God.

E. D.

## As Dear Children

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What a wonderful place the Lord sets us in here, and sets us in the consciousness of it too, showing us how we get to it, with its effects and fruits; but that consciousness is hindered by everything that is in contrast to God—worldliness, carelessness, or negligence. Still it is where God has really set us, and we are to be “followers of God, as dear children.” To think that such a word should come out of His mouth to us, calling us “dear children.” We are familiar with the thought of being sons of God, “children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;” but when we think of the nearness and intimacy of this, and His revealing Himself to us, and acting as such, it is wonderful. It is not what He has done to deliver us from condemnation; but when the sin is all gone, to be remembered no more, He sets us in this relationship of “dear children,” and in the consciousness of it. If He says to me, “Dear child!” what a thought I have of Him, and of the wonderful condition I am in: the expression draws out the consciousness of the love in the place. He may have done all kinds of things for me, but the very word conveys to me where I am. If we come to think of it, and measure it, we have to think of Christ. He says, “I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” He dwells in us to be the power and enjoyment of it, and attracts down from the Father’s heart ‘what He feels for Him and for us, and that is shed, abroad in our hearts.

We have been accustomed to look at God as a Judge—a solemn truth in its place. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity; but ‘there is such a complete putting away of sin. Looking at the work of, Christ, there is such an entire putting away of sin according to God’s glory, that I get into the light, and the only thing it shows, is that I am as white as snow, leaving the heart free to enjoy the present “grace wherein we stand.” Being justified by faith, I have peace with God. I can say I am waiting for the glory, and besides that, I have access to this present grace. It is of all importance for our hearts and affections that we should be there with God; we cannot enjoy it if we allow evil, and even negligence dims our hearts, and prevents our apprehension of it.

We get the doctrinal part before, and now He says, “You are my dear children;” it is not a mere doctrine, but the address of God to us. When He says “dear,” what says it? It is His heart, what He feels about us, poor creatures as we are; but He says it because He feels so. He is expressing Himself and reaching us, and that is what is so thoroughly blessed. A child is to be obedient and dutiful, and all that; but it is so wonderful that God should say this, and He reckons on our hearts walking in it. This is the outgoing of God’s good pleasure and delight, and I know I am His delight, poor unworthy creature as I am; it is not a question of worthiness, that is in Christ. The sin has been so put away in God’s sight that His heart can go out. Christ’s love took Him to that baptism “I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” Till then His love could not go out freely, but then it could flow out in unmingled freeness; perfect love in the drinking of that terrible cup, now the love is free to act. Grace reigns because righteousness is accomplished. His whole love can go out through grace. I get, through the work of Christ, God free to satisfy His love, all the purposes and delights of His own nature. The love is free to flow out in all its fullness. You never get a word about the prodigal when he comes to the father (a great deal

about him when he is coming); but you hear about the father, and his joy in having him. The poor prodigal was happy enough, but it is not “meet to make him happy;” he had the best robe, but it is “meet to make merry, and be glad; for this my son was lost; and is found.” He tells it to us that we should know it. It was meet that He should make merry, and have all glad around Him, because this poor sinner had come back. There is no hindrance to the full satisfaction of His soul, His own joy to have this one in.

We get two great truths —the work of Christ that was needed to put away sin, and open out this love; there is a new creation, and we are dead. We are to put off the old man and put on the new. Then the love is perfectly free, and I get hold of another thing—what did it all come from? what have I got into? It comes from God; the very nature is of God. “Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” We are of God, and the righteousness of God; all is of ‘God, and according to. God, and we have a nature capable of understanding it, and of enjoying all God is. All is free and full, and this nature can let itself out to me in love. The thing I am brought to enjoy is of God, and all my intelligence for conduct and feeling and everything is of God. Paul could say, “Be followers of me;” but the Spirit here goes up to the source, and says, “Be ye followers of God;” “renewed in knowledge after the image, of Him,” etc.; “which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,” and love too.

Having the divine nature (sin put away) we are in the light as God is in the light, brought into the presence of God, and capable of enjoying it. It is not of human wisdom or knowledge, but of a pure heart; we learn more and more every day if we are walking with God, but it is not intellect. All the intellect in the world never knew what it is to be loved, never found out God; found wills and lusts, but never found God. We learn Him by our wants. The one who learns what strength is, and knows the comfort of it, is a poor feeble person who cannot get along a rough road; and a strong one lends his arm. What a comfort strength is to him. The real wants of the—soul God has met in every possible way. “When we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly.” The perfectness of His love came out, in that when we had no strength to get out of our state He says, I must come down to you. It takes me up to enjoy it in God Himself He comes down to the sinner where he is, and the sinner learns, there is love enough to reach from the holy throne of God to him, and to take his poor heart up to the throne of God. Not wisdom or intellect, but God revealing Himself; and as He thus acts in love, I get the very spring of it, and the root from the beginning to the end as I know Him, the light comes into my conscience, and makes everything manifest, and the love comes too. We have to learn more of the treacherousness of our hearts, of the wiles of Satan, and of the world; but I am in positive relationship with God, and sin outside (by faith, I mean), and there we have to keep it. In the heavenly places as to doctrine, then we get the practical power. He sends us out from Himself to the world that men may know what He is. How close we have to keep to Him, and to judge ourselves, learning utterly unsuspected bits of self and selfishness, and self-confidence in ourselves. There is another thing—we are brought to God, but not I as a poor human being having to do with God. I get Christ, God revealed in man; He came down to where we were as poor sinners. He can say to Philip, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath, seen me hath, seen the Father.” God did not want to exalt Himself; but there was one new thing with God, to come down to us. The love that came down to be near us (as a man, but the divine nature breaking through the lowliness), so that when I talk to the carpenter’s son I find the Son of God, the most lowly, humble minister of goodness to me. “For

ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Poverty was the new thing with God, and the poverty was that He came among us. I know God by it, I get it by an intimate object; the nearer I get to Him, the more I see the divine majesty. He is close to us, reaches us, touches us; nay, He is become our life. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him." So near us—not physically, though He was that—that "He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one." All the power and grace in Him, but we brought into this like condition. "I ascend unto my Father and your Father; to my God, and your God." The One I can be intimate and at home with I find engaged with myself; and He expects our affections, expects our interest in His glory. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I am unto the Father." We often sing—

"Jesus, Lord, 'tis joy to know

Thy path is o'er of shame and woe."

He expects us, while worshipping and adoring Him, to have our part in His joy.

There is great comfort in putting off the old man, practically in power. I have put it off altogether, though I have to fight it every day; but I have a right to say, through the efficacy of Christ's death, "I have put off the old man, and put on the new." It is complete deliverance. I may forget it, and let the old man come out; but ye have "put on the new, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Morally, it is association with Himself. Who is the righteous one? God. And the holy one? God. Well, you are "after God;" no lower measure and standard. Even when He chastens us it is that "we might be partakers of His holiness." (In us it is a new creation, in Him it is eternal) That is what I am before God, and according to what God has wrought, and I have done with the old man. I am after His nature or else I could not enjoy God. We have the new nature, Christ is become our life; and the new creation in me is "after God," according to what He is. He has not created a thing inconsistent with Himself. In that I am to live. We are weak and feeble, but we have it in virtue of Christ's work. He being glorified we have the Holy Ghost. Being sprinkled with the blood we receive the Holy Ghost. He comes and dwells in us, takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He stirs us up, leads, guides, and corrects, and rebukes, if necessary.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of, God." (v. 30) Don't grieve Him. "We know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He has given us." There I get not only a nature to enjoy, but power suited to my capacity, whether as a 'babe or father in Christ. Christ having taken His place as man at the right hand of God, the Holy Ghost comes down and tells me, "This is your place, and you are all dear children." The blessed Spirit of God dwells in us, and we are not to grieve Him. All my sins are gone, I am as white as snow. He has stepped in and charged Himself with the whole thing, drank the cup, and I am dead and risen, 'and get consequently this present grace, and the Holy Ghost the earnest of what I shall have when He comes. I have it in a poor earthen vessel, and learn to discern good and evil, and a deal about myself—about God too, but I learn it as a dear child. It may be very humbling, as it was to Israel in the wilderness, but they could never have learned it in Egypt. In the wilderness they had a great deal to learn, and very humbling things too, and so have we; but we are in "the light as He is in the light," and "as He is so are we in this world"—before God. Not as He was, because He was absolutely sinless; but, wonderful to say, as He is in glory. As He is, because grace has put us in Him before God. There I am between accomplished redemption and the glory He has won. The Holy Ghost comes as the earnest, and we are dear

children, and He speaks to us as such. The spring as to conduct is, “You, as my child, honor your Father.”

If He is not my Father there is no sense in it. As brought to God I have learned what God is as to His ways of grace. (vv. 31, 32) Did God come and clamor against you in justice? He sent His Son to give Himself for you, and has forgiven you. You go and do so to others. You are a dear child, go and manifest what God is, He has forgiven you. There is a man who has wronged me; I go and forgive him as God forgave me, if I am near enough to God to do it, to show out what we have been learning is the joy of our souls.

“Walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us.” There we see the preciousness of Him who brought it so close to us. Don’t you know what that means? Have you not understood what Christ’s love to you as a poor creature was? Have you not learned for yourself that He gave Himself—no light thing—up? Then you go and give yourself up. He did not give a great deal for us (everything in one-sense), He gave up Himself. The law requires the measure of your love to yourself to be that of your love to your neighbor. In a world like this I want something’ more than that. I have to do with people who wrong and insult and harass and outrage me. Christ did more than love us as He loved Himself—He gave Himself up entirely. The perfection of love is measured in self-sacrifice. We may fail in it, but there is no other measure. “We ought to lay down our lives for the ‘brethren.” Was not God manifested in Christ? Is not Christ your model? He, the blessed Son of God, walking through this world, manifested God with a divine superiority over evil. It is put away between me and God, and I am to be above it between me and man—the power of good in the Midst of evil. If you see unrighteousness, and your spirit boils over, that won’t do; you may “be angry and sin not”—righteous indignation at evil. Christ was the expression of unavenging righteousness—doing well, and suffering, taking it patiently.

One word as to carrying this through verse 2. I give myself up for others, but to God. If I give myself to others, I may not go right, for they may not go right; but the lower and worse the person I give myself up for, the higher it is. The principle of Christ was—He gave Himself to God, but for the vilest. It was a sacrifice of love—love that had its motive in itself for God, its object in God, and that kept it steady in the path. Further in the chapter (v. 14) you get light brought in—the full light into the conscience, and the full love into the heart, and then you will go right. There our souls should be—walking in the light, our consciences alive, and our hearts in the undisturbed consciousness of that word of God, “Dear children,” the feeling of affection going out from His heart. So that when I go to Him there is not only the love that sought the sinner, but the love now, in the relationship that finds delight in expressing itself. Wherever the world or selfishness gets in (evil too, I need not say), that is not after God, but after the world, and after the devil. That is like a man asleep. He does not hear or speak, he may dream, and the word is, “Arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” If my heart goes with the things of the world, Christ is not shining into it. There may be glimmerings, but I cannot say “Abba” and go to Him with the sense that He will say, “Now, my dear child, go and follow me.”

J. N. D.

## Simple Christian Truths: The Person of Christ

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The truth concerning— the person of Christ lies at the foundation of Christianity. Apart from what He was, even His death on the cross would not have made atonement for sin. It is necessary, therefore, to be clear on this subject, being as it is a component part of the Christian faith. On this account the apostle John wrote, “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine” (the doctrine of the Christ; i.e. the true teaching concerning Him), “receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” (2 John 10,11,) Such a one while claiming to be a teacher must not be regarded even as a Christian. The truth involved is both fundamental and vital, so that neutrality concerning it would amount to identification with those who rejected it. Another remark is needful. Our Lord Himself said, “No man, knoweth the Son, but the Father.” (Matthew 11:27) By this we are to understand that no one can grasp the mystery of His being, of the union in Himself of the divine and human natures. Acquainted with Him we can be, for He has also said, “I know my sheep, and am known of mine, as the Father knows me and I know the Father.”

There is thus no limit to the possible intimate knowledge of Christ Himself; but together with this, it must never be forgotten that none but the Father comprehends the Son, the mystery of His being who, when down here, was God manifest in the flesh. It savors therefore both of presumption and profanity to seek to penetrate into that which is absolutely concealed from all human eyes. The attempt has often been made, as church history abundantly testifies; but those who have made it, left to their own imaginings, have always fallen into dangerous errors, and become the blind instruments of Satan to scatter the people of God, while those who listened to or read their unholy speculations were often drawn into the vortex of doubt and infidelity. What is revealed may be pointed out for reception with adoration, but to proceed one step beyond is to forsake the light of revelation for the darkness of unhallowed reasonings.

There are three scriptures which in a very special way bring before us the glory of the person of our blessed Lord; they are John 1, Colossians 1, and Hebrews 1. We may then, first of all, look at these in the order named. The very first verse of John’s gospel brings Him in all His divine majesty before our souls— “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” And then it is added, “The same was in the beginning with God.” Doubtless this precise title— if title it be is used in relation to errors current in the apostle’s day. Into these we need not enter, for the term is simple, and means, as has been said, that He is, and is the expression of the whole mind that subsists in God. Let the reader reverently ponder this statement; for what does it imply? Nothing less than that He is divine, for He who was the expression of the whole mind of God, could not be other than Himself God. No created intelligence, however exalted, could by any possibility be the complete display of the divine mind. Prophets and apostles were often used, though they did not always understand the messages they had received, to communicate parts of God’s mind, but none but the eternal Word could be its perfect expression. The saying of the old writer is strictly true—That only God could comprehend God.

The first verse, as often pointed out, asserts three things of the Word—that He is eternal in His existence—He was in the beginning; distinct as to His person—He was with God; and He is divine as to His nature—He was God. That the words “In the beginning” reach back into eternity is plain from verse 3, for the Creator of all things (“and without Him was not anything made that was made,” whether angels, principalities, or powers, as well as men), necessarily was eternally existent. Creation indeed was the first expression of God, and that, as we here learn, was by Him who was the Word, In Him also was life, and the life was the light of men. (Compare Psalms 36:9) Of whom could this be said but of one who was Himself absolutely divine?

Passing now to verse 14 we read: “The Word became” (not was made) “flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” We may read in connection with this, “No one hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” (v. 18) We have thus brought before us the mystery of the incarnation—the Word became flesh. He who was with God, and who was God, became man, and tabernacled amongst men in a human body. But though His essential glory was thus shrouded from the natural eye, there were those who, with their eyes opened by the Holy Spirit, beheld His glory—not simply His moral glory, but His divine glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. Thus, down here as Man, He was the perfect expression of God—the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. Creation was an unfolding, a display or revelation of God (see Romans 1:19,20); but the Word become flesh was the revelation of the Father, as He said to the Jews, “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also” (John 8:19), and to Philip, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” (John 14:9) What then do we learn from these statements, but that He whom we know as the Lord Jesus Christ was the eternal and divine Word, that He was God, that He was the Creator of all things, and that He stepped forth into time and became flesh, a Man amongst men, “very God and very Man?” And this, we repeat, is one of the essential truths of Christianity.

We will now turn to Colossians 1. The apostle tells of how the Father “hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light...delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (literally, the Son of His love); and then, after adding that it is in Him (in Him who is the Son of His love) “we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins,” he proceeds to describe His glories. First, He is the image of the invisible God. If the reader will look at Genesis 1, he will see that man was made in the image and likeness of God; and this indicates a twofold distinction Man. was made in the image of God; our blessed Lord was that image. Secondly, man was made in God’s likeness; but it would be derogatory to the Godhead of the Son to say that He was the likeness of God. Being Himself God, He could not be the likeness, but, as manifested in time, He was the image of God. Man was made in the image of God, for he represented God in the first creation. When Christ came, He, as the image of God, not only represented Him, but was in Himself the perfect presentation of God. Truly read, therefore, this one brief statement is the assertion of His divine claims. He was also the Firstborn of every creature, or rather the Firstborn of all creation. Let us borrow the words of another as to this: “He is then the image of the invisible God, and, when He takes His place in it, the Firstborn of all creation. The reason of this is worthy of our attention—simple, yet marvelous. He created it. It was in the person of the Son that God acted when by His power He created all things, whether in the heaven or in the earth, visible and invisible. All that is great and exalted is

but the work of His hand; all has been created— by Him (the Son), and for Him. Thus, when He takes possession of it, He takes it as His inheritance by right. Wonderful truth, that He who has redeemed us, who made Himself man, is the Creator! But such is the truth.” And then, that there might be no misconception as to the glory of His person, we read, “And He is before all things”—before the existence of a single thing, when the self-existent One, God Himself, dwelt (if we may venture the words) in the solitude of His own blissful being. “And by Him all things consist;” called into existence by His creative word, they are dependent still for continuance upon His power. And be it remembered that these things are revealed, not to be explained, but to be received; and to be received that our hearts may be filled with adoration as we think of the essential glory and majesty of Him who came into this scene as man, and humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

In the epistle to the Hebrews we shall also find, if in connection with another line of truth, the glories of the person of Christ unveiled. God, says the writer of this epistle, hath in these last days spoken to us by the Son; and he adds immediately, “Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.” So that we have in these few lines a very trinity of glories—Son of God, Heir of all things, and Creator. “All the vast system of this universe, those unknown worlds that trace their paths in the vast regions of space in divine order to manifest the glory of a Creator—God, are the work of His hand who has spoken to us, of the divine Christ. In Him has shone forth the glory of God. He is the perfect impress of His being. We see God in Him in all that He said, in all that He did, in His person. Moreover, by the word of His power He upholds all that exists. He is then the Creator; God is revealed in His person. But who, we may ask, is this glorious Being? It is no other than. He who was crucified through weakness, Jesus of Nazareth, as He was known amongst men, the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, as depicted by the prophet; for as soon as we are told that He upholdeth all things by the word of His power, it is added, that it is He who made by Himself purification of sins, and has thereon sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. This identifies Him at once with the Christ who died on the cross, and who rose again on the third day, and is now at the right hand of God.

There is, however, still more in the chapter. He is the Son of God as born into this world, spoken of as such in the words, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” As the First-begotten, when introduced into this scene, “all the angels of God” are commanded to worship Him. He is addressed even as God: “Unto the Son He saith, thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom.” Once more He is pointed out as the Creator; and finally, His position is given at the right hand of God until His enemies are made His footstool. It is glory upon glory which is here unfolded, and all alike centering in and radiating from the Son, in whom, in these last days, God has spoken, and who not only became flesh and tabernacled amongst men, but was also, as we learn from John’s gospel, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

But it is not only in such scriptures as these that the character of the person of Christ is revealed. Every page of the gospels tells that He was the God-man. If, on the one hand, He was a homeless stranger, a weary Man sitting on Samaria’s well; if He hungered in the desert, slept in the boat; if He groaned, wept tears of sorrow and sympathy; on the other hand, He wrought miracles, cleansed lepers, opened blind eyes, raised the dead to life, asserted His power over the winds and the waves, controlled the movements of the fish of the sea; in a word, He declared by His mighty

acts that if a man He was also God. Hence He said to Philip, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." (John 14:11) And again, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man" (rather, no other one) "did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." (John 15:24) And the testimony which He gave by His words and by His works during His sojourn here was confirmed and sealed by His resurrection from among the dead, for He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Romans 1:4)

There is even yet another line of truth pointing—unmistakably pointing—to the same conclusion. He received and approved the confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and traced it to a special revelation from His Father in heaven. His disciples and others fell at His feet, and in their measure, and according to their light, rendered to Him what only belonged to God. Nay, He claimed from His own what could only be properly given to God. They were to follow Him, love and serve Him; and on His part He engaged to give them rest, peace, and eternal life; promised to return to receive them unto Himself, that where He should be, after His departure, they should be also. Take the one instance of the thief on the cross. In his penitence and faith he turned to the One who was crucified by his side, and said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." The answer was, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise," (Luke 23:42,43) That He was man was proved by the fact of His crucifixion, and these blessed words which He spake to the malefactor demonstrate no less clearly that He was also God. And such is the professed faith of Christendom, and nothing less can be received as Christian faith. This must be ever insisted upon with uncompromising—fidelity, and especially now, when there are not wanting signs of a rising wave of socinianism, which threatens to spread throughout the land, and which, as it is the result of increasing rationalism, is also the sure precursor of wide-spread infidelity, and, it may be, apostasy. The enemy is very subtle. He will even commend Christ as man, if he may but thereby raise doubts as to His Godhead; and for this purpose he chooses rather to use as his instruments professed Christian teachers than open adversaries. We need therefore, as not ignorant of his devices, to be on our guard, and to cling to the precious truth with ever-increasing tenacity, that the Christ, who as concerning the flesh was born of the seed of David, is over all, God blessed forever. (Romans 1:4;9. 5) And it is also written, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." (1 John 4:15)

"Thou art the everlasting Word,

The Father's only Son;

God manifest, God seen and heard,

The heaven's beloved One.

Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,

That every knee to Thee should bow."

E. D.

## A Meditation on Song of Solomon

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The character of the soul's communion delineated in this little book is very elevated. It is something that we may say with sorrow we little reach. There is no question of sin at all here; it is no inquiry either into the fact or the nature or the ground of our acceptance with God. Such questions and inquiries are here settled beforehand. The communion here is upon the settlement of them all. It is joy in God, delight in Christ, occupation with Himself, that we get here. It is not the finding of Him out, but the enjoying of Him as found to be infinitely suited to the soul's blessing; nor is it the confession of sins. The communion is a sinner's communion most surely, but it is of a consciously pardoned, accepted, and loved sinner; and when any sorrow or repentance is felt or owned here, it is not for any blot or open transgression, but for some spiritual backsliding, some momentary coldness, some infirmity in maintaining or cultivating the soul's due fervor towards Christ. This last point I feel to be especially significant, and such as gets its illustration in this little portion of the book. There is in the believer here the detecting of something wrong; but what is the character of the wrong? Nothing gross or even open in conduct, nothing established as a habit, nothing that a soul that had not been already in simple and earnest fellowship with Jesus would have been apprehensive of; that is, a temporary slothfulness of heart. The very repentance and confession is of such a nature as intimates the fine tone of the soul that could feel and make it; the contact is so tender that the very perception of it speaks the delicacy of the organ which, met it and resented it. But what an element is this! Ah, how coarse are our sensibilities compared with all this! Our poor souls are rarely here. They are engaged oftentimes in doing first works again, in grieving over the advantage which our lusts have taken of us, the surprises which the heat of wrong tempers have wrought, and such like things that keep us below this peace and spiritual joy in Christ. This sickness of love, this keeping of the garden of spices, here so blessedly presented, surely it is little of this we know. Is God thus our exceeding joy? Is it thus in the chambers of the King in thoughts of glory we walk? Is our spikenard thus greeting our Lord, and our souls thus able to call Him nothing less than our Beloved? It were well indeed if such affections as these were filling and commanding our hearts. Thus should we have weapons of sure victory wherewith to meet our enemies, and to beat down the intrusive desires and thoughts that defile us so often. They could not with any power come against a soul thus occupied. This joy of the Lord would indeed be our strength; but indeed, we know it but poorly. It is not the love of pity in the Saviour which the sinner here enjoys, but the love of, complacency which there is in Christ towards His elect. The soul here has tasted the pity and salvation of the Son of God, and is now occupying itself with thoughts of His delights in His saints. Oh, what communion is this! what a dwelling-place for faith opens here! what a banqueting-house for the soul! How far distant from fear and clouds of conscience such regions lie; the land of the turtle indeed, the garden of all pleasant fruits. But where is the precious faith to enter it and walk there? We need to cry for largeness of heart in the bowels of Christ Jesus.

J. G. B.

## Fragment: Atonement

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In the Epistle to the Hebrews (chaps. 9: 10) we find full light as to the atonement and its blessed consequences. In chapter 9:12-14 we have the stupendous truth that Christ entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. That blessed One brought up, as it were, the atoning blood (as to its efficacy and value) under the eye of the eternal God, and it was accepted there. In that acceptance and in Him His people stand; the blood applied to conscience, purging it, and giving title to the believer to enter with boldness into the holy of holies. (Chapter 10:19) What a portion is here revealed to the child of God! That by the death of Jesus he has been brought in spirit and by faith into the presence of God without spot or stain upon the soul, the conscience purified as well as sins purged away, so that he is without fear (which has torment) before God, with the sweet liberty "to serve the living God." Precious privilege, no longer to be the servant of sin or of the world, but of the living God!

G. A.

## **Fragment: The Person of Christ**

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It was the Person of Christ which gave all its virtue to His death or sacrifice: and it was His Person which gave its peculiar glory to all He did in His course of self-humbling obedience.

## **Romans 14:5-6; Galatians 9:10-11; Colossians 2:16-17**

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Is there any contradiction in the teaching of these several passages? That is impossible; but it is exceedingly interesting to trace out their connection. In Colossians 2 we have the consequence for the believer, in one aspect, of death with Christ. In Romans 6 we are delivered from sin—in chapter 7 from the law—through having died with Him. But in Colossians 2 we are delivered from man, whether it be on the side of philosophy or of religion. As dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, we are not “as alive in the world” to be subject to ordinances. No human precepts or religious rites or observances have thus any claim upon the believer, because, through death with Christ, he has passed altogether out from under the yoke of the first man. He acknowledges, on the new ground of death and resurrection with Christ, the authority of Christ alone. Everything else, however, sacred from long usage, all “the traditions of the elders,” he entirely refuses, even the meats, drinks, holy days, new moons, and Sabbaths of Judaism; for they have now become to him but “rudiments of the world,” and were never, at any time, more than a shadow of things to come, while the body is of Christ. (v. 17)

In Galatians the apostle had to encounter a strenuous effort to re-impose the yoke of Judaism on the saints, and this he would not bear with for a moment. It was a total denial of grace, and hence he does not hesitate to withstand even Peter to the face, “because he was to be blamed” for countenancing the Judaistic spirit, which led to a distinction between Jewish and Gentile believers. (See chapter 2) When therefore these teachers of the circumcision made Jewish observances obligatory, the apostle declares that they were turning again to the beggarly elements, unto which they sought again to be in bondage; and he says, “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.” (Chapter 4:10,11) No quarter would he give to the imposition of such a yoke.

Passing now to the Romans, the case is very different. It is here a question of one who was “weak in the faith” (v. 1); and such was to be received, but not “to doubtful disputations.” He might as yet be undelivered from many things, as was often the case with Jewish converts; he might still be entangled with many a Jewish habit as to meats, and as to the observance of holy days. Still, such an one was to be received, borne with, even while seeking to lead him on to the full truth of the Christian position; and the apostle reminds us that we are not to judge another man’s servant, or set at naught our brother, or put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his way. In a word, weak consciences are to be respected (vv. 20, 21), and the strong must bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves, incited to this course by the blessed example of Christ, who pleased not Himself, but, as it is written, “the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.” (Chapter 15:1-3)

## 2 Timothy 2:20-21

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The difficulty which is often felt by many as to this scripture would be at once removed by giving attention to the exact language employed by the apostle. He does not say, "In the house of God," but "In a great house there are not only vessels," &c. In fact, he uses an illustration to set forth what professing Christianity—the house of God, indeed, as built by man (1 Corinthians 3)—has become; i.e., it has become a mixed thing, like a great house with vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor in it. The question therefore whether the vessels are teachers or saints proceeds upon a misconception, inasmuch as they only illustrate the fact pointed out, that the professing church has become so mixed and corrupt that separation is now necessary within its own borders. Whether converted or unconverted is not the point, for all are on that ground as professors; and all, whether converted or otherwise, must be separated from it if, like the vessels to dishonor, they are polluted by unholy associations or employments.

If a man therefore purge himself from these—the vessels to dishonor—he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work. The next verse (22) points out that there must also be moral separation, and fellowship with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

E. D.

## Matthew 28:19

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The formula which I have used in baptizing is, In the name of the Lord Jesus I baptize thee unto the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. My reason is, that two things are thus owned —the Lordship of Christ, and the full and Christian revelation of the name of God, which is thus called upon the baptized person. Surely baptism is connected with these two important truths. “To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.” (1 Corinthians 8:6)

“I quite admit that Scripture gives us no historical account of any carrying out of the commission in Matthew 28 to the nations; but that does not alter the significance of the form, as to baptism, there given by our Lord especially for Gentiles. They had previously no connection with the name of God —i.e., the Jehovah of, Israel (Isaiah 63:19) —though Amos (9: 12) prophesied of Gentiles who would be called by His name. Acts 15:14,17, shows how that part of the prophecy had received a kind of accomplishment by Peter baptizing Cornelius and his household. This use of the full name of God is important to my mind or there would be no administrative bringing of the Gentiles into connection with it; and I confess I do not feel happy in any one using a formula which omits it. Surely it is of moment that there should' be a people upon earth thus formally connected with the name of God, as fully revealed in Christianity. We see the principle of this as early as Genesis 4:26, in the family of Seth.

“In the development of the ways of God, which is given us in the Acts, a great point is the establishing of the Lordship of Christ, quite as important as, and intimately connected with, owning the name of the one true God. (Compare Isaiah 45:22, 23, with Philippians 2:10, 11) Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.’

The whole administration of the ways of God is in His hands, all ministry and power is there; all authority and rule are made subject to Him. It was therefore necessary for Jews, who were already in connection with the name of Jehovah by circumcision, to own Him whom God had made Lord and Christ It is stating too much to say that the apostles never used the formula of Matthew 28. We know that negatives are dangerous statements to make; in fact, I judge there is no record given of the formula they used; for we cannot gather it from the various expressions which the Spirit records. ‘In (ἐν) the name of Jesus Christ,’ or ‘the Lord Jesus,’ connects baptism, I think, with the power and authority of that name; while ‘Unto the name’ would be to the confession of His name as Lord, and this has to be confessed and owned to the glory of God the Father.

It would be a mistake to take the words, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ,’ or, ‘Unto the name of the Lord Jesus,’ as a formula. There is much implied in baptism which is not expressed in the formula used, such as moral cleansing, salvation, and being planted in the likeness of Christ's death; but to me the real formula is in the words of our Lord, in Matthew 28. But then His Lordship is distinctly connected with it there; for. He states that all power is given to Him in heaven and earth, though baptism only refers to His authority as, administered upon earth. The form of this administration on earth, so far as Scripture tells us, has not been carried out yet according to Matthew 28, but

according to Luke, and in the way described in the Acts. Still our Lord's words remain, that baptism was to be in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

T. H. R.

## 2 Kings 2:12

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“My impression as to the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof is, that faith in Elisha connects the chariots of God with Israel. (Compare Psalms 68:17,18) Hence he calls it the chariot of Israel. He sees prophetically in the angelic power which was taking up the ascending Elijah the deliverance of Israel by the same power. For us it is the power which wrought in the Christ when God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. Connect, for this power which will finally deliver Israel, Deuteronomy 33: 2; 2 Samuel 22:9-11; then Psalms 68:17 (it is remarkable, Adonai is among them); Habakkuk 3:3-8; Revelation 8:5; Psalms 18:12,13; Psalms 104:3,4, &c.

“I suppose Elisha knew the secret of this power when he picked up the mantle of Elijah—a power not yet displayed fully for Israel, but Elisha was in its secret, (See chapter 6:16,17) Elijah had passed through the waters by a power that rolled them back; the full deliverance will, come because that power has been exercised in the depths through which Jesus has passed. (Psalms 18:14,15) I think there is something analogous to Elisha being in the secret of a power not yet fully exercised in Revelation 5. We are surely in the secret of that chapter. The Lamb in the midst of the throne having overcome to take and open the book. The throne is not yet openly acting, and the rider on the white horse not yet come forth; but I believe we are in this secret, that even now, in all the political actings, and amid the schemes of men, there is the secret acting of the throne, because the Lamb is in the midst of it. The suffering one has overcome, and is there, and the actings of God, even now providentially, are all in connection with Him. As to crisis, it is all future; but if our eyes are open, we know now the secret of the power which will accomplish all.

In 2 Kings 13:14 the vessel of this power is just departing, and the words of Joash recognize that Elisha was the vessel of the power of deliverance for Israel. It was a wonderful scene as the window was opened, and the arrow of the Lord's deliverance sped on its way; but everything breaks down in man's hand, and there is no faith in the king to use the power.”

T. H. R.

## Treasure in an Earthen Vessel

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2 Corinthians 4:7

Thy grace transforms the shapeless clay To vessel for Thy hand; Then fills, till living waters flow  
To cheer Thy pilgrim band.

Oh, grace beyond expression great To choose, and form, and fill

Thyself the Fountain, Lord, to be, Unchanged by earthly ill.

In PEACE, surpassing human ken, Thy Peace, O Lord, I stand And wait, contented just to be This  
“vessel” for Thy hand.

H. C. A.

## Brotherly Care and Personal Trespass

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This question, asked by the disciples, in the first verse of this chapter, led the Lord to speak of the moral state that was suited to that kingdom. As a fitting model of the spirit which God looked for in those who belonged to it, He placed in their midst a little child, and, in reply to their question, said, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Meekness and humility—littleness in our own eyes, whatever our insignificance in the eyes of men—were the equivalents for what was truly great in the sight of God. "Thy gentleness," said David, "hath made me great," (Psalms 18:35)

Verses 10 to 14 give us the Lord's thoughts as to these little ones, and withering indeed are His words to those who cause them to stumble. Indeed, the "woe" which He pronounces against His own betrayer is expressed in almost the same language as that pronounced upon the one who should "offend" His little ones of the one He says, "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed;" of the other, "Woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." (Matthew 26:24; 18:7) How constant the care that should be found in us, therefore, lest, even unwittingly, we should do anything to stumble or even discourage the feeblest of His own. In verse 15 the Lord takes up another side of the subject. He is no longer warning His disciples against offending others, but giving instruction as to what their behavior is to be if a brother should trespass against them. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee." The spirit of gracious consideration' for the welfare of others is to, characterize their conduct under every circumstance, the very opposite of the spirit of him who said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" In verses 8 and 9 we are told to make no allowance whatever for our own hand, or foot, or eye offending. The utmost severity is to be shown in such a case, even to cutting off or plucking out the offending member, as though the Lord had said, "You can't be too severe with yourselves when you go wrong, and you cannot exercise too much carefulness in your conduct towards others." How natural for us to act directly opposite to this! Any amount of consideration we are ready to show towards ourselves; the cleverest excuses can be produced at the shortest notice in palliation of our own failures, yet there is no lack of righteous indignation 'if the failures of others are in question.

It is noteworthy that personal trespass between brother and brother is the first disturbing element mentioned in Scripture in connection with the gathering together of the saints to the name of the Lord Jesus, and He proceeds to lay down in the most simple and explicit manner what is to be our line of conduct under such circumstances. Let us carefully consider these important communications. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Mark well, in the first place, there is to be no making light of the trespass: "Tell him his fault." In the gospel of Luke (chapter 17:3) it is even stated more strongly than this: "If thy brother trespass again thee, rebuke him: and if he repent, forgive him." The natural course might be to avoid him, and to say nothing to him about his fault; or we might be determined in our own mind to bear the injury in long-suffering towards the offender, and, as it is sometimes expressed, "try to live it down." Such might at first, sight seem very plausible, and have the appearance of grace on my part; but it omits one all-important item of consideration viz., the spiritual condition of my offending

brother; and whoever may commend it, it is certainly not the Lord's way of treating the matter. Besides, staying away from my brother might leave a tinge of bad feeling in my own heart; and even if it did not, am I to rest while knowing that the conscience of my erring brother is defiled? (See Leviticus 19:17) No, I am to go and plainly lay his fault before him; for if he is to be truly recovered it must be through the exercise of conscience and the judgment of his state before God. "Go and tell him his fault" are words that cannot very well be mistaken. It is not even, "Go and write him, a note." Alas! who can measure the mischief that has come in among God's people by this very thing, either through ignorance of the Lord's mind about such matters, or through failing to act upon it when known. To send what I think a very faithful letter may both spare my feelings and suit my pride; but He who knows us far, far better than we know ourselves says plainly, "Go and TELL him his fault."

Then, again, what wisdom and grace are embodied in the next few words— "Between thee and him, alone." Yet is it not sadly too common to discuss a personal trespass somewhat more publicly than this? Perhaps there is some brother whom we know to be not on the most amicable terms with the one who has injured us. We have but little doubt that he (i.e., the brother just referred to) will lend a ready ear to the tale of our wrongs, and the danger is that, in our selfishness, we go to him, though, if we considered his soul's welfare, he would be the last person in the assembly to whom such a thing would be breathed. But it suits us better to share the story of our grievance with others, who may be ready to sympathize with us, and tell us how shamefully— we have been treated, and the like, then to go and seek "to gain" the one who has done us an injustice. How is this? It is much to be feared that we are not altogether sorry to be able to inflict a punishment upon our brother by lowering him in the estimation of others. But is it obedience to the Word thus to act? Is it the Spirit of Christ? Is it not rather only another, though more subtle, form of the same flesh, that manifested itself in our brother's trespass?

Next comes a sentence of the very deepest importance to us— "If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Does not this let us into the secret of why I am to tell him his fault, and why it is to be between him and me alone? It is "to gain" my brother. The Lord had, just before (v. 12), been speaking of His own search among the mountains for the lost sheep, and of His joy when the straying one was brought back, in order; no doubt, that we might see the value which He put upon one of His own, and that 'we might learn to act toward them accordingly. Notice here that nothing is said about the redress of my wrongs. The Lord does not say that "if he hear thee, all thy wrongs shall be put right," but, "If he hear thee, thou has gained thy brother." No doubt, if grace really works in him, if he is really "gained," one of the earliest fruits of it will be an ardent desire for the redress of those injuries; but the securing—of this is not to be the motive which prompts me to go to him. Leaving my wrongs with the Lord, I am to seek my brother's blessing. But this going to "gain" him will necessarily put my own soul through deepest exercises. If, in true love to him, I am set upon his recovery in a, righteous way, what godly watchfulness and carefulness will be wrought in me! With what earnestness and fervent desire shall I plead for him before God! When a bird has left his cage, any rude hand or discordant voice can drive him further away; but how great the care and caution that is exercised by the one who really desires to bring him back to food and shelter If my errand to my brother were only to pain him, the task might easily be accomplished without a particle of exercise; but if I am to gain him, then grace must work both in him and in me.

But now we proceed a step farther. Suppose that the best-intentioned efforts to restore my brother prove fruitless, what then? Am I therefore to take it for granted that he is henceforth beyond recovery? Not so. How do I know that my manner of dealing with him was not the cause of my failure? Or perhaps our interview has made the discovery to him that I have put what he considers to be an unwarrantable color upon his conduct, or attributed motives to him which he is conscious he never had. In that case, I should only have given to him what he judges a righteous ground for resisting me, and have left him harder than I found him. I am therefore now to take with me “one or two more, that in the mouth of —two or three witnesses every word may be established.” And even should this prove unavailing, another step is yet to be taken; the assembly must be told. If, after all this, the offender still manifest willfulness, if repentance be not wrought in him, the word then is, “Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican;” for there is no higher court of appeal for the saint upon earth than the “two, or three” gathered to the name of the Lord. (vv. 18-20)

But there is another danger, into which, if not very watchful, any one of us might very easily fall. I might go to the brother who has trespassed against me, not so much with a desire to “gain” him as to satisfy my own conscience, in a hard, legal, way, that I have acted scripturally toward him. Suppose such a case. I go and “tell him his fault;” but instead of finding him hard and unrepentant, he is thoroughly broken down. He freely owns that he has trespassed against me, and shows every sign of genuine contrition. But—what follows? Alas! I am more concerned about the injury which I have sustained than I am for my brother’s restoration to happy fellowship with me. The pangs of wounded pride spur me on, and I make it but sadly too manifest that I would prefer my brother getting the discipline of the unrepentant, rather than the forgiveness of the repentant. Grace has wrought in him, but not in me, and in my heart, I do not forgive him.

Now what follows in this chapter seems to be addressed to such a case. Let us examine it. In verse 21 Peter asks the Lord this question, “How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” And the question is answered by, “I say not unto thee; Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.” And then (by the word therefore) He connects this statement with the parable of the merciful master and the unmerciful servant. Two cases of debtor and creditor are brought before us in the parable. The first debtor owes his king ten thousand talents. Yet upon confession of the debt, and the expressed willingness on the part of the debtor to meet his creditor’s demands, the whole debt, immense though it was, is immediately forgiven. The same servant leaves his gracious master’s presence, and finds a, fellow-servant, who owes him “a hundred pence.” He takes him by the throat, and demands immediate payment. The poor debtor confesses to the legitimacy of the claim, and makes known his willingness to meet the righteous demands of his creditor. Yet what do we find? No mercy whatever is shown, no forbearance is exercised; he cast him into prison “till he should pay the debt.”

Now mark well what follows; for it is full of solemn and wholesome instruction for us. The rest of the servants seeing such behavior are “very sorry,” we are told, and bring the tidings to their master, who summons the ungrateful servant into his presence and deals this most withering rebuke: “O thou wicked servant,” he says, “I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?” (vv. 32,33) And then it is added, “His lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.”

The Lord next applies the parable by saying, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses." It need scarcely be said that this parable does not speak of the salvation of the soul, but of the principles of the government of the King in His kingdom, principles as applicable to the real possessor as to the mere professor. It is an unchanging fact that upon the cross Christ took bile consequences for eternity of every believer's sins; but as to our conduct in this world, it is an unalterable principle in the government of God that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Galatians 6:7) Another broad principle of His government is expressed in Psalms 18:25,26: "With the merciful Thou wilt show thyself merciful; with all upright man Thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure Thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the forward Thou wilt show thyself forward." And again, in Matthew 5:7: "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." Now which of us, as he reviews his past history, whether as saint or sinner, and thinks of the governmental consequences of all he, has said and done, can say, "I stand in no need of governmental mercy?" Do we not rather each feel ourselves to be more like needing the mercy shown to the ten-thousand talent debtor, and say with all our hearts—

"Nothing but mercy will do for me; Nothing but mercy, full and free?"

Let us then remember, if tempted to show a hard, unmerciful, unforgiving spirit to our brethren, that while, through the grace of our God; our sins and iniquities He will remember no more, yet that according to His government, "with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matthew 7:2) Let us bear in mind that precious exhortation to the saints at Ephesus, "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ hath forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32)

Is it not significant that the chapter which instructs us as to the Center to whom we should be gathered (Matthew 18:20) should be so similar, in the scope of its moral teaching, to the chapter which gives us the ground of our gathering; viz., the truth of the one body? (Ephesians 4) In Matthew 18, as we have seen, the spirit of childlike lowliness and gracious consideration for the welfare of others is brought before us as that which should ever characterize us. In Ephesians 4:2 the exhortation is, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

It is, said of a blind man that, when asked why he always carried a lantern at night, he replied that, being himself unable to see, the light was therefore not to preserve his own feet, from stumbling, but to prevent others stumbling over him. May the Lord keep us each walking "as children of light;" and then not only will our own feet be kept from stumbling, but we shall be no occasion of stumbling to others! On the contrary, may our care for each other in the sight of God be more and more apparent! (2 Corinthians 7:12; 1 Corinthians 12:25) Remembering that He who was the "merciful" was also the "faithful" (Hebrews 2:17), and that He who was perfectly "holy" was equally "harmless" (Hebrews 7:26), let us never seek to show mercy at the expense of divine principle and practical holiness, nor mistake hardness and harshness for firmness and faithfulness.

GEO. C.

## Two Letters on Worldliness

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(From the Italian)

Dear Brother, —I should like to say a few words on the tendency which there is in these days to worldliness, and more especially on the means employed by the enemy to divert Christians from the path which leads to the glory. (Philippians 3)

The subject is of so much importance that many will immediately say: "While we are down here we have occupations which bring us into direct contact with the world, either in our daily avocations, or in our individual relationships, and consequently it is impossible to fulfill our duties without more or less participating in the principles which govern it." This I totally deny, and. I think the Word shows us clearly that there is in us a power great enough to keep us, unspotted from the world, and capable of resisting it unto the end. The Word does not admit the possibility of our living out of the world; on the contrary, it teaches us that we are left in it, but that we are kept from the evil. (John 17:15; 1 Corinthians 5:10), and, in order to encourage us in our warfare with the prince of this world, it tells us that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4) What then is lacking? God has put at our disposal all the weapons necessary to meet the assaults of the enemy, and if, instead of defending, we allow ourselves to be beaten, it is either that we fail to employ the weapons with which God has furnished us, or that we misuse them. A true Christian pursues his trade honestly to gain his bread, but his real aim: is to obtain everlasting glory with Christ; and this is a normal Christian according to the Word. I come now to the means employed by Satan for turning us aside, if the heart be not truly attached to the person of Christ. It is astonishing how many Christians, while avoiding serious falls and flagrant sins, allow themselves to be overcome, little by little, by worldly ways, by the claims of society, by old friends; while they fail to see that the divine life in them loses its energy, that it is choked and enfeebled, and that gradually "old things" take possession of their hearts. At first they suffer, and make almost a sacrifice to please the world in things that are not evil in themselves; but they end by having a taste for the "old wine" (Luke 5:39), and forget that the new is much better.

We have a picture of these Christians in the history of Solomon. He never had such a serious fall as David, he never committed so great a sin as his father; but an attentive examination of the conduct of this illustrious man will reveal to us a gradual return to the world. His reign opened amidst the glory of a little millennium, his golden scepter was resplendent at the dedication of the temple, around him all was joy and peace; but unhappily it was of short duration. As we advance in the examination of his conduct, it is easy to see that his pristine glory fades, the monarch's heart turns to the world, the world becomes his master; and the reign which had been inaugurated by peace and glory, and the knowledge of God, is terminated amidst idols and strange women. What a difference between the beginning and the end! And how had this decadence begun? Note, dear brother, it did not happen all at once, but gradually; insensibly the things of the world gained access to his heart, and he went from bad to worse till he became an idolater.

This may be a wholesome warning to us, dear brother, and certainly shows us with what reason John said to the young men who were already strong in Christian life, “Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world.” (1 John 2:15) We are in the truth, but we are not out of danger, and the Lord alone can keep us faithful.

Amongst Satan's many fruitful devices for lowering the saints is that of subtly introducing the world without their being aware of it; on this account it is well not to be ignorant of his weapons, so as to be able to turn them aside, I will try and indicate some of them, with the hope that we may profit by the experience of other Christians who have preceded us on this difficult road. In the foremost rank may be placed old acquaintances, just because we have been on intimate terms with them, and to them our weaknesses are known. There are but two ways of avoiding this, danger—either to break off all connection with them, or to proclaim the truth to them, by showing them that we have found an object worthy of our affections—an ‘object which has taken possession of our heart, which has given a new direction to our life, and which is jealous of any friendship which is not based on the work of redemption. I admit a priori the difficulty of turning our back on an old friend, who has perhaps been of service to us, and the enemy takes occasion by all this to keep us in slavery, and to allure us into an atmosphere very unhealthy for those whose senses are fitted for a heavenly one. It may happen, for instance, that a worldly acquaintance of former days comes in and expresses a wish to pass an evening with us. What should be done under such circumstances? If we are not careful, it may become the means of making us miss a meeting, or a projected study of the Word with others; so what is the right path? I think the best service we can render to a worldly friend, who persists in seeking our friendship, is to speak to him faithfully of the Saviour's work, and the result will be generally one of two—if he listen, so much the better, the Lord can work and help us to win a soul; if he do not listen, he will probably complain that we are changed, have new ideas, and are less amiable than formerly, but meanwhile we shall be left free to follow the Lord. This may appear a hard thing, as truly it is to the flesh, and it would be an ignoble action if the motive were not the Lord's; but we ought not to forget what Peter said to his contemporaries—“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.” (1 Peter 4:1) And then there is the exhortation which Paul addressed to the Corinthians—“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2 Corinthians 6:17,18)

Next to former friends, our greatest danger lies in old habits, tastes of the first Adam, which are so easily re-awakened in us. What a sad thing to be a Christian, and yet to go on with the ways that we allowed before knowing the Lord the Cretians by nature were liars, and they remained so although converted (Titus 1:12,13); but they were to be rebuked sharply, because they were not walking according to the new man, or in dependence on the Spirit of God.

There are many of our brethren who, without falling into open sin, allow old things, already judged as hurtful, to take possession of the heart, and here is a principal cause of the weakness they often lament. Admit that our characters are different, and that tastes differ according to temperaments; but these are the things inherent in the first man, and if we follow our individual tastes, we shall get out of the sphere of Christian communion, where a taste for the Lord Jesus is the only thing. If, for instance, an amateur of music take up his old flute or violin ‘to please the

flesh for a few hours, if the reader of novels hunt up some old story to pass the time, and thus if each of us turn back to some occupation which we loved in days before the light reached us, who will be occupied with Jesus of Nazareth? Who will proclaim His virtues? who will exalt Him in a song of praise? Remember Elisha, who, before putting on Elijah's mantle, rent his own garments.

I must not omit to mention another weapon which Satan uses successfully in his ceaseless work of drawing back into the world those whom God has set apart for Himself; it is present things —the very air which surrounds us. It is quite true that the majority of Christians do not care for the world in its most ostensible forms; they do not go to balls, do not play cards, &c., but is that enough? The Word says to us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world;" and it is patent that many, without loving the world in its most popular garb, love certain things which are in the world. It is very easy to be led away by an object which in itself is not evil; but if our hearts be ensnared by things which are seen, we lose the taste for things which are not seen, and thus unwittingly we find ourselves in a worldly atmosphere.

The other day I received a letter from a brother, which I hoped might contain some word of edification; on the contrary, I found it full of a great industrial and artistic exhibition which was on hand in a European city. You can conceive, dear brother, my astonishment. But that is what we have come to. In the meetings we say we are heavenly, we read and print good books, we publish excellent periodicals, and then, from the practices of many amongst us, we see that hearts are full of worldly things, and insensible to the glory of Jesus, which we shall so soon inherit. I do not say that art and science are bad things, but I would remind you, nevertheless, that Adam made a very wrong use of the trees in the garden of Eden, which in themselves were not bad things, when he used them to hide from God.

Farewell, dear brother, I have perhaps written sufficiently; but if the Lord permit, I will on a future occasion add a few more thoughts to my letter.

Your affectionate fellow-laborer, E. L. B.

## Fragment: The Lord is Enough

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There are no circumstances in which the Lord is not enough for us.

## Building up Yourselfs

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Believers 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 we are only receivers; that we have nothing in ourselves, and yet possess all things in Christ.

There are three ways in which edification or building up is presented to us in the epistles,

1. We have gifts of teachers, pastors, &c., 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. (Ephesians 4:12)
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. (Ephesians 4:16)
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 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 advantages. 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 intellectually dealing with divine truth, or being led and taught by the Spirit of God, and hearkening to what He saith.

It should be a daily question as to how much we are occupied in building ourselves upon 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 conscience void of offense 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 throughly furnish us unto all good works?” Do we seek in this way to gather strength, so that faith may grow, love abound, and hope be increasingly 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 this 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 forever. 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 forever 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 some time were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ, brought into favor in the Beloved, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ; so that we are always before God in the cloudless favor, 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. 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 “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 Corinthians 12:13)

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 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.” 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 Corinthians 6:14-18)

H. H. S.

## 1 Kings 21

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Nothing could more strikingly reveal the frightful moral corruption of Israel—of king and people—at this time than the details of this chapter. Naboth had a vineyard “hard by the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria.” The king saw and coveted it for himself: It was near to his house, and he desired it for a garden of herbs. Accordingly, he sought to obtain it from Naboth, either by exchange or by purchase. Outwardly this was fair and honest; but Ahab knew, or should have known, that he could not have it except by inducing Naboth to transgress the law of God. Naboth preferred obedience to the Word above the favor of the king and his own advantage, and thus he replied, “The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.” (See Numbers 36:7) Baulked in his project, “Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased... laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.” (v. 4) In the previous chapter he likewise came to his house “heavy and displeased” (v. 43) because a prophet had pronounced judgment upon him for making an alliance with one whom God had appointed to destruction. Weakness and wickedness are often united, and in both cases the king was angry because the will of God was against his own, and interfered with his designs. But mark the lesson: whenever the heart is resolved upon evil, Satan is ever at hand to open the way for its commission. Covetousness had mastered the soul of Ahab, but he was lacking in courage; he feared to take what he longed to have. Jezebel was of another spirit; she had neither conscience nor fear. Daughter of a heathen king (1 Kings 16:31), she owned no law but that of her own wicked will. Like the unjust judge, she feared not. God nor regarded man; and, determining that her husband should gratify the desire of his heart, she said, “I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.” Her measures were soon taken. “She wrote letters in Ahab’s name, and sealed them with his seal,” commanding Naboth to be falsely accused and to be stoned. Surely there would be conscience, we might think, in some of Jezreel’s elders! Alas! the men of Naboth’s city, “the elders and the nobles,” fellow-citizens of this faithful man, hastened to obey the queen’s command, brought in—false witnesses, as in the case of our blessed Lord (also of Stephen), procured his condemnation, “stoned him with stones, that he died;” and they sent immediately to Jezebel to say, “Naboth is stoned, and is dead.” (vv. 11-14) Let the reader pause, and mark the consequences of covetousness in Ahab’s heart. A simple desire, at first, for a convenient garden—such was the root of this deadly tree, bearing such a crop of poisonous fruit; such the trickling stream that swelled into this blackening river of corruption. Ahab wanted a garden; Jezebel determined he should have it at, all costs; and the elders of Jezreel, wishing to commend themselves to the queen, carried out her commands even at the cost of shedding innocent blood. What an unfolding of the heart of man!

So far all concerned, except Naboth, had left God out of their calculations, and it seemed as if sin had triumphed. Naboth had been stoned, and Ahab was now free to take possession. He went down, and his feet at last stood in the vineyard of Naboth; but, at the very moment he was about to lay his hand upon the coveted possession, he is confronted by Elijah the Tishbite, and has to learn from the awful words with which the prophet terrified his soul, that verily there is a God that judgeth

the earth. "Hast thou (not Jezebel, but thou, hast thou killed, and also taken possession? Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." Miserable king! He could only utter—his vision is still bounded by the earth—"Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" It was Jehovah who had found him, and who sent His servant to denounce judgment upon Ahab, his house, and upon the wicked Jezebel.

Verses 25 and 26, parenthetically added, reveal the full extent of the abominable wickedness of this guilty king "stirred up" by his wife Jezebel. But the words of the prophet rang in his soul as a death-knell, reached (at least) his natural conscience, and produced a transient repentance. (v. 27) Who shall fathom the depths of the long-suffering and the mercy of the Lord! "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?" His word thus came to Elijah, "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me?" And on this account, though it were but a passing humiliation (for we are here in the sphere of God's government on earth), the judgment on Ahab's house (though the personal judgment on himself and Jezebel was literally executed) was postponed until his son's days. There was thus a day of grace even for Ahab.

Leaving the reader to study the details of this chapter for himself, we may indicate some general lessons first, that there are no limits to the evil of man's heart; secondly, that sin can neither escape the eye nor the judgment of God; and lastly, that the mercy and goodness of God are unfathomable.

## Isaiah 29:13-14

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Three times this scripture; or part of it, is cited in the New Testament—twice by our blessed Lord, and once by the apostle Paul; and it is exceedingly instructive to note the connection in which the different quotations are found. In Matthew 11, after upbraiding the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done because they repented not, the Lord turned at this moment of rejection to His Father, and found rest in the sovereign counsels of Him who was Lord of heaven and earth, saying, “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,” &c. (v. 25) Turning back to our scripture, we learn that hiding these things from the wise and prudent was not the action of arbitrary power, but the judicial consequence of formality and hypocrisy in holy things, and of accepting the precepts of men in the place of the word of God. In Matthew 15 the Lord brings forward the first part of the scripture in condemnation of the ritualistic observances of the Jews, making, as they did, the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition. “Ye hypocrites,” He says, “well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” (vv. 7-9) Let the reader observe that the chief sin of the Pharisees; in addition to, their hypocrisy, was teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and that worship so regulated was in vain. The apostle Paul quotes the latter part of the passage to show that the wisdom of this world is brought to naught by God. “The preaching of the cross,” he says, “is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” (1 Corinthians 1:18,19) The reader, if he pursue the study, will soon discover, if led of the Holy Spirit, how various the applications and lessons of the smallest portion of the sacred Word. But “the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God;” and this Spirit we if believers, have received “that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:11,12)

## 1 John 5:18

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It is essential for the understanding of John's epistles to remember that, in such statements as this, he confines himself to the positive character (excluding from his view all other considerations) of the new nature. "Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not." He does not for one moment forget that the believer has two natures (chapter 1:8), or that he may fall into sin (v. 16); but he is stating in an abstract, and therefore absolute way, because he is thinking alone, of what is born of God, that such an one does not sin. (See chapter 3:9) This will explain what follows. First he says, "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself;" that is, he will act according to his nature, the new nature—not that he may not fail sometimes to be watchful, but that, having been born of God, it is a necessary consequence, considering alone what this new nature is, how it is necessarily antagonistic to sin, and that it will shun temptation as being averse from it, that lad will keep himself. Then he adds, "And that wicked one toucheth him not." Satan indeed is powerless in the presence of a child of God when he keepeth himself. He may come, as he did to our blessed Lord and Saviour, and seek, by his allurements, to find an entrance into the soul by every possible avenue; but he cannot succeed if he that is born of God is on the watch. He cannot penetrate inside the circle where the child of God is abiding in dependence and obedience. He may seek to entice the believer to come outside the circle; but he cannot touch the one who is "keeping himself" inside. And the reader is again reminded that, in the view of the apostle, he that is born of God does so keep himself; for in the nature received from God in the new birth there could be no response either to sin or to Satan; only the most Positive detestation of both. (Compare John 14:30)

E. D.

## Tarry Ye Here, and Watch with Me

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Wondrous the love of Him who spake these words;  
Wondrous the grace to stoop so low, to ask  
Of men to tarry and to watch with Him  
One hour! With Him, whose goings forth of old  
From everlasting were; whose word did form,  
Whose power upholds, creation's utmost bound.  
Yes, He did stoop to crave their tarrying,  
E'en for one hour, to watch with Him; and yet  
He asked in vain. Alone He prayed; alone  
He watched. For comforters He looked, and none  
Did find. Wondrous the love of Christ Matchless  
The grave! Perfect the sympathy that flows  
To lonely ones! Tell out thy grief to Him  
He felt the same. No human breast had He  
To lean upon, no voice to soothe or speak  
Of comfort to His wounded heart. Not one  
To watch with Him in that drear, darksome hour.  
He knows it all. It was for thee, for thee,  
Thou purchased one, He passed through all, and now  
With open arms can welcome thee to come  
And pour out every grief, the keenest pang,  
Or that too small for any ear save His.  
Yes, pour out all; He can uphold, sustain,  
Can comfort thee, can whisper peace, His peace,  
E'en in the wildest storm. Nay, more, can make  
All things to work thy good, and yield to Him eternal praise!

M. G.

## The Firstborn

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The righteousness of God was witnessed by the law and the prophets, although only manifested by the cross, resurrection, and glorification of our Lord. The witnessing was to the manifestation what the shadow is to the substance—a resemblance and a contrast. The outline may be simpler, but the fullness is wanting. Now the shadows are left by the Lord doubtless to help us to understand better the reality. One of the most interesting of these shadows is found in the relative position and fate of the firstborn of the clean and unclean animals. In them we have a wonderful picture of the Saviour, the sinner, and the atonement.

If I think of the relative status in nature and under the law of the clean and unclean beasts, clearly the clean have the advantage. Noah shows us this when he takes seven to one into the ark. When I remember this I am struck with the fact that the firstling of the unclean creature has greatly the advantage over that of the clean; for it may freely enjoy life, though only on the ground of redemption; but the other is absolutely doomed to death. Thus—we read, “The firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem.” (Numbers 18:15) But the firstling of a cow, a sheep, a goat, that is, of clean animals, “thou shalt not redeem; they are holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar,” &c. These two classes of animals represent two men—the unclean or sinful man, and the holy man. Man looked at as the race, including of course every individual save One, stands side by side with the unclean animal, and this not from any act of our own which made us guilty, but from our birth, from which, through the first man’s sin, we were constituted sinners, and by nature children of wrath. So we find coupled with the redemption of the unclean firstling. “The firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem.” This teaches the unholy nature of man. In a similar way we find man, associated with the ass in Exodus 13, reminding us of Zophar’s word, “Though man be born like a wild ass’s colt,” giving man the thought of the naturally insubordinate character of our hearts. They are “not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” So we see man away from God, under condemnation, and needing a Saviour from his birth. This corresponds with the end of Romans 5 “By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.” But also, we see redemption as large as the ruin— “The firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem.” There stands the open door of salvation for all. “By one righteousness the free gift was towards all to justification of life.”

Now in the midst of redemption—mercy there was One for whom there was none. For the firstling of the clean beast there was no escape from death. Strange may seem the reason: it was holy. The unclean might find an escape, the holy never. What a riddle this presents to the natural mind! It seems subversive of all justice, and it would be of all human and legal righteousness. But what a vivid picture it is of God’s righteousness in saving the sinner! Here was the will of God, our sanctification. This must be by sacrifice; namely, by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. (Hebrews 10:10) Our Lord comes to do that will. He takes the place in infinite grace ‘of the clean animal, being Himself the firstborn of every creature, and “that holy thing,” as Luke declares. Now the absolute doom of the firstborn of the sheep, &c., pictures His awful position as thus come, shut up without escape to judgment. True He looked beyond it to that right-hand place where there are pleasures for evermore; and He could say, “Thou wilt show me the path of life;” and, “The lines are

fallen unto me in pleasant places.” But it was ‘nevertheless true that the weight of that judgment into which He had to go was on His spirit. His enemies, ignorant of the truth, correctly expressed it in the bitter and cruel taunt, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save.” As the end draws near we find Him fully alive to the situation, but absolutely undeterred by it. So we read, “Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?” As indeed in the garden the terror of it was upon His holy spirit—“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” It is not possible—“Thou shalt not redeem.” There is the type—“Thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar.” So too the, for the time, unanswered prayers for deliverance in Psalms 22—“I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not” now in all this depth of suffering, shut in to judgment, “deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts,” we see the wonderful perfection of the Lord. He justifies God in the midst of all—“Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.” The depth of His trial proved how truly He was holy. There was no answer of evil to be wrung from His heart. There was a Man in whom only good was, and only good could come forth; thus He was a sweet savor to God. All men much tested had utterly failed—Job and others—and must range themselves, as we must, side by side with the unclean beast. In Christ we find the only antitype of the clean animal, and (consequence to Him of His grace and love to us) He was the only One for whom there was no escape; so that through the grace of God there might be for the sinner who believes in Him.

If we carry on further the history of the firstborn, it is full of interest and instruction. The firstborn of Israel was saved by the blood at the passover; but those so redeemed were specially and peculiarly God’s. “Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb is mine.” (Exodus 13:2:) Thus the firstborn was not merely redeemed from death, it was bought for God—“Ye are bought with a price therefore glorify God in your bodies which are God’s.”

Now the history of the firstborn was this God had His tabernacle, with its varied and multiplied services, to perform which required an immense number of men. Now this service belonged to the firstborn, but their places were taken by the tribe of Levi. Each Levite represented a firstborn man in Israel. The number of eldest children that exceeded the number of that tribe were redeemed by five shekels of silver each. (Numbers 3:46-48, and 8) Thus the Levites were in a special way a redeemed company. Clearly, they are thus typical of Christians, both in our redemption and in the claim God has upon us for service as redeemed. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God” (redemption-mercies here) “that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

The firstborn thus viewed has, so to speak, a double history from his redemption, and so have we. First, he dies in his substitute, then he lives as a servant in the Levite. And this finds its antitype in the believer now. We are dead with Christ. (Romans 6:8) That is the end of our history as responsible children of Adam—“I am crucified with Christ.” So the Israelitish father might say, “My son has died in that lamb.” Then that history ends. But “nevertheless I live.” Now we have a new life—“Christ liveth in me.” At this point we have the Levite before us, saved from death, but devoted to God. The individuality remains the same, of course; but I am dead as a child of Adam, I live as a child of God—redeemed and born of Him. Thus we get our double privilege and responsibility, both to reckon ourselves dead to sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Christ is not only the firstborn who dies, but also the firstborn who lives. He is the first from the dead. Thus, it is blessed to think of Him in triumph over all His enemies, and in grace associating

us with Himself. “He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.” We are through grace the church of the firstborn ones whose names are written in heaven; also “a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.” When we see our association with Christ-and may we, know it better—we would thankfully own that all our blessings flow from grace through His being shut up without escape to death. Thus only could the purposes of God towards us be accomplished. Now if we are firstborn with Christ, so to speak, still God’s counsel secures for Him as always the preeminence— “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

C. D. M.

## Letters on Worldliness

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(From the Italian)

Dear Brother in the Lord,—It has been on my heart for some time add to my first letter on worldliness, and more especially because several brethren have communicated with me on the subject.

To some of these I appear hard and narrow-minded. Others, on the contrary, believe that such exhortations in these days are both useful and necessary, and have pointed out certain things which, with the Lord's help, I hope to notice. With the first class I have little to do, for if my first letter was stigmatized by them as severe and narrow, they will have occasion to do so still more with the second, since the greater our knowledge of the world, the less possible shall we find it to make a truce with it.

Two points in particular have been put before me—the politics of this world, and the way in which the families of believers are so often a means of opening the door to the world.

On the first subject—i.e. the world's politics—I think two observations will not be out of place. Many, Christians, whose conversion no one doubts, have hitherto failed to comprehend that the calling of the church is purely heavenly; that is to say, they have not grasped this sufficiently clearly to deliver them from an interest in politics. It is not theory that is lacking. What we want is to put in practice the marvelous truth that we are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and are consequently entirely strangers to the ways of the inhabitants of the earth.

But some will object, "Ought we then to take no interest in events which warn us that the end of all things is at hand? We admit that the world is to be judged, and we approve in no wise its principles; but we have always felt free to follow the course of politics in order to see what things have come to." To such I would say, "If you must study politics, study Daniel and Revelation for a few days, and you will learn God's thoughts thereon." I think this is the only satisfactory way of quenching the thirst for tracing the progress of events; and I have often said that the most simple Christian is better acquainted with this world's fate—with the Eastern question, and with the last phase which the European Powers will assume—than the cleverest politician of this world. "Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book," says the Revelation (22: 10) That is to say that the Church can always know the thoughts of God on such questions, without the need of consulting newspapers to see if God has told us the truth. After all, this shows a want of faith in the Creator of all things, and a lack of reverence for the authority of His eternal Word. Newspapers only confuse the mind of the reader, because they alter their standpoint with every new aspect of the political world, and know no other basis than the vacillating ideas of men. It has been rightly said, that from a mountain-top the course of a river is better seen than in the plain, where the river-fogs impede the view. In like manner we Christians, who by grace occupy a higher place than the world, can peacefully speak with God, as did Abraham on the mountain-top, and study His thoughts on prophecy without consulting the mists of the valley. Had there been newspapers, in Abraham's

time, I do not think he would have read them. Lot perhaps might have been betrayed into so doing, because he had accustomed himself to living in the atmosphere of Sodom. But it is evident that he had not a very clear insight into true politics, or he would not have lost all his goods by staying in a town about to be destroyed. How indeed could he see clearly in Sodom?

Here then is my answer to those who, under pretext of seeing how far things have gone, interest themselves in the world. Although prophecy ought not to be our chief study; it would nevertheless be well that all the saints should understand the books of Daniel and Revelation, wherein is presented the judgment of all human power; and Christ, in His great majesty, is seen taking possession of the whole world, to the praise and glory of God. This would, it seems to me, be the best preservative against the tendency which there is amongst Christians to the study of this world's politics.

And now, dear brother, I want to touch on the second subject which I mentioned at the beginning of my letter; viz., worldliness in the children of believers. And I hope, at the same time, you will understand that I do not allude exclusively to “they of Italy,” but also to those who live where Christianity is supposed to be carried out better.

Alas! how many sincere Christians allow in their children that which they themselves have given up forever! I do not say this in a critical spirit, but simply by way of drawing attention to several called-for remarks which have been made to me of late. The subject is a delicate one, because we know what difficulties there are in bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but we ought to be acquainted with the means which Satan has at his disposal for alluring the saints of God into the world. Godly fathers of families are to be found, who are weak enough to permit their children to be dressed in a manner not in keeping with their godliness. It may seem a very small thing, that the children of Christians should be dressed like those of the world; but the fact is forgotten perhaps, that as they grow older something more must be allowed, and something more again—things, it may be, innocent in themselves, but which insensibly bring the world into the house; and once within, it is not easy to turn it out. I would not have it thought that I mean in anywise to make hard-and-fast rules for Christian fathers; but I desire to press the fact, that the houses of such ought to be wholly for the Lord, and that if they have His glory at heart, they must not allow for their children what they do not allow for themselves.

The history of the sons of Eli ought to be a salutary warning to every Christian father. (1 Samuel 1, do not think that they became so wicked all at once—probably the starting-point was the over-indulgent heart of their father; then they went further and further into the world, until the whole house was swamped by it. How much grief would have been spared to poor Eli, had he known how to bring up his children in the fear of the Lord! And are not Eli's to be found in our day? May God grant grace to His saints, to keep their families set apart for Him, and free from the spirit of this world. The days are evil; false principles easily take possession of youthful minds, and if fathers are not watchful, they will have, later on, to mourn over the infidelity of their children.

Before closing my letter, I must reply to one more observation which has been made to me is said that circumstances vary with different countries, and that in my first letter I referred only to music, novels, &c., while I ought also to have specified the worldly attractions peculiar to countries differently placed. I am sure it is useless to do so, because one would never have done signaling the examples and the dangers. Every true Christian will easily discern the spirit at work in the

world, and will avoid whatever seeks to come between him and the Father.

An old servant of the Lord being asked one day by a banker's clerk if shoveling gold all day was likely to make him worldly, replied, "I don't see any more harm in a shovelful of sovereigns than in one full of sand, provided my heart be not in it." This example might serve, I think, for all the circumstances in which the saints of God may find themselves. So long as our hearts are not engrossed with our employments, our workshops, our fields, or any other means of subsistence, each one of us may use what God has put before him, and administer it with the knowledge that all belongs to our God and Father.

My desire is, that each may search his own heart, to find out the worldly element which has a hiding-place there, and, when discovered, that he may judge it, and de-throne the idol that contaminates him.

Your affectionate companion in service,

E. L. B.

## A Marriage Address

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An immense sphere, if one looks at the scene laid there in the garden, and, on the other hand, that scene in which the last Adam, life-giving Spirit, will present to Himself a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. It surely is part of the special grace of God to His people on an occasion like this that He presents before us so distinctly what, in His mind, this relationship in which many of us stand, and into which this day our brother and sister are entering, points to, not merely as Adam at first, with Eve as a helpmeet, but to that amazing counsel of God brought out since Pentecost, how the Lord Jesus Christ, the last Adam, will present a Bride to Himself without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. I feel the immense importance of this at the present time because all relationships are made so little of amongst men—no natural affection. Therefore, on entering into any new relationship, it is very important to look to it, whether or not we enter into it and stand in that measure of grace the word of God presents to us as a privilege to those who love the Lord in sincerity and truth. We get the word in Genesis about the man leaving father and mother and cleaving to the wife repeated in Ephesians 5:31. “As the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” Oh, what a word that is! God subjected the Church to Christ, chose her in Him before the foundation of the world, and subjected her to Christ, not only for the wilderness, but for eternity, even for the paradise of God, where the Lord Jesus Christ will take her to Himself. She has nothing whatever apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has beautifully put forth what He felt as the responsible One. He has done; He does, and will do everything. His thoughts have not changed in the least during the 6000 years of man’s rebellion. He has done and won all for us; and with the same large heart that took us up He gives us promises, declaring that the same glory which the Father gave to Him He will give to us.

We have found Him the One whose thoughts always are characterized by “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;” and in the good pleasure of His will Christ became the shelter of the Church. That is a solemn word, when one looks around the world on all the miseries of domestic life, and sees how little the husbands know how to be the shelter of the wives; how little, as individual Christians, we know how to walk like Christ, to say, “This must be done because it is the will of the Father. That must not be done because it is not the will of the Father,” and at the same time to be the perfect shelter. The wife should have to recognize, “This is the Father’s will.” What a change it would make with wives if we that are husbands could take that ground, able to say; “My wife sees I am will-less: as to all unimportant things; let her have her own way!” If I am in the intelligence of Christ, I see how He connects this relationship of the human family with His own relationship to the Church; and I am sure, if I can lay aside my own will and take up His only, I may reckon on having the constant flowing of the water of refreshment. My arm ought to be like the wing of the hen for her chickens, the place of shelter. Of course, with that comes authority, but that is not burdensome. She would say, as he, in all unimportant things, where the glory of the Lord is not concerned (there she would have to stand firm as, a rock); “This is but a passing thing, and an opportunity of being subject.”

I feel a great difficulty and sorrow in looking round at all relationships. Husbands, parents and children, masters and servants, and friends —there are difficulties in them all, even in friendship. (Who can have walked with a friend twenty years and not found it out?) I cannot say that the state of them in practice is to the Lord's glory. I believe that in every case, when there is anything painful and wrong, we shall find that it is in the higher member the failure comes in first. The first to look at is the one God puts forward as being responsible; yet whatever a husband, a father, a mother, a master, or a mistress, may be, if there is grace in the subordinate members, they will be able to accept the place of subjection to the superior members.

The wife must not say, "Oh, but I have not a shelter in my husband!" Have you no Father in heaven? Cannot you bring His power to bear on him? Cannot you put your will aside, so as to be able to bring in the power of a higher relationship? If you can get that thought, you will be able to get strength and power to meet all.

Child and parent, are you not, as a believer, a child of God? Have you not your Father's ear? You have only to show to your father and mother what Christ showed out towards His parents. Yours will know and own the power, if you are walking with the Lord Jesus Christ and God your Father. The same with servants. We who are masters and mistresses have a very solemn sin lying at our door for not knowing how to form in our houses homes that those who are with us might feel to be places that they covet, and to which, when they leave, they love to turn back, and to look to us for counsel. I ought to be one whom they knew (be they Christians or not) as having a Master in heaven, one ever a master for their blessing. If a servant complained, I ought to say, "Have you been to the Lord, and have you spread out all before Him, all before your Father, and have you found nothing to check complaint?" Of course, there are difficulties in every relationship; but, oh, to know what the setting is in which the two jewels are locked together! It is pure gold—gold, not of Ophir, but the divine antitype, Christ, in heaven. Marriage is like a finger pointing to the union of Christ and the Church, and what a poor-hearted thing he must be who, with the arm of wife pressing on his own, has never thought of it as pointing to the love of the Lord Jesus Christ for that Church for whom He gave Himself, and which He is to present to Himself without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

G. V. W.

## Psalms 45-48

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Few readers of the Scriptures can have failed to apprehend the connection in this interesting series of Psalms. In Psalm 44 the faith of the remnant rests upon the memorial of God's past deliverance of His people: "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old." (v. 1) Their present condition was in complete contrast: "But thou hast; and goest not forth with our armies." Still, amid all the exercises of soul thus occasioned, faith cries, "Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake." (v. 26) Psalm 45 gives the answer to this cry in the introduction of Messiah, who brings deliverance from enemies, and whose kingdom is forever and ever. (vv. 5, 6) This is followed by the celebration of His marriage with His earthly bride—Jerusalem—now robed "in gold of Ophir" (v. 9), and the consequent acknowledgment of the place of supremacy and blessing into which the bride has thus been introduced. Nothing could surpass the beauty of the details of this bridal psalm. Proceeding to Psalm 46, we find, as the result of Messiah's coming, that God is the refuge and strength of His people, a very present help in trouble. He has proved Himself to be so in power, as may be gathered from Zechariah 14. The sixth verse may possibly point back to this if it does not refer to a subsequent attack on Jerusalem after Messiah has come. In either case God shows Himself to be His people's refuge and strength; and thereby so encourages their hearts, that they cry, "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed," &c. (vv. 2, 3)

There is also positive blessing in connection with Jehovah's presence in Jerusalem. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God," &c. (v. 4. Compare Ezekiel 47, Revelation 22, &c) Well, then, might the cry be raised, "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her (as in the margin) when the morning appeareth;" for the advent of Messiah will be indeed the dawn of the morning without clouds. (2 Samuel 23:4) Verses 6, 7 recall the deliverance, and celebrate the results; verses 8, 9 give the desolating effects of Jehovah's interposition in judgment, and the universal peace that follows. God Himself speaks in verse 10, calling upon all to know, by the works He has wrought, that He is God, and declaring that He will be exalted everywhere among the Gentiles on the earth. In verse 11 the remnant again lift up their voices in their chorus of praise; "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

Psalm 47 points out the consequences in government for the whole earth. Not only is Jehovah once more in the midst of His people, but He is also "a great King over all the earth," (vv. 2-7) He "reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness," &c. (v. 8) In Psalm 48 we find that now Messiah's authority has been established Over the whole earth, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." (v. 2) God is still known in her palaces (a word that marks the splendor of the city) for a refuge; for notwithstanding the display of His glory and power, the kings of the earth (such as man as the tool of Satan) were assembled, but only to be driven away by the fear that seized upon them when they beheld the signs of His presence and glory. The ships of Tarshish too were destroyed by that same east wind which once drove back the proud waters of the Red Sea.

Thus delivered and blessed, the remnant now say (the allusion is to Psalms 44:1), "As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God will establish it forever." (v. 8) Their own eyes have now witnessed Jehovah's intervention in power on behalf of His people, and thus their fathers' report was abundantly confirmed. Their hearts were therefore filled with thanksgiving, and overflow in praise and testimony (vv. 9-13); while their faith, strengthened by what they have witnessed, enables them to say, "This God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death." Nothing will ever more separate them from His presence and care. This is the truth of Romans 8 "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

E. D.

## 2 Timothy 2:7-8

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“Remember Jesus Christ raised from among the dead, of the seed of David.” The sevenfold forms of service in this chapter have often been noticed. The first three characters of the Lord’s labor seem to be especially emphasized in these verses, and the Lord Himself presented as the great Exemplar of His servant. He pre-eminently was faithful as soldier, athlete, or husbandman. The apostle tells Timothy how to consider what he says in bidding him to “call to mind Jesus Christ”—David’s seed—whose holy separation, obedience, and labor as Man on earth, an obedience unto death, is attested by His resurrection. Avoiding or resisting every entangling alliance “with the affairs of this life,” refusing every unlawful aid in His strife against sin, and He was ever about His Father’s business. He “rendered to Omar” his things, rejected the praise of men and their desire to make Him a King. He refused the testimony of demons to His divinity, or the temptations of their prince. He Himself, the First-fruits to God, of His own labor, now, after first laboring, “is a partaker of the fruits.”

C. H. H.

## 1 Corinthians 9:27

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Two things have to be insisted upon in this much debated scripture. First, that the meaning of the word castaway must retain its proper force. It is **δοκιμος**—signifying something that will not stand the test and is rejected; as, for example, in 2 Timothy 3:8: “Reprobate concerning the faith;” i.e., men who, tried by the truth, are to be refused. Secondly, it is of equal importance to maintain that the apostle had no thought of the possibility of his being a castaway. What he says, in other words, is, that if he were only a preacher—a preacher whose life did not express in some measure the truth he proclaimed, one who was governed only by his own will and inclinations— he might then be a “reprobate.” Or, to borrow the language of another, “I am not merely a preacher, but a living man, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” And again, “If Paul himself had been preaching only, not living, he would have been a castaway. But he was not that; and he states how he was living, that he might not be.” What we have then in this passage is, that even a preacher of the gospel may be lost; that the evidence of his being a true Christian does not lie in his being a preacher, but in his walking as such; even as the same apostle writes to the Romans, “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” (Romans 8:13)

E. D.

## Simple Christian Truths: The Work of Christ

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The person and work of Christ are inseparable, for —as we saw in the last paper—the efficacy of His work is derived from the character of His person; that is, in simple language, no other but He who was both God and Man, who was the image of the invisible God, the Word who was God, and who yet became flesh and dwelt among us, could have made atonement for sin in His death upon the cross. The truth concerning these two things lies at the very foundation of Christianity, and neither therefore could be surrendered without departing from the faith once delivered to the saints.

By the work of Christ, it should be observed, is meant especially what He accomplished on Calvary. The will of God, which He came to do (Hebrews 10), would perhaps embrace the whole of His life, as well as His death; but, as that chapter itself shows, it has reference chiefly to His death, as is seen from the words, “By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.” In like manner the apostle Paul alludes to His death, when he speaks of the “one righteousness” which is towards all men for justification of life. (Romans 5:18, New Translation)

We propose therefore, in this paper, to inquire briefly into the nature of the work of Christ through His death—a work which is often expressed by the one-word atonement; and if we turn to the sacrificial ceremonies of the great day of atonement, we shall find the materials necessary for our investigation. There are three points to which the reader’s attention may be directed. The first is, burning the incense inside the veil before the mercy-seat. After the details are given concerning the sacrifices to be offered, and after the sacrifice was killed, it was said of Aaron, that “he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not.” (Leviticus 16:12,13) This was the first transaction inside the veil on this eventful day. Aaron had washed himself in water, and put on the holy linen garments, that he might be a type (only a type) of the spotless holiness of Christ. The sin-offering had been killed, death had been brought in upon the victim, the blood which was to make propitiation had been shed; but the first and foremost thing enjoined, before the blood could be dealt with or sprinkled, was, that Aaron should burn the fragrant incense before the Lord in the holiest. The incense sets forth the acceptability of Christ Himself to God; the sweet fragrance of His graces, excellencies, and perfections—a truth not ill-embodied in the lines—

“The merits of the Lord appear,

They fill the holy place.”

This will explain to the reader what has already been observed—the indissoluble connection between the person and the work of Christ. Aaron pauses as it were in the midst of his preparation for his sacrificial service, and enters first of all into the holiest with his censer of burning coals of

fire from off the altar before the Lord to burn incense; teaching that the graces, the perfections of Christ, tested by the holy fire, by the absolute standard of God's holiness, emitted a cloud of perfume which covered the mercy-seat—the dwelling-place of Jehovah. It is, we repeat, the infinite acceptability of Christ Himself—the acceptability proved by the application of the holy fire. It therefore tells us of God's delight in what Christ was in Himself; not so much God's delight in His beloved Son, as expressed at His baptism and on the mount of transfiguration, but rather His unmeasured complacency in Christ as Man—in Him who had devoted Himself to death, and to death in the place of sin, and for sin, for the glory of His God. Though not the burnt-offering—for that was presented on the brazen altar—yet, in one aspect like it, the incense, when placed upon the burning coals, ascended as a sweet savor unto the Lord.

The next thing was dealing with the blood of the sacrifice. The reader will observe that Aaron was to offer a bullock as the sin-offering to make an atonement for himself and for his house. (v. 6); but for the congregation of the children of Israel two goats were appointed—one of which (that on which the Lord's lot fell) was to be killed as a sin-offering, and the other was to be the scapegoat. (vv. 8-10) It is with the goats that we are concerned in this paper; for while the bullock speaks of Christ equally with the two goats, it is in these latter God has been pleased to show forth the two aspects of the death of Christ. The blood of the bullock was dealt with in the same way as that of the goat of the sin-offering, both alike being sprinkled once on and seven times before the mercy-seat. (vv. 14, 15) The blood on the mercy-seat was manifestly for God, for the mercy-seat was God's throne in the midst of Israel. (Psalms 80:1, &c) That before the mercy-seat was for him that approached—the high priest, in this case—as representing the congregation, and here seven times as a perfect testimony to the efficacy of the sacrifice, while, once was enough for the eye of God. What then did this blood represent? It was the blood of the sin-offering, type of the precious blood of who was made sin in His death on the cross, of Him whose soul—according to the language of the prophet (Isaiah 53:10)—was made an offering for sin. Hence the apostle Paul writes, “Whom God hath set forth a propitiation (a mercy-seat) through faith in His blood.” (Romans 3: 25)

In order then to apprehend the true significance of this blood-sprinkling, it must again be carefully remembered that it was inside the veil—in the holiest of all—and on the mercy-seat, where the eye of God alone rested, and that the mercy-seat was His throne. Two things follow. First, that it was for God; and, secondly, that it appeased, answered, according to the nature of Him that sat thereon, the claims of His throne in the midst of Israel. But inasmuch as the holiest was but the pattern (as all the tabernacle), and therefore the anti-type of heavenly things (see Hebrews 9: 10), we learn from this sprinkling of the blood on the mercy-seat, on the day of atonement, what the blood of Christ was for God. As another has written: “The perfect death of Jesus—His blood put on the throne of God—has established and brought into evidence all that God is, all His glory, as no creation could have done it. His truth (for He had passed sentence of death) is made good in the highest way in Jesus; His majesty, for His Son submits to all for His glory; His justice against sin; His infinite love. God found means therein to accomplish His ‘counsels of grace, in maintaining all the majesty of His justice, and of His divine dignity; for what like the death of Jesus could have glorified them?’ This blood-sprinkling on the mercy-seat constituted the propitiation, because it was for God in reference to the claims of His holiness upon men as sinners. Being thus for God, there is no question of application to sinners, though it is the glorious and righteous basis on which

God can act in grace, and save everyone who receives His testimony respecting it, on which He can be both just and the Justifier of all who believe in Jesus. (Romans 3:24-26) It is this aspect of the death of Christ—the propitiation made through His blood—that has glorified God completely in relation to all that He is, whether as regards His holiness, His truth, His majesty, His righteousness, or, His love. Were no sinner ever saved, God would yet have been infinitely glorified by the death of His Son, in the propitiation He has made by His precious blood; for all His claims as a holy God, all the claims of His holy government, have been publicly vindicated in the face of the universe. But, blessed be His name, not only has peace—the peace of God’s throne—been made by the blood of His cross, but streams of blessing also have flowed out therefrom, ever increasing in volume, from the day when the malefactor went from his gibbet to be with Christ in paradise until now; and they will flow onward until the last saint is gathered in, whether in this or the coming dispensation.

“Blest Lamb of God, thy precious blood

Shall never lose its power,

Till every ransomed saint of God

Be saved to sin no more.”

If we now consider the scapegoat, we shall have before us another aspect of the work of Christ: “And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.” (vv. 21, 22) If the blood on the mercy-seat made propitiation, the putting the sin of Israel upon the live goat sets forth the truth of substitution. Thus, as another has well expressed it, “is evident that, though the scapegoat was sent away alive, he was identified as to the efficacy of the work with the death of the other. The idea of the eternal sending away of sins out of remembrance is only added to the thought of death. The glory of God was established, on one side, in the putting of blood on the mercy-seat; and, on the other, there was the substitution of the scapegoat—of the Lord Jesus—in His precious grace for the guilty persons whose cause He had undertaken; and the, sins of these having been borne, their deliverance was full, entire, and final. The first goat was Jehovah’s lot, it was a question of His character and majesty; the other was the lot of the people, which definitively represented the people in their sins.”

These two aspects are found in the epistle to the Romans. At the end of chapter 3, as already pointed out, we have Christ set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood (v. 25), and in chapter 4 we read: “Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification,” where the being delivered for our offenses is clearly substitution, answering to the putting of Israel’s sins on the head of the scapegoat. But substitution involves the application of the efficacy of the work of Christ, and is therefore limited to believers. This is indeed seen in the ceremony connected with the scapegoat. Aaron laid his hands upon its head, and in that attitude confessed over it all the iniquities of Israel. Laying his hands on its head expressed identification with the goat, and the transference, through confession, of the transgressions and sins of the people to the goat, and the goat consequently bore away their sins into the, wilderness. Now none but believers

are identified with the sacrifice of Christ. It is only when they first came to Christ, having received God's testimony concerning His beloved Son, and confessed their sins, that they were brought under all the value of His work, and learned that all their sins were put away forever. And if we refer to a few scriptures where the truth of substitution is found, it will be clear, beyond question, that it is limited to believers.

"He was wounded," says the prophet, "for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5) Such is the language which the Spirit of God has provided, through the prophet, for converted Israel of a later day; for the reader will observe that without faith it would not be possible to say, "He was wounded for our transgressions," or that "with His stripes we are healed." In like manner, when the apostle Peter writes, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24), he expresses the faith of himself and of his fellow-believers to whom he was writing, for he adds, "that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness."

There is another class of scriptures, as the point is important, to which we will briefly refer. Whenever the death of the Lord is looked at in its substitutional aspect, it is limited to His people. Speaking Himself He says, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for (■vτ■) many," the many, as shown by the preceding preposition, being a special class; i.e., His people. In the epistle to the Hebrews we also read that Christ was once offered to, bear the sins of many (chapter 9:28), not of all, because the truth of substitution is again in view. On the other hand, when it says that Christ died for all, as in 2 Corinthians 5:14, or that He gave Himself for all, as in 1 Timothy 2:6, the thought of substitution is excluded, and carefully excluded, by the language employed. Both things are blessedly true of the death of Christ—He died for all, by the grace of God He tasted death for every man—but, according to the teaching of scripture, only believers are entitled to say that He bore their sins in His death upon the cross, for this involves, as before pointed out, faith in His work, and the application to those who have it of the benefits of His death.

If the reader has followed the above statements, he will have apprehended the difference between propitiation and substitution; for, as the writer already cited says, "These two aspects of the death of Jesus must be carefully distinguished in the atoning sacrifice He has accomplished. He has glorified God, and God acts according to the value of that blood towards all. He has borne the sins of His people, and the salvation of His people is complete." It was by the propitiation that He glorified God, and by which, all His holy claims having been met, God was set free in righteousness to proclaim grace to the whole world, to issue the invitation— "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." It is by substitution that all the sins of God's people have been borne away forever; and it is these two things that make up the one work of Christ—the atonement—which was wrought out and completed on Calvary, when through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God. There are several aspects of this work, as may be seen in the details of the offerings (Leviticus 1-4); but the work is one, and perfect, and eternally complete. In this finished work of Christ God has been abundantly glorified (John 13:31,32;17:4), and He has shown His estimate of it by the glory in which He has set His beloved Son at His own right hand. It is moreover, as we have seen, the righteous basis on which God can now in His unspeakable grace send out to the whole world the entreating message— "Be ye reconciled to God"—as well as the all-efficacious ground on which He will put away sin out of His sight forever. (See Hebrews

9:26)

Thus God has His part in the death of Christ. Believers have theirs, inasmuch as they know that by it their sins have been eternally put away. Even the world reaps some of its blessed consequences, in that it is written, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Israel will share in its efficacy, for He died for that nation (John 11:49,50); and thus the time will come when "all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Romans 11:26) The whole creation will in virtue of it be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Romans 8:21); yea, the reconciliation of all things will proceed on the foundation of peace having been made through the blood of His cross. In a word, God will, in virtue of the finished work of Christ, accomplish all His counsels of grace, whether in respect of believers of this dispensation, of Israel in the age to come, or of the whole creation; and together with the introduction of the new heaven and the new earth, all sin will have been put away as the full consequence of the finished work of Christ.

E. D.

## Wells of Salvation

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The well-known scripture from which the heading is taken—Isaiah 12—is evidently prophetic, and finds special application to Israel in millennial days. This is easily seen in tracing its connection with the foregoing chapter, by means of the formula, “In that day,” which occurs twice in each chapter. The formula points to the restoration of God's earthly people to their own land, and to the state of things coincident with Messiah's reign, as described in chapter 11. Then, in the words of Psalms 85, the Lord will have brought back the captivity of Jacob, forgiven all the iniquity of His people, and covered all their sin; glory will dwell in their land; mercy and truth will have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other; truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven; and the overflowing hearts of His adoring People will find suitable expression in the words of Isaiah 12.

Salvation known and enjoyed is the prominent theme of the chapter—the keynote of the song; and God Himself is that salvation. With the heart salvation is sought, appropriated, and learned; and for satisfaction therein, a person, not a thing, must be the object. The salvation here spoken of is obviously cast in a Jewish mold; it is that of Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, who is in the midst of the inhabitants of Zion, &c. They will with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation, and utter the shout of triumph—blessed exercises of long-looked—for rest. We may see a foreshadowing of all this in the refreshment afforded by Elim's twelve wells, and threescore and ten palm trees.

Fruits of grace which smelt, in such abundance, Israel in a future day are, though in higher measure, and in a more blessed way, offered to faith now. “Things which God hath prepared for them that love Him” are revealed and ministered to us by His Spirit for our comfort and sustenance; whereas Isaiah could only speak of these things as, in fact, hidden. (Chapter 64:4. Compare 1 Corinthians 2:9,10) It is plain therefore that drawing “water out of the wells of salvation” may be with us a present joyous exercise.

We notice the word, “Therefore with joy shall ye draw,” which pre-supposes a certain condition of soul. This condition may be inferred from the first two verses of our chapter. Thus: (1) God is the soul's object; (2) His wrath is turned away; (3) He acts as comforter, and as a shield. (4) He is the soul's strength and its song; (5) and is become its salvation.

It is indeed lamentable when saints derive neither pleasure nor profit from the word of God, which lays open to us the wells of salvation. When we lack joy in drawing water therefrom something evidently is astray, and it behooves one to consider. (Psalms 45:10,) Waiting upon God is the secret of strength; and the same, in a self-judged spirit, is the secret for discovering the cause of weakness. Generally the cause is not far to seek. But, without dwelling further upon what is certainly of much importance, the case is infinitely worse when the soul is altogether unacquainted with the condition above described. Naturally, man has no heart for God. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” He stood amongst us, as John the Baptist declared, but we knew Him not. He would even sit with us, and finding us preoccupied, would become our debtor, that He might have opportunity to assure us of the unsatisfying character of natural resources. Yes,

though these should even be the very mold in which man's life is cast, the elements by which, so far as he sees it, life is estimated, sustained, and characterized. And, together with assuring us of this, He would reveal to us the true source of lasting satisfaction—the unfathomable love of a giving God. “He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again.” is aptly expressive of the former, whatever the resource may be. “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst” as aptly indicates the latter, and the manner in which the source of blessing becomes available to the thirsty. Well it is when the soul is led to the simple and wholesome inquiry, “Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well?” Yes, this blessed One—the author and giver of all we possess—is superior alike to the possessions which charm and pre-occupy us, and to the channel through whom they may have become ours. He can show Himself to be so. But to do this we must be laid bare, that we may see ourselves as He sees us, and recognize our need. He puts forth His hand in love, and touches the tender point of our consciences, which then yield to Him, and we apprehend Him as One capable of telling us “all things that ever we did.” He speaks to us of the Father seeking worshippers, of worship too, but according to the exigencies of God's nature. This the contrite can yield Him, and only they. But now the void is formed, which only Christ can fill, and He fills the void. “I that speak unto thee am He.” Satisfaction is tasted; the well is filled, and overflows, sending forth a stream of living water (John 7: 38) in communion with the divine source. The valley of Baca is made a well; the rain also filleth the pools. The heavenly fount itself sends forth showers of blessing, graciously supplementing the channels, as well as causing them to flow. (John 4:39-42)

Thus the Father known in the Son; the Son known as One whose meat and drink was, and is, to do the Father's will; and we introduced, in the power of the Holy Ghost given (John 7:39), into that wondrous sphere, constitute the essence of Christian blessedness. “Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Is it any wonder our joy should be full? (1 John 1:3,4)

But with this there is also the opening up of God's counsels and ways, the patient gracious unfolding of them, for our intelligent establishment and enlargement, in that wonderful fellowship. There is “in us a well of water,” yielding blessed satisfaction, which is the subjective side of things. But, objectively, there are other “wells of salvation” out of which “with joy” we may draw water. Thus we have justification made good, to us “freely by God's grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus,” and treated of at length in Romans. When utterly ruined by nature and by practice, “He was delivered for our offenses;” and “our old man was crucified with Him.” “Raised again for our justification,” our guilt is canceled, and “we have peace with God.” We are more over ranged under Him as our Head, and also are in Him, where “there is no condemnation;” and from whose love there is no separation. “God for us” the whole way onward from justification to glorification, so that we rejoice in hope of His glory; glory even in tribulation, and joy in Himself, the source of all the blessing.

Then we have, again, access to God, as set forth in Hebrews, with all the essential preliminaries and accompaniments. The blood presented on and before the mercy-seat; the way into the holiest opened through the rent veil; the conscience purged, so that we may act on the precious invitation to enter with boldness; our High Priest there “for us,” to encourage, comfort, and sustain. He bears our names upon the breastplate and on His shoulders. Our interests are His care.

Thirdly, we have eternal life in the Son of God; involving new birth and relationship, as set forth by John, especially in his first epistle. Well may we exclaim with him: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!"

Acceptance in Christ—the Beloved, involving union with Him, as shown in Ephesians. Members of His body; objects thus of the Father's complacent love, and of the Son's "delight," ascending to the eternal counsels. His destined bride withal.

"Of Him, for Him" made, to share "with Him" the eternal glory, the paradise of God on high; then to be feasted by Him—yea, on Him; and "to be found in Him," and He in us, forever!

Again, our citizenship is in heaven, as we learn in Ephesians 2 and Philippians 3:20.

Then there is "that blessed hope" for which we look, the Lord's promised coming, bound up as it is with all our joys and sorrows, patience and longings, testimony and service for Him, yea, with our very being as Christians, while He leaves us here.

And lastly, what we may truly look upon as the just counterpart to all the above, viz, His own place in rejection and reproach on earth. We cannot forget that here is found a system, ordered by Satan, and opposed to God. As prince of the world he governs its politics; as, god of the world, its religions; and in more subtle guise he governs the social world by ministering to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." The Christian is properly outside of all this, a pilgrim and a stranger here.

Not only do our souls rejoice in the intrinsic blessedness of these various aspects of our salvation, but also in contrasting them with the condition in which our lack of them once found us. And God would have us, to view matters thus, in learning to estimate His grace towards us; as we read: "Remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles aliens', strangers having no hope, and without God in the world." The more distinctly we recognize all this, the higher view of His grace we shall rejoice in; and transcendently so when manifested before His judgment-seat.

Then, not only does our joy flow from the immensity of grace and love manifested; but with joy also we may consider His own part, in the working out and' accomplishment of the eternal counsels of His heart in respect of us. Yea, will this not be the noblest strain in our many—themed song—the richest element, the deepest spring of our eternal blessedness? "He will rest in His love," when, and only when, He will have wrought out, to full accomplishment, the bright conceptions of His grace towards us. What a voice this has for our souls!

"We rejoice, and Thou rejoicest

In the riches of Thy grace."

J. K.

## Simple Christian Truths: Reconciliation

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The very name of this subject points out to some extent its character. It implies, at least, that enmity had somewhere been existing; and when it is remembered that the question is concerning the reconciliation of sinners to God, it may well be asked, Where was the enmity? It is the more important to answer this question, owing to the fact that the statement is continually made, that God is reconciled to man in Christ. This indeed was the general thought at the time of, and subsequent to, the Reformation, and it has found expression in many formal theological treatises. But it only concerns us to ascertain the teaching of the Scriptures. If, then, the reader will turn to Romans 5 he may read, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (v. 10) This places beyond dispute that the enmity was on our part, that it was we who needed to be reconciled to God, and not God to us. The latter thought, indeed, loses sight altogether—as may be more fully seen farther on—of the fact that God Himself is the fountain of all grace, and that it was acting from His own heart "that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

There are three scriptures which especially speak of reconciliation—Romans 5:10,11, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, and Colossians 1:20-22, and we hope to refer to each of these in tracing out the subject. Let it then be borne distinctly in mind that man, man as such, is an enemy of God. The scripture says, the carnal mind—the mind of the flesh—that is, the mind of every natural man, is enmity against God (Romans 8: 7), and this was proved when the Lord Jesus came into the world, as He Himself says, "They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25), and they rested not in their hatred until they had nailed Him to the cross. Perfect goodness did but elicit perfect evil: perfect light was in the world, "and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh, to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." (John 3:19,20) Let us now see how God met all this enmity, and what steps He took to break it down, and to reconcile the sinner to Himself.

Turning, first of all, to 2 Corinthians 5, we shall perceive that the Holy Spirit is careful to remind us, what has already been insisted on, that God Himself is the source of reconciliation. "All things are of God; who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ," &c. (v. 18) Of necessity it was so; for how could man make approaches to God when he was already not only a poor, lost sinner, but also his mind was enmity against God, and when there was no foundation laid on which a righteous reconciliation could be effected? No, man was helpless, and could never, even if he had the desire, have bridged over the chasm that separated him from God. God alone could undertake, this mighty work. And this expression—"All things are of God"—tells the blessed tale of grace which flowed out from His heart towards poor guilty man, and made provision for his eternal reconciliation. And the passage in Romans, already cited, teaches us, furthermore, that the motive for the action on God's part was in Himself alone: it was when we were enemies—when our backs were turned to Him in our hatred, that was the moment when God unfolded the depths of His own heart in the gift of His beloved Son. (Romans 5:8-10)

We may trace the stream of grace in its onward course. Its first appearance in this world is indicated by the words: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Corinthians 5:19) This refers to the attitude of God in Christ in incarnation. He came into a world of sinners, all of whom were under the just judgment of God, on account of sin, and who all, had He dealt with them in righteousness, must have been swept away to eternal destruction. But He came in grace, dwelt with sinners, submitted Himself to all their taunts, malice, and hatred, did not for the time impute their trespasses unto them, but bore all their hatred and malice in patience, and even entreated them to come to Him and live. God was thus in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Instead of exacting what was due to Himself, He offered mercy, rest, forgiveness, life, and would fain have in this way broken down the enmity of their hearts. But all was in vain, man would not be reconciled. Still the stream of grace flowed on, for the heart of God was unwearied, even in the presence of the ever-increasing manifestation of the enmity of man's heart, which rose up to the total rejection and crucifixion of Him who would if possible have reconciled them to Himself. The cross was the answer to man's hatred; that is, the work that was there accomplished. And the aspect of it presented her is very beautiful, "for He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin." It is, as suited to the subject, an action on the part of God. It is God who is reconciling in this chapter, and hence He was acting both in Christ and on the cross (as also in His messengers after the cross), that He might, by the exhibition of His own heart, melt the hard heart of man, break down His enmity. Let the reader ponder this wondrous display of the riches of His grace. For what did God accomplish by the death of Christ? He made Him sin, He exacted from that spotless and willing victim, who offered Himself to endure all that the glory of God demanded on account of sin, all His claims upon us, so that He might lay a foundation, —righteous and immovable, on which He could still proceed to satisfy His own heart, in harmony with all His attributes, in His longing 'desire to reconcile men to Himself.

The stream still flowed. Christ died on the cross, was buried, rose again, ascended up to heaven, and sat down on the right hand of God. Thereon the Holy Spirit was given, souls were converted and reconciled, and then sent forth with God's message to the whole world. The apostle says, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." And then he proceeds to describe the carrying out of this ministry: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech, by us: we pray in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God." (v. 20) Sent forth as Christ's ambassadors, after He had taken His seat at the right hand of God, it is still, as it were, the voice of God beseeching through those who were pleading with men, in the stead of Christ (for He was no longer here), to be reconciled to God. Such has been the action of God with the view of reconciling men. He Himself was here in the person of Christ, here in grace in the attitude of seeking to reconcile, then, still proceeding with His object, He made Him, who knew no sin, sin on the cross, and thereon He took up men, reconciled them to Himself, and put in them the ministry of reconciliation, that the whole world might know what was in His heart. And though the immediate ambassadors of Christ are no longer upon the earth, yet wherever the gospel message is proclaimed there is still heard the entreating voice of God addressed to His enemies.

We may now look a little more closely at the truth of reconciliation; but first it may be necessary to state distinctly its ground. This is brought forth prominently in, all the three scriptures named. We

take one of these having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile," &c. (Colossians 1:20) Here is given, in precise form, the foundation on which God proceeds; it is the peace which has been made by the blood of the cross of Christ. The reader will at once perceive that this peace is not peace between God and, man, not the peace with God which those possess who are justified by faith, because it is set forth as the ground on which God can act in reconciliation. It is rather the peace of God's throne, consequent upon all the claims of that throne, the claims of a Holy God upon sinners, having been completely met by the precious blood of Christ. God, having been thus glorified by the death of the Lord Jesus, is free, in righteousness as well as in grace, to take the first step in the work of reconciliation. The death of Christ is the alone ground on which He acts; so in Romans we read, "We were reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (chapter 5: 10); in Colossians, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death." And, as it is on the ground of the death of Christ, so it is by the presentation of what God is in Christ, when down here, and through Christ in His death on the cross, that God speaks in power, through the Holy Spirit, to the hearts of sinners, and effects their reconciliation by the revelation of what He is in all His goodness and grace. The work of reconciliation is thus the work of God; even as the apostle says, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself;" and again, "And you hath He reconciled."

What, then, is meant by reconciliation? Between men who may have been at variance it is the restoration of happy relationships; it is much more than this between God and man. The enmity was in the heart of man alone; and it is not only the removal of this, but it is also bringing man to God according to the eternal efficacy of the perfect work of Christ—a perfect work as estimated by God Himself. It is a reconciliation, therefore, according to all that God is as displayed in the death of Christ, and we brought to be—to quote the words of another— "in absolute harmony with the full display of what God is in His own character and nature." It is not, therefore, merely removing the enmity of our hearts, and God fully and freely forgiving our sins, but it is lifting us up into His own presence, setting us in the light as He is in the light, bringing us to Himself, and causing us to be in harmony with the full manifestation of Himself in Christ. The apostle could therefore say, "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." (Romans 5:11) That is, the result of reconciliation is that we can joy in God, delight ourselves in all that He is, in His holiness, love, grace, majesty, truth, righteousness—in a word, in Himself. What a contrast between joying in and being enemies of God! And this mighty change has been effected by His grace.

If now we turn once more to the epistle to the Colossians, we shall learn the scope of reconciliation. Believers are reconciled. This is the precise statement of the apostle (v. 21), as also in both Romans and 2 Corinthians 5; and the character of it may again be marked from the words he employs in Colossians: it is, "To present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight." Such is the wondrous place in which God brings all whom He has reconciled to Himself, and all, it need scarcely be added, whom He may yet reconcile. But the reader should observe that, while it is God's work, it is through faith, for this opens the door of reconciliation to every poor sinner who listens and yields to the beseeching cry, "Be reconciled to God."

There is, however, outside of believers, another field in which God will work for the same end. The apostle says, "Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things

unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” (v. 20) It is of the utmost moment to observe, especially in a day when false teachers, presuming upon a wide-spread ignorance of the Scriptures, are seeking on every hand to substitute their own thoughts for the infallible word of God, that here the apostle speaks of things and not persons. Had it been persons, there were no need to proceed to speak of believers ‘as a separate class. The “all things” that, are to be reconciled correspond with the headship of Christ over all creation— “He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” (v. 17) -just as believers correspond with His headship of the body. (v. 18) And these “ all things,” “ whether things in earth, or things in heaven” —i.e., the heavenly things, which were to be purified by better sacrifices than those used for the patterns of things in the heavens (Hebrews 9: 23)—are regarded in this scripture, not only as defiled by sin, but also, through being connected with man and Satan, is under the power of evil, and, therefore, of hostility to God; (Compare Romans 8:19-22) God, therefore, will act, in power (peace having been made by the blood of the cross), and bring, through Christ, all these things back into harmonious relationship with Himself. This will be seen in measure during the thousand years, when Christ will wield His kingly scepter over the whole earth; but it will be then only in measure, for evil, if repressed, will still be there, and breaking forth, under the instigation of Satan at the close of the kingdom, will again defile the beautiful scene. It will be, however, its last appearance; for the dark and awful judgments, which will consummate the ways of God with earth and man, will but be preparatory to the introduction of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein righteousness will forever dwell. All things are now made new, and “the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (Revelation 21:3,4) It is only in this perfect scene—perfect according to the thoughts of God—that we behold the far-reaching consequences and efficacy of the precious blood of Christ; for here we are permitted to see all things, whether on earth or in heaven, actually reconciled; and the foundation on which God will work out this glorious ‘result is the peace which has been made by the blood of the cross.

E. D.

## Fragment: The Blood

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The blood, that justified God in pardoning me, has shut my mouth from saying a word for myself, and opened it to say much for God.

## Possession

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The chief thing we have here is possession, The Spirit of God comes from heaven, to make good in the hearts, of believers what Christ has wrought, to give possession to us. There is a great contrast between Acts 3 and Genesis 28 God gives, in Genesis 28, an unconditional promise to the man of His choice—a gracious, unconditional promise, based on His own sovereignty. “I will,” “I will,” “I will.” “I will not leave thee,” He says to the man of His choice, “until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.” Now listen to Jacob. When he opens his lips, he begins with a poor miserable vow. Is it not humbling to turn from the words of God to the words of man? God opens His Mouth and speaks in sovereignty, and the poor calculating heart of man replies “If.” There is no “if” with God. “If” comes from man’s unbelieving heart. “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.” Was ever anything more miserable than that vow? Nothing, except our own hearts. Be sure of this, you will find the counterpart of it there. It is a single instance set before us, a sample of what the heart really is. There is, on God’s part, an unconditional promise, founded on the certainty of His word and His will, given to a man who is the object of God’s favor, who, when he opens his lips in reply, makes a vow, founded upon a doubt—a doubt whether God really meant what He said. I refer to that because the contrast is so great between Genesis 28 and what we have in Acts.

Here is the temple which had been built by Solomon according to God’s glory, and renewed, just for a moment, that Jesus might be there. And Jesus having died upon the cross, and being risen from the dead, and now at God’s right hand exalted, we find these two men going up to the temple to pray. And there is another who is brought there—a lame, helpless creature. He never had walked. He is laid there, in his helplessness, in the place of blessing, but it was powerless to help him. No blessing comes from that place. No blessing comes to the powerless man laid there, except in another way. The place is desert, though it be the beautiful temple that Solomon had built, though it be the beautiful gate of that temple, and though it be Solomon’s porch where the lame man is laid, it is but a desert place now. The blessing to him must come from elsewhere. And these two men, these two vessels of power and grace, these two temples of the Holy Ghost (one likes to look at it in that way, not two unknown and ignorant men)—these two temples of the Holy Ghost, these vessels of grace, full of blessing from God Himself, come up to the temple to express dependence upon God; and the poor helpless one looks at them, hoping to receive something of them. Then Peter looks upon him, and says, I have no silver, and I have no gold; but such as I have I give thee. He does not say at first what that is, but he is in the conscious possession of it. It is possible for us also to have it. It is not merely the case of an inspired apostle, but it is the Christian’s possession, the possession of a power that is outside this world—the power of the name of Jesus. It was not merely that Jesus had been here, was crucified, and now risen, but Peter had in himself the power of that name—he had possession of it; and he says, I have not silver, and I have not gold; but such as I have, give I thee. He was the poorest man in the world in

one way, he was the richest man in another—he had possession of the power of the name of Jesus. Have you and I that power? We are not inspired apostles—no one ever thought we were; but have, we the power of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth? Have we really now the power of that name? Do we know what it is, by the grace of God, to have touched that blessed One, to be linked up with that power? Now Peter says, “In the name, of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” It is wonderful the way the Spirit of God puts these names together. Peter, does not say the glorified Christ, and he does not say the crucified Christ, but he says, “Jesus Christ of Nazareth,” the despised One here, the humiliated One, “the despised Man here upon the earth. Well Peter knew Him in the glory, but when he comes to meet this man in his, need, where he was, he says, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth”—the despised man— “rise up and walk.”.

There is the power of the name. You and I may sit and sing about Christ glorified, and gazing on Him, and it is a blessed reality; but the reality of gazing on Him. is also the finding, here in this world, that it is Jesus Christ the despised One. We gaze upon Him there, and we sing of Him there; and what answers to that glory is the humiliation here in this world. And so Peter speaks to the lame man “in the name of Jesus Christ,” not the glorified One, but “of Nazareth;” and he says, “Rise up and walk;” and the man rises up, and walks. And now look at the effect of that directly. Everyone is against him, and the whole world is roused. All the religious authorities and the powers of the world are set against this man—a poor man. What has he done? He has healed a man that never had walked in his life. He had brought into the midst of sorrow and weakness and pride, and hatred of God, the life-giving power of “the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.”

And look at the effect of that healing, how it brings glory to God. “All the people saw him walking and praising God.” There, was glory to God. The possession of the power of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth here upon earth produces glory to God, and sets the world in a flame against the poor vessel, the honored vessel. There was no poverty there. There is poverty in the silver and the gold; but there is no poverty in the name of Jesus. There is rejoicing, blessing, light, in the possession of that name. “Such as I possess give I thee.” And so we find the whole world is against Peter and what he had done. He had brought blessing to a poor lame man, but on a new ground altogether. Not the effort of man, nor anything of man, but the power and healing that comes from One who was entirely outside this world; a humility and a power the world could not gainsay or deny, ‘but which it yet was resisting; a power’ that found all the world against it, and against the one that possessed it. Do you think it is a wonderful thing that, with this power, the world is against you? If you have not this power of the name of Jesus you will not find the world against you—either in animosity, or in wiles.

The effect in the healed man, of the power of this name, is glory to God; the effect in the world is enmity against God, and against him who had the power of the name. Satan always takes up what God has cast off, and he does the best he can with it, just as he will take, up the professing church. The Church had been clothed in white raiment. Satan comes in and seeks to dress it up with everything that can charm the heart of man, everything that can appeal to and attract the senses. See also his action with the world, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” He gave His Son, and now the blessing flows from the One the world has rejected. The world is set aside by God. “Oh,” says Satan, “that world will just do for me now. I will do my utmost’ with the world (for the world is ever capable of being. used). I will handle the world that it shall be the very deadliest pitfall for, the children of God. I will use it to keep man in bondage, to

keep man independent of God in every possible way. I will use it to be a stumbling-block, a handle to draw aside the children of God, if I can. "That is what Satan does with the world, in every way he knows and is master of; and he is god of this world, and he will use it against every single child of God that is not in possession of the truth which he professes. If you have not possession of the truth, you are just on the very edge, the brink, and you will soon fall over—very soon.

It is the possession of the truth God has given us that enables the soul to stand for God and for Christ; and if there is not possession, that very truth will become a stumbling-block. The truth we have believed, and not possessed, becomes occasion of stumbling. "Such as I have.", Have we got what God has given us? He "has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Do you think you have the least idea what that means, to be "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ?" Yet when death comes, to take us out of this world where He was crucified, to be with Him, how often is it said, "Oh, let us use every endeavor, every remedy we can think of, to ward off the moment!" We do not want to go from this earth. You have possession of that which God has given you in heaven, yet you want to remain here. Where is the power of the truth—the possession of the truth? where is the clinging to this place here, if you have possession of that heavenly place there? I only take one thing that shows how it comes in. I refer to the spirit we find in Jacob (it was before the Holy Ghost had been sent down). There is the man in all his powerlessness, making a vow, with God's unqualified promise unheeded by him. I do not believe people make vows when they have possession of the truth. Vows always come with a kind of doubt, I will promise this if God fulfills that. Here there is nothing of the kind. Peter speaks of possession. He does not talk much about the possession of it. No great display of words, but there is the display of power. He imparts what he has to give. The world—all the authorities of the world—are against him directly.

Now look at the twelfth verse. There is the great point of it all, where people stick fast so often. They all crowd round Peter, and they look at him. Here is a wonderful man. There was a poor man laid at the gate of the temple, lame, always a powerless one, and this man has pronounced some words over him, not incantation, it's with the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19)—nothing of that kind. Here we find the reality of the power, and the people come crowding around Peter as if he were a wonderful man. This is the moment of danger for Peter; but how does he meet it? How does it find him? It finds him dependent, it finds him self-emptied. So he says, "What are you looking at us for? Do you think it is our power or our holiness which has made this man to walk? Do you think the manifestation of the power of the name of Jesus depends upon us? Why do you, look upon us so earnestly?" There is where we so often fail. It is not our own power, it is not something to do with our holiness, nothing of the kind. It has just to do with us in this way, that we are vessels in His hand, sufficiently empty of self for Him to be making use of us—vessels in His hand, willing to be nothing, to be, as it were, like a spade, an instrument in the hand of Him who uses it. "There must be intelligence," people say, "and a state of soul." All very good in their place; but Peter says it is not that, it is the absorbingness of that Person over me, the absorbingness of the power of that name. "Here is, Jesus of Nazareth, whom you denied, God has raised Him from the dead, and His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given—him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." God has fulfilled His Word, and God hath given His Son, and Peter says, "Do not look at us, as if it were anything to do with our power or holiness." It is a blessed thing to find a man actually in the

presence of God in such days as these. Here is a man in the presence of God, and directly God used him for blessing, he says, "Don't look at me. Look there above. Look at Him, the glorified One there, the despised One here. I am only the vessel through which it came." John the Baptist, when they came out to him, and asked him who and what he was, says, "I am a voice. Just a voice, and no more; and if you ask me what I say, it is, He that cometh, after me is preferred before me; He is One the latchet of whose shoes I am not fit to stoop down and unloose." There is a man with such a consciousness, such a sense of the One before whom he stands, that he cannot speak of himself at all. It is the conscious sense of who this One is, the power of whose name he is in possession of, that gives Peter this power. "Do not look at me," he says, "look at the man that is cured there, he is praising God, look at Him whom you crucified, whom you spat upon, and look at that poor man praising Him there." Deny it if you can. He takes the place of being set aside, it is not that he is set aside by a power outside himself, but he takes the place of being set aside, and the glory of God flows out, and God is glorified. The blessing flows out, and the name of Jesus is glorified.

I want you to look at the contrast in Genesis 28. For the most part, even the children of God are more really in the state of Jacob. They say, "Well, if it is so." If what is so? If God has done it? But He has done it. If God blessings in heavenly places in Christ? If God has given me all these things? You cannot take that ground really, if you have the power, the reality of it, if it is true of you in your own soul, you cannot take that ground. It is because it is not really true of, you in your own soul.

Jacob's was a good, very good, vow, but it was founded on what? On a doubt whether God has spoken the truth; Now here there is nothing of; the kind. Peter could not say, "If God has glorified His Son Jesus," and "if there is any power in His name, let this man stand up and let blessing come." The man would have remained there to the end of his days, and I believe something more would have happened. I believe the devil would have broken forth upon them, because there would have been a doubt thrown on what God had done. It would have been like, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth."

It is a very solemn thing to have to do with the truth. The sons of Sceva would never have pronounced the name of Jesus, if they had had the suspicion what a terrible thing it is to be on that ground without possession, just to provoke Satan to break forth upon them. God honors those who honor Him. There is the reality of having to do with God; and there is the same blessed power in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and if the Lord's table is the place of blessing, surely it is also the place of judgment. If you read 1 Corinthians 11 you will find it is so. The place of blessing is the place of judgment it depends upon the soul's real apprehension of the truth God gives us, and a small bit of truth possessed in the soul is worth ten thousand times more than an immense quantity of truth that is not possessed. It is not the amount, it is the truth we have really got hold of in our souls. We do not go and talk about it, and say, "I have got this, I have got that;" but we live in the blessed present possession of it. And if we do not, it is because we have not got it in possession.

P. A. H.

## Psalm 67

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There are several most important principles in this brief and beautiful psalm. The first is, that the blessing of the nations is dependent upon the restoration of Israel to divine favor. The remnant cry, "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." (vv 1,2) That this is God's order for the blessing of the world is clear from many scriptures. (See Romans 11: 11-15; Isaiah 27:6, &c) In this day of grace the gospel goes out to Jew and Gentile alike, and "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10) But there will be no such thing in the present dispensation, during the time of Israel's unbelief, as the conversion of nations. When, however, at the Lord's appearing, the Deliverer comes out of Zion and turns away ungodliness from Jacob, and all Israel shall be saved, blessing will flow out, according to our psalm, to the ends of the earth: Israel will blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. Another thing may be observed in connection with this prayer. "God be merciful unto us," they say, "and bless us, that thy way may be known upon earth," &c. They desire blessing that their God may be glorified among all nations. This is a very high order of prayer, and cannot but remind the reader of that of the blessed Lord Himself, when He said, "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." We might well be instructed by these perfect models—both bearing the stamp of the same workmanship of the Holy Spirit, whether in the hearts of the remnant, or in the lips of our Lord. The second thing to be pointed out in the psalm is, that the happiness, both of Israel and the Gentiles, in the millennium will depend upon Messiah's righteous government, "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth." (vv. 3, 4) This is in complete contrast with the present time. Now grace reigns through righteousness (Romans 5:21), and grace is the source of our joy and blessedness (Ephesians); but then during—the kingdom, while all proceeds from grace inasmuch as all is based upon the death and resurrection of Christ, it is His righteous reign which will secure and maintain the blessing of the earthly saints as well as be the theme of their thanksgiving and praise. Lastly, we learn that the fertility of the earth is bound up with the blessing of Israel and the nations. "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase. &c. (see Isaiah 55:12,13 Ezekiel. 34:23,27) Thus the curse of the ground on account of Adam's sin (Genesis) will be abrogated when Christ, as the Son of man, has, all things put under His feet (Compare Hag. 2:15-19; Amos 9:11-15) There is even more; for they add, "God, ever our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him." It will be a time of universal earthly blessing.

## Isaiah 60:1

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At the end of the previous chapter the Redeemer, it is said, shall come to Zion; and it is as based upon that the exhortation is given, “Arise, shine; for thy light” (the Redeemer) “is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” The light now possessed in the person of the Redeemer, dwelling in Zion, is to be displayed. Note, moreover, that this is in contrast to the state of the whole earth. “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.” Jerusalem, irradiated with the light of the glory of the Lord, shines in the midst of the dense moral darkness around. It was so with the Lord Himself at His first coming. “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” (John 1:4,5) So also with the believer, as the apostle writes: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, for the shining forth” (as it should be) “of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4: 6)

Another thing may be observed. When the light shines, whether through Jerusalem or through the believer (as indeed it was also through our blessed Lord and Saviour), it is for a testimony—a powerful testimony—to Him who has enkindled it, yea, to Him whose glory is the light. We thus read in our chapter: “And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” (v. 3; compare Rev, 21:23, 24) The Gentiles behold, and are attracted to the glory that has dawned upon the earth; and “the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel,” becomes thus the center of universal blessing, the source of all being indicated in the words, “The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.” (v. 19) In dwelling upon this blessed scene, it is well to remind ourselves that God, in His grace, has set believers, in anticipation of that day, as lights in, the midst of the darkness; and if this treasure—the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is possessed in earthen vessels, it is that the excellency of the power which causes it to shine forth may be of God, and not of us. Christ in glory is ever the light in the New Testament; and when our light shines it is simply the exhibition of Christ in the life.

E. D.

## Fragment: Christ's Love

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Christ never makes a breach except to come in and connect the soul and heart more with Himself; and it is worth all the sorrow that ever was and more to learn the least atom more of His love, and of Himself, and there is nothing like that, like Him, and it lasts.

## Fragment: Occupation with Christ

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Occupation with our state will never bring us one whit nearer the Lord; it will only distress, enfeeble, and enslave our souls. Occupation with Christ will produce every moment increasing conformity to His image. The true remedy therefore for a bad state is Christ so completely filling our vision—Christ in what He is and in what He has done—that self cannot be seen in the light of His glory. State is not everything; but Christ' is everything; and in proportion as we learn this lesson will our state meet His mind.

## The End of the Lord

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When difficulties and trials arise, the tendency of our hearth is constantly to be more occupied with deliverance from the difficulty than with the end and purpose of the Lord in allowing it; and, unless the soul is exercised before Him, an issue 'is often sought and accepted which is neither His help nor His salvation.

Hence it is good for us, whether individually or collectively, to ponder well the Lord's way with us which surely leads to the Lord's end. Of Israel it was said that they were "a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways." Thus the state of heart before God becomes important, so that the soul may be disciplined and His end may be reached by it. Nothing occurs but His hand is in it. Stormy wind and rain do but fulfill His word. "He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for His land, or for mercy." (Job 37:13) It is thus we learn most precious lessons—precious because we get beyond the trial which exercises us to the loving-kindness of the Lord, and our feet can then stand in an even place. We are in the sanctuary of God, and everything falls into its proper place with us there.

Never was there a moment when the saint who desires the Lord's glory more needed to be there, in the quietness of spirit which results from the sense of everything being under God's eye. Could anything be more trying to the Psalmist (Psalm 73) than to see evil apparently prospering, while, those whose desires were right, and were seeking to walk in integrity, had waters of a full cup wrung out to them? It was in the sanctuary he learned that while his heart had been grieved; he had been, and was, the object of God's care and solicitude, that he would be held by His hand and guided by His counsel. Surely we may say, "Blessed are all they that wait for Him."

Now there is something equally trying which tests the state of our hearts before Him. It has pleased God in His grace to awaken, in the midst of the surrounding, form of godliness, many of His saints to the desire of holding fast the word of the Lord, and of not denying, His name. But, alas! even here, while desires may be sincere, how often is the heart lacking in subjection, and consequently the end of those desires is sought, if one may speak for others, in our own way. The claim to be fearing Him, who is the Holy and the True, is put forth by saints who take different paths, and finally seek separate fellowships. When this is so, can we say that the claim does not result from sincere desire to be true to Him? But while this is admitted, shall we not find that the soul is not chastened? and thus the moral state necessary for the desire to be accomplished in us is not reached. The exhortation of the apostle to the Philippians, that they would fill up his joy by being of, one accord, of one mind, evidently sprang from the tendency in each to seek to serve according to the bent of the mind of each, Euodias and Syntyche liked to have their own way in laboring in the gospel. The mind which was in Christ Jesus, humbling Himself as a man, and becoming, obedient even unto death, alone would enable them to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together (as co-athletes) for the faith of the gospel." Encouragement is not found in carrying our own point, but in Christ. There is comfort of love there. It is fellowship of the Spirit, and not unity of opinion; and bowels and compassions take the place in this poor world of sorrow of our

own way. When the soul is disciplined and self-will rebuked in us, then the mind of Christ becomes dominant. He could say, "My judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me."

When evil prevails among the saints of God, it is a great thing to remember that "the Lord is good and doeth, good." This should lead our hearts to Himself, and then we shall not fret ourselves because of evildoers, nor be overcome of evil; but we shall learn to rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. He bears long, and moreover His end has to be reached, and not ours. Besides, in reaching His own end, He knows how to order everything so as to produce, in the one that waits for Him, exercises of heart and utterances of voice which otherwise would not have been called forth. Affections and desires are thus wrought in us which are according to Himself; we learn to silence self, and even words and thoughts are ordered before Him. This is brought before us in Psalm 5, "Give ear to my words, O Lord." It is not a general petition, but words become weighed before Him. Thoughts too. The musings of the soul are as in His presence— "Consider my meditation." There is no room for self-will to seek to gain its end from the Lord when the utterance is, as in Psalm 19:14, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight."

Further, the Psalmist continues (v. 2): "Hearken (or attend) unto the voice of my cry for unto Thee will I pray." Let it be noted that these early psalms, as do others, contemplate the godly in the midst of the pressure of evil around, and turning to the Lord on account of it, and this not as a last resource, but as the first thought— "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I order unto thee, and will watch." (See R. V.) The thought here is not so much the fact of directing the prayer to the Lord, but the ordered watchful state of soul which claims His ear and attention. Evil may be all around, and there— is the consciousness that "He has no pleasure in wickedness;" but the soul is not occupied with evil, but with the Lord, and thus holy fear is produced— "In thy fear will I worship toward the temple of thy holiness." This does not produce indifference to evil, but rather the suited conduct with regard to it. "Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of those which observe me (marg.); make thy way straight before my face." The Lord has a way of His own, and His will is good and acceptable; but we need to learn it in the presence of watchful foes lest we, dishonor Him. "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of those which observe me." (Psalm 27: 11)

It is good thus to have self-will broken up, and the soul ordered before God and men. A lowly walk results, and the feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, while adoring worship flows forth.

"I bow me to Thy will, O God,

And all Thy ways adore."

This tunes the heart and brings the—spirit into harmony with the wisdom as well as love of God. They doxologies of the saints vary in their character according to the subject which fills the soul. In Ephesians 3 the infinity into which the saints are introduced, and the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, lead the apostle into the expression of what the Church is as the vessel formed by the power which worketh in us for glory to God by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. In Romans 11:33, after the Spirit has reviewed the whole scope of the relations between men (Jew

or Gentile) and God, and the aboundings of sin are shown to have brought forth the super-aboundings of grace, the apostle's utterance of glory takes another character, and celebrates "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

Sin broke up the rest of God in the first creation, but opened up the way for Him to form a new scene of blessing, where that rest shall never be disturbed. And if He, in patient grace and long-suffering with evil, has, without wearying, moved on towards that rest in His own path of wisdom and knowledge, and that rest remains for us, shall we not welcome any exercise which throws the soul into harmony with that path, and teaches us His way? All was ruin with Israel when Moses prayed, "Show me now thy way." (Exodus 33:13) He had really acted for God in the camp; the result of holy jealousy in the sense that Jehovah's presence was incompatible with that of a golden calf. "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" I say not here how far his actings, prompted as they thus were, were the taking of his own way to vindicate what was dear to him—the name of Jehovah; but the pressure on his spirit of the state of the people, and the taste in his own soul of being known of God and of being the object of His favor, lead him to say, "Show me now thy way." Had not Jehovah a path in the midst of Israel's ruin? Surely He had; and as Moses pleads, he gets the consciousness that there is a glory all His own, and yet connected with Jehovah's dealings with a sinful people, which he earnestly desires to see. That was impossible. None but One—a lowly Man of sorrows indeed, but in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead—knew that glory, and could meet it. As we gaze on the cross, we learn adoringly that Godhead glory was in the One who seeped there. Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. The Son of man indeed, but for God to be glorified in Him there must have been the infinite and eternal springs of Godhead fullness. "My servant Moses," honored as he was, must be hid in the cleft of the rock as Jehovah's glory passed by. Covered with His hand he may see the back parts; that is, the Lord must first pass by. To meet Him face to face would be to take the place of an equal. When He has passed by the blessedness of His path is seen. His glory, in which He abides, alone is supreme. We now see the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." And yet the glory of His person remains unknown. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." Well may we ponder the grace accorded to Moses as, put into the cleft of the rock by the Lord Himself, he saw the back parts, and heard the name of Jehovah proclaimed—a name which told what He was with respect to the evil which had come in. "He made known His ways unto Moses," and Moses, worships and intercedes for the people. He is with God about the people, and learns the value of His name in a fuller way than had been taught him at the bush. (Exodus 14:15) That name he publishes in the prophetic song which records the lowest depths into which the people would fall. (Deuteronomy 32: 3) But besides this his own condition is transformed, and he acquires the impress of the communion he had enjoyed. "He was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights." in his actings he had been with the people, and he had acted with holy jealousy surely, but with regard to their evil. Now he is with the Lord, and all is in harmony with that place. When he comes down he reflects, unconsciously to himself, the light which shone upon him there.

Two things are thus brought before us. First, without being indifferent to evil, we learn to walk with the Lord in the midst of it, and to know His way. The end of the Lord is then quietly waited for.

“His every act pure blessing is,

His path unsullied light.”

Secondly, the soul is chastened, and learns to behave itself as a weaned child. There is no seeking to carry out our own will, however sincerely we may believe ourselves to be right. The eyes are not lofty, nor the heart haughty; but communion with His mind, who could say at a time when evil was specially felt, “I thank thee, Father,” will cause us to bear the impress of having been with Him, by our taking His yoke and being meek and lowly in heart. The end of the Lord will be more precious to us than the end which the fretfulness of our own spirits would desire.

May the Lord rekindle in each beloved saint fresh desires to lodge in the goodness of the Lord, and to have His secret with us.

T. H. R.

## Risen with Christ

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We get here the blessed side of the Christian state being risen with Christ, the great groundwork on which we are. It is not that Christ has died for our sins, but that we have died and are risen, and this is the starting-point of the exhortation. We have done altogether with the old man, having died as children of Adam; and we are also risen, having totally done with the world, and yet in it, but risen with Christ; therefore you get the practice of a person risen, and the affections and state and condition of the heart. The Christian is looked at as a person not alive on earth at all; he has died, and now, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above." In chapter 2, you get, "Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" You are not living in the world—you are dead: Now set your affection on things above. You belong there; you have not gone there yet, but the new man is not in you to put you into earthly things. The Spirit takes of "the things of Christ" and shows them to you, not to fix your hearts on earthly things, but to deliver you from them; we are to be, in spirit, mind, and affections, up there. We are risen, and have nothing more to do with the world, as to our affections and object, than a man who has died out of it. It does not say, "You must die," but, "You are dead," for that is the Christian state. Christ having died, and He being my life, my life is hid up there in Him. There is complete association with Christ. He has died; I have died. He is hidden up there; my life is hidden. He will appear; I shall appear with Him in glory. Thorough, complete, blessed association with Christ is the place into which we are put; and it is the starting-point of the character of this life displayed on the earth to which we don't belong. If an angel were here, he would do that which was God's will for him; but he would have nothing to do with the earth as to the object for which he lived.

The apostle does not allow that we have any life here, but talks of our members: "Mortify" —put to death— "therefore your members which are upon the earth." All that proceeds from the flesh the Christian is not to allow for a moment. Mark how different it is to dying to sin. Mortify is just the opposite, it is putting to death. That is power. If I say "I must die," that is being alive. We are dead to sin, the world, and the law. Christ having died, we have died. What is true of Him is true of us. Having now life and power, we are to put these things to death. There is no more lust, or self-will, or working of the flesh, if a man is dead. I am to reckon, myself dead, not setting about to die to sin, for I should not be able; that is, the flesh, the old man, doesn't want to die. The apostle says, "Reckon yourselves dead." You have died. Then put off the old man. "Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." Sin has been "condemned in the flesh." Now I have the place of power to put to death every evil that the flesh would produce. Put to death your members, not your life in Adam. You are dead; therefore put to death your members. If you let them act, it is the flesh. The Christian has power in Christ— "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" —to put down everything inconsistent with the life in which thin power is. The life is hid with Christ in God; but our members are on the earth; and he says, "Now keep them in order; you have the power in Christ."

There is not deliverance till you get to that. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." We have to watch, not to be careless and let these things

spring up; but we have power to say, “Not a single sprout of the old stock shall spring up.” The old tree is cut down and grafted. The old stock may begin to sprout, but that is not “the tree” in common parlance; it has been grafted. We know the stock is there, and so is our flesh there; but we must remember we have power, and we must not excuse ourselves. Our will is not changed; but if Christ is our object, there is power. There is still the law of sin and death; but I am not a debtor to it; it has no claim or power over me. It will have power enough if we allow it; but we have a power entirely above it. The Lord leaves us here to learn to have our senses exercised to discern good and evil, to be tested and tried. The flesh is there; but if we are full of Christ, we are master of it; if we are not full of Christ, it masters us; but it is our fault—we have no excuse. We have to exhibit this life of Christ, or else the flesh acts, and then the old man is exhibited. The apostle says “You are not living in the old man at all now; you are living in Christ, and you, are not going to walk in these things.”

In verse 7, he applies it to their walk. It requires us to make active use of the power. The flesh is soon up if we are not full of Christ. We are to arm ourselves with the power of Christ, and be active in keeping the flesh in its place—down altogether. If I am not full of Christ, for Himself, for His own sake, enjoying Him, the flesh comes out. It will not do to put on your armor at the battle. Everything we pass through in this world is one of two things: either an occasion of obedience to the new man, or of temptation to the old. The Lord prayed in an agony in Gethsemane; and when they come to take Him, He says, “Whom seek ye?” He had gone through it with His Father, and it was an occasion of obedience when it came. “The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?” Peter was asleep in the garden; and when the Lord is witnessing a good confession, he is cursing and swearing he doesn’t know Him. If we were full of Christ, temptations would be nothing but occasions of obedience and glorifying God. We need self-knowledge and diligence of heart in abiding in Christ for Himself, so that when the temptation comes, we don’t enter into it, and it is an occasion of blessed obedience.

In verse 8 we come to another thing—there is no lust, but the flesh is not subdued. We have no lust to be angry; it is an unsubdued nature, and that is not Christ. This is a second step— “also put off all these.” We have done with those horrid evils that God abhors (and He abhors them even more in His children than in others; His delight in us does not change the holiness of His nature); now put off these which express an unsubdued will, an unarrested action of the flesh. If a man says something to me, and I get in a passion, that is not Christ; it is that which unsubdued flesh gives forth. “Lie not one to another.” Satan was a liar and a murderer; we are to put off lying and violence, put these off, because “you have put off the old man (faith has done it) and put on the new.” You have done with the old as to its very nature, you have put on the new; now don’t bring forth the fruits of the old, the crab apples of the old stock. The new is “renewed in knowledge after the image of Him, that created him.” The new man knows God, and takes nothing as the right thing but what suits God. It is not merely an intelligent creature; he is not received in that way; but the Christian knows the love and holiness of God in Christ. It is the knowledge faith has of God. There is no measure of the path I am to walk in as a new man but God Himself. That is where the Christian is set. Act in the same spirit and character as He has shown in Christ. Did He not show grace to you when you were an enemy? Then you go and show grace. Was He not full of mercy to the unthankful? Then you go and do the same. “Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Verse 11. There is no motive, no life, no character but Christ. "Christ is all and in all." I am not a Jew, a Gentile, or an Englishman; I am in Christ as to my life, and "to me to live is Christ." What we are brought into is Christ, and our object is Christ, and nothing else whatever. The life was expressed in Him, and the power of it is in us as alive; we are brought into it by redemption, and Christ is the whole object and character of it. It is Christ subjectively in me, and objectively outside me. I get in Christ Himself the knowledge of God. He is Himself the image of God. Look at Christ, and you see it all in a man. Christ is everything, and He is in the Christian. The whole sphere of the life, and the object of the Christian, is Christ. Where Christ is the divine life, He is the object of the life. The Father's love is fully revealed in Him too. Then what comes in most blessedly is, that I have His place.

Verse 12: "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved." Was He not the "elect of God?" He was God's beloved Son. Having thus brought in Christ, the apostle looks at what we are to put on in practice. "That is your place," he says. You are the objects of God's delight, holy and beloved; His nature is in you; now walk in the consciousness of it, and your heart will be in a state to put on these things that are suited to Christ. If Christ has put us into this place, He looks for fruit. He has cut the tree down, and it is the graft that now lives. "Then," Paul says, "show all these blessed fruits." If Christ is my life, He is in me, and He is my object. "Remember," he says, "what you are before God; walk in the affections of it, in the consciousness of it." You are to have the sense of it, as a child has of its mother's love. A child has the consciousness of the place it is in, and it ought to walk worthy of it, and please its mother; but it must have the consciousness of the place it is in first. It may do every duty without that; but it is only a show, there is no heart in it. In Ephesians we get much the same thing: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;" go and act like your Father. Here it is another aspect of the same thing: "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved." There is the character of Christ, and you are in His place of relationship to God; let us see the spirit that belongs to such a place—the place of Christ in this world. It is hard to be put down, and trampled on; but that is what Christ had, "If when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable to God." That is Christ's character. Did He not do well, and suffer patiently? You do it. It is more important to keep Christ's character than to keep my coat. That is the way it works in the heart. I do not expect righteousness in a world of sin; my business is to show the character of Christ before the world—gentleness and meekness in a world of wrong—that is superiority. If a man vexes me, we are on the same ground. If I have the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of power, it lifts me above the flesh.

But all this is not natural gentleness. He says, "Above all these things charity, which is the bond of perfectness" —the real love of God, that perfects a thing, and makes it divine, and not merely a gentle nature that we see constantly with no power to resist, no firmness of character, one who can't say "no." There are plenty of people to whom it is torture to say "no," and where it would be grieving the Spirit not to say "no;" that is human kindness, not divine love. This bond of perfectness is a holy thing. Gentleness is very sweet to see, but it won't stand good in a world of temptation. If it is the grace of Christ, and I have divine love and power, I do go through it; for it is divine godly love and obedience.

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts"—with the spirit of peace, the Holy Ghost not grieved. Peace is enjoyed with God in a conscience not injured. Then he adds, "Be ye thankful," for I get everything from God. I can't be thankful for everything if my will is not broken; but the moment I

look to God as counting the hairs of my head, I glory in tribulation, and count it all joy, every trial and exercise. There is the Christian's place—the peace of Christ ruling in his heart, walking in peace through the world, thankful for everything he gets; it is for his good. Now he is to enjoy the things of his own world. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” That is the positive world into which you are brought— “The unsearchable riches of Christ.” It is not head knowledge, but spiritual things— “Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” We know God's ways and thoughts in the wonderful Word we have, and we have the mind of Christ. The men of the world sing in their enjoyment; you sing together to the Lord. Now the Christian is enjoying his own world with his heart's affections. We get the rule for his conduct. It is very simple very sweeping, and uncommonly satisfactory to the heart that really desires to do the will of God. “Whatsoever ye do, whether in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” If we look at that “Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,” it is bringing all the principle and motive by the revelation of a Person who is everything to us, not forbidding things. We know in how many things during the week the question rises, “Shall I do this or that?” Not as to absolutely wrong things; but a person says, “What is the harm of that?” Are you going to do it in the name of the Lord? No Then you are getting away from the Lord, and that is the harm—a great harm for the Christian. In taking a house, or buying a dress, in the way I manage my house, is it “in the name of the Lord Jesus?” What can we say? It is leaving the Lord out (not leaving Him altogether), and letting self in. That is what the will of the flesh is.

The Christian has the privilege in everyday things of doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. People ask if there is any harm in a concert of sacred music. It is a cheat of the devil! Ask if they are going in the name of the Lord Jesus. They know they are not thinking of Him! Someone says, “Can't you come and see this beautiful scenery God made it.” “I know He did. Are you going in the name of the Lord Jesus? It's the object, that's the thing. God sent honey to Jonathan when he was going through the wood, and he was refreshed by it. Very right and nice. But if he had been looking for honey, it, would not have been fighting the Lord's battles. There was to be no honey in the sacrifices; but if God sends it, it is right to be refreshed by it, and I am thankful for it. The question is—where the mind of the man is set and living. If a person is in earnest to do the will of God (and the Holy Ghost could not lead us in our own will to amuse and please ourselves, He is not down here for that), if a person is anxious to live to God, and no one else, he says, “Give me a simple rule for the things that turn up every day.” “Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Then I live with Him in the everyday things. Suppose my father wants this book put that way, and I put it this way; it may be of no importance, but it is a proof I don't care for my father. If the blessed Lord is all to me, I shall be seeking to do everything in His name. We may forget—alas! we do—but if it is on my heart to please a person, I don't forget. Suppose I am walking thus in everything, I shall taste more of Christ, and it will give fixed happiness instead of grieving the Spirit for some foolish thing I shall not care' for, in a few years. I shall have Christ for my object in everything I do. We do think much of those we love in our conduct, and I shall have in my mind what He likes, if I love Him. That is what the Lord looks for as one who has loved, us and given Himself for us in grace.

As Christ is everything to me, and I have Him for my life, now I must walk in it, and do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. I am sure it is what makes us happy. We shall find what weak creatures we are, and that is humbling and very useful. There will be that walking with Him that gives the secret of His presence and counsel, as He says Himself, “I will manifest myself to him.” There is

the positive living of the heart in the enjoyment of the Lord's presence, in consequence of living for Him. Are we content to live like Lot, vexing ourselves with the evil—we are amongst? or do we give it up, and joy to think of the time when the Lord comes and says, as He did to Abraham, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward?" Are we content if God says that? It was seen in Abraham's walk. He was called "the friend of God;" and God says, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" The secret of the Lord was in his heart. We find then in what has been before us the remarkable expression of what the life of Christ is, and its workings in us; and it all starts with having put off the old man, and put on the new. God has fully revealed Himself in Christ, and we have received the divine nature. There we are put to understand in our souls what God is thus revealed—Christ the pattern of our walk, and Himself our strength for it.

J. N. D. (1871)

## Under His Wings in Lovingkindness

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“He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.”—Psalms 91:4.

Much blessedness is evidently implied in this threefold! assurance of protection. Our desire is to trace the bearings of the central figure alluded to, being not only striking in itself, but used so frequently as to become familiar to us all. It occurs many times throughout the Psalms in one form or another, and in various connections, and even in the New Testament Thus the Lord, addressing Jerusalem, says, “How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.” But He has to reproach them with their self-destroying in—difference, if not willful rejection of His grace. Before proceeding we trust this is not the case with our readers. We earnestly long that all would appreciate and yield to the entreating grace of Jesus.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us”—manifesting Himself as capable in every way of meeting, and satisfying every element of our need; more than satisfying it, blessed be His name, and as He alone could justly estimate it. This He did in no respect more truly than in awakening us from the stupor in which the need was unfelt, unrealized by ourselves. He would make us, sensible of it, whether in heart or conscience; indeed, in both; for it was only thus that we could ever know, ever be drawn to Him—the living Center of God’s moral universe. But, refused and rejected, His love told itself out in tears of pity over the despisers of His grace, as in Luke 19, when He contemplates the condition of those who did not, “would not,” recognize Him, and the consequences which should follow their refusal of Him. Man, in his lost state is an anomaly in God’s creation, possessing a will which impels him from his divinely-appointed Center; but the day is coming when all shall own the earth—rejected Son of God. To Him “every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” What wisdom then it is to avail oneself of the shelter of His outstretched wings—now, in this “day of salvation,” before the day of judgment flashes upon heedless thousands, and places them beyond hope!

Returning to the Old Testament, we find in Ruth a striking illustration of the wisdom just referred to. Though doubtless uninstructed as to the immensity of blessing treasured up in God’s promises to Abraham concerning his seed her faith discerned sufficient in Naomi’s circumstances to form a link between her soul and him. Little hopeful that in poor Naomi’s path lay any fair immediate prospect—nay, distinctly warned as to the futility of cherishing such a prospect—who can doubt that Ruth’s earnest soul clung to her mother-in-law as to one representing divine things—the only measure of them her intelligence had as yet attained to, as she says, “Entreat me not to leave thee, whither thou goest, I will go, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God?” We have here the most perfect expression of attachment one can well conceive, and (may we not add?) the basis of that attachment. God uses this providentially to lead her on; and are not souls often thus linked with divine things, unconsciously perhaps, in a measure of intelligence, at least, scarcely

discernible? How blessed also to be in any measure, as was Naomi, an exponent of God's wonderful purposes, blessings, and grace! It is beautiful to notice how distinctly Ruth thus enters on the ideal pilgrim path, leaving country, kindred, and father's house (Genesis 12:1; Psalms 45:10); and how thoroughly she has learned the essential lesson for true pilgrimage, that of self-abasement! (Ruth 13) Self-renunciation and devotedness are twin virtues, and more; for they are born together, and are, mutually dependent. From Boaz, Ruth learns she may reckon on the favor of the Lord God of Israel, "under whose wings" she has come to trust.

Thus, blessed is it to trace the path which leads into the protection expressed in the figure before us, and, the consciousness of that protection. It is more than entertaining, thank God, as indeed the revelation of His mind about things must be to us. For example, is it not sustaining to observe the zeal with which our God indicates the way—marks for our guidance and encouragement? And is it not by a similar path we have all reached the same goal?

The thought of protection involved in the expression "beneath His wings" sufficiently accounts for the frequency of reference to it in the Psalms. The godly are there seen, in God's dispensational ways; to be subjected to the oppression of enemies, in the midst of whom they are providentially preserved (Psalms 124), and from whom they are ultimately delivered. These are His means of dealing with His favored earthly people, for their chastisement, exercise of soul, and restoration, as we read, "Deliver my soul from the wicked, thy sword: from men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world." (Psalms 17:13,14) The effect of these dealings is presented in the foregoing verses (7-9). Deadly enemies compass the godly one about, and he is thus induced to seek the covert of Jehovah's wings. In that secure retreat the heart is free to rejoice, doubtless in God, known through the efficiency of the protection He affords. Thus, "Because thou hast been my help, therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." (Psalms 63:7)

There is an expression of great beauty also frequently found in the English version of the Psalms, and occasionally accompanying that now under review; viz., lovingkindness, which, being an associated thought, indicates the spirit, the grace, in which our God accords His protection. The expressions are directly connected in Psalms 36:7: "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." The tenderness of divine affection is involved in His care for us. Comfort is ministered with the protection. Such favor meets us not only under circumstances of oppression from without, as in Psalms 17, but in trial experienced within, should this even be the agony felt by those newly awakened (as Israel in the Psalms) to a sense of guilt under a broken law. Refuge is needed for an overwhelmed heart, as well as from the persecution of enemies. Both needs are linked together in Psalms 61:2-4; just as the means of comfort and protection are connected in Psalms 36 above noticed. In the great penitential Psalm (51), resource; and we may take him here to be representative of those truly exercised as to guilt before God. It is worthy of observation, that what leads us to trust Him resignedly, when subjected to outward trials, is the knowledge of His lovingkindness learned through deep-soul exercise. This primary, though unquestionably outward trial, is helpful and often necessary in, preparing a soul for the ministration of grace (Job 33:14-33; and outward and inward trials simultaneously descending on Israel by-and-by, will be the furnace by which Jehovah will purge away its dross, and teach it to value the mercy which it now despises. How sweetly then will they who come forth purified sing of the mercy that "endureth forever," as in, the words of Psalms 107 and 118.

God as Father is not revealed in the Psalms. Hence love in this relationship is not in view here. The love of God, as such moreover, may be contemplated in its blessed essence by those consciously reconciled, apart from the thought of mercy; though it was in mercy towards us, when guilty and dead in sins, that we first tasted His love. This is the fountain whence His mercy flows. And the two thoughts run side by side in Ephesians 2:3-7. His lovingkindness (mercy) known through experienced need, however, is what is chiefly dwelt upon in the Psalms. Psalm 107:43 directly teaches this: "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things" (i.e. men delivered, as set forth in the Psalms, through crying to God when brought to "their wit's end" in trouble), "even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." The psalmist himself is full, of this precious theme, and appeals to men to praise the Lord for it. Psalms 106 illustrates the absolute need for mercy; and if the subject were doctrinally treated here, as in Ephesians 2, this Psalm would form the natural preliminary counterpart of evil. But the former completes book 4, and has its fitting place, while 107 is the beautiful introduction to book 5, which reviews God's dealings with Israel, its history, and attitude towards Him when restored.

The place God has given Psalms 106 is to be seen thus: 106 celebrates God's "honor," "majesty," "riches," and "glory" in creation; Psalms 105 records His dealings in grace, to the glory of "His holy name;" and, lastly, the dark history of man's utter failure in "the best possible circumstances is set forth in Psalms 106. What fits one for the contemplation of this, as well as the glories of God set forth in the preceding psalms, is the knowledge of God's mercy—His lovingkindness. And this is found in a deeper way in 103 than it could be learned even through the exercises of 107. It would be disastrous to limit our apprehension of God's mercy or of our need to that measure of it which is realized through afflictions. At the cross it is that man's need and God's love in meeting that need, according to the inexpressible exigencies of His own glory, are fully told out. Christ's death is in view in Psalm 102; not as sin-offering or burnt-offering in atonement certainly, but His cutting off, whose personal glory gave even the burnt-offering its inestimable value. In lowly association with Jehovah's servants (compare, Matthew 3:15) the Messiah takes pleasure in the ruins of Zion, and looks for its restoration. This, not for Zion's sake alone, but for the declaration of the name of the Lord therein. Then how about His cutting off? In reply, God reminds Him of the glories of His adorable person, and finds occasion to pass these glories in review before our souls. (See Hebrews 1) Though cut off in the midst of His years, He is the same whose "years are throughout all generations," who "of old laid the foundations of the earth," whose hands made the heavens. What an astonishment is the death, of, such an one! Is it any marvel, considering the love that brought Him to this, that Psalms 103 opens with, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" Thus, are also "benefits" to be recounted, forgiveness, healing, satisfaction, renewal and crowning with loving-kindness and tender mercies, all to be enjoyed as flowing from the cross of Jesus. In view of this also God's "mercy is from everlasting to everlasting." And as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy (lovingkindness) towards them that fear Him. Shall we not in all truth and earnestness re-echo, "Bless the Lord, O my soul?" J. K.

## Fragment: Knowing His Love

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It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of cultivating those holy affections which attach us to Christ, and cause us to know His love, as also to know Himself.

## Three Things

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1. We may so walk as to have ourselves in the presence of or in company with the Lord.
2. We may act so as to bring our fellow-saints or fellow-sinners into His presence or into His company.
3. We may be living so as to be keeping ourselves before our fellows and companions.

The first is the way of the worshipper.

The second is the activity of a true servant.

The third is the fruit of vanity, and want of singleheartedness, and will surely keep us uncertain, without joy or strength, and prove a snare as well as bitterness in the latter end.

J. G. B.

## Fragment: Perseverance and True Faith

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Perseverance always characterizes true faith when the work is of God, be it ever so poor in appearance. The whole heart is in it, because it is of God. In times of difficulty, faith does not show itself in the magnificence of the result, but in love for God's work, however little it may be, and in the perseverance with which it is carried on through all the difficulties belonging to this state of weakness; for that with which faith is occupied is the city of God and the work of God, and these things have always the same value, whatever may be the circumstances in which they are found.

J. N. D.

## 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:1-10

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It is very interesting to observe the apostle's use of the word "abound" or "increase," in this epistle. It is also important, as showing that there is, no limit of attainment here for the believer. Many speak of perfection or holiness as something to be reached in this world; but the slightest glance at the teaching of the apostle on "abounding" reveals that these doctrines have no countenance from the word of God. He thus says, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another," &c.

There can be, it is evident, no standard for "abounding." Again, "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and please God ("even as ye do walk," the Revised Version and others add), so ye would abound more and more." (4: 1) These believers had been instructed how to walk and please God, and, accepting the added clause, they were walking so as to please God; and yet they were not to be, satisfied—they were to "abound" more and more. So also, in the last scripture named (4: 10), they had been taught of God to love one another; and they were showing their love "toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia." But the apostle adds, "We beseech you, brethren, that ye increase (or "abound") more and more." Whether, therefore, in loving one another, or loving all the brethren, all saints, or in pleasing God in their walk and ways, they were to abound more and more; and hence there was not one of these dear saints who could take the ground of saying, "I have reached the standard; I have now attained; and I am in the enjoyment of perfection." The answer at once to such vain imaginings would be, "Whatever your attainments, you have to abound more and more." And how could it be otherwise, when Christ, in His infinite love to us, is our example? (1 John 3: 16) and when, moreover, it is written, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked?" (1 John 2:6) To claim to have reached the standard of Christ can only spring from a want of appreciation of what He is, and from ignorance of what we ourselves are.

We may add, as a point of interest, that the apostle's prayer in chapter 3: 12 is—seen to be answered in 2 Thessalonians 1:3; for he says, "Your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." But even so there might be, bearing in mind the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, a larger measure of "abounding."

## 1 Peter 1:10

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The word here rendered “without blemish” is found seven or eight times in the New Testament. Twice it is used of our blessed Lord and Saviour—in the scripture given above, and in Hebrews 9: 14, where it is translated “without spot.” As the Lamb of God, He was without blemish, the Lamb by whose precious blood we have been redeemed; and “through the eternal Spirit” “offered Himself without spot to God.” In every other place of its occurrence it is applied to believers. Thus we read, in Ephesians 1:4, that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, “that we should be holy and without blame before Him. in love;” in Philippians 2:15, of “the children of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,” &c.; in Colossians 1:22, that God hath reconciled His people, to present them “holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight;” in Jude 24, that we shall be presented “faultless before the presence of His glory,” &c.; and lastly, in Revelation 14:5, it is said of the 144,000 who will stand on Mount Sion with the Lamb, that “they are without fault before the throne of God.” Leaving the reader to follow out the teaching of the several scriptures, we may call attention to two or three things First, that our present standing before God is “without spot”—that God sees us, in a word, on the ground of the work of Christ, as spotless as He who accomplished it; secondly, that it is our present responsibility to be “without spot” (“without rebuke,” Philippians 2:15) in our walk through this world; and lastly, that we shall be finally presented before God actually “without spot,” entirely and perfectly conformed to Christ. What unspeakable and infinite grace!

E. D.

## The Life of Christ in the Believer

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What characterizes Colossians is the life of Christ in us; not the effect of the presence of the Holy Ghost, as in Ephesians, but the life of Christ. The Holy Ghost is the power that acts in me: the power and presence of the Holy Ghost is everything to me, assuming that I have life. I am led by Him, the love of God is shed abroad in my heart by Him, He is the earnest of the inheritance, the consciousness and power of all our relationships is by the Holy Ghost; so that our bodies are His temples. Life is equally important; for if we hadn't it we could not have the Spirit. He could not put His seal and dwell on, the mere ground of life; but we being sprinkled with blood, He comes as the witness that we are whiter than snow, and dwells in us. The new life has a capacity to enjoy the things of Christ, but no power of revelation; and we need the power of the Holy Ghost to bring these things to us. They are spiritually discerned. We cannot even use the Word without the Spirit; it is the sword of the Spirit. It is not the life that unites me to Christ, but the Holy Ghost— "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." It is the Holy Ghost that is the power, and it may take me clean out of all relationships with this world (the Lord says to Paul, "I have delivered thee from the people and the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee"), and yet in the fullest way He owns the relationships.

We find here some that God did create, and some that He did not. In marriage I get, not redemption or the Holy Ghost, but what was set up at the creation; and what God created God owns. All these relationships are owned in the fullest possible way; they may be dreadful snares, now sin has come in and made everything miserable, and spoiled and corrupted what God made good. Then a power comes in, not grace, but the Spirit, and takes Paul out of Jew and Gentile, and identifies him with a glorified Christ, who sends him with the message of what is heavenly into the world; but he is not of it. "As my Father sent me into the world, even so send I you." Their bodies were in it, but they were not there morally. They came from Christ; He had sent them. That lifts them above relationships, though God puts His seal on them; and it is one of the signs of the last days, that men are without natural affection. He sanctions them, but they are all to be given up to serve Christ here. Creation is God's own making, and He never gives up the title to it. Only another power, has come in, and for the moment it is a question of Christ. I have to give up everything. "Salute no man by the way." The closest ties were the most dangerous; not that they were not fully owned by God, but "if a man hate not his father and mother... he cannot be my disciple."

The world—the state of things around— is not what God created it at all; it is sin's making. I get His beautiful workmanship in it, but spoiled by the devil getting man's ear. The whole creation is under the bondage of corruption; that is not God's doing. It is a labor to make people happy; they seek in a thousand ways to forget God, for if they think of God they know they are lost. But there is the world of God's providence, where not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him; everything is under His hand. He has committed authority to magistrates and so on, and He owns it. If I were innocent as Adam in Eden I should not need magistrates; now this world would be a kind of pandemonium without such. The Christian is to be subject to such authority—the Queen of

England or a Turk, wherever it is: It may not be righteousness. I do not look for righteousness but at the right hand of God—Christ. I don't mean it ought not to be, but I don't expect it. My business is to walk as a Christian, and show the character of Christ, not to set the world right; when Christ comes He will do that, for He will take it into His hand. If I could only set myself and other Christians right that would be the thing. The Christian should be the perfect presentation of the character of Christ in the world that has turned Him out. We are the living witnesses of what we are enjoying of the Christ they won't have. The world is under judgment, but in grace God has not executed it; He is sending out His gospel.

Now there is a great system of government going on, and God owns it. There were no servants in paradise; there was no stealing. Now God owns property, &c., it is not the original thing that was instituted in goodness, nor the heavenly condition, nor is it in itself what the Christian is (though Christianity maintains it all)—he is the expression of what Christ is; but he owns and submits to all that God has established. “Servant” here is slave, and nothing but sin brought in slaves. There would never have been such a thing if sin had not been there; but the apostle does not meddle with it. He does not say he approves of it, but he leaves the government of the world just where it is. If I can relieve bodily wants as a Christian I am bound to do it, or prevent one beating another if I can do it by kindness; but I am to leave the world alone. It is hard to do it; in our hearts we don't like it. Suppose a war is going on, we wish success to one side; it was all settled before you ever heard of it. There a hard-hearted emperor wishing Rome had one neck that he might cut it off, or setting the city on fire, and then accusing the Christians of it; well you must be subject— “The powers that be are ordained of God.”

Wherever I find real power exercised I find God's authority. If there is a rebellion, and other powers rise up, I am submissive as before. It is my Christian path, though not the relationship God created; there the bond is maintained on the principle of Christianity. Where it is a question of slaves it is. If you can be free use it rather; but if you are bound never mind. You are the Lord's free man, and Paul sends the runaway Onesimus back to his master. He expects Philemon to set him free, and speaks very touchingly—“I beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.” But he would do nothing “without thy mind,” “knowing thou wilt do more than I say.” He expects grace; but he leaves the thing where he finds it. You will never set the world right; you have no principles nor power to do it. You can control an unconverted man with unconverted principles, but you can't deal with him as a Christian. If I am to set the world right I must join with the world, and can't have any principles but theirs. Then I must give up Christianity; for they have none to be governed by. You can use gracious influence as Christ did, and that we have to do. The Christian is to let his light, shine, and the testimony of what his principles are is so distinct and positive that they “see your good works.” If he joins with an infidel he owns infidelity can set the world right. The Christian by himself has his own gracious godly principles to act on, that the testimony may be there of what his principles can do (Christianity has reformed the world in a sense; for it brought in the pattern of things better, and they are ashamed to do in the light what they did in the dark). A man will not do what is “unworthy of a man;” but “unworthy of the Lord,” you never find that; and that is where the Christian is to walk.

Paul says to masters, “You have a Master in heaven” who will take notice of everything you do. Your part is to show what Christianity is and does, and that is good to an infidel, or whoever it is. Your confession of Christ is to be so positive, that they should know what to attribute these things

to. Let the world go on its own way, and you go yours—that is Christ's. If not, you compromise Christianity, instead of maintaining its testimony.

Remark here that the obedient side comes first in everything. It is the natural thing the Christian gets into. He is "sanctified unto obedience." He never gets out of it; he fails in it, of course. The Lord says, "As the Father gave me commandment, even so. I do." The apostles never said, what often jars on one, "I have a right to do so-and-so." It is, "We ought to obey God rather than man." If man hinders me from obeying God, it is wrong. But it is not "I have a right," but I must "obey God rather than man."; You get in the path of Christ—the path of divine wisdom, that the vulture's eye hath not seen; and the way to keep yourself in it is to "continue in prayer" (4: 2), incessantly referring everything to God. There is the positive direct intervention of God, everything—working together for good; and by prayer our hearts get through grace in connection with this overruling power of God, whether to stop some mischief Satan is doing, or to open a door of utterance. "We will give ourselves to prayer, and the ministry of the Word," not the ministry of the Word and prayer. Whatever the subject of prayer is, there is continually bringing in God; so that the heart is with God. If I am entirely dependent on Him, living in Him, and His word living in me to direct my thoughts, I am sure to get what I ask. Then there is most gracious dealing with regard to my requests—"Be careful for nothing." "Make known your requests to God." It does not follow that they are right; but don't brood over anything, bring it to God. Perhaps He may say He can't grant it; as when Paul asks for the thorn to be taken away, He says, I have given it to you for a purpose; I am not going to take it away. And the power of Christ rested on him through the very thing that had broken him down. So, the peace of God keeps my heart.

"Watch in the same" here: (v. 2) If I am living with God, I know what to ask God for—I see Satan and danger coming; or else when a snare comes I may not be thinking of it, like the disciples sleeping for sorrow—they were not watching. If I am watching and see temptation, I get power to obey and to show Christ in it, with thanksgiving;" for if a person is walking in a path of intimacy with God, thanksgiving is there. Before I get the actual thing I ask for I get His answer, and say, "Thank God, He has come in," though not seeing the fruit of it at the moment.

Verse 5: "Walk in wisdom." As dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth an ill savor, so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom, and every Christian ought to be in reputation for wisdom—godly wisdom; to give no occasion to the enemy. A foolish word, a rash expression, may hinder a person receiving the gospel. It may be a slight thing; if it is a stumbling-block to hinder the gospel, that is not slight. You have to carry Christ, and it behooves you to be fit carriers of Christ in the relationship in which you are.

Verse 6: "Let your speech be alway with grace." If Christ is dwelling in my heart by faith, and my habitual habit of mind and thought is with Christ, Christ will come out. How many words—not bad or evil—but idle, for the moment, without harm meant, do we speak in a day? It is not Christ, and mark, if it is not Christ, it is something else—the flesh. It is not that we are not to be happy, Christ makes us happy, and that will be seen; but our speech is to be "alway with grace." If we carried Christ in every word, what a life we should live! The joy of heaven to me is, I shall not want my conscience at every step. Here I can't let myself loose, there are snares everywhere, and I require to keep a wonderful check on myself.

Verse 12: He looks that they should stand “perfect in ‘all the will of God;” not perfect in the flesh, but “growing up to Him who is the Head in all things.” The Christian who begins to want proof in his walk that he is a Christian is wrong; others do look for testimony. He is to be totally given up to God, and looking for nothing but His will, the eye single. Do you ever doubt about anything—taking a house, or the like? Ask what the will of God is. If you doubt then, I say your eye is not single. Perhaps you, have not found out the cause; but He is teaching you, putting you in circumstances to detect motives you never knew were in your heart, that you may be like Christ, and “perfect and complete in all the will of God.” Is the energy and purpose of our heart that? It is connected with the consciousness that we belong to Christ. We are set in the world as the epistles of Christ, known and read of all men, that we may manifest the life of Jesus in our mortal bodies. We look to Him for strength and wisdom, and to grow up to Him in everything. Is that the purpose of our hearts in all we do? Is it, “I want to do the will of God?” The Lord give us to have that as our desire, constant and earnest, and then to “continue in prayer, and watch in the same.” If you want to be happy as a Christian, it is in not grieving the Spirit; and not to do that is to walk close to Christ, and get the secret of His will, that you may enjoy Christ with ungrieved Spirit. I don’t say you will see your growth. Moses did not see his face shine; but it was the witness to the people that he had been with God. ‘The Lord grant us to be with God in the dependence of prayer, and we shall get the strength of the Lord, and clear-sighted as to where we are not walking with Him.

J. N. D. (1871).

## Simple Christian Truths: Prayer

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There is no need to insist upon the importance of prayer; for, while it may often be neglected, there are few who will not admit that it is a necessary expression of the Christian life. Our purpose, however, in this paper is to offer a few considerations upon its nature, as well as upon its conditions and objects.

There are three things contained in prayer—dependence, confidence, and expectation. Necessarily prayer is the language of dependence, springing from the fact, as it does, that we are dependent on Him to whom we pray. When the Lord said to Ananias, concerning Saul, “Behold, he prayeth,” He intimated that Saul had now learned his true place of dependence, along with the conviction of his guilt in persecuting the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. It is the sense of dependence that begets need, and turns our eyes upward to Him who alone can meet it. This is expressed in the language of the psalmist, “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him.” (Psalms 62:5) There might, however, be entire dependence without confidence; and in such a case there could be no real prayer. A natural man, for example, might be convinced that he is dependent on a higher power for his existence; but with his carnal mind enmity against God he could not turn to Him in prayer. The believer not only knows his dependence on, but he has also confidence in God.

He has learned something of His grace, His heart, and he thus, under the sense of his need, casts himself in childlike confidence on God, in the assurance that He will hear his prayer. Then, allied with this, there is expectation, waiting for the answer in faith. No doubt the heart is relieved by the very utterance of its needs before God; but he who prays in the Spirit will be found watching in his prayer for the expected answer. As the psalmist again speaks, “I waited patiently (in waiting I waited) for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.” And again, “I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.” So, in the New Testament we are exhorted to “continue (to persevere) in prayer, and to watch in the same with thanksgiving.” As also to “pray without ceasing.” (Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17)

The conditions of prayer according to God are found in various scriptures. Jude speaks in his epistle of praying in the Holy Ghost, and this may perhaps be termed the fundamental condition; for while we read in the Scriptures of prayers offered by natural men, and of such being answered by God in His tender mercy and compassion, it, is yet true that no believer could pray except in and by the Spirit of God. It is He who must produce in us the sense of need, and it is He who must lead us into the presence of God, as well as guide us in our petitions. As the apostle says, when speaking of our connection with a groaning creation, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.” (Romans 8:26) We are thus as dependent on the power of the Spirit for prayer as for walk. It is owing to the forgetfulness of this truth that Christendom seeks refuge in its prayer-books, both in families and in public assemblies,

and at the same time conceals thereby its need and poverty.

Our Lord has also laid down an indispensable condition of prayer—a condition which, when fulfilled, always ensures the answer to our cries. He says, “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.” (John 14:13,14) It becomes therefore a matter of the utmost importance to ascertain, the meaning of the, words “in my name.” It could not mean the utterance simply of the words, or closing our petitions with, “through our Lord Jesus Christ.” That would attach the answer of prayer to a mere formula. This is impossible, and we shall see that much more is involved. Even in human transactions the name of another cannot be used without his consent and authority. If we ask anything of a third person in another’s name, in the name of one that would give us influence in our request, it can only be with his express permission, and a permission which must be proved if the demand is made. In like manner we cannot use the name of Christ in our prayers without His warrant—a warrant that must be found in His own Word. When we have this, and we have it for every petition which is evoked from us by the Holy Ghost, for every prayer which is the expression of His own mind, we appear before God with all the authority of Christ Himself, in all His value and preciousness to God, and hence the prayers so offered ascend with the same power as if presented by Himself. This is seen from the promise He annexes to the condition, “I will do it.” And He will do it, moreover, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. How blessed then when we thus pray! And what an encouragement thus to pray! And what a foundation, we may also add, for faith to build its hopes and expectations upon In John 15 the Lord has given us another condition—“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” (v. 7) This is sometimes spoken of as a lower kind of prayer, but the slightest examination of the terms our Lord employs will dispel the misconception. True it is asking what we will, but this is preceded by a double condition. The first is, “If ye abide in me.” Now abiding in Christ is the constant maintenance in our souls of our dependence upon Him for life, strength, and everything; a dependence as complete as that of the branch on the vine for its power to bear, fruit. “Apart from me,” He says, “ye can do nothing,” any more than the branch could bear fruit after it was severed from the vine. Whatever of life towards God, service in testimony, fruit-bearing of every kind, that flows out from His people has its source in Him, and can only flow out through them, as the connection is maintained by abiding in Him; realizing that they are dependent on Him, that in this sense they live, move, and have their being in Him. Then He adds, “And my words abide in you.” The two things must go together—abiding in Him and His words abiding in us. The first gives the secret of the power and the second the knowledge of His mind; for when His words abide—dwell in us—they become the source of His thoughts to us; yea, they form His mind, and as a consequence what we will is according to His will. This reveals to us that our prayers—the prayers that have power with God—flow from God’s own mind as revealed in the Scriptures. An example of this may be found in the life of David. When the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to tell David that not he, but his son, should build Jehovah’s house, and gave him promises concerning his own house, his throne, and kingdom, he went in and sat before the Lord with his heart overflowing with gratitude, and praise, and prayer; and, among others, he used these remarkable words, “Thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, halt revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.” (2 Samuel 7:27) That is, David’s prayer concerning his house was founded upon and formed by the gracious communications which Jehovah had been pleased to make. So likewise, our truest prayers are

those which spring from the word of God, the words of Christ, as in John, dwelling in our hearts, because we then pray in communion with, as well as according to, the divine mind, and hence necessarily also in the Holy Ghost.

In the gospel of Matthew another aspect of prayer is presented— “All things, whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” (Matthew 21:22; see also Mark 11:24) James too speaks of the necessity of faith in asking, and adds that a waverer must not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Now faith can only spring from confidence in God about the thing sought, and this confidence in God will only follow upon the conviction that what is prayed for is according to God's will; and, it may be added, the assurance that we have the mind of God can only be produced by the Holy Spirit, and by the Holy Spirit, speaking generally, through the written Word. Once having this assurance, we await with the certainty of expectation the answer, according to that word of the apostle John: “This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.” (1 John 5. 14, 15) This passage is important as showing that faith finds its sure foundation in the knowledge of God's will—a will that is unfolded to us in the Scriptures.

The apostle John warns us of a common hindrance to prayer. He says, “Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” (1 John 3:21,22) Self-judgment and confession, if there has been failure or sin, are therefore pre-requisites to effectual prayer, even as the psalmist says, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” This will again link itself with the statement of James— “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” The righteous man being, we judge, one who is practically such; one who, in the language of John, “keeps God's commandments.” For walking in obedience is not only the path of holiness, but it is also the source through the Holy Spirit of intelligency in God's mind, and thus of confidence in prayer. The very example of Elijah that James adduces is an illustration in point. In the history Elijah announces by a word of the Lord that there should be no rain upon—the earth for “these years;” and again, after that period, that there should be rain. And now we learn from James that both the one and the other were answers to his prayers.

We can only touch briefly upon the objects, or, perhaps we should rather say, the subjects, of prayer. From Philippians 4 we learn that we may tell out before God everything which burdens our hearts: “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God,” etc. It is not said that God will answer all these requests; still, in His love and grace, He would have us unburden ourselves, and He engages that His peace shall guard our “hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Yes, He would have us, as Peter exhorts, to cast all our care upon Him in the knowledge that He careth for us. These requests are connected with our personal needs, but outside of these (and it is our privilege to rise above ourselves) we may have fellowship with the heart of God in His thoughts, aims, and purposes, in His desires for the saints, and in the activities of His grace which flow out towards the world. Take an example from the prophet Isaiah: “ For Zion's sake,” says the prophet, speaking in the Lord's name, “will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth;” and then

afterward we read, “ I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night; ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” (Chapter 62:1,6,7) Thus while He purposes to bless Zion, He would have His remembrancers upon the earth to plead with Him for the accomplishment of that on which He has set His heart. To pray intelligently, therefore, needs acquaintance with His word. It is in the epistles of Paul especially that we find what God’s desires are for the saints, in the inspired prayers of the apostle, as well as in the exhortations given for their direction. Besides these the apostle often asks for prayer for his own ministry; and in 1 Timothy 2 he names special subjects for supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks. This will suffice to show the reader that it is from the word of God we must learn what are the suited subjects of prayer; and that if led out, in the energy of the Holy Spirit, into this blessed field of service, he may occupy himself unceasingly with fervent labors in prayer (see Colossians 4) in communion with the mind and heart of God.

There are other questions, such as the secret of liberty and power in prayer, the character of private as distinguished from public prayer, or prayer in the assembly, or in unison with others (Matthew 18:19), which must be reserved for another opportunity. In the meantime, the whole subject, both as connected with the Christian life, and the life of the assembly, may be earnestly commended to the attention of the saints.

E. D.

## Fragment: Jesus Is Sufficient

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Jesus alone is sufficient, but seems insufficient when He is not wholly and solely embraced.

## The Father Loveth the Son

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That the Son loved the Father, His perfect obedience, faith, subjection, and entire surrender of Himself to the Father's will fully proves. But what an object of infinite and unchanging love was He ever to the Father's heart! What a sweet savor was He always to God in life and in death! What a delight was He to the Father by the Jordan! and again in the holy mount, where others were eye-witnesses of His majesty! On each occasion the voice from the excellent glory declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Never was there such a testimony from heaven before.

The Son also declared the Father. This He did not in word only, though He simile the words of God, and the Father who sent Him gave Him a commandment what He should say, and what He should speak; but also as to the works He did He could say, "The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." And is it not also true that He so manifested the Father in every detail, that if one had known Him he would have known the Father also? Thus the Son from heaven so declared the Father, that those who hated Him hated His Father also, and those who believed on Him believed on the Father who had sent Him; for "Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth Him that sent me." How blessed then it is to find our Lord saying to His disciples, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" and yet as the sent One He could add, when leaving the world, "I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." (John 12:44-50;14. 6-31)

In seeing the Father as revealed in and by the Son, we recall to mind the Father's eternal counsel, purpose, and grace toward us in Him before the world was; and in His life and death we see divine love, and all the claims of divine righteousness and truth fully met, and God thus vindicated, glorified, and satisfied in this wondrous way of bringing blessing to us; so that divine power can now be for us, and not against us. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

"The Father loveth the Son;" for divine, infinite, unchanging, eternal love ever has and ever must subsist between the Father and the Son. Hence the Holy Spirit, according to one of His present operations for our blessing, is taking of the things of the Father and the Son when He is pleased to say, "The Father loveth the Son;" and to show the perfection of the love, He adds, "and hath given all things into His hands," which sets before us not only the Deity of the Son, as thereby being capable of receiving all things into His hands, which no creature could do, but also the perfection of the Father's love in having no reserve in thus giving everything into His hands. What other object could satisfy the Father's heart How is it possible the Father could withhold anything from Him who could speak of Himself when on earth as "the Son of man who is in heaven?" Here we have perfect love in power—giving all things into His hands.

Again, we read, "The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth"—communicates the secrets of the heart without any reserve. Nor is the honor to be given to the Son less than that which is due to the Father. Not only does the Son of man, who is also

Son of God, quicken whom He will, and has all judgment committed unto Him, but “all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father;” so that to slight the Son would be to dishonor the Father. “He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.” Thus, we see that perfect love not only gives its object—that is, in divine relationship with the Father— “all things,” and reposes such complete confidence as to show Him all things, but puts Him also in the place of equal honor with the Father. Nor is this all. For where could be the resting-place of love for the Son so loved but the Father’s bosom? We read therefore of Him as “the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father.” This surely is the resting-place of divine and infinite love; and certainly, no other place could suit the Father who loveth the Son, or the Son who loveth the Father, infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably. Thus, was the Son in the resting-place of perfect love, and knew no reserve with the Father as to power, confidence, or honor. It is true that the Father thus loved the Son in ‘life, and in His death the Son showed that He loved the Father; so that the Father there found an additional motive for loving the Son, as He said, “ Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again;” for in it He had perfectly loved, honored, and glorified the Father under the most adverse and trying circumstances. (John 10:17)

The Son was always the central object of the Father’s counsels and grace, and now glorified is the central object of the ways of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in goodness and grace, as He will be in power and judgment when He takes His great power and reigns. In His commendatory prayer to the Father, as recorded in John 17, the Son referred seven times to believers as the Father’s gift to Him. He very often spoke of Himself as the sent One of the Father; but we are also taught that this sent One was the loved Son, whose glory to faith was the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. It was His own Son that God delivered up for us all, who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. It was the Son whom in due time the Father so graciously revealed to us and in us, and thus drew us to Him for our eternal salvation. When Peter confessed that the Son of man standing by him was “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus answered and said unto him, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” And Paul speaks of it having pleased God to reveal His Son in him. Our Lord also plainly said, “All that the Father, giveth me shall come to me;” and “no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.... Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” (Matthew 16:17; Galatians 1:16; John 6:37, 44, 46, 65)

Thus, the object of such infinite love, and the One who was always so perfectly loving, was sent by the Father to save. “The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world;” and He lovingly and obediently came into the world to glorify the Father in, redeeming, us from all iniquity, that, when risen from among the dead, He might bring us into living association and relationship with Himself and the Father, and, as Man, enter into the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. There we see Him crowned with glory and honor. There we have to do with Him, assured too by Himself that the glory which the Father has given Him He has given us; and that it is His desire to have us with Himself, that we may behold His glory, which we know must be with ineffable delight. We know Him there upholding all things, and in faithful love sustaining, restoring, and comforting us by the various offices He fills. We know Him there too as the glorified Man, having angels, authorities, and powers made subject unto Him; as having all power given to Him in

heaven and in earth, and soon to rise up from that throne on which He now sits, when this world will most certainly know that He is sitting on His own throne. And He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet, and subdued all things unto Himself, thus putting down all rule and authority and power. "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Hebrews 1:8,9)

It is to the Son that the Holy Spirit now directs us, and gives us to know that He is in the Father, and that we are in Him, and He in us. He is our righteousness, and we have no other. He is our life, and all our resources are in Him; so that, being no longer in the first man, but standing in the cloudless favor of God in the second man who has redeemed us, we are taught to live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

It was then the unspeakable gift of the only begotten Son that was sent forth by the Father to be a sacrifice for sin. It was the Son in the bosom of the Father who became flesh; some little inferior to angels for the suffering of death, that we might be with Him, and in love without blame before the Father forever. What loved how abundantly it met our need, and fills our hearts with, praise and thanksgiving Is it any marvel that an apostle by the Spirit should say to us, "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God?" "Beloved, now are we the children of God." Can any relationship be more endearing or more lasting? The work of righteousness and grace on which all is founded has been done, and the Son who did it has glory with the Father given Him as the only adequate recompense according to divine righteousness for such a mighty and God—glorifying work; and having done it for us, we become therefore entitled to the gift of righteousness—the righteousness of God by faith. What grace! Grace too which reigns through righteousness. Moreover, by the rending of the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom, the raising of the Son from among the dead by the glory of the Father, and setting Him at His own right hand in the heavens, the coming down of the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, after the Son's exaltation, and sealing and indwelling all who know the cleansing power of the blood of the cross, clearly manifest God's perfect satisfaction with that finished work for us.

When we meditate on the infinite perfection and love of the Son, and what He was to the Father before the world was, and when here as Man in the bosom of the Father counted worthy of all power, all confidence, and all honor, a sweet savor, and glorifying the Father every step of His path, we realize something of what an amazing gift it was when God gave His only begotten Son that we might live through Him. To give Him too to make propitiation for the sins of such unclean and loathsome sinners, knowing that in delivering Him up for our offenses it involved nothing less than His being forsaken of God, suffering all the judgment due to our sins, the Holy One—being made sin for us, and treated as if He, the intrinsically pure and spotless One, were guilty and unclean! Who can fathom such love? How true it is that God only knows the love of God! How incompetent we feel to rightly estimate such a gift! What love to us must have been in the Father's heart to send Him, to give Him, to spare not His own Son for us! Infinite love arrests us here! We think of it, and are lost in wonder, love, and praise. We try to speak of it, and find our warmest utterances are so cold and scanty that we can only say it is an unspeakable gift. How it would draw out our inmost souls in worshipping the Father as His dear children, and in longing for the Father's

house, if we could better estimate the deep reality of His love in sending His own Son to be the propitiation for our sins!

H. H. S.

## **Fragment: Discovery of God's Will**

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GOD has connected the discovery of the path of His will, His way, with the inward state of the soul.

## 1 Chronicles 21:15-27

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It is interesting to see the order unfolded here in the establishment of the relations of sovereign grace. First of all, the heart of God, and His sovereign grace in election, suspending the execution of the deserved and pronounced judgment; next, the revelation of this judgment—a revelation which produces humiliation before God, and a full confession of sin before His face. David, and the, elders of Israel, clothed in sackcloth, fall upon their faces, and David presents himself as the guilty one. Then instruction comes from God as to that which must be done to cause the pestilence judicially and definitely to cease; namely, to sacrifice in Oman's threshing-floor. God accepts the sacrifice, sending fire to consume it, and then He commands the angel to sheathe his sword. And sovereign grace, thus carried out in righteousness through sacrifice, becomes the means of Israel's approach to their God, and establishes the place of their access to Him. The tabernacle, a testimony to the conditions under which the people had failed, offered no resource in such a case; on the contrary, it occasioned fear. David was afraid to go to Gibeon. (vv. 29, 30) Nothing would do but the definitive intervention of God, according to His own grace (the circumstances of the sin, on the king's own part, leaving no room for any other means). The whole system of the tabernacle as a legal institution is set aside, and the worship of Israel founded on grace by sacrifice coming in where all, even the king as responsible, had failed. Such was Israel's position for him who understood it.

J. N. D.

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