

CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 22

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A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 22, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

100 Chapters

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Christian Truth Volume 22

Abiding in Christ

The little child is not self-confident; it fears the untried and unknown; it seeks the companionship of mother or friend, and it is willing to be led. O for the child-heart, with its simplicity and trust-its unbounded faith and lovely guilelessness! Many strong men may read these words, who glory in their strength, and they must be converted and become as little children if they would learn the secret of abiding in Him.

It is said of the great soldier Naaman that "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child" (2 Kings 5:14). It was a splendid combination! The stalwart form of a man was combined with the soft, sweet flesh of childhood. And these qualities should blend in each of us -strong and simple, manly and childlike, like David, the champion of Israel whose heart was not haughty, or exercised in matters too great, and was like a child weaned from its mother. Such are counted by the Father as His babes, fed with the sincere milk of the Word, taught secrets which are hid from the wise and prudent, and instructed in the art of abiding in Him.

Abiding in Christ is the result of continual watching and self-discipline, the outcome of the blessed Spirit's tender influence on the inner life. It is not easy at first to get the vine to entwine itself in some chosen direction. The string and hammer and knife must be used; but in time it is satisfied to adopt the new and forced attitude. And the clinging of the soul to Christ comes as the result of continual self-discipline beneath the culture of the Spirit of God.

After Many Days

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.... He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.... In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." Eccles. 11:1, 4, 6. "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters" (Isa. 32:20).

These verses of Scripture are pregnant with meaning. They give Christ's servants plain injunction and clear directions to go diligently on with the Lord's work, in the full assurance that seed sown will bring forth fruit, although many days may elapse before the fruit be seen. They are very cheering also, for the assurance that they who sow beside all waters are blessed of God, may well encourage our hearts anew to go on with the Lord's work. The Lord loves to cheer His servants. He is the God of all encouragement, and some of the cheer He has given me lately, I should like to share with fellow laborers.

At the close of an after meeting, succeeding a gospel service, a middle-aged lady came up to me and said, "I can tell you your text of this night thirty-four years ago." "Indeed," I replied, "what was it? Pray tell me." "'And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark'" (Gen. 7:1).

"You spoke from that text in this town, and that night I was turned to the Lord. I did not find full peace till next day, but my mind was made up; I decided for Jesus that night." "And He has kept you ever since?" "Ever since, and He will to the end."

I remembered the occasion, when it was called to my memory, and also the deeply anxious young woman to whom I spoke in the after-meeting that night; but it was very sweet, after a lapse of four and thirty years to find that the incorruptible seed of God's Word had brought forth such good fruit, as her happy face and manifest delight in the Lord indicated.

One Saturday about two years ago I attended a meeting of Christians where many had gathered together for fellowship and ministry of the Word. Between the afternoon and evening meetings a cup of tea was provided. Among those who were bearing round refreshments I observed a middle-aged woman whose bright happy face quite attracted my notice. Catching my eye, she came up to me and said, "I should greatly like to shake hands with you, Doctor, for I have never seen you since the night I was converted." Shaking hands with her cordially I replied, "And when were you converted?" "It is so long ago that I can scarcely fix the date, but do you remember preaching the gospel in a farmhouse more than a quarter of a century ago?"

"Yes, I remember it perfectly, and the date also. It was twenty-eight years ago. Were you in that meeting?" "Yes, I was then a girl of seventeen, living in a house nearby. I was asked to the meeting; I went, and God spoke to me through your lips that night. I was turned to the Lord. It changed my whole life, and I have been happy in the Lord ever since."

At the time I did not know of anyone who was converted at that meeting, though the farmer's twin girls of twelve years of age became very interested, and found Jesus a night or two after at another meeting. It was a great joy, therefore, to meet this child of the gospel after so many years, and her joy in meeting me was reciprocal.

On the Monday following I was present at some similar meetings, and during the tea interval a weather-beaten man came asking a grip of my hand, saying, "You know I was converted through you." "Indeed," said I, warmly shaking him by the hand, "and where did you hear me preach?" "O, I never heard you preach; it was through one of your little books, but it is twelve years ago. I was then a careless, godless man. One day when I came in to my dinner, I saw my little girl sitting by the fireside twisting and about to tear up a little booklet. My wife at the moment exclaimed, 'Take that book from her; do not let her destroy it.' I took the booklet and read the title, 'God says I am saved.' I said to myself, 'That's a queer title; I cannot say that,' and not heeding my dinner I stood and read the little book through. It was very simple, I thought, so simple, only to look to Jesus and be saved, that when I had finished it, I read it through a second time. And then I said to myself, 'If that's all a man has to do, why should I not be saved?' I read it through a third time, and the light burst into my soul; I saw the truth, just as the dying girl did of whom it 'speaks, and like her I could say, 'I am only a poor sinner - Jesus died for me - I believe in Him - God says I am saved, and so I know I am.'

"Turning to my wife I said, 'Where did that book come from?' 'Oh,' she said, 'a sack of coal came in this morning from the coal merchant, and when I untied it, there on top of the first lump was the little book.'

"Was it not wonderful? But I found Jesus then, and I have been rejoicing in Him ever since, praise His name. Who put the book into the sack I do not know, but God spoke to me through it."

How wondrous are God's ways, and how happy will the person who put that book in the sack be, when he or she finds out it was the means of present and eternal blessing to an immortal soul. This tale should cheer and stimulate tract distributors. If we sow the seed, God will bless it.

Fellow-Christians, let the foregoing instances of God's grace stimulate us all to go on diligently in the Lord's work. Preachers, tract distributors, and those who perhaps can only invite, or better still, bring with them an unsaved soul to a gospel meeting, have good ground for ceaselessly going on with their work.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. 15:58.

The All-Sufficiency of the Scriptures

If any word of ours could deepen in the souls of our readers the unspeakable importance of possessing a written revelation from God, we would be truly thankful. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments - consisting of 66 books, and embracing an endless variety of subjects, the work of about 40 different penmen drawn from all classes of society, from the wisest of monarchs down to the unlettered fishermen of Galilee, composed too at different periods during the progress of 16 centuries, and in some cases in places 1000 miles apart, pervaded by One mind, one plan, and characterized throughout by unity of design - are fully inspired of God, and hence their authority is absolute and unquestionable. The authority of the living God is lodged in these divine and imperishable records. The declaration of Scripture on whatever subject must be accepted as the voice and will of God.

The contempt of man has been poured out upon the Scriptures; the power and ingenuity of man have been exerted to their utmost to blot them out of existence; the learning of man has been employed to destroy their divine character; but all has been in vain. Has the accumulated lore of 33 centuries produced one fact contradicting a single statement in the earliest written of all books - the book of Genesis? On the contrary, that venerable document written by Moses on the plains of Moab, in the middle of the fifteenth century before Christ, throws its certain light upon every branch of science and subject to which it refers, and upon every moral question bearing upon man - his present and future.

Fuller light there may be in other portions of the matchless Word of God, but there is as divine certainty in the statements written by Moses, as in the utterances of the Lord Himself (John 5:45-47). Believing most firmly in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures - as they came from the hands of the various penmen employed by the Spirit of God - we utterly reject the thought that Bible statements need to be confirmed by human testimony, or that the sacred page needs light from the scientist. "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Psalm 12:6.

With ever increasing delight we turn to the sacred volume, every page, and line, and word of which were penned by inspiration of God. In these divine records we have unfolded the history of man from paradise to paradise, from the first transgression to its final judgment in the lake of fire, from the tribunal in the garden (Gen. 3) to the judgment throne of eternity (Rev. 20), from eternity, through all time and its vicissitudes, on to eternity.

What a tangled, twisted web, what a mass of complications, what a crowd of unanswered questions, and a multitude of unsolved problems, does the history of man present! But in the Word of God, all is plain, and the mind of man is fully instructed in every theme bearing on his present relation to God, and on those connected with his eternal future. There the true account of creation, the origin and unity of the race and subsequent history, their distribution into nations, their geographical location, their future, whether of judgment or blessing, and kindred subjects of universal interest are clearly unfolded; while the yet more perplexing questions of the ancients, as

the existence of sin, the unity and character of God, the ultimate triumph of good; the revelation of heaven, of hell, of eternity, of grace, and of Christ too, are moral questions of supreme moment, satisfactorily and divinely answered by Him who alone could sound the depths of man's utter wretchedness and ruin, and yet disclose in love and righteousness His beloved Son as the Savior of the lost. In the divine volume we have the veil lifted from the historic past and the prophetic future, for with God all is one present. The certain light of inspiration is thrown across the whole history of the race, and we are given to weigh actions and motives, origin and destiny, in the light of God and of eternity. What a book! Truly its author is God!

The Apostle Paul in Rome

The Apostle, when brought to Rome, declares (upon the manifestation of unbelief among the Jews,...) that the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles; and he dwells two whole years in the house he hired, receiving those who came to him (for he had not liberty to go to them), preaching the kingdom of God and those things which concerned the Lord Jesus with all boldness, no man forbidding him.

And here the history is ended of this precious servant of God, beloved and honored by his Master, a prisoner in that Rome which, as head of the fourth empire, was to be the seat of opposition among the Gentiles, as Jerusalem was among the Jews, to the kingdom and to the glory of Christ. The time for the full manifestation of that opposition was not yet come, but the minister of the assembly and of the gospel of glory is a prisoner there. It is thus that Rome begins its history in connection with the gospel that the Apostle preached. Nevertheless, God was with him.

Are We Content to Be Instruments, Not Doers?

If we may be permitted to speak for others, I fear we are in danger of aiming at being doers, instead of being content to be merely instruments. We are apt to forget that there is but the one great and glorious Doer. The works that are done upon the earth, God is the Doer of them. This is a weighty truth to keep ever in remembrance. God is the Doer; we are but instruments. If we become doers, we shall be sure to do mischief, and play into the hands of the enemy instead of being to the glory and praise of the one great Worker. Moreover, we shall fall into the snare of the devil, and do serious damage to our own souls and to the cause of Christ.

The only place of true moral security is to be at the blessed Master's feet, as instruments, ready for His work, whatever that work may be - vessels meet for His use, whatever that use may be. If we, in the mere energy of nature, and the restless activity of an unbroken will, rush hither and thither as wonderful doers and active workers, the consequences may prove disastrous in the extreme.

We live in a day specially marked by the actings of self-will, and that too in connection with the Lord's work. Hence the need of lowliness of spirit, brokenness of will, and holy subduedness on the part of all the Lord's beloved servants. Our retirement from the principles and the spirit of the scene around us cannot be too profound; and the only way to secure this retirement is to abide at the Master's feet, in absolute subjection to His holy authority in all things. There we are safe and happy; there too we shall ever be in an attitude of heart, and in a condition of soul, to be taken up and used as instruments in the Master's work, and to His praise.

It lies not within the range of human language to set forth the reality and blessedness of being in the presence of God, in true self-emptiness and dependence. There is on all hands danger of using even the service of Christ as a pedestal on which to display ourselves. This is terrible. Who would ever think, as he gazes upon some exquisite piece of workmanship, of praising the tools by which it was made? So, if the Lord deigns to use us in His service, what folly, yes, what sin, in us to be occupied with ourselves, as though we had accomplished anything! It is marvelous grace, most surely, that can stoop to take up such poor things as we are and use us in that blessed work which our God is carrying on, whether in gathering or feeding the flock of Christ; but the work is His, not ours; we are instruments, not doers. When a gardener waters his drooping plants, and causes them to emit their fragrance, who thinks of praising the watering pot? And yet the watering pot has its place. Truly so; but it is a watering pot, not a gardener - an instrument, not a doer.

This is the true secret of all our joy of heart, all our fruitfulness in service, and all our safety from the wiles of the enemy. Let us keep close to the side of our ever gracious Lord, safe, and satisfied. Then we shall always be ready to carry His messages, and do His will. We shall be His feet, to run to the bedside of some afflicted member of His body, and give him a cup of consolation. We shall be His mouth to speak a word in season to some weary one. We shall be His hands, to supply the need of some of His beloved poor. In a word, we shall be His instruments, ready for His work; and when the work is done, instead of thinking of the work, or the way we have done it, we shall find our place at His feet in homage and adoration, "lost in wonder, love, and praise," at the sovereign

grace that deigns to take up such as we, and confer upon us the privilege of being His instruments in His blessed work.

In every sphere of work, in every department of ministry, God is the Doer. Blessed fact! Did we all but abide in the sense of it, and live in the power of it, what a different tale we should have to tell! What a different state of things we should witness! What different results we should reach! But, alas! we rush about in bustling self-importance; we get occupied with ourselves and our work, our gift, and our ministry.

Thus the Holy Spirit is grieved and hindered, Christ is dishonored, and God cannot own the work; no, rather He has to take the instruments aside and, by His faithful and wise discipline, correct their errors, and teach them that they are but instruments. What marvelous grace on His part, to occupy Himself with our failures and errors in order to deliver us from them and fit us for His holy service! Oh, I the ineffable blessedness of having to do with our God, of being in His hands for everything! Who would not praise Him, and trust Him, and love Him, and serve Him? "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." Rom. 11:36.

"Let our feebleness recline On that eternal love of Thine,

And human thoughts forget;

Childlike attend what Thou wilt say,

Go forth, and serve Thee while 'tis day,

Nor leave the sweet retreat."

Brethren Alienated

The whip and the scourge may be righteous, but there is no winning the heart of man with these. Nor is it righteousness which reigns among the saints of God, but grace, through righteousness, unto eternal life. Alas! how many sins that might have been washed away (John 13) have been retained! How many brethren alienated for all time, that might have been won back to God and to us, because we have hammered at the conscience merely, with the heart ungained - with the heart, I may say, almost unsought! We have not overcome evil, because we have not overcome it with good. We have taken readily the judge's chair, and have got back judgment; but the Master's lowly work we have little done.

But how little yet do we understand that mere righteous dealing - absolute righteousness, as it may be - will not work the restoration of souls; that judgment, however temperate, and however true, will not touch and soften and subdue hearts to receive instruction, that, by the very facts of the case, are shown not to be in their true place before God. Man is not all conscience; and conscience reached, with the heart away, will do what it did with the first sinner among men - drive him out among the trees of the garden, to escape the unwelcome voice.

Christ As Seen in the Offerings: Meat Offering

Lev. 2; 6:14-18

We were saying last week that the burnt offering, which comes first in the book of Leviticus, is a type of the Lord Jesus offering Himself to accomplish the will of God, at all cost, even to death. We have bloodshedding and atonement in that offering, because, although the Lord Jesus went into death in obedience to God, it was on account of what we are by nature, on account of our condition as lost children of Adam.

The case of the meat offering is quite different. There is no bloodshedding here. This offering was composed of fine flour, or it might be of green ears of corn. There was no death connected with it. The fine flour was to be mingled or anointed with oil, and frankincense put upon it. Part of the meat offering - "the memorial of it," as it is called - with all the frankincense, was offered on the altar for a sweet savor to God. Thus it was quite unlike the burnt offering, all of which went up to God, excepting only the skin, which the priest had for himself. The remainder of the meat offering Aaron and his sons ate.

Now, while the burnt offering typifies Christ offering Himself to God for a sweet savor in His death - obedient unto death, the meat offering speaks to us of the perfect, sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus - what He was as a man here on earth, but as offered to God; "an offering," as it states here in chapter 2, "made by fire." This fire, as you know, represents testing judgment; and surely the blessed Lord was tested in all His path through this world, as also on the cross, and by death itself. But the more He was tested, the more was brought out His infinite perfection before God. Every thought, every word, every action was a sweet savor to God. The Lord was perfect in every step of His way through this world - perfect in obedience, perfect in dependence, perfect in meekness, perfect in kindness, perfect in sympathy, perfect in humility; in fact, there is not a single grace you can think of that the Lord Jesus did not exhibit in all its perfection during His life upon earth. This the meat offering typifies. All the frankincense was to be burnt with the meat offering, and the sweet perfume of that frankincense speaks to us of all the graces of the Lord Jesus, everything being perfectly acceptable to God - a sweet-smelling savor.

Some might wonder why the burnt offering comes first, since the Lord's life, as a matter of time, came before His death. But divine wisdom is shown in giving us the burnt offering before the meat offering; for had the Lord stopped short of death, and the bearing of judgment as made sin for us; had He failed when the last test came - when, in the garden of Gethsemane, there was brought before the Lord all the awful suffering He would have to go through in bearing the judgment of God if He took up our case - if then He had said, "It is too much; I cannot go on to that in obedience to God," His obedience would not have been perfect. Therefore, we get in Philippians 2, He "became obedient unto death." The perfection of His obedience reached even to death. The obedience that characterized Him throughout His life was brought to its severest trial in His death. Then that obedience was perfected in His giving up His life in atonement. Thus we find, first of all, the Lord's death brought out in the burnt offering, as that was the foundation of everything. Then, in the meat

offering, we find what He was as a man here on earth - His life here, but as offered to God.

It is a very blessed subject indeed, but one feels utterly unable to speak at any length of the perfections of the Lord Jesus in His life here below. Would that one could better! There is, however, a very practical side for us to consider;

and we always gain by learning God's thoughts concerning the Person of Christ, whether in His life or in His death.

When we were looking at His death, and the value of it, we saw how infinitely acceptable all was to God. All was a sweet savor. We saw that every believer in Christ is accepted before God in that same sweet savor. That shows how we gain by learning God's thoughts about the Lord's death. So, when the thoughts of God concerning the life of Christ on earth are known by us, we are immense gainers. We see the delight that God finds in Him, and can, as believers, say that we are accepted in that blessed One. Of course, it is only after His death and resurrection that we could be in Him; but the same One in whom we are now accepted was the Object of God's delight here below. The better we know God's thoughts about Christ, the better we know God's thoughts about us, who are in Christ. According to that verse in 1 John 4, "As He is, so are we in this world." There is not a single grace, not a single beauty, not a single perfection of the Lord Jesus that we see brought out in the gospels respecting which we, as believers, may not say, "That is mine." Do you ask how this can be? I reply, Is not Christ your life? "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear" (Col. 3:4). Do you want to see what your life is in its perfection? You must not look at yourselves, or your fellow-Christians; you must look at Christ here on earth. "For the life was manifested" - shown out (1 John 1:2). What life? The eternal life. That is the life you and I possess as believers. How often that blessed yet simple verse, the last verse of John 3, is quoted and preached from! and how many thousands of souls have got peace from it!

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

Many, by believing that verse, have known they are saved; but when we come to inquire, "What is that everlasting life that we possess?" we have touched upon a far deeper question than that of the soul's salvation. Well, I say, You must not look at me to find it out, because very often a great deal that is not the life of Christ comes out; very often the sin, the Adam-nature, shows itself. No; if you wish to see the eternal life that I possess perfectly manifested, you must look at the Lord Jesus Christ as a man on earth.

The meat offering then sets forth the life of Jesus as a man on earth, yet as offered to God. He is our life now as risen from the dead; and was not that life manifested in His Person here on earth? Most of you will remember that verse in 2 Corinthians, where we find the very expression, "life... of Jesus." Just turn to it for a moment (chap. 4:10).

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus."

Now, this is the part I meant to call your attention to:

"That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

Scripture furnishes no account of the Lord's life in glory, where He is now. We only know that He is there, and there to make intercession for us. But in the gospels God has given us an account of

the life of the Lord Jesus on earth in four distinct aspects, just as there are four great typical offerings in the book of Leviticus, as we noticed when speaking of the burnt offering. And the life of Jesus, that eternal life, which was with the Father, was manifested, or shown out. The Lord having now died, and borne our sins, being made sin for us, there is an end of what we were as children of Adam; and, as risen out of death, the Lord communicates His resurrection life to us. As we read in John 20, He breathed on His disciples and said to them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost"; that is, He imparted life in resurrection in the power of the Holy Ghost. Does it not make it more interesting when we remember this in looking at the life of the Lord Jesus here on earth?

Returning to our chapter, we read:

"And when any will offer a meat offering unto the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour." v. 1.

Fine flour is a type of the spotless, sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus. The Lord speaks of Himself once or twice, at least, in the gospels, as wheat, and also as bread. One instance is in John 6.

"For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." v. 33.

There you see that a humbled Christ - the One who came down - is called "the bread of God." And John 12 says,

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." v. 24.

There the Lord speaks of Himself as a corn of wheat. In chapter 6, as we saw, He speaks of Himself as the bread of God. Thus it is not very hard to understand the language of the types when we turn with the light of the New Testament to the book of Leviticus. We find that one of the offerings, which we know typifies Christ, is composed of fine flour. This represents the One who came down from heaven, the Man Christ Jesus, in His spotless, sinless humanity here. And how beautiful is fine flour! When we pass our hand through it there is no roughness, no unevenness; all is perfectly smooth. So in the Lord Jesus. There was no unevenness in Him; there was nothing in that blessed One but what was absolutely according to God's mind.

In some cases the fine flour was mingled with oil; in other cases it was anointed with oil.

"And if thy oblation be a meat offering baked in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil." v. 5.

"Mingled with oil." Of what does that speak to us? Well, we know that the blessed Lord Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost, as the angel announced to Mary.

"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35.

Thus, in His nature as a man, He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and everything that He did was by the power of the Holy Ghost. No doubt the mingling of the oil speaks to us of that.

Some of the meat offerings were anointed with oil, which speaks for itself. Most of us are familiar with the verse, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." Acts 10:38. The Lord was anointed with the Holy Ghost when He was about thirty years of age. At the baptism of John the Holy Ghost descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove, and abode upon Him. There was the anointing.

There is another thing to be noticed in this offering, and that is the entire absence of leaven. There was to be no leaven in any of the offerings.

"No meat offering, which ye shall bring unto the LORD, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire." v. 11.

Leaven in Scripture is a type or symbol of evil. There is not a single place in Scripture where it typifies any good. I am aware that some people, who cannot deny that it represents evil in many places, say that in one place it means good. The supposed exceptional passage is in Matthew 13.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." v. 33.

Those people say that this means the gradual spread of good in the world, until at last the whole world becomes converted. We know, however, that it is not so. In every instance where the word leaven is found, it refers to evil. Two passages will be enough to quote here. In 1 Cor. 5:8 we read, "The leaven of malice and wickedness"; and in Luke 12:1 the Lord said, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." In this same Gospel of Matthew (chap. 16:12) the Lord shows His disciples that, when He bade them beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, He referred to their doctrine; and this parable in Matthew 13 no doubt speaks to us of the spread of the Christian religion, so called, in contrast to other religions, but not of true faith and real conversion so much as of propagating doctrines, dogmas, etc. in the world, the result being professing Christendom. Doctrines are held where there is no real conversion, and all mere outward religion must be connected with evil. For instance, Babylon, in the book of Revelation, representing worldly religion, will be judged by God as utterly corrupt and evil. When we understand by God's Word that the professing church here on earth is going to get more and more corrupt, evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse (2 Tim. 3:13), we need not seek to alter the significance of the word leaven in Matthew 13. It is all simple and clear. There was to be no leaven in any offering of the Lord. That speaks for itself. In the Person of the blessed Lord Jesus, there was no sin; "that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." And the exception in verse 12 of our chapter only brings out more strikingly the wonderful accuracy of the Spirit of God in using these types, and shows that the records are inspired of God in a most admirable way.

"As for the oblation of the firstfruits, ye shall offer them unto the LORD: but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savor." v. 12.

Particulars of the oblation of firstfruits are given in Lev. 23:15-21. The meat offering referred to there is a type of the Church, of Christians as a body, sanctified by the Spirit of God, and accepted in all the value of the work of Christ. In that instance only was leaven to be present. How beautifully accurate Scripture is! In the one type only, which represents us as believers in Christ, was leaven to be found. Because, although we are before God according to all the value of the

work of Christ, we still have sin in us. If an uninspired man had written the book of Leviticus, would he have put in a thing of this kind? Impossible. These are God the Holy Ghost's pictures of the heavenly things and of the One who was coming.

There was also to be no honey in the sacrifice. Honey is understood to typify that which is sweet to us as men here- family affection and such like, right in itself - but when it was a question of being wholly consecrated to God, or offered to Him, as in the language of our type, all this had to be set aside. The blessed Lord when on earth fully recognized natural relationships, but (to use the language of another) He who could say, "Woman, behold thy son!" and to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!" even in the terrible moment of the cross, when all was finished, could also say, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" when He was in the simplest accomplishment of His service.

There is very little said of the Lord's life before His public ministry. We have just a mention of Him when He was twelve years of age. He was with the doctors in the temple, hearing them, and asking them questions. It was then that He said to His mother, "Wilt ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" He was consciously the Son of the Father; yet the very next verse says that He went back with His parents, and was subject to them. That shows the perfection of what He was, even at twelve years old - a subject Son to His earthly parents. How beautifully the Lord's perfections came out every step of the way! What passed from the time He was twelve years of age till He was thirty, the Holy Ghost does not reveal to us, but all that time the Father's eye rested upon Him; and all His thoughts, acts, words, and prayers were going up as a sweet savor to God.

Concerning the commencement of His public ministry, we read in Matthew 3,

"And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." vv. 16, 17.

Have you ever seen the force of that expression, "Unto Him"? It does not say the heavens were opened upon Him, but "the heavens were opened unto Him," which means that He Himself was the Object on earth for the heavens to look down upon. "The heavens were opened unto Him," and then the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form, in the form of a dove, and rested upon Him. Never, from the moment Adam sinned and dishonored God, never till this time was there a man here on earth in whom God could find perfect delight. Never before was there a man without sin here on the earth, a man in whom God could find His delight. Never. Therefore the heavens, so to speak, must open, and the Father's voice declare, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

These words were repeated on the mount of transfiguration, further on in the Lord's ministry, nearer His death. Again the voice came from the excellent glory, as the Apostle Peter tells us: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (or, have found My delight). I have found My delight, the Father says, in Him. Wonderful and blessed to think of the delight that the Father found in Him. The world did not know Him; they rejected Him. They saw Him only as the carpenter's son. They called Him Beelzebub. "He bath a devil," they said; "Why hear ye Him?" They did not know who He was, but the Father knew. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight." J.N.D. Trans.

A great many are not clear about the life of the Lord Jesus on earth. We know that many thousands of Christians think that His perfect, spotless life on earth is reckoned to them for righteousness. Their thought is, that He kept the law for them during His life, and on the cross He bore their sins, and that the righteousness of His life is reckoned to those who believe. But there is no scripture to show that Christ kept the law for us, or that His righteous life on earth is imputed to the believer. God has made Him righteousness unto us (1 Cor. 1:30), and we are made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21); but this is only in resurrection.

On the other hand, we are apt to go to the other extreme, and attach too little importance to the Lord's life. Nevertheless, it is very clear that His life is not for our justification, and we cannot be too clear upon it; for if He had lived down here ten thousand years, and had not died, we could never have gone into the glory of God. Never. Therefore we can say with all confidence, that the Lord's life on earth did not put away sins. His death and bloodshedding alone could do that.

If it be asked, "What was the object of His life on earth?" I reply, that in all things we are apt to think of our own side, and the benefits we get from what Christ has done. Have you ever considered that the world's history for 4000 years, from the time that Adam sinned till the Lord came, is a history of sin, of dishonor done to God, of rebellion against Him, of independence and self-will in every conceivable form? We have only to read the Old Testament to find that this was the case, both before the flood and after it. It is all the same story - nothing but a history of man's sin, rebellion, and independence of God, except when there was true faith wrought by the Spirit of God. And is all this to be allowed to pass without any notice being taken of it? No.

It is most interesting to see that the Lord Jesus, in His life down here, took up, and glorified God in, every point in which the first Adam and his race failed. It is very blessed to see that. Adam and all his race are characterized by disobedience. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (Rom. 5:19). What characterized the Lord Jesus? Obedience, perfect obedience. Independence characterized the first Adam and all his race all the way down. Look at the tower of Babel, for instance. What an expression of independence that was! They said, "Let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name.... And the LORD said,... now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." Gen. 11:4-6. There was the self-exaltation of man on the earth in independence of God.

But what characterized the Lord Jesus? Perfect dependence. In the wilderness He was a hungered; and when the devil came to Him and said, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread," He answered, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Perfect dependence, perfect obedience, characterized the Lord Jesus in every possible way. He brought infinite glory to God in the very place where nothing but dishonor had been brought to Him by the first man and his race. It is most blessed to think of - He was doing the Father's will at all cost to Himself. Do you think that you lose by contemplating God's thoughts of

Christ? I will give you an instance of the opposite of this. Just turn to John 6:37, 38.

"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

Why?

"For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

The beauty of that well-known passage - "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" - is generally missed by not reading the context; for "him that cometh to Me" is only the last half of the verse. The whole verse is seldom quoted. How beautifully Christ's obedience is brought out here! First, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." Then, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." How blessedly comforting that is! If I ask any soul that has not peace with God, "Have you come to Christ?" and that soul can answer, "Yes," I can say, "That shows that you are one whom the Father has given to Christ; for He said, 'All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me'; and you have come to Him. The Lord says, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.' The Father sends these sheep to Christ, and in receiving them He is doing the Father's will. How would He be doing the Father's will if He cast out those whom the Father had given Him? In receiving you and me He is doing the Father's will, because the Father sent us, and we came. We did not know it at the time, but we know it now, thank God." This is an example of how we gain by seeing that the Lord was here doing the Father's will perfectly.

Surely the life of the Lord Jesus on earth was of use, although, as I said, of no use to us as sinners. But now that we are saints of God, how blessed to look back on the spotless life of the Lord Jesus here on earth, to read the gospels in the light of this meat offering, and see the Man Christ Jesus going through this world, altogether a sweet savor to God, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps (1 Pet. 1:21).

You may have noticed the different intensity of the trials to which the Lord as man was subject here. This was typified by the different ways in which the meat offering was prepared. In one case it was baked in an oven (v. 4). In another case it was baked in a pan - a flat slice or plate (v. 5). In a third case it was baked in a frying pan. These different modes of offering the meat offering by fire, no doubt set forth the different degrees of intensity in the trials to which the Lord was subject here. The "oven" may refer to the hidden path of His life, that which men could not see, that which was between Himself and God alone. How blessed to be allowed to enter into all this! It will be the joy of our souls in that day of glory that is coming when we are with Him, to be going over and retracing the pathway of that blessed Lord who so humbled Himself in this world - the One who, in coming to do the will of God, also, in the love and grace of His heart, gave Himself for our sins, becoming a man in order to do it.

In verse 13 we find another thing; namely, that salt was never to be lacking from the meat offering, or indeed from any offering.

"And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt."

Salt, as you know, is a preservative, and may here speak to us of that which is eternal, as we read in Mark 9:49, "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." Eternal judgment is the portion of all men

who die in their sins. But in the case of the sacrifice, the efficacy of it and its results will endure forever. It is "the salt of the covenant of thy God," in which God, as it were, binds Himself to bless us according to His own heart on the ground of the everlasting efficacy of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. In connection with this meat offering, the sweet savor of what Christ was to God here as man on earth will be no passing savor, but will abide for all eternity, as will also our joy in feeding upon Him as the humbled Man here on earth.

We will just refer in conclusion to "the law of the meat offering" (chap. 6:14-18). This passage brings out our portion in that offering. The memorial of that meat offering was to be burnt upon the altar for a sweet savor unto the Lord.

"And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat: with unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation shall they eat it. It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it unto them for their portion of My offerings made by fire; it is most holy, as is the sin offering, and as the trespass offering."

"I have given it unto them." I think that is beautiful. God says, "I have given it unto them." Given what? The meat offering. Unto whom? Unto His priests, unto us - "for their portion of My offerings." It was God's offering, all offered to God, as the life of the Lord Jesus here, but we have our portion in it. We, as God's priests, can feed upon that humbled One; our souls can feed upon and delight in Him in His perfection as a man going through this world. How wonderful that is! And is it not very remarkable that every time these scriptures speak of Aaron and his sons eating of this offering, it is said, "It is most holy"? Read the third verse of chapter 2: "And the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire." Verse 10 also: "That which is left of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire." And verse 17 in chapter 6: "It shall not be baked with leaven."

I have given it unto them for their portion of My offerings made by fire; it is most holy, as is the sin offering, and as the trespass offering." "With unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place" (v. 16). What is the holy place for us? Surely the presence of God. Without leaven the priests' portion was to be eaten in the holy place; with unleavened bread - the absence of all allowed sin. In the presence of God, with the flesh judged and kept in the place of death; only there and thus can we, as God's priests, feed upon the spotless, holy Person of the Lord Jesus Christ in His life as a man here below. The meat offering and the sin offering are characterized alike by "it is most holy." All the efforts and attacks of Satan against the truth, in almost all false doctrines, are directly or indirectly aimed at the Person or work of the blessed Lord - not so much at what He is now in glory, as what He was as man down here on earth. A humbled Christ seems to be the object of the enemy's attack in all false doctrine. It was so in the beginning. Look at the troubles in the early days of the Church - the Arian doctrine, for instance, aiming a blow at the Person of Christ - and the doctrine of the non-eternity of punishment, in our day, indirectly undermining the truth both as to the Person and the work of Christ.

But we read, first of all, that the priests shall eat of the meat offering. Only a converted person can understand and feed upon the Lord Jesus in His pathway through this world. Second, "with unleavened bread shall it be eaten." No sin may be allowed in us. If sin were unjudged in us, the Holy Ghost would be grieved, and could not unfold to us the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ in His

humiliation on earth; and it is the Holy Spirit alone who can do that. On the other hand, nothing is more dreadful than an unconverted man's criticizing and judging the life of the Lord Jesus here on earth, or than the exercise of the thoughts of an unrenewed heart as to the Person of the Son of God. The priests of God feed upon a humbled Christ in the holy place.

May the Lord enable us in the power of the Holy Spirit to feed on Himself. Surely that is what the Lord speaks to us of in the message to the church at Pergamos in Revelation 2: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." What is the "hidden manna"? There in glory we shall, in the power of the Holy Ghost, look back and enter fully into God's delight in the perfections of the blessed Lord in His humiliation upon earth; and it is surely our portion now. Surely His humiliation is far more wonderful to us than His exaltation - the humiliation of that blessed One who, being in the form of God, emptied Himself, humbled Himself, went down in perfect obedience "unto death, even the death of the cross." May the Lord in His grace give us to be feeding upon Himself more and more.

"There on the hidden bread,

On Christ - once humbled here -

God's treasured store, forever fed,

His love my soul shall cheer."

Christ As Seen in the Offerings: Peace Offering

Lev. 3:16, 17, 1-5; 7:11-18, 31-34

The term "peace offering" conveys a wrong thought concerning the sacrifice spoken of in the scriptures which we have just read. Many persons take it for granted that this offering typifies Christ making our peace with God. But that is not a correct thought. The peace offering is rather an offering of thanksgiving or praise. "Sacrifice of prosperity," as it is translated in French, better expresses the thought. The peace offering typifies our communion, as saints of God, on the ground of the value of the work and precious blood of Christ before God - our communion with God Himself, our communion with the Lord Jesus, and our communion with one another as priests of God. That is what is set forth in the peace offering. It is really a communion sacrifice, and thanksgiving and praise naturally flow from communion. Consequently, we have that expression, "If he offer it for a thanksgiving" (Chap. 7:12). Praise and worship necessarily flow from communion. The ground of it all is the value of the work of Christ in the sight of God. That, no doubt, is why we find in chapter 3 that the peace offering is founded, as it were, upon the burnt offering.

"And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is upon the wood that is on the fire." v. 5.

How beautiful that is! The burnt offering, you are aware, typifies Christ offering Himself to God in death for a sweet savor, and in the very place where He was made sin for us bringing fullest glory to God. There surely we find the foundation for everything - for all our joys, all our communion, all our worship, and all our praise. The foundation of all is the burnt sacrifice.

We might, in passing, look at an illustration. See 2 Chron. 7:1-3:

"Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices."

There was the burnt offering offered up, and God signified His acceptance of it by sending fire down from heaven. That was a picture of Christ offering Himself as the true burnt offering, and God has shown His acceptance of it and delight in it by putting Christ at His own right hand in glory.

"When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshiped."

So, when we see that wondrous offering of the Lord Jesus, and know the place in which God has put Him in glory, we worship as those who are accepted in all the infinite value of that one offering. Thus the ground upon which we are worshipers is the offering of Christ to God for a sweet savor.

There is another thought connected with the peace offering which we ought to notice, and that is, although this offering typifies communion and thanksgiving and worship, these things are not

individual, but collective. It is very blessed to see that they are connected with the Lord's table, and with our place there as worshipers. These things are brought out very clearly and distinctly in the peace offering.

It typifies communion, because all the persons concerned partook of the same sacrifice. God had His portion, the priest had his, Aaron and his sons had theirs, and the rest of the animal was eaten by the one that brought it, and by those with him. We will refer to the verses which speak of this, that it may be impressed upon the mind: "It is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savor: all the fat is the Lord's." Chap. 3:16. "The fat that covereth the inwards" especially (v. 3); but all the fat was offered to God upon the altar. It was God's part of the sacrifice; or, as it is beautifully expressed, "It is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savor." Whose food? God's food. That upon which He could feed, that was God's portion.

Chapter 7:31 gives the connection. We saw in chapter 3 that all the fat was the Lord's. Here we find that "the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons." Aaron and his sons always typify believers - all believers in Christ - not looked at as one body, but looked at as individual priests to God. Aaron, when alone, is a type of Christ. Read verses 32 and 33:

"And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest for a heave offering of the sacrifices of your peace offerings. He among the sons of Aaron, that offereth the blood of the peace offerings, and the fat, shall have the right shoulder for his part."

Connecting these verses together, we find out very clearly, first, that the fat was God's, and was burnt upon the altar for a sweet savor; second, that the breast belonged to Aaron and his sons; and third, that the right shoulder belonged to the offering priest - a type of the Lord Jesus. As I said before, the rest of the animal was eaten by the one who brought it, and by his friends. Thus God, and the offering priest, and Aaron and his sons, and the person who brought the animal in sacrifice, all fed upon the same thing - the same animal. It becomes, therefore, a very simple type of communion with God, and with the Lord Jesus Christ - the offering Priest - and with one another as believers. We might add, with the whole Church; for when we think of our joys, our blessings, our communion, our praise, our worship - if they be really in the power of the Holy Ghost - all saints necessarily are included, for they have a common salvation, a common portion, and common joys.

We will turn now to a passage in 1 Corinthians, in order to get a clearer understanding of the subject (chap. 10:15-20):

"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of [or, in communion with] that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of [or, in communion with] the altar? What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."

In verse 18 we read,

"Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?"

I think many of the Lord's people read this verse without thinking of what it refers to. It no doubt has reference to the peace offering; so then unless that offering is understood, we cannot understand 1 Cor. 10:18. Neither can we understand what the Apostle is speaking about in the other verses. Therefore I read them in connection with this offering in Leviticus. We read,

"And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice" (Lev. 3:5).

We have seen that the burnt offering speaks of that wondrous work in which Christ offered Himself to God without spot. In the very place where He was made sin for us, He put away all our sins, so that they are all gone forever from before God; and we, as believers, may add, "And we ourselves, as children of Adam, are gone too." What remains? Nothing but the sweet savor of what that sacrifice was to God, and in that we find ourselves accepted; in other words, it is not a question of our thoughts, of our appreciation of the work of Christ, of how we value it; but the blessed truth is, that if you are the weakest, feeblest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ - one who has just looked once away from self to Christ as Savior - it is true of you at this moment that you are accepted before God according to His estimate of all the infinite value of the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross. You and I may little enter into or understand it, yet such is the blessed truth. Does Christ's acceptability ever alter? Does the sweet savor ever change? Never. Neither does your acceptance ever change, dear believer in Christ. The sweet savor is as fresh before God now as it was when Christ offered Himself; and in that sweet savor you and I are found before God. This is the ground of our peace.

I need not say that unless a person has peace with God, unless every question about sin is settled, there can be no communion, no worship in spirit and in truth. The ground of it all is the value of the work of the Lord Jesus - all its efficacy in the sight of God. Perhaps the reason why so many Christians do not seem to have much heart or inclination to look into the Word of God, and search out the precious things contained therein - do not seem very interested in what concerns the Lord's interests, and what the Lord is in His own Person - is, in nine cases out of ten, because they have not really peace with God; the great question of their sins has never been settled. Therefore, when they come into the presence of God, or think about the things of eternity, the question is always rising up in their minds, "Am I after all really accepted? Am I really and truly a child of God? Or have I been deceiving myself all this time?" Such a soul is not free to be occupied with God's thoughts about Christ, is not at liberty to be occupied with the blessed Lord Himself. Such a soul has necessarily to think about himself, his acceptance; and therefore the first great question with him is, "Am I fit to stand in the unclouded light of God's presence, in that glory where not a single trace of sin can be found? Can I stand there? Can I be at home there?" If we, any of us, look at ourselves, we must all confess that we cannot stand there for a moment; but if we look away from ourselves, and see Christ offering Himself up to God, we hear the blessed words, "It shall be accepted for him." We learn that all our sins were dealt with and effaced at the cross, and that now nothing is left but the sweet savor of the sacrifice, and that we are before God according to the infinite value that He sets upon the work of Christ. What peace that gives!

"And the priest shall burn them upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savor: all the fat is the LORD'S." v. 16.

The fat, especially that which covered the inwards, was, as it says in verse 3, the Lord's. Fat signifies the energy of the inward will. When the will is in opposition to God, set up against Him, Scripture calls that sin. The very fact of our having an independent will of our own is sin. That is what it means in 1 John 3:4, which is not correctly translated in our version. I am glad, however, to see it is rightly translated in the Revised Version:

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

The proper reading is, "Sin is lawlessness." It is lawlessness to set up our own will in opposition to God. That is why I said if any one of us had a will independent of God's will, that in itself is sin. So God claims all the fat for Himself; for if the will does not belong to God, it is sin; it is not God's will. The Lord Jesus could say, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." "Lo, I come," He said, "to do Thy will, O God"! He came to accomplish the will of God at all cost to Himself, although it led Him on to death, and that the death of the cross. He did not shrink back even in the garden of Gethsemane, where He prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

All the fat then was Jehovah's; all went up to God for a sweet savor. The energy of that will of the Lord Jesus was perfectly in accordance with God's will. That is a lovely expression in verse 16: "It is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savor." How much is involved in these few words! - God's food. Where was the offering made? At the cross. How was it made by fire? The testing judgment of God was there, and the more Christ was tested, the more was brought out the perfection of that blessed One who came to do nothing but the will of God. God found His food in Jesus; He could feed upon Him, He could delight in Him; and we can say, "Never was He personally more the object of His Father's delight than when He went into death for our sins, even when forsaken of God on the cross"; for Scripture never says, as some persons say, the Father forsook Christ. He said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" I suppose that the only time He used that expression before His resurrection was when He was on the cross, when He took the sinner's place before a holy God; but personally never was He more a sweet savor than at that moment.

The sacrifice of Christ has set us in the glory of God without a fault, and that glory can search us through and through and not find a single spot or stain. Why? Because we are there in all the value of the work of Christ; and if God were to find a spot upon one who was before Him on the ground of the value of the work of Christ, He would have to say that that work was not perfect. He would have to say, "The value of the sacrifice is not sufficient; it has cleansed some sin, but not all." Could God ever say that? Never. The more we are in the light of the glory, the more does it make manifest how clean we are, because washed in the precious blood of Christ. "It is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savor: all the fat is the Lord's." All belonged to Him. Is it not a very blessed thought for us, that that in which God finds His chief delight - that wondrous sacrifice - is the very work that has set us without spot in the presence of His glory?

Refer now to chapter 7:

"And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar" (v. 31).

As we have seen, this was the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savor. We will connect this with the Lord's table. There it is that our worship ought to flow out. Our communion ought to be

at its height when we are gathered there around the blessed Lord Himself, with the memorials of His death before us - His body given and His poured out blood showing that redemption is accomplished. Surely if we can worship anywhere, it ought to be there. We read in 1 Corinthians 10, "The bread that we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Now, I think a great many of the Lord's people read that verse without really thinking what it means. I have heard a brother ask the Lord in prayer that the bread which we break might be the communion of the body of Christ to our souls. The Apostle does not say, "May the bread which we break be the communion of the body of Christ"; it is, he says. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" And then he refers to the offerings under the law. Leviticus 7. He says, "Behold, Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of [or, in communion with] the altar?" v. 18. The words "communion of" and "partakers of" are two different translations of one expression in the original. The word is also used in connection with the heathen sacrifices; that is what the Apostle is speaking of there - "I would not that ye should have fellowship [communion] with devils" (v. 20).

But how blessed to know - do you ever have the thought when you break the bread at the Lord's supper? - that it is the communion of the body of Christ. What does that mean? It means, I believe, this: that by that act of yours you profess before all angels and principalities, intelligences and powers, that you are identified before God with all the value of the work of the Lord Jesus when He offered Himself to God for a sweet savor; that you are identified with the value of the sacrifice upon the altar; that you are in communion with the God to whom it was offered, and with the Lord Jesus who offered Himself. The same thing applies to the cup. Whoever drinks of the cup says, by that act, "I am identified for all eternity with the value in the sight of God of the precious blood of Christ, which was shed for me." Therefore, although the bread remains bread, and the wine remains wine, it is not like eating a piece of bread or drinking wine at home.

If it be not as I say, what is it? Only an empty form, a mere profession, a non-reality; and if you read verse 15 of Leviticus 7 you will see that any worship apart from the sacrifice of Christ is only an abomination to God.

"And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning.",

If he did so leave it, what happened? Read verse 18:

"If any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it: it shall be an abomination, and the soul that eateth of it shall bear his iniquity."

If any worship or praise to God is not connected with the value of the work of His Son, it is simply an abomination in His sight. In other words, people who have never been washed in the precious blood of Christ are not accepted as worshipers before God. There is nothing God is so jealous about as the way He is worshiped, and that generally is the last thing that Christians think about. "As long as we are saved, and get to heaven," they say, "it is of very little importance how we worship God; it is a secondary thing altogether." But when Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire, before the Lord, they were struck dead, because they did not approach in the way God had

commanded. And what did Moses say?

"This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me" (Lev. 10:3).

For an unconverted person to pretend to worship God is, like Cain, to ignore sin and the fact that he is a fallen creature. When we are gathered around the Lord's table, the bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. We are there gathered to the Lord's name, identified as true believers in all the value of that one offering, the sweet savor of which is before God in all its freshness, accepted before Him in the light of His presence without a spot. We know that we are fit to be there, and we give "thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Col. 1:12. God finds delight in that wondrous sacrifice; we, in our poor, feeble measure, find our delight in it too. And we see the love that gave the Son, and we see the wondrous efficacy of that sacrifice, and what a sweet savor it was to God; and then we find that the very thing that God finds delight in has set us, without a spot, in His own holy presence. This, surely, will bring praise and worship out of the heart - not prayer to ask the Lord that there may be worship - that is to confess there is none. When we are occupied with Christ and His beauty, thanksgiving and praise must flow out; we cannot help it.

Do you not think - I submit it to those who have had longer experience than I - that it is a mistake to suppose that we go to the Lord's table to worship? because we get occupied with the worship instead of the Lord. What do we go for? The disciples came together to break bread. They did not come to have a worship meeting, or to have a service; they came to break bread, to remember the Lord in death. "This do," says the Lord, "in remembrance of Me." If we remember Him, we think of that work; we think of God's food of the offering, of His delight in it; we think of all its infinite results, and the glory that is coming; and we cannot help rejoicing, in consequence of our blessing. So thanksgiving and praise must flow out. That is God's part; our part is mentioned in verse 31:

"The priest shall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'."

Aaron and his sons typify all believers. The breast was their portion. What does the breast speak to us of? The place of affection, and the unutterable love of the Lord Jesus to us is our portion forever. We must ever remember that the blessed Lord Jesus loves all His people. Individually we say, He "loved me, and gave Himself for me"; but collectively we say, He "loved the church, and gave Himself for it." It was love that brought Him down from heaven, from that glory which He had with His Father before the world was. Even then His delights were with the sons of men. Love brought Him to the manger, and led Him through this world till He came to the cross, and there to give Himself for us. And it is well to notice that the Lord's words at the last supper, as to the bread and the wine, were more expressive of what His work was for us than the burnt offering aspect of it, what it was to God. "This is My body," He said, "which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me." For at the Lord's supper it is surely not so much doctrine that engages us; it is the exercise of the heart and affections as we remember Him who gave Himself for us. We think of all the love of the Lord Jesus in thus giving Himself, and we shall ever remember it. We shall know it in all its fullness when we see Him as He is, when we behold Him in all His glory and beauty, when we behold Him there, the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily, and the glory of God shining out of His face. We shall bow down before Him in worship, and individually we shall be able to say, He "loved me, and gave Himself for me." "The breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'." Ah! we shall never forget it; on the contrary, the remembrance of it will be intensified when we are in glory - that

blessed, blessed reality! - He loved us, He gave Himself for us. Even now we say, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever." We say it now; how much more when in the glory, and like Him!

Thus we have seen that God has His part, and that we have our part, in the sacrifice of Christ. But there is Another who will have His part too, and that is the One who brought about all this blessing - the Lord Jesus Himself. We find the type of this in verse 33:

"He among the sons of Aaron, that offereth the blood of the peace offerings, and the fat, shall have the right shoulder for his part."

The offering priest is a type of the Lord Jesus, who offered Himself without spot to God. He must have His part, surely, in all this blessed communion and joy and worship, because it is through Him it has all come about, as we were singing-

"Our every joy on earth, in heaven, We owe it to Thy blood."

The Lord Jesus - wonderful and blessed to think of it - finds His joy and delight, even now, in seeing of the travail of His soul. How little we think, when we are gathered, for instance, around the Lord's table, of the Lord's joy in having us gathered around Himself; and when we are in eternity, when we shall all be like Himself, and when He will fully see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, what joy He will have then! If we have done some piece of work that has cost us a great deal of pains and trouble, we have satisfaction in seeing the results of our labor. Do you not think that the Lord Jesus has joy in seeing the results of His work? Are not we the results of His work? What joy He must have in seeing us gathered around Himself to remember Him! And when we are thus gathered, and, indeed, at all times, we ought to see ourselves and our fellow believers as He sees us; that is, in all the value of His work, and acceptance in Himself, before God.

I cannot leave this subject without referring to an illustrative passage in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 26:29. It is connected with the Lord's supper too. The Lord said,

"I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

We read of the Father's kingdom in chapter 13 also: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (v. 43). It is the heavenly side of the kingdom. There will be the earthly side of it; but the heavenly side of it will be the excellent glory, as Peter calls it. Wine is a type of joy. What does the Lord mean when He says He will drink it new in His Father's kingdom? He means that it is not the joy of earth; it is the new joy belonging to that place of blessing into which He has brought us. There are two little words in this verse that I think very blessed - "with you." "I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." He will share the joy with us in that day of glory. And the Father will have His joy as He sees us blessed as His beloved children, holy and without blame before Him in love, according to His own heart, and according to His own counsel before ever sin came in. The Lord will then be able to say, in the language of the Song of Solomon, "I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Chap. 5:1. In that day we shall not need to have our loins girded; we shall not need to be on the watch; there will be no danger of being defiled; but we shall share in those eternal joys

which the Lord will minister to us with His own hands. He will make us sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve us.

But, beloved brethren, we are not obliged to wait till we get to heaven in order to enjoy these things. We can begin here; and the Lord's table, surely, is intimately connected with all this. When we are gathered around Himself, we think of the body of Christ given for us, the love that it speaks to us of, the shed blood of which the cup reminds us. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

May the Lord give us, when we gather around Himself, to enter into it all in the full, unhindered power of the Holy Ghost. We need not think of worship. We are sure to worship if our hearts are filled with Christ, and with the remembrance of what He has done through that one offering, when He offered Himself without spot for a sweet savor to God.

Christ As Seen in the Offerings: Sin and Trespass Offerings

Lev. 4; 5:6:1-7, 2.4-30; 7:1-7

It would take too long to read all the passages that speak of the sin offering, so we will just read portions here and there. First then Leviticus 4.

The sin offering and the trespass offering, though differing in detail, were exactly the same in character and principle. Some persons, I am aware, have thought that the sin offering deals more with the sin in our nature, and the trespass offering with acts of sin-sins committed by us. But I can hardly see how that could be, for this reason, that in the case of all the sin offerings, with the exception of the priest's, we find this expression, "And it shall be forgiven him."

Now, most of us know that the sin in our nature is never, in Scripture, said to be forgiven. It is judged, or condemned (Rom. 8:3). Sins are forgiven; sin is judged, or condemned. I will just read, in chapter 5, what is said as to one or two of the trespass offerings, in order to get the idea more clearly.

"Or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatsoever uncleanness it be that a man shall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty. Or if a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips to do evil, or to do good, whatsoever it be that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these. And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing: and he shall bring his trespass offering." vv. 3-6.

You see that a trespass and a sin are very much the same:

"When he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing: and he shall bring his trespass offering." The two, sin and trespass, are put together. He has sinned, and he is to bring, not a sin offering, but a trespass offering. Then, again, "for his sin which he hath sinned... a lamb, or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering." That shows that a trespass is a sin, just as much as when it is called a sin. And in this verse 6 the expressions "sin offering" and "trespass offering" are applied to the same animal. So the two are very much alike.

We will read verses 14-19, and the law of the sin offering in chapter 6:24-30.

I might have mentioned, before reading these passages, that it is a great help to the understanding of all these offerings and sacrifices to notice that when we have the expression, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying," it is always the introduction of a new subject. Now, the first three chapters- which speak of the burnt offering, the meat offering, and the peace offering-are all, in a manner, one, because they are all "sweet savor" offerings, which the sin offering in itself is not. And you will not find that expression anywhere in those chapters after chapter 1:1. But when the subject of the sin offering is spoken of, in chapter 4, there you find the expression again, because it is a different character of offering-an offering for sin, instead of an offering made by fire for a sweet savor. We shall notice the difference by-and-by. You do not find a third occurrence of it till

you come to chapter 5:14. The trespass offering, properly so-called, begins with this verse. The first 13 verses of chapter 5 seem to connect the sin offering and the trespass offering together, as we have seen. I believe I am right in saying that, throughout this book of Leviticus, at the beginning of every new subject this expression occurs.

It is important to see that the sacrifices are divided into two great classes-the sweet-savor offerings, or "offerings made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the LORD," and the sin offerings. In the sweet savor offerings, when the worshiper laid his hand upon the head of the offering, it signified that all the acceptability of the sacrifice was his; he was identified with all the sweet savor of the sacrifice. But in the sin offering it was just the other way. Instead of the offerer being identified with the sweet savor of the sacrifice, the animal- the offering-was identified with the man's sin; his sin was transferred to the head of the animal. Now, there are these two sides to the work of the Lord Jesus: The first is, that the Lord Jesus was charged with our sins-"He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world." The Holy Ghost has put into our mouths those words in Revelation 1:

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

The Lord Jesus, at the last supper, in the night in which He was betrayed, when He took the cup, said,

"This is My blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matt. 26:28.

That is our side, so to speak, and we shall never forget it throughout all eternity-that He gave Himself for our sins. In one sense it is even more wonderful than the other side; namely, our acceptance in Him. We think it is wonderful to have His place of acceptance before God; but I think it is even more wonderful that that holy, spotless One-the One who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, the One who was in glory with the Father before the world was-that that glorious Person should become a man, in order that He might charge Himself with the sins that we had committed against God-that He might bear them in His own body on the tree. That is what the sin offering typifies; and when the offerer laid his hand upon the head of the animal, it implied that the sin of the offerer was transferred to the victim.

The other side was represented by the burnt offering. In that case also the offerer laid his hand upon the head of the offering, but that signified that all the acceptability of the sacrifice was transferred to the one who brought it.

So there are the two sides of the work of Christ. He gave Himself for our sins, in order to put them all away, never to be remembered any more before God. But in the same place where He bore our sins, He was a "sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor." The fire of God's judgment consumed our sin; and now, instead of there being judgment for us, the judgment is all past, and there is nothing left but the sweet savor of that sacrifice in which we are accepted. Compare Eph. 5:2-Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us; our side-"An offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor"-what that work was to God.

The sin offering, therefore, as the name implies, typifies the Lord Jesus bearing our sins. It is remarkable that the sin offering or trespass offering is inseparable, in almost every instance, from

the burnt offering. The sin offering was to be killed in the place of the burnt offering; and in one instance you find the expression "sweet savor" connected with it (chap. 4:31). In every case all the fat of the sin offering was to be taken away. As it says,

"As the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings" (v. 31).

When the fat was taken off the sacrifice of peace offerings, it went up to God for a sweet savor, and was God's food of the offering made by fire; and we, as God's priests, are called to enter into communion with God, and with the Lord Jesus, to see all the results of the work that He has accomplished. Then the sin offering was the other side. There we learn how the Lord Jesus identified Himself with our sins; but it was in the same place where He bore our sins that nothing but a sweet savor rose up to God. It is most blessed to remember that. When the Lord took our sins upon Him, it was in perfect obedience to God. Therefore, never was He personally more the object of the Father's delight. Although God being holy, we know He had to hide His face from that blessed One, which caused Him to cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" You cannot separate the two-the sin offering from the burnt offering. They are, as it were, offered at the same time. In the antitype it was all one blessed act.

There is another thing that we must be clear about in looking at this sin offering. I remember it was rather puzzling to me once. I wondered why it was these people of Israel had to offer sin offerings, seeing that they were a people already in relationship with God. The blood sprinkled on the great day of atonement (Lev. 16) had laid a righteous ground upon which God could be in relationship with them, and could dwell in their midst. Then, we may ask, What need was there for any further offerings? If the blood within the veil, on the great day of atonement, settled the question of God's righteousness, and all the sins of Israel were put on the head of the scapegoat, what need for any other offerings? Well, I suppose these sin offerings were not really to bring the people into relationship with God, but to restore to communion those who already were in relationship with Him. And therefore, if the high priest sinned, or the congregation sinned, the communion of the whole of the people was interrupted, because the high priest represented the people. Accordingly, the blood of the sin offering for the high priest, or for the congregation, was taken inside the tabernacle, and sprinkled before the veil, some of the blood being put upon the altar of incense, where the high priest, who represented the whole people, approached. (Exod. 30:8.) When an individual of the common people sinned, it did not interrupt the communion of the whole company, but merely that of the particular individual; so the blood of his sin offering was sprinkled only on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, where the people approached God. We must remember this.

In Hebrews 10 it says,

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things" (v. 1).

Have you ever considered that expression-"not the very image of the things"? It was an image, but not the very image; that is, it was not a perfect image; it was only a shadow. Why was not the law a perfect image of Christianity? For two reasons at least. One reason is, that under the law there was no entrance for the people into the holy of holies. None dare go into that most holy place. The veil was there, and, as it has often been said, God was shut in, and nobody dare go in; the sinner was shut out, and God never came out; that is, He never manifested what He was in grace. Therefore, the law was not a perfect image of Christianity. God has now come out; that is, all that

God has been perfectly revealed in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ here on earth. On the other hand, there has been a Man who entered the holy place not made with hands, into heaven itself. What man is that? The Man Christ Jesus. He has gone in. As it has been very beautifully expressed by another, "He came down in grace, and He went up in righteousness." I remember someone asking once, "What is the difference between the gospel of the grace of God and the gospel of the glory of God?" The answer was, "The gospel of the grace of God is God come down in grace, manifested here in the Person of Christ; and the gospel of the glory is man gone up in righteousness to God."

Another thing characterized the Old Testament types and the law, which showed they were not a perfect image; namely, the constant repetition of the sacrifices. Every time a sin was committed, they ought to have brought a fresh offering. Blood was constantly flowing; therefore, it was not the very image of the heavenly things; it was not a perfect image; and I think that helps us in considering these types. The Jew under the law, in order for his communion to be restored when he had sinned, although he was in outward relationship with God, had to offer a fresh sacrifice. It is not so when Christians sin. Christ has not to die again, neither has the blood of Christ to be applied to us again, as many think and say. For us it is, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father" (1 John 2:1). But the means by which the Israelites were restored to communion (that is, by the sin offering) is just a type or picture of how we once for all have been perfected forever by the one offering of Christ; "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Heb. 10:14. I think that makes it clear that these sin offerings are types of that one offering of the Lord Jesus by which He perfected us forever when we came first as lost sinners to God. It is in contrast to the many sin offerings under the law, as we find it brought out in the epistle to the Hebrews.

The mass of the Lord's people in the present day think that every time they sin -they must be resprinkled with the blood of Christ. If you say it is not so, they actually imagine that you are undervaluing the precious blood. Now, it is just the contrary, as we shall see, I trust. The simplest way will be to take the case of the sin offering for the common people in chapter 4.

"If any one of the common people sin through ignorance" (v. 27).

I might say here that it was only for sins of ignorance that a sacrifice could be offered. There was no sacrifice provided under the law for willful, presumptuous sins. The Holy Ghost, in Heb. 10:26, no doubt refers to this. "If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins"; no more sin offering. Some here might like to know the meaning of that scripture. To explain it, however, would occupy too much time now; but I may just say that sinning willfully is not spoken of in reference to a true child of God getting away from the Lord, and falling into sin. It refers to one who gave up Christianity altogether, to an apostate from the faith, one who denies the value of the precious blood; it does not refer to a backsliding Christian at all.

"If any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD, concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty."

"And be guilty." As in Romans 3, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (v. 19). Every sinner, whether he knows it or not, whether he has been

awakened to a sense of it or not, this is his condition-"guilty before God." That is the first thing.

"Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge" (v. 28).

The next thing is that he becomes aware of his guilt. So with us. We were all guilty before God. The next thing was that the sin came to our knowledge: God in His grace showed us what we were.

"Then he shall bring his offering."

He is guilty; the sin comes to his knowledge; and then God meets him at once with the offering. The moment he confesses, takes his place before God as a guilty one, there is the offering to meet him. There is a beautiful picture of that in Matthew 3, where the Lord Jesus takes His place with the remnant of Israel who were confessing their sins, owning their true condition as sinners, taking their first right step before God. Jesus is found with them-not bearing their sins yet-that was on the cross afterward-but He was found with them. Is not that a beautiful picture? The moment a person owns his guilt before God, the moment he takes his true place as a repentant, hell-deserving sinner, with whom does he find himself in company? The Savior Himself. The sinner comes to God, owning his guilt, and God sets forth the Savior at once; the repentant one finds himself in company with the Lord Jesus. So here; the moment the individual acknowledges his guilt "He shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering" (vv. 28, 29).

We have already seen that when the offerer laid his hand upon the head of the offering, it meant that the sin of the man was transferred to the offering. Wonderful, blessed truth! When we come as lost sinners before God, when we come trusting the Lord Jesus for our souls' salvation, then we know that not merely one sin, as here, but all our sins, all we have ever committed, were laid upon God's beloved Son by God Himself, many centuries ago. And here it is typified. By the man's laying his hand upon the head of the offering, the sin is transferred to it. And then he shall "slay the sin offering." The moment the sin is upon the sacrifice, he shall "slay the sin offering," because "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Death must come in. Where was the sin offering slain? In the place of the burnt offering. You cannot separate the two. In the very place where the blessed Lord took all our sins upon Him, there also the sweet savor of His sacrifice rose up before God in all its perfection. Further, "The priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar." v. 30.

"The blood is the life"-all the life of the animal was poured out, given up to God. What is atonement? It is, as has been expressed by another, life given and accepted in sacrifice for a life that has been forfeited. The man had forfeited his life by his sins; "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Instead of the man dying, his sin was transferred to the kid, and the kid died instead of him. How simple! When we, as guilty sinners, deserved death-"once to die" was our portion, "after this the judgment," then the lake of fire, the second death- God said, as it were, "I will accept the death of another instead of your death," and that is the death of His own beloved Son, whom He gave in the love and grace of His heart, and who bore the judgment due to our sins, laying down His life in atonement for us. So all the blood was poured out at the bottom of the altar; the life was given up to God. In the Gospel of Matthew, in which Gospel we find the Lord's death more in the aspect of

the sin offering, we read (chap. 26),

"He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament [or covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins." vv. 27, 28.

The word "shed" might be rendered "poured out"; and if you read it in that way, how it fits in with this sin offering! "This is My blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed [poured out] for many for the remission of sins." His precious blood was poured out, just as all the blood of the sin offering was poured out at the bottom of the altar; the life was given up to God, taken in exchange for the life of the man who had forfeited his life by his sins. Some of the blood was sprinkled upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and the fat (v. 31) was taken away, "as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savor unto the LORD." There the sweet savor of the sacrifice is connected with the sin offering, although the sin offering was not a sweet savor sacrifice in itself.

"And the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him" (v. 31).

Is there anybody here who at all doubts whether he has forgiveness of all his sins? It is an immensely important question to get settled. The Holy Ghost Himself says, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." Rom. 4:7. It is no light thing to be able to say, "My sins are all forgiven." Have you ever, dear friend, seen that the Lord Jesus in His grace took your place on the cross, and there died for you? Have you by faith seen God, the holy God, who knows every sin that you have ever committed in thought, word, and deed, taking them and laying them upon the head of that spotless Victim, the Lord Jesus Christ, His beloved Son, on the cross? Have you seen Him there bearing the judgment due to your sins? Now, in the type, the word of the Lord as to the Israelite was, "And it shall be forgiven him." How, do you think, did that Israelite know that his sin was forgiven? Suppose you had met him coming back with a light heart and glad countenance from offering his sacrifice, and had asked him, "What makes you look so happy now? I saw you a little time ago looking sad and downcast." He might have said, "I now know my sin is forgiven." "Indeed; how do you know that?" "I have done what Jehovah required; I have taken a kid of the goats to the priest, and have killed it. I saw all the blood poured out, and the fat burnt for a sweet savor to Jehovah." "But how do you know your sin is forgiven?" "Because of the word of Jehovah. I have got His word for it, that, if I bring my sin offering, and the blood is shed, my sin shall be forgiven me." He could rely upon the word of Jehovah, and thus he would know he was forgiven.

So with us. Have we not to go back to it again and again and again? Ah! indeed we have; everyone will agree to it. Has there not been many an established father in Christ who, till his death, has had to go back to the value of the precious blood of Christ, and the written Word of God, over and over again? Ah! yes; and there is nothing else to rest upon for salvation, nothing else certain, nothing else sure, nothing but the value of the precious blood of Christ and the written Word of God-these two things. What word have Christians got? We have many, thank God.

There is that simple one in Acts 10:

"To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." v. 43.

What a blessed message to proclaim! Dare you doubt that word of God Himself? If you have been waiting to feel forgiven, oh, wait no longer! If you have been waiting for certain experiences to assure yourself that you are forgiven, I say, Wait no longer. Just take God at His word:

"Whosoever believeth in Him [Jesus] shall receive remission of sins."

Does not that answer to the words as to the type here, "And it shall be forgiven him"?

There is another important point. I said, just now, that the law was not a true image of Christianity, for there was constant repetition of the sacrifices. A Jew, when he sinned, had to bring his offering; then, if he sinned again, he had to bring another offering; and if he sinned a third time, he would have to bring a third offering. But if it were the same as that in Christianity, Christ would have often to suffer. Every time you and I committed a sin, Christ would have to leave the glory, and come down and die for us. That could not be. The contrast is beautifully drawn in Hebrews 10.

"Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." v. 11. the priest, under the law, stood and offered oftentimes. Now notice the contrast.

"But this man [that is, the Lord Jesus Christ], after He had offered one sacrifice for sins [or, one sin offering, in contrast with many], forever, sat down [in contrast to standing] on the right hand of God.... For by ONE offering [one sin offering] He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." vv. 12, 14.

It has been often said, that if the whole question of our sins was not settled at the cross, it never can be settled throughout the countless ages of eternity; for Christ is not coming to die again. He offered one sin offering on the cross. How many of your sins were there? Were they all there? Thank God, they were, if you are a true believer. Were only the sins you can remember borne there? No; all were laid upon Him. As we read, "Though he wist it not, yet is he guilty" (chap. 5:17). That is an important point; for some Christians have thought that every time they sin they have to pray for forgiveness, and that if they do not pray they will not be forgiven. And very often they are troubled as to whether any sins they may have committed have been left unconfessed.

One Christian asked another once, "Supposing, now, that you were killed in a railway accident, and you had not confessed your sins for the day, what would become of you?" The answer was, "Well, I am sure I do not know. I am not at all sure what would become of me." And many think that they do not get forgiveness of their sins unless they ask God to forgive them, and then the asking becomes a formal thing very often. At night, or when they say "grace," as it is called, they just make a general confession of sins, saying, "Forgive us all our sins for Christ's sake." That is not confession to God; that is not at all what God means by confession. "Though he wist it not, yet is he guilty," because a sin is a sin in God's sight, whether you are aware of it or not; and sin is judged according to the standard of His holiness, and not according to our thoughts about it. "The thought of foolishness is sin," and every independent act of our will is sin.

How many sins have we committed today? God only knows. What then is to become of us if we leave any unconfessed? No doubt we have committed some that we are not aware of. The more we grow in grace, the more we see what sin is; but God saw it was sin before you found it out. It is a blessed thing to think of. God Himself, in His holiness, knows every single sin that we have ever

committed; He knows them all. He does not leave one out, just as He will not leave one out for the unconverted at the judgment day. Not one will be forgotten in that day; so God did not leave out one of the sins of those who believe when He laid them on the head of His beloved Son, who bore them all. That is why it needed a divine person to do the work, one who could view sin as God views it; and who but a divine person could do that? It was the Lord Jesus who knew what sin is in the sight of God, who knew our sins, who took them all, every one, and bore them in His own body on the tree. I do not say past, present, or future sins, because Scripture never speaks in that way. We ought not to think of future sins at all. It is a monstrous thing to say, "I am going to commit sins tomorrow." We can speak only of past sins; future sins are not to be thought of. The simple question is, How many sins had you and I committed when Christ died? They were all future then. He answered to God for everyone, blessed be His name. What did we read in Hebrews 10?

"This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." v. 12.

In some Bibles this passage is better punctuated than in others. We should read it in this way: "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins [here should be the comma], forever sat down." That expression "forever" is not the same as that used for "eternity." It means "going on uninterruptedly throughout eternity." That is, the value of that sacrifice abides throughout eternity. If you read verse 14 first, it is made simple, I think.

"By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

And because He has perfected us forever by one offering, because He has nothing more to do for you and me, dear believer in Christ, as regards putting away our sins for all eternity, He has "forever sat down," in contrast to the priest under the law, who was always standing. How blessed to look up into heaven by faith, and there see that blessed One who has "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Why? Because He has perfected us forever by His one offering. He is not going to rise up again to do anything more in regard to putting away our sins. He is going to rise up to take us to Himself. That is quite another thing.

May the Lord, in His grace, give us to know the reality and the blessedness of the Lord Jesus bearing our sins, and of the grace that brought Him down thoroughly to identify Himself with us in our sins; to die for us. Perhaps some are apt to think too lightly of this, to regard the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, and the Lord's dying for our sins, as an inferior aspect of truth. I think that is a great mistake. I ask one question. What was one of the greatest proofs of God's love toward us? In the first epistle of John we read,

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Chap. 4:10.

There is the proof of His love. He gave His Son to die for our sins, those very sins that we should have thought would turn His love away from us. Our sinning against Him only brought out the love all the stronger, for He gave His beloved Son to put them all away. Shall we ever forget such love? Never.

May the Lord give us to know more of His grace, more of the love that led Him to come down in grace to take up our case, and perfect us forever by one offering, in order that we might share His

joy in the Father's house throughout all the ages of eternity, for His name's sake.

Christ As Seen in the Offerings: the Burnt Offering

Lev. 1; 6:8-13

My intention is to take up in a simple way, as the Lord may help me, some of the offerings mentioned in the book of Leviticus, because they set forth in a special manner the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ; and also, we may add, the blessings which have become ours through what He has done. Let us read, therefore, two verses in the last chapter of Exodus (34, 35), the whole of Leviticus 1, and "the law of the burnt offering" in chapter 6:8-13.

Probably most present here are aware that the offerings which are brought before us in the book of Leviticus are, as I have intimated, types or pictures given by the Holy Ghost of the Lord Jesus Christ's Person and work, of what results to us through that work too, thank God. But some one might say, "Are you sure that they are really types? Or is it only in the imagination of man that they are such?"

In answering this inquiry we will turn to the New Testament, where we shall learn from the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as well as from the inspired words of an apostle, that the offerings of the Old Testament are indeed types of the Savior and His work.

First then we will read a passage in Luke 24. The Lord Jesus, speaking to those two going to Emmaus, said,

"O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." vv. 25-27.

The expression, "Moses and all the prophets," really comprehends the whole of the Old Testament. "Beginning at Moses"; that is, the five books of Moses - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy - and then "all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures" (that is, the Old Testament Scriptures) "the things concerning Himself."

Have you, dear friends, ever read the book of Leviticus, and learned from it the things concerning the Lord Jesus? Or have you done as many of the Lord's people to this day do? They commence to read through the Bible, but when they come to Leviticus they pass it over. They do not read it at all, because they think it is only a book of Jewish forms and ceremonies - a ritual that has nothing to do with Christians at all. But we learn from this passage in Luke that the Lord expounded to those two travelers "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

A little further down in this chapter of Luke we read,

"He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me."

"The law of Moses" does not mean merely the ten commandments, but the first five books of the Bible.

"Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." vv. 45, 46.

Oh, what a wonderful exposition that must have been! It was from the Old Testament Scriptures - the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms - that He expounded unto them the things concerning Himself. How wonderful then does this book of Leviticus become in our eyes, when we find that, instead of its being only some Jewish ritual, we have precious things in it concerning the Lord Jesus Himself. And when we find that each one of the offerings gives us a picture of the Lord Jesus, either in His Person or His work, how interesting does it become! It is indeed very gracious of God to teach us in this way, by means of types or pictures; for our poor, narrow minds could not apprehend at once the glory of the Person of the Lord Jesus, or the value of His work. Therefore, God gives us these types in order that we may, so to speak, consider one aspect of the Person or work of the Lord Jesus at a time. Then, having looked at one type, we turn to another, which gives us a different aspect. Thus, putting all together, our hearts are filled with wonder, worship, and praise; while we learn, in a way we could not otherwise have learned, what the glory of His Person is, and what the value of His work.

We find in this book of Leviticus that there were four chief offerings. The first chapter presents the burnt offering; the second chapter, the meat offering; the third chapter, the peace offering; and the fourth chapter, the sin offering. Four offerings are brought before us by the Holy Ghost, in order to make clear to our minds four different aspects of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as, in the New Testament, the Holy Ghost has given us, in the four gospels, four different views of the Lord's Person.

Now if you turn to Hebrews 10, you will find all these four offerings mentioned:

"Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure." vv. 5, 6.

"Sacrifice and offering," in verse 5, would answer to the peace offering and the meat offering; and in verse 6 we have "burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin." So we find all these four offerings mentioned. Then in verse 7 the Lord Jesus is seen coming to accomplish the will of God.

It is very clear from these verses that the offerings are types of Him who said, "Lo, I come... to do Thy will, O God"; that is, of the Lord Jesus.

Another scripture that may be referred to is in Hebrews 9:

"Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." vv. 6-8.

So; by Aaron's going only once a year into the holy of holies, the Holy Ghost signifies something. In fact, the act was typical; the whole ritual was so. We find indeed, from Heb. 9:23, that the tabernacle and the things in it were called "patterns of things in the heavens."

I think we have now seen enough from the New Testament to show us very clearly that all these sacrifices are really types given us by the Holy Ghost of the Lord Jesus Himself. We will therefore return to our subject.

It is very helpful to connect the end of Exodus with the beginning of Leviticus. This is not often done; but I think we may lose by not doing it, and that is why I read those closing verses.

Twice over in them we find this expression: "The glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (vv. 34, 35). "And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." v, 35. Moses dared not go in because of the glory there.

Now read Lev. 1:1: "And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying." It was from within the tabernacle that the Lord spoke. He did not speak from Mount Sinai, where He gave the law. No. The glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle, and out of that glory He spoke to Moses, and said, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD," etc. He gave out all those instructions, not about law-keeping, but about the sacrifices.

Is that not significant? First, we find glory filling the tabernacle, and then God speaking out of that glory as to the way a sinner, like you and me, could be made fit for all eternity to dwell in that glory. How simply, how beautifully, it is brought out in this chapter! The burnt offering stands first, because it shows how a sinner by nature can be accepted before a holy God on the ground of sacrifice. It brings out clearly and blessedly how a sinner that is away from God, alienated from Him by wicked works, who hates God in his heart, who has a rebellious will, and is full of sin; how that sinner could be accepted before God on the ground of the value, in His eyes, of the sacrifice of Christ. That is what we have brought out in the burnt offering. I do not say that it is the first thought, but it is what we do find brought out.

Now, of what does this burnt offering speak? "The work of Christ," you say. But what aspect of the work of Christ? Well, the sin offering, which comes last in order, speaks for itself. That is a type of Christ bearing our sins, what we have done, putting them away forever. But what is the burnt offering? The burnt offering is that which typifies Christ coming to do the will of God, at all cost to Himself, in spite of all that awful suffering and agony of the cross. He came to accomplish the will of God and to glorify Him, even in death. Thank God, it was for us too. God's will was our salvation; and thus the Lord Jesus, in coming to accomplish the will of God, came to accomplish our salvation also. Supposing I were to ask this question of the Lord's people generally, "What do you think was the first object of the Lord Jesus Christ in coming into this world?" What answer do you think they would give? Nine out of ten would say, that the first object was to save sinners, of course. Yet that was not the first object. It was an object. But what was the Lord's first object in coming into this world? Have we not just read from Hebrews 10?

"Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no

pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come... to do Thy will, O God." vv. 5-7.

The first object the Lord Jesus had in coming into this world was to accomplish the will of God and to glorify Him. And when was this perfect obedience to the will of God more perfectly expressed than when He was made sin for us on the cross? when He, to do the will of God, went down into death, and that for us? It was when He took our sins upon Him, and was made sin, that God acquired His highest and greatest glory (John 13:31, 32). It is most important to see that.

Very naturally, therefore, the burnt offering comes first, because it presents Christ, not so much as taking our sins, but as offering Himself without spot to God, to accomplish the will of God, and to glorify Him, and that in death.

If you turn to Ephesians 5 you will find that there are two sides of the work of Christ presented to us in one verse:

"Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us" (v. 2);

that is our side:

"an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor";

that is the other side, and is the aspect that is presented in this burnt offering - an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. I am sure we lose very much in our own souls through not looking at that aspect of the sacrifice of Christ - what it is to God, and not merely what it is for us. We get far deeper peace by looking at it in that way. We gain immensely by it. Let me ask you, Have you ever contemplated that aspect of the death of the Lord Jesus? I trust that everyone here is able to say from the heart, "The Lord Jesus died for me; in the love of His heart He gave Himself for me." Wondrous and blessed fact! We shall never forget it through all eternity. But let me ask you, Have you ever dwelt upon what that work of Christ was to God? Have you ever considered what were God's thoughts concerning that blessed One when He thus offered up Himself without spot? Returning to Leviticus 1 we read:

"If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it for his acceptance" (this is the correct reading) "at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD." v. 3.

Mark, the animal is not killed yet. It is first brought, or presented, without blemish, for the offerer's acceptance before the Lord. An imperfect animal could not be accepted. Just turn to a passage in chapter 22.

"Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, Whatsoever he be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, that will offer his oblation for all his vows, and for all his freewill offerings, which they will offer unto the LORD for a burnt offering; ye shall offer for your acceptance" or, that ye may be accepted (see the Revised Version) "a male without blemish, of the beeves, of the sheep, or of the goats. But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you. And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein." vv. 18-21.

It must be perfect to be accepted, to begin with. If there had been a single spot, a single blemish, upon that bullock, it could not have been accepted; and if the bullock had not been accepted, the offerer would not have been accepted, for it was for his acceptance that the animal was offered. What does that point to? To the holy, spotless Person of the blessed Lord Jesus, born into this world, made of a woman, made under the law, the One who thought it not robbery to be equal with God (Phil. 2), but who made Himself of no reputation, emptying Himself, coming into this world, not a full-grown man as Adam, but a newborn babe, and then passing through this world as the holy, sinless One, and offering Himself without spot to God. The whole of that blessed, spotless life (which I do not dwell on now, because it is typified in the meat offering), the whole of that life, every word He spoke, every action He performed, ascended to God as a sweet savor. And then we find that He went into death.

The obedience that characterized Him in His life was only perfected, so to speak, in His death. Or, as we read in Philippians 2, He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. We know the Father's thoughts of that blessed One. Twice over, the heavens were opened, and the Father's voice was heard, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," or, "in whom I have found My delight" (J.N.D. Trans.). Every thought of His heart was to God a sweet savor. Then came the dreadful hour in the garden of Gethsemane, when there was brought before the Lord Jesus all that He would have to go through if He persisted in this blessed path of obedience - what He would have to go through if He carried out the will of God perfectly. It was all brought before Him in such wise that the Lord said, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Matt. 26:39. So He goes on to the cross in perfect and blessed obedience, and there offers Himself up, a willing victim, to accomplish the will of God.

I ask you, beloved friends, not what your thought is about that wondrous work, that act of blessed obedience and devotedness to the Father's glory, but, Have you ever considered what is God's thought about that blessed One and His obedience unto death? If the Father could say of Him during His life here, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," how much more now that He has gone even into death itself, out of obedience and love to the Father. In John 14:31 we find the two things, His love and His obedience to the Father, both shown in His going on to death. "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." He rose from the supper to go to the cross.

Supposing a friend whom we loved very much went through great trouble and suffering to do something we wished to be done, should we not appreciate his devotedness to us? Think then of the Lord Jesus Christ, at all cost to Himself, at the expense of that awful agony of the cross, in perfect obedience coming to do the will of God; as He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." John 4:34. The Father ever delighted in Him. But now He was going to lay down His life in love and obedience to the Father, and He says, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." John 10:17. Therefore! Did not the Father always love the Son? To be sure He did. Yet He says, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life." There was a fresh cause, a new motive, so to speak, for the Father's love to flow out toward the Son; and when on the cross the Lord was made sin, never was He personally more the object of the Father's delight. His being made sin was the perfection of His obedience. He went into death out of obedience to God. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. O beloved friends, what does God think of that? It is expressed in our chapter

in these words:

"But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water" (that is, the sacrifice was made clean to show what Christ was by nature-perfect, pure, holy): "and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the LORD." v. 9.

"An offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the LORD." What idea do those words convey to your minds? Is not a sweet savor something in which we delight, something that is pleasing to us? These are the words the Holy Ghost uses to make known to us God's thoughts of that blessed One and His sacrifice. "An offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the LORD." What does "fire" mean in Scripture? Fire signifies generally God's testing judgment. Fire and the sweet savor go together. Look at that blessed One on the cross. When He was there, all the waves and the billows of the judgment of

God rolled over His head. When He was made sin for us, who knew no sin; when He was there, bearing the whole weight of our judgment, in His infinite grace, what came out? Nothing but infinite perfection, nothing but a sweet savor to God, nothing but what God found infinite delight in. Tested to the utmost, and the more tested the more sweet savor came out. The more we are tested, very often, the more our imperfections come out. The more He was tested, the more His perfections came out - the more the sweet savor came out before God. How blessed to look back and see the Lord Jesus made sin for us, and yet the sweet savor of what He was going up to God! In that sweet savor we find ourselves accepted, as we shall see further on.

Up to this time we have been thinking of what Christ is to God; and if we ask, "What does God think of the wondrous sacrifice of the Lord Jesus? What does He think of that blessed One who went to the cross to accomplish His glory at all cost to Himself?" the subject is so great that we can never know it in its fullness. But the Holy Ghost has expressed it for us in these words: "An offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor" (Eph. 5:2).

Now, what is our part in the burnt offering? Where do we come in? It has been truly said, that the burnt offering was all for God; the priest was to "burn all on the altar." But we must remember that atonement is spoken of, blood shedding is spoken of; and in verse 4 it says,

"And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him."

That is our part - our getting the benefit of it, so to speak. It is the sin offering that tells us how Christ "bore our sins in His own body on the tree." That relates to what we have done. The burnt offering deals more with the question of what we are - our state before God as sinners, as in Rom. 5:19: "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners" - what we are by nature. That is really the question to be settled, and how a sinner by nature can be accepted before a holy God. This is a difficulty to thousands of the Lord's people. Many say, "I have no difficulty about my sins; I know the Lord bore them all. Yet I cannot say that I have settled peace before God." How is that? You say, "I see my sins are forgiven, but I feel I come far short of what I ought to be as a Christian. I seem to have so little love for the Lord and for His Word."

I believe the burnt offering represents that which fully meets this question, because it deals more with our state by nature, and how we are accepted before God. This is not the first time we read of

a burnt offering in Scripture. Abel's offering bore the character of a burnt offering; and by it he obtained witness that he, a sinner by nature, was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; that is, bearing witness to the value of the sacrifice (Heb. 11:4).

Noah also offered a burnt offering after the deluge. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor there, and said in His heart, "I will not again curse the ground," although "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21). Again, Job offered burnt offerings for his sons. "For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts" (Job 1:5).

You will notice that verse 4 of our chapter says, "He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering." That action means that the offerer was identified with all the value of the sacrifice. In other words, if God accepted the sacrifice, He accepted the one who brought it; but if God rejected the sacrifice, He likewise rejected the one who came with it. If God found the sacrifice a sweet savor, and found delight in it, He found the same delight in the one who came with it. The offerer was fully identified with the value of the sacrifice before God. As we read, "And it shall be accepted for him," instead of him. Oh, how simple and how blessed that is! The sacrifice of Christ accepted by God for us, according to all the value that He puts upon it - Christ accepted instead of us. Instead of being before God with our sins and hatred to Him, instead of our disobedience and lack of devotedness, we are accepted according to all the value of that work on the cross, where our sins were all atoned for, and where Christ's obedience, devotedness, and love to the Father were fully manifested. "It shall be accepted for him."

Whatever the offerer was, whether he was devoted or not; whatever were his feelings, his experiences, or his thoughts as to the value of the sacrifice - all this had nothing to do with his acceptance. The question was, what the value of the offering was in the sight of God. The offerer might have said, "If God accepts the sacrifice, I am accepted; if He rejects the sacrifice, I am rejected too. If God finds delight in the sacrifice I bring, He finds delight in me too." How simple when we apply that to our case! In other words, it is Christ and His work accepted by God instead of me. That is really it. Thank God, if we have once come as lost sinners, and taken our true place before Him, we find ourselves accepted, in spite of all that we are - our unworthiness, our lack of devotion, and our hatred and rebellion against God; accepted on the ground of what Christ was to God when He offered Himself a willing sacrifice - when He was made sin for us, who knew no sin.

Does not that make it plain? I am sure we lose a great deal by not dwelling more on what that work was to God.

We must remember that these things give only different aspects of the same work. It was when the Lord was made sin for us, bearing our judgment, that the sweet savor of His sacrifice rose up to God. Has the value of that sacrifice before God changed? Thank God, it has not. The value of that sacrifice is as fresh before God today as on the day upon which it was offered.

We will just look at "the law of the burnt offering" in Leviticus 6 before we close.

"Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering: It is the burnt offering, because of the burning upon the altar" (mark the following expression) "all night unto the morning." v. 9.

I think that is so beautiful! It was burning "all night unto the morning." In the darkness of the night, when Israel were asleep, or perhaps murmuring in their tents; in the midst of

the darkness there was the sweet savor of the sacrifice going up before God. Is it not the night now? "The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:12). Is it not night during the absence of the Lord Jesus, till He come as the bright and morning Star? It is blessed to think that, during the long, dark night, when the ruin of the professing church is becoming more and more manifest, and in the midst of all the failure of the Lord's people on every hand, the sweet savor of the sacrifice, when Christ offered up Himself, is as fresh before God as at the moment when it was offered. May we not also apply it individually? Yes. If we get away from the Lord in heart, and drift back into this world, and the things of the world - right away from the Lord - is our acceptance before God changed? No; for the sweet savor of the sacrifice of Christ before God is as fresh as ever, and in that we are accepted. Does that sweet savor ever alter? Never. Therefore the believer's acceptance never alters. Our appreciation of it may; alas! it does. As we often sing -

"My love is oftentimes low,

My joy still ebbs and flows;

But peace with Him remains the same:

No change Jehovah knows."

There is another blessed point brought out in this chapter 6, and that is, the eternal efficacy and value of Christ's work. "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out." v. 13. Never go out. What does that imply? When we have been in the glory of God for innumerable ages, we shall be there on the same ground as that upon which we are now accepted; namely, the value of the work of Christ before God. When God brings in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, the foundation on which all that scene of blessedness will rest will be the sweet savor of the sacrifice of Christ, when He offered Himself without spot to God.

I do not know a more peace-giving truth than this that we are dwelling on. If anyone ask, "What are you building on? What are you resting on for your eternal salvation?" we can answer, "The value God puts upon the work of His beloved Son." What a sure, solid foundation for our souls! I was only lately saying to some Christians, "It is a great thing to see that you and I are as fit for heaven now as we ever shall be through all eternity." At first they could not see it, and did not quite believe it. They could not endorse that statement. I then asked the question, "What makes us fit to dwell with Christ in glory?" They said, "Why, of course, the work of Christ." But will the work of Christ be of any more value in God's sight when we are in glory than it is today? Not one atom. Therefore, if we are believers, the blessed truth is this, that on the ground of that work we are as fit for the glory now as we ever shall be when we are actually in it, although then free from the presence of sin, and with a glorified body like Christ's. And although we may fail, and get away from the Lord, and our hearts become as cold as a stone; though the whole professing church have gone wrong, how blessed it is to think of the burnt offering burning all night; the sweet savor of it as fresh before God at this moment as on the day when the sacrifice was offered. And throughout all the countless ages of eternity it will be still the same - what Christ was to God when He offered Himself without spot through the eternal Spirit.

May the Lord give us, beloved friends, to know more of that wondrous work of the Lord Jesus on the cross - what it is to God, and what it has done for us. It will be our theme of praise in glory, when we shall know as we are known. The same blessed Savior will occupy us then, and will bring out the thanksgiving of our lips, and the adoration of our hearts. May God grant that it may be more and more so now.

Christ As Seen in the Offerings: the Red Heifer

Numbers 19

Perhaps if we had written the Bible, we should have put the passage concerning the sacrifice of the red heifer along with the accounts of the other sacrifices in the book of Leviticus. It is remarkable that the Spirit of God has not done so, but has put it in the middle of the book of Numbers, which book presents the people of God journeying through the wilderness. The subject of the book of Leviticus is how we approach God on the ground of sacrifice. The book of Numbers might be called a wilderness book. It relates the ways of the children of Israel, what they did during their journey to Canaan, their murmurings, their backslidings, their lusts.

Now, this world should be a wilderness to the Christian while he is on his way to the glory of God. When we see this, we understand the appropriateness of the sacrifice of the red heifer. The people are in the wilderness, going on to their rest, just as we who believe in the Lord now are still in the world, exposed to defilement, with sin in us, the world outside us (and the devil, too), while we are on our way to the glory of God. And it is while we are journeying through this world that we need to be cleansed from all the defilement which we contract by the way.

I cannot now attempt to go into all the details of this scripture. We will take up only the main points. In verse 2 we read,

"This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without

spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke."

That is the first thing. There must be a spotless sacrifice. So the Lord Jesus presented Himself to do the will of God, according to those words in 1 Pet. 1:19:

"A lamb without blemish and without spot."

"And upon which never came yoke." What does that mean? The Lord Jesus, as regards His own Person, was never under the yoke of sin. We by nature are under that yoke. We read,

"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant [or the slave] of sin" (John 8:34).

We were under the yoke of sin. The Lord Jesus, as we know, was born into this world holy—"That holy thing which shall be born of thee," the angel said to Mary, "shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). No yoke of sin ever came upon Him. He did no sin; He knew no sin.

"And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face." v. 3.

Now turn to the last chapter of Hebrews:

"For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." vv. 11, 12.

"Without the camp," "without the gate." How clearly does the antitype answer to the type! The heifer was brought forth without the camp, just as Jesus was led forth without the gate. "And one shall slay her before his face." The spotless one is led forth without the gate, and then slain.

There are three aspects of the value of the death of the heifer:

"Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times." v. 4.

"And one shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn." v. 5.

3. "And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer." v. 6.

In each of these verses we have a different aspect of the work of the Lord Jesus. 1) Shedding the blood and sprinkling it before the tabernacle of the congregation (v. 4), was really done as before God. That was the thought. It presented the precious blood of Christ, which has been shed once, and by virtue of which we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The whole animal burnt to ashes without the camp, shows, I believe, in type, that the fire of God's judgment, so to speak, consumed all our sins on the cross, so that they are entirely put away, and can never be imputed to us. They are gone forever for those who believe.

Concerning cedar wood and hyssop, you may remember it says in 1 Kings 4:33, Solomon "spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." That is, I suppose, from the greatest thing in the vegetable kingdom to the smallest, and the rest comprehended between the two. So cedar wood and hyssop would typify all that belongs to us as children of Adam, all that we glory and boast in as natural men. Scarlet is a well-known type of the glory of this world. The woman in the Revelation, spoken of as sitting on the beast, was arrayed in scarlet, and it was a scarlet-colored beast. So these things were all consumed in the midst of the burning of the heifer.

Further down in the chapter we learn how a person got defiled. He became so if he touched anything connected with death. That is the way it is put in this chapter. A bone of a man, or a grave, or one slain with a sword in the open field; if he came in contact with any of these, he was defiled - he was unclean. Now, death is the wages of sin; it was the result of sin. And I think there is no chapter in the Bible, at least in the Old Testament, that gives us such a sense of the holiness of God as does this chapter. It is most remarkable. If the man only touched a bone, he was unclean. But not only was the man who touched the bone unclean, but if another person touched him, or anything he had touched, the other person was unclean too; and if a third person touched the second, that third person likewise was unclean; and so it spread from one to another. Thus, after all, it is a question of what God calls clean, and not of what we call clean; and God calls nothing clean but that which is absolutely fit for His glory. Thank God, we are washed in the precious blood of Christ, are clean and fit for His presence.

Now let us briefly consider these aspects one by one. 1) The first is the foundation of every blessing.

"And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times." v. 4.

The number "seven" in Scripture is a symbol of divine perfectness. So the blood was sprinkled seven times before the tabernacle; that is, before the eye of God. A beautiful picture this of that precious blood of the Lord Jesus; and, mark, it is God, He who alone knows the value of it, who calls it precious

(1 Pet. 1:19). God the Holy Ghost speaks in Hebrews 9 of the precious blood of Christ. Look at verse 22:

"Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission [or, forgiveness of sins]."

Notice that expression, "without shedding of blood." It does not say without application of blood, but without shedding (or, pouring out) of blood there can be no forgiveness of sins. Now (I speak to all believers in this room), when was the precious blood of Christ shed? Was it shed when you were brought to God? Certainly not. Has it been shed since you were converted? Certainly not. If that were necessary,

"Then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world" (v. 26).

No; that precious blood was shed, or poured out, on the cross, and it is never going to be repeated throughout eternity. "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

When you and I were, by the Spirit of God, first awakened to see our need, we believed God's precious Word, and came to Christ. In that Word we saw, when we were troubled about our sins, "that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). And we believed it. Now we can say, "Thank God, I know that I have forgiveness of my sins, because God tells me so in His blessed Word." But when was that work done, when was that blood shed, on the ground of which you got forgiveness? On the cross. When was the value of that blood applied to you, a guilty sinner? When you believed. For how long does the application apply to you? How long does the efficacy of that blood which was, so to speak, sprinkled on you when you believed-how long does its efficacy last? To all eternity. Blessed, precious truth! When the efficacy of that precious blood, when the value of the blood of Christ is applied to a sinner, it is for all eternity. It is not for six months; it is not for a year; it is not till we sin again; it is forever. Is there a scripture for that? Read Heb. 10:14:

"By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

Now, we are always ready to catch up something or other,

and make a difficulty of it. So some have said, "I am not sure whether I am among those that are sanctified. It says, Perfected them that are sanctified." "Sanctified," in the epistle to the Hebrews, never means inward sanctification by the Spirit of God. We do not find sanctification of the Spirit in this epistle. It is not sanctification by the Spirit that is spoken of here, but sanctification by the one

offering of Christ. "Sanctify" means "to set apart." So, when a person believes, God sets him apart from the rest of the world by putting all the value of the precious blood of Christ upon him. Thus that person is set apart, or sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once (v. 10). That is not inward or progressive sanctification by the Holy Ghost, which is a different thing altogether. Therefore, verse 10 is true of every believer; for everyone who believes is in this sense sanctified, and therefore is "perfected forever" by the one offering (v. 14).

To illustrate it by a case. Supposing you and I have been converted to God, say six months. At the time of our conversion we were, of course, washed in the precious blood of Christ, and the value of that precious blood was applied to us. But supposing that we have fallen into some grievous sin, and dishonored the Lord, and that the blood had to be applied to us again, how long would the efficacy of it have lasted after we were converted? Why, only six months, because we were converted six months ago, and now after six months it has to be applied over again. That would show that the efficacy of that blood of Christ was for only six months. But Hebrews 10 says, "By one offering He hath perfected," not for six months, or six years, but "forever," which means that the efficacy of the offering abides throughout the countless ages of eternity. There is the blessed, simple truth in the Word: but then our own hearts are always ready to find fault with God's Word; and many a one says, "That seems dangerous doctrine. 'When the blood of Christ has been applied once, it is so for all eternity; the value of it lasts forever; and thus a believer can never be lost.' That seems to be almost allowing a license for sin." We shall see, however, that it does not. It is exactly the other way. Instead of being a license for sin, it is a blessed power to keep us from sin. There is nothing that keeps us, and nothing that breaks us down when we have sinned, so much as the sense of the love of Christ, the love of Him who suffered all the agony of that cross, in order to save us from all those sins which, alas! we Christians even commit now, for "in many things we offend all [all offend]" (Jas. 3:2).

The first thing is the blood sprinkled before God seven times. Now we see the question of our sins settled forever. I will ask each one here, Have you really known in your own soul that the question of all your sins is settled? Can you say, "The question of my sins was gone into between God and His Son on the cross, and that question has been settled never to

be raised again throughout all eternity"? God will not raise it, if you do; there is the blessed comfort. Many a Christian wants to rake up the question again. God says, as it were, "I will not raise it again. It has been settled forever on the ground of the precious blood of Christ." And God can say (although one does not like to put words into His mouth), "If I were to raise the question of your sins again, I should be calling in question the eternal efficacy of the blood of My Son," which He never could or would do.

2. "And one shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn." v. 5.

This is not merely the blood shed; the whole animal is taken outside the camp, and entirely consumed. It is burnt to ashes. What does that signify to us? As we said before, it is a figure of how entirely all our sins were borne and put away forever at the cross. There the fire of God's judgment consumed all our sins when the Lord Jesus in His matchless grace took them upon Him, and bore the judgment due to us, so that they can never be imputed to us who believe in Him; and it is important to see that not only is it said, He bore our sins, but that He was made sin for us, who

knew no sin. (2 Cor. 5:21). In

Rom. 8:3 we read, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [that is, a sacrifice for sin], condemned sin in the flesh." So sin in the flesh, our state by nature as children of Adam, not merely our sins, was condemned or judged by God when His beloved Son was made sin for us on the cross. Hundreds of believers say, "Ah, it is not my sins that trouble me; it is what I am that troubles me! I am not what I should like to be. I find so many foolish and evil thoughts, and just the same dispositions in me now as when I was unconverted. Sometimes that makes me consider whether I have not deceived myself, and whether I am a child of God at all." Many a one says to himself, "If you were a child of God, you would not have all those reasonings, and all those idle and evil thoughts; you cannot be a child of God."

Ah, beloved friend, that is no proof that you are not a Christian, a child of God, that you were not converted. You would not be troubled about them at all if you were unconverted. You would be a careless, indifferent sinner, in your sins, as we all were once. But here is the blessed thing to see, that the thing which you are troubling yourself about - what you are as a child of Adam - was condemned by God on the cross when His beloved Son, who knew no sin, was made sin for us.

Have you ever seen that not only your sins, but what you are by nature, was answered for on the cross? That when the Lord was made sin He bore the judgment due to you and me as sinners? God condemned sin in the flesh-not the sins, but the nature that produced them. I think this is a wonderful comfort to a believer. Perhaps, dear friend, you have been finding out for years past, or perhaps for weeks only, the evil of your nature; and you say, "The more I get on, the older I grow, the worse I get." And then you are very apt to think that God also is finding out by degrees how bad we are. But it is not so. He knew it from the beginning. Hundreds of years ago He knew how bad you and I are by nature; and the blessed truth is, that when He knew how bad we were, and how badly we should turn out after we are saved-in other words, when He knew the worst about us - He was all love toward us, and gave His own beloved Son to meet the question of our sins on the cross, and to meet this far deeper question too, of what we are by nature.

I think it is important to see that the death of the Lord Jesus was the death of One who bore the judgment of God for us. He was forsaken of God during those three hours of darkness, when His soul was made an offering for sin. No doubt it was then that the great question of sin was gone into, and forever settled by its condemnation on the cross. But, before He died, He again said, "Father." When He was on the cross, in the hour of darkness, He said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And then, before He yielded up the ghost, He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." He bore all the judgment of God due to us, and died, and therefore nothing can be imputed to us who believe. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Rom. 4:8.

3. "And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer." v. 6.

There is something beyond the question of our sin being settled. We read in Galatians 6,

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." v. 14.

Yes, dear friends, the world put Christ on the cross; the world hated the Lord Jesus when He came into it. It was all over with the world when it cast out and rejected the Son of God. Its condemnation was fixed. The Lord Jesus, looking forward to His death, said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." John 12:31. Moreover, the world crucified the Lord of glory, the One whom Christians think everything of; therefore the world is put in its true place, as deserving shame and degradation and death.

So the Apostle says, "The world is crucified unto me"; and on the other hand, I am crucified to the world-I have died to it. There is an end to the world as far as I am concerned. The cross is the end of it to me. When we see that the Son of God, the Lord of glory, came to die because of what we were, what becomes of our wretched pride, and all that the world esteems glorious and seeks after? We look at the cross of Christ, and cast it all there, just as the cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet were all burnt up in the midst of the burning of the heifer. What is the world to us when we see that it crucified our Lord Jesus? When we learn that He suffered such agony to save us from the judgment that is going to be poured out upon it, what is the world to us then? Nothing. The world is crucified to us, and we to the world.

Next we have directions concerning defilement.

"He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days." v. 11.

If an Israelite touched anything connected with death he became defiled, because death is the wages of sin. Dead bodies, dead men's bones, and graves, have their existence through sin. It has been very nicely remarked that in the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, there will be none of these things to run away from. There will be no such thing as a grave, or a bone lying about; there will not be such a thing as a dead body there. Why? Because there shall be no more death. Sin will be outside those blessed regions on account of the shedding of the precious blood of Christ. Now we are surrounded by sin and death, and we little know how frequently we get defiled. Very often we become so by being occupied with evil. The man that sprinkled the water became unclean himself. Just think of that. So if we are occupied with evil, we get defiled by it, because we have a nature in us that answers to evil.

The Lord Jesus did not get defiled in this world, because He had no sinful nature that answered to evil. We have such a nature; and it is a remarkable thing that when a notice of some notorious crime, or anything fearfully wicked, is placarded in the streets, or in a shop window, hundreds of people will stop and read it; or if some picture that illustrates any fearful crime is to be seen, what crowds stand around and look at it! But if there is anything beautiful, precious, or lovely on view, you will not find such crowds standing near. Why? Because the natural man likes evil more than good. We know what our own hearts are. The only thing that gives power to a Christian is occupation with nothing but good. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Phil. 4:8. Do not have your minds filled with evil, but have them filled with good; then there is no danger of getting defiled.

In verses 16-19 is a beautiful picture of what is done when a child of God commits a sin, or gets defiled by coming in contact with evil in his pathway through this world. When an Israelite

contracted defilement, was the blood sprinkled on him again? No. What was sprinkled on him? Not blood, but ashes and water. What do they imply? The ashes were simply the memorial of that blood which was shed, and that body which was burnt outside the camp - the remembrance of Christ's sufferings and death. Running water is a symbol of the Holy Ghost. How do we know that? If you look in John 7 for a moment you will see very clearly the way in which the Lord Himself used the symbol.

"He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" v. 38.

If you look in the margin of your Bibles at Numb. 19:17 you will see that the term is living water; so then living or running water represents the Holy Ghost. The ashes of the heifer set forth the remembrance of Christ's sufferings and death, when He settled forever the question of all our sins, and of our sin too. The Holy Ghost, when we have been defiled by evil, takes, so to speak, the sufferings of Christ, and brings them to our mind, brings to our remembrance the sufferings of

Christ for us, and the value of His death. Is not that wonderful? Do you think that would make us sin? Never. Now, consider for a moment. Supposing you and I committed a sin today, and we were told from God, "Now you have sinned, and there is nothing but judgment for you. You have forfeited all blessing by having sinned against grace, and there is no hope," what would become of us? We should be driven into the depths of despair. It would not help us at all. But supposing that, when we had committed a sin, the blessed Lord Himself were to appear personally to us and say, "I suffered untold agonies on the cross, even the judgment of God, in order that you might never be condemned for the very sin which you have just committed," what then should we say? We should be so thoroughly ashamed of ourselves that we should not know how to hold up our heads; we should be completely broken down, and hate ourselves for having done that which the Lord Jesus suffered on the cross to save us from.

That is what the Holy Ghost does, as typified in this chapter. We sin, consciously or unconsciously, and we are defiled; we have got into contact with the world and the things of the world. Perhaps we have been with the ungodly, and have not confessed the Lord; we may even have joined in their foolish talk, and thus have got defiled. What does the Holy Ghost do? He brings back to our remembrance what the blessed Lord Jesus suffered in order to deliver us from that very thing which we have done. What is the consequence of that? The consequence is that we are ashamed of ourselves; we grieve over what we have done, and we go and confess it to the Lord. Why do we confess it? The Spirit of God has brought those sufferings of Christ to our remembrance, and leads us to the confession of what was done in answer to the blessed service of the Lord Jesus on high, as our advocate with the Father. That is so blessed to think of. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). Not "If any man confess his sin."

Before ever we confess our sin, perhaps before we were aware of it, there is that blessed One with the Father; and the result of His advocacy with the Father is that the Holy Ghost brings to our mind what we have done, and at the same time brings to our remembrance what the blessed Lord has suffered to deliver us from the very sins we have committed. We are thus humbled, and go and confess to our God and Father. All the Trinity, so to speak, are engaged with the restoration of our

souls when we have sinned. God the Son, the Lord Jesus, is there as our advocate with the Father; God the Holy Ghost, in answer to Christ's advocacy, brings home the sin to our conscience, leading us to confession; and God the Father forgives us. He is faithful and just to forgive us on the ground of that precious blood shed once for all. It is very interesting to mark the difference between forgiveness once for all as sinners, and the forgiveness that, as saints, we get from the Father.

A few words more and I have done. The man was sprinkled on the third day, but it was not till the second sprinkling, on the seventh day, that he was pronounced clean. This teaches us, I think, that God does not think lightly of sin, and that it is far easier to get out of communion than to get back again. When we are first made aware of our sin, we are unhappy, and are humbled in the dust before God for what we have done. It is not joy; it is grief. Then we go and confess it, and find that the Lord gave Himself for the very sin which we have committed. After we have owned our sin, it only increases our sense of the love of the blessed Lord, and of the value of His work; so, through God's grace, we are led, perhaps, into a deeper knowledge of Himself and the value of the work of His Son, than we had before.

Well, I have been able to give only the leading thoughts in this beautiful chapter, but I trust you have gained some acquaintance with the truths which it teaches. Study them at your leisure, and look to God for the Holy Spirit's guidance to unfold them to you, and blessing must come.

May the Lord in His grace give us each one to be kept so near to Himself that we may not need His gracious, blessed service as our advocate. It is difficult not to be defiled in this evil world; but, oh, let us always remember the blessed truth that we have been perfected forever by the one offering of Christ, by His precious blood; and that when we commit sin, the Holy Ghost brings to our remembrance that the suffering of Christ on the cross has delivered us forever from it. How we shall praise the Lord when, in His own presence in glory, we look back on our past history, and on all our failings here, and at the same time on the history of His ways of grace with us! May we know more of the unceasing love of Him who gave Himself for us, who cleanses the Church by the washing of water by the Word, and who will present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Oh, how blessed that will be when, for the first time, we taste what absolute holiness means, and we worship unhindered, when the flesh and all connected with it is gone, and we shall be forever like and with the Lord! May the Lord keep us near to Himself until that day!

Christ Our Hope: Part 1

Only once do we find in the Scriptures the expression, "Christ our hope." "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope." 1 Tim. 1:1. But although the term itself is not repeated, the thing signified by it is found in almost every book of the New Testament, and in some books, almost in every page. For the characteristic of every Christian is that he is waiting for the Lord Jesus, who will return, according to His own promise, to receive us unto Himself, that where He is we may be also (John 14:3). It belongs therefore to our position, as left in the world, that we are waiting for Christ, because it is at His coming that we shall enter upon the full fruits of our redemption. For it is then that our bodies are also redeemed (Rom. 8:23); "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Phil. 3:21. Hence we are said to be saved by (rather, in) hope (Rom. 8:24). Even now we receive the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls (1 Pet. 1:9); but we look forward to the moment when our bodies likewise shall be redeemed from the power of death and the grave; for God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren (Rom. 8:29).

Accordingly, it belongs to our present position that we are waiting for the coming of our Lord, for it is at His return that this consummation of our blessedness will be effected. He is our Hope, therefore, because it is Himself for whom we wait in connection with it. And not only so; it is for Himself we wait, because the One who has redeemed us is He on whom our hearts are set. Apart therefore from every other consideration, Christ is our Hope- Christ in His coming - because we desire to be with the Object of our affections. We are thus brought into fellowship with His own desires; for if we wait for and desire to be with Him, He waits for the moment when the desires of His heart will be fulfilled in having us with Himself (John 17:24).

We shall find therefore that during His sojourn with His disciples He continually prepared them and exhorted them to watch for His return. Sometimes He presented this truth - the hope of His coming - in relation to their responsibility as servants. "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh I shall find so doing" (Matt. 24:46); and again, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching." Luke 12:35-37. Sometimes He presented His coming as ushering His waiting ones into fullness of blessing, as bringing them into His own presence to be with Him forever. For example, in the scripture already referred to, when His disciples were plunged into sorrow at the prospect of His speedy departure, He says, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3. The Lord here not only presents Himself to His sorrowing disciples as the Object of their faith in His absence from them, and as One who was departing in their

interests to prepare a place for them, but also as the Object of their hope in returning to receive them to Himself.

In entire accordance with this is the teaching of the epistles. The Apostle says of the Thessalonians that they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:9, 10). This scripture is exceedingly important, inasmuch as it shows beyond dispute that the coming of Christ was no advanced truth imparted to a few of the spiritual, and no peculiar doctrine adopted by a class, but an essential part of the Christianity of these early believers. It may also be well to remark that this was the Apostle Paul's earliest epistle, and that it was written therefore to very young converts; and it is these that he reminds that, by their conversion, they were not only turned to God, etc., but that they also were brought upon the ground of waiting for God's Son. His coming was their hope.

Evidence of the same character might be adduced from almost every epistle. A few citations will suffice. Writing to the Corinthians, the Apostle says, "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 1:7. To the Philippians, he says, "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Chap. 3:20. James also says, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord" (Chap. 5:7). And in the last chapter of the inspired canon, the blessed Lord Himself announces three times His speedy return (Rev. 22:7, 12, 20). But it is the Apostle Paul who was especially commissioned to reveal this truth in its specific character as the hope of the Church; and he does it with precision and fullness in his first epistle to the Thessalonians. He says, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." He then proceeds to explain how it comes to pass that the saints will return with Jesus; that is, at His appearing; for if they return with Him, then they must have been with Him previously, and he is specially charged to unfold this mystery. Hence he adds, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [an old word, signifying to go before, or anticipate] them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. 4:13-18.) Two things plainly appear from this scripture: first, that the Lord will return for His saints, both those who have fallen asleep and those who may be alive at that time on the earth before His appearing; and, second, that when He comes back to earth, His saints will be with Him. (See also Col. 3:4.)

There is another class of passages which speak of our looking and waiting for the appearing rather than the coming of Christ. One of these has been cited (1 Cor. 1:7). We add another: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing [rather, the appearing of the glory] of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ," etc. Titus 2:11-13. There is a reason for this. It will be found that whenever believers are looked at as under responsibility on the earth -as, for example, in service- the "appearing" is the goal rather than the "coming."

Thus the Apostle Paul says to Timothy, "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Tim. 6:14. Some have concluded from this and similar passages that the Church will be left down here until the appearing and have to pass through the sore tribulation of which our Lord speaks in Matthew 24. This is, however, an entire mistake, as seen, indeed, from the scripture already cited (1 Thess. 4:13-18). The fact is, the appearing is spoken of in connection with responsibility, because as earth has been the scene of the service, earth also shall be the witness of the displayed recompense. Hence in 2 Thessalonians, after the Apostle has unfolded the proper hope of the Church in the coming of Christ, in writing to the same saints, and speaking of their patience and faith in all their persecutions and tribulations that they were enduring, he points them on to the time when they should have rest, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (have believed). 2 Thess. 1:7-10. This is in no way inconsistent with, but is rather the complement of, the truth of the Lord's coming for His saints being our proper object of hope.

It may perhaps tend to make this, if possible, more evident if we show that there is nothing, as far as the Scriptures reveal, between us and the return of the Lord—that He may return at any moment to receive His waiting people. If indeed there were a single event which must necessarily, to our knowledge, intervene between us and His return, His coming would not be our immediate hope. In that case, we should look first for the predicted event or events, and after that we might be able to expect the coming of the Lord. Two or three scriptures will show that it is our privilege to look at any time for the return of the Lord.

Christ Our Hope: Part 2

After our Lord's resurrection, and ere His ascension, in one of His interviews with His disciples, Peter said to Him concerning the disciple whom Jesus loved, "Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me." John 21:21, 22. Now without pausing to enter upon the special significance of these words, as applied to John, it is clear upon the surface, that had there been necessarily a long intervening space between the Lord's departure and return, rendered necessary by the accomplishment of earthly events, these words could not have been spoken. Again, in the epistle to the Corinthians, when dealing with the resurrection of the body, the Apostle says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51); and also in the passage from the Thessalonians, which has been remarked upon, he says, "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." A great deal of ingenious reasoning has been expended upon these scriptures to destroy their evident teaching, that the Apostle Paul knew of nothing to hinder the Lord's return during his lifetime. Had he known that a long course of prophetic events and earthly judgments must first be accomplished, he could not have thus classed himself, as he does by the word "we," among those who might never die.

But it is objected that our Lord Himself prepared the minds of His disciples, in other scriptures, to expect a long course of events before His return; and Matthew 24 is freely adduced by those who seek to obscure the distinctive hope of the Church. What then do we find there? After describing a time of special tribulation, the Lord thus speaks: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matt. 24:29-31. Now it is freely conceded that if this be a description of the Lord's return for the Church, there must yet elapse, it may be, a long interval of time. But does this scripture contemplate the Church? There are several reasons in the chapter itself which forbid the conclusion. In the 15th verse the Lord gives a sign - "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place," etc. This sign, as all must confess who will take the trouble of reading the prediction of Daniel, refers exclusively to a temple (hereafter to be rebuilt) in Jerusalem. Again, our Lord urges upon them to pray that their flight might be "not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day," a prayer which could scarcely be offered by a Christian, seeing that the Sabbath - the seventh day, and no other; that is, Saturday - is to him as any other day of the week. If, moreover, one should come, according to the 23rd verse, and say to a believer, "Lo, here is Christ, or there," how could he be deceived? Would he not reply, Christ is at the right hand of God? But there would be nothing so calculated to deceive the Jew who was eagerly looking for the advent of the Messiah. Indeed, it is undeniable that the whole chapter applies to the Jews, who will be, at the time spoken of, in Jerusalem and

Judea.

It can be shown even more convincingly. Examine the order of events detailed in the passage cited. After the tribulation the sun is darkened, etc.; and then appears the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then all the tribes of the earth mourn; and then they see the Son of man coming, etc., and it is not till after all this that He sends His angels with a great sound of a trumpet to gather together His elect. So if this applies to the Church, it is not gathered together until after the appearing. But what says the Apostle Paul? "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Col. 3:4. Both scriptures cannot therefore apply to the same thing, or they would be mutually contradictory. Since then the scripture in Matthew 24 differs from that in Colossians 3, it is evident that it cannot apply to the Church. Indeed, the application is to the elect remnant among the Jews, who will be gathered in the manner there described when the Son of man shall come in His glory.

In Revelation 19 we shall find confirmatory evidence. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God." vv. 11-13. This is a description of the coming of the Lord Jesus in judgment, as the sequel shows; in other words, of His appearing. It is at this time that He returns with His saints. Let the Word speak for itself. "And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." v. 14. Who are these? Their dress is distinctive and supplies the answer. "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." vv. 7, 8. The armies therefore who followed upon the white horses are saints; but if saints, they must have been with Christ before He issues forth for judgment at His appearing. This is in accordance with the Apostle Paul's statement, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Col. 3:4.

It is thus abundantly plain that the Lord returns for His people before He appears in judgment, and hence that there are no necessarily intervening events between us and the Lord's coming. This might be gathered, indeed, from the Lord's own words, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16); for the star of hope which burns aloft in the sky is the herald and harbinger of the coming day, the star to which we turn in earth's darkest hours in the longing expectation that we shall soon be caught up and associated with Him in all His heavenly splendors. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." Happy they who can from full hearts respond, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20.

Such is the teaching of the Word of God, and very many profess to receive and to hold it. But it is one thing to hold the doctrine, and quite another to live in the power of it, to be possessed and molded by the truth which it expresses. To hold the doctrine that the Lord is at hand, and to be living as if this scene were our home, to be engrossed in its cares, activities, or pleasures, or to be associated with things which are not suited to Him for whom we profess to wait, is practically to deny our hope, and even to turn the grace of God into an occasion for the liberty of self-will and pleasing of self. It behooves every one therefore who believes that the Lord is at hand, to judge

himself, his heart, and his ways, by the light of the Word, that he may be brought into a state conformable to his expectation, suited to the presence of Him whom we so soon expect to see face to face, and with whom we hope to be forever. Let us then collect a few examples of the effect which this blessed hope should practically produce upon our walk and ways.

The parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25) shows that, whatever our profession, we are not prepared to meet the Lord unless we have "oil" in our vessels; and the effect of the cry, "Behold, the bridegroom," was to awaken both the wise and foolish as to their condition and needs. But everyone will understand that none but those who are born again through the Word and by the power of the Holy Ghost can be ready for the Lord's coming. There was a second thing. The cry was, "Go ye out to meet Him." With this corresponds another scripture. The Apostle John, after revealing to us that when Christ is manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, adds, "Every man that hath this hope in Him [in Christ] purifieth himself, even as He is pure." (1 John 3:2, 3.) The effect of the expectation of Christ therefore, when held in living power, will be to separate, and to produce in us an ever increasing separation. With Himself before our souls, and looking for Him hourly, our desire will be to be apart from all which would not please His eyes, and to be possessed of all that would delight His gaze. Hence we may measure the reality and intensity of our hope by its separating power upon our hearts and lives. How were it possible indeed to cleave to a single thing, however innocent even in itself, if it be not distinctly for Christ, if we were expecting every moment to see His face? No; waiting for Him, our aim would be to be found just as He would have us to be, so that, weaned from every earthly thing and object that might bind our heart to the scene through which we are passing, we may have nothing to leave but the wilderness itself, when He descends from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.

It will also help us to keep our lamps trimmed and burning. All the ten virgins had fallen asleep; and when roused from their unfaithful slumbers, their first anxiety was for their lamps. "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." v. 7. They had been careless about this before, but immediately they hear the cry, "Go ye out to meet him," they turn to see if their lamps can be prepared in time to meet him. But they should have been kept both trimmed and burning all through the darkness of the night; and had they really been waiting for the bridegroom, it could not have been otherwise. How is it now with us who profess to be expecting the Lord? Are our lights burning - burning steadily and brightly through the surrounding darkness? The light is Christ. Are we then reflecting Him? "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." Matt. 5:14, 15. In like manner, if by the grace of God Christ is in us, it is that He may be displayed. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 4:6; see J.N.D. Trans.

The Apostle Paul applies this truth in many ways. "The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing," etc. (Phil. 4:5, 6.) He would thus have us without a single care in the prospect of His coming. He uses the same truth to comfort the hearts of the sorrowing in the passage already adduced (1 Thess. 4). And what can comfort the heart of the bereaved like the expectation of Christ? For even while the bodies of our dear ones are lying in the house, or on their way to the grave, we are entitled to hope that the Lord may return; and then, raised from their sleep of death, and we ourselves changed,

we shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

The Apostle James exhorts to patience on the same ground. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Jas. 5:7, 8. The prospect of the Lord's return is thus an antidote to the weariness, the trials, and the difficulties of our wilderness journey.

The Lord Himself continually uses the uncertainty of the time of His return as an incentive to fidelity. When He represents Himself in the parable as departing to receive a kingdom and to return, and delivers the "pounds" to the servants, His word is, "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:12, 13). Again He says, "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods." Matt. 24:45-47.

These are but samples of the practical uses of the truth of the coming of Christ for His people. An examination of all the passages that treat of the subject will show that it is interwoven with every detail of Christian life and walk. To ignore it therefore is to lose one of the most powerful motives to holiness which is given to us in the Scriptures. More than this: it is, as before remarked, an integral part of Christianity; and hence the Christian who has not received the truth of the Lord's coming is ignorant of the character of the place into which he is brought, as well as of the fullness of the grace of God. Is the coming of Christ - Christ Himself in His coming - your hope, dear reader? Can any prospect be so fraught with joy to the believer? To see the face of Him, whom not having seen we love! To be like Him, and to be with Him forever! Surely if our hearts respond in ever so feeble a measure to what He is to us, and to His love, we must long for the moment when He will enter upon the fruition of His own joy in receiving His own to Himself, and when our joy will be consummated in the everlasting possession of the Object of our affections.

May the Lord bring many more of His beloved saints into acquaintance with it, and enable those who by His grace do wait for Him to maintain the truth in living power - walking under its full separating influences every step of their wilderness path!

Christian Worship

Christian worship is the united outpouring of thanks and blessing to God and the Lamb from hearts purified by faith, who have the knowledge of the Father and Son by the power of the Holy Ghost, and who therefore draw near in the happy confidence of His love, in the confessed delight and enjoyment of what God is, in the praise of what He is and of what He is to them.

Any of you, children of God, who are not seeking to take the place given you by the word of the Lord, of true worshipers worshiping the Father, are losing your time upon the earth in forgetfulness of your sweetest privileges. No one dictates to you; you are not advised where to go, what to do, with whom to consort, but this only-consult, as to it, the Word of God for yourselves. If you be afraid of the test, if you are unwilling to follow its direction, you have not avoided a bad conscience. Remember what you are sanctified for. Let nothing be so prized as the glory of Christ, nothing so authoritative as the revealed will of the Lord.

Let me press this also upon you, as self-evident, that if you are mingled, Christians and no Christians, men of the world and believers in Christ together, there cannot be worship in spirit and in truth. There never was, since the Lord announced its nature, real Christian worship where such mixture exists. The effect of the attempt is not that worldly persons are raised upward to the ground and power of worship in spirit and in truth, but that Christians must go down to the atmosphere of the worldly. That is to say, you abandon (and for what? or on whose authority?) all your own proper privileges.

Christ's Love

The pattern characteristic of Christ's love was service. "I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22:27). Selfishness likes to be served, love likes to serve. That is one characteristic of Christ's love.

Another is, that it is a companionable love. How freely the Lord was going in and out among them, sympathizing with them when they had no sympathy with Him!

Another is, that it was above all the evil that it met with. We have not to go with the evil, but rise above it with patience, as Christ did, because our love, as His, has its spring from a source which is not dependent upon the thing that it loves, and which is above all the things that hinder. It goes on and abides, because its spring is in God.

Another characteristic of Christ's love is that it is thoughtful and considerate of us, and consequently adapts itself in the way of love to our condition, because it is entirely above it.

Another is, that it esteems others better than self. Christ could go and take up these poor wretched disciples as those who had been faithful to Him, and say, I will give you a share in My kingdom. He encourages every heart by the good He can say of it, and thus prepares it to receive rebuke when it is needed.

Another is the anxiety of love. In this world where evil is, we cannot have love without anxiety. The heart yearning in love is drawn out in anxiety-an anxiety that looks to the Lord and finds an answer there.

The measure and extent of the love of Christ was the total giving up of Himself to die for us. If I want to have a love that will do for a world of evil, it is the giving up of self for everybody, a love that is above the evil.

"Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." John 13:1.

Clear Views: Perhaps As Cold As an Icicle

Christian reader, beware of being satisfied with "clear views" of scriptural subjects. It is no doubt most needful to "hold fast the form of sound words"; but then a form of sound words without realized companionship with Christ will leave the heart as cold as an icicle. We must remember that, in nature, the clearest nights are often the coldest. Thus it is with professing Christians. A sound creed in the head, without Christ in the heart, is a poor, cold, dead, worthless, soul-deceiving thing.

The true way of obtaining clear views of the gospel, is to look "in the face of Jesus Christ." The true way to obtain a knowledge of sound doctrine, is to feel by the touch of faith the very pulsations of the heart of Jesus. One reason why so many Christians lack abiding peace, is that they make peace their object, instead of cultivating a closer walk with God. It is impossible to be in the presence of God and not have peace, because perfect love makes everyone within its range feel perfectly at home. This is one of the precious effects of love.

"Clear views" may leave the heart barren and void. We want to enjoy the companionship of One in whom we can fully confide. The heart needs to be refreshed by the dew of true sympathy. We need to be sharpened by "the countenance" of a man. Where can we find all these, but in Jesus? Every other heart but His will disappoint us at times.

"Earthly friends may fail or leave us, One day soothe, the next day grieve us; But this Friend will ne'er deceive us-

Oh how He loves!"

Beloved reader, let me exhort you to seek a closer, deeper, more personal walk with God. It is your privilege to enjoy this. Jesus died, "the just for the unjust," not merely to give us "clear views," nor yet to bring us into a good place, but to "bring us to God." We are brought to God now. We are brought to Him in heart, in conscience, in understanding, in order that we may enjoy Him according to the mode in which He has revealed Himself. And how are we to enjoy Him? By the Word. If we attempt to think of God apart from Christ; or to think of Christ apart from the Word; or to think of the Word apart from the Holy Ghost, all is mist, confusion, or cold speculation; whereas a single line or clause of Scripture can bring God into the soul with unspeakable sweetness and power.

This makes all very simple. We have received a new nature and have been brought into a new position. But this is not all. We have been brought to a Person. This is what we want. This is what the heart can understand. The human heart would rather have a cottage with companionship, than a palace in solitude.

The Closing Scenes of Malachi and Jude

In comparing these two inspired writings, we find many points of similarity and many points of contrast. Both the prophet and Apostle portray scenes of ruin, corruption, and apostasy. The former is occupied with the ruin of Judaism, the latter with the ruin of Christendom. The prophet Malachi, in his very opening sentences, gives with uncommon vividness the source of Israel's blessing and the secret of their fall. "I have loved you, saith the LORD." Here was the grand source of all their blessedness, all their glory, all their dignity; Jehovah's love accounts for all the bright glory of Israel's past, and all the brighter glories of Israel's future. While, on the other hand, their bold and infidel challenge, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" accounts for the deepest depths of Israel's present degradation. To put such a question, after all that Jehovah had done for them, from the days of Moses to the days of Solomon, proved a condition of heart insensible to the very last degree. Those who, with the marvelous history of Jehovah's actings before their eyes, could say, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" were beyond the reach of all moral appeal. Hence, therefore, we need not be surprised at the prophet's burning words. We are prepared for such sentences as the following: "If then I be a father, where is Mine honor? and if I be a master, where is My fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise My name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised Thy name?" There was the most thorough insensibility both as to the Lord's love and as to their own evil ways. There was the hardness of heart that could say, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" and "Wherein have we despised Thy name?" And all this with the history of a thousand years before their eyes- a history overlapped by the unexampled grace, mercy, and patience of God-a history stained from first to last with the record of their unfaithfulness, folly, and sin.

But let us hearken to the prophet's further utterances, or rather to the touching remonstrances of the aggrieved and offended God of Israel. "Ye offer polluted bread upon Mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted Thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.... Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for naught? neither do ye kindle fire on Mine altar for naught. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For, from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering: for My name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even His meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD."

Here then we have a sad and dreary picture of Israel's moral condition. The public worship of God had fallen into utter contempt. His altar was insulted, His service despised. As to the priests, it was a mere question of filthy lucre; and as to the people, the whole thing had become a perfect weariness-an empty formality-a dull and heartless routine. There was no heart for God. There was

plenty of heart for gain. Any sacrifice, however maimed and torn, was deemed good enough for the altar of God. The lame, the blind, and the sick, the very worst that could be had, such as they would not dare to offer to a human governor, was laid on the altar of God. And if a door was to be opened, or a fire kindled, it must be paid for. Such was the lamentable condition of things in the days of Malachi.

But, thanks and praise be to God, there is another side of the picture. There were some rare and lovely exceptions to the gloomy rule - some striking and beautiful forms standing out in relief from the dark background. It is truly refreshing, in the midst of all this venality and corruption, coldness and hollowness, barrenness and heartlessness, pride and stoutness of heart, to read such words as these: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name."

How precious is this brief record! How delightful to contemplate this remnant in the midst of the moral ruin! There is no pretension or assumption, no attempt to set up anything, no effort to reconstruct the fallen economy, no affected display of power. There is felt weakness, and looking to Jehovah; and this-be it observed and ever remembered-is the true secret of all real power. We need never be afraid of conscious weakness. It is affected strength that we have to dread and shrink from. "When I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:10) is ever the rule for the people of God-a blessed rule, most surely. God is to be counted upon always; and we may lay it down as a great root principle, that, no matter what may be the actual state of the professing body, individual faith can enjoy communion with God according to the very highest truth of the dispensation.

This is a grand principle to grasp and hold fast. Witness the Daniels, the Mordecais, the Ezras, the Nehemiahs, the Josiahs, and Hezekiahs, and scores of others who walked with God, carried out the highest principles and enjoyed the rarest privileges of the dispensation, when all lay in hopeless ruin around them. There was a passover celebrated in the days of Josiah, such as had not been known from the days of Samuel the prophet (2 Chron. 35:18). The feeble remnant, on their return from Babylon, celebrated the feast of tabernacles, a privilege which had not been tasted since the days of Joshua the son of Nun (Neh. 8:17). Mordecai, without ever striking a blow, gained as splendid a victory over Amalek as that achieved by Joshua (Esther 6:11, 12). In the book of Daniel we see the earth's proudest monarch prostrate at the feet of a captive Jew.

What do all these cases teach us? What lesson do they tell out in our ears? Simply that the humble, believing, and obedient soul is permitted to enjoy the very deepest and richest communion with God, in spite of the failure and ruin of God's professing people and the departed glory of the dispensation in which his lot is cast.

Thus it was, as we may see, in the closing scenes of Malachi. All was in hopeless ruin, but that did not hinder those who loved and feared the Lord getting together to speak about Him and to muse upon His precious name. True, that feeble remnant was not like the great congregation which assembled in the days of Solomon, from Dan to Beersheba; but it had a glory peculiar to itself. It had the divine presence in a way no less marvelous though not so striking. We are not told of any "book of remembrance" in the days of Solomon. We are not told of Jehovah's hearkening and hearing. Perhaps, it may be said, there was no need. Be it so; but that does not dim the luster of the grace that shone upon the little band in the days of Malachi. We may boldly affirm that

Jehovah's heart was as refreshed by the loving breathings of that little band as by the splendid sacrifice in the days of Solomon's dedication. Their love shines out all the brighter in contrast with the heartless formalism of the professing body, and the venal corruption of the priests.

"And they shall be Mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble.... But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts."

We shall now give a hasty glance at the Epistle of Jude. Here we have a still more appalling picture of apostasy and corruption. It is a familiar saying among us that the corruption of the best thing is the worst corruption; and hence it is that the Apostle Jude spreads before us a page so very much darker and more awful than that presented by the prophet Malachi. It is the record of man's utter failure and ruin under the very highest and richest privileges which could be conferred upon him.

In the opening of his solemn address, the Apostle lets us know that it was laid upon his heart to write unto us "of the common salvation." This would have been his far more delightful task. It would have been his joy and his refreshment to expatiate upon the present privileges and future glories wrapped up in the comprehensive folds of that precious word "salvation." But he felt it "needful" to turn from this more congenial work in order to fortify our souls against the rising tide of error and evil which threatened the very foundations of Christianity. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." All that was vital and fundamental was at stake. It was a question of earnestly contending for the faith itself. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

This is far worse than anything we have in Malachi. There it was a question of the law, as we read: "Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments." But in Jude it is not a question of forgetting the law, but of actually turning into lasciviousness the pure and precious grace of God, and denying the Lordship of Christ. Hence, therefore, instead of dwelling upon the salvation of God, the Apostle seeks to fortify us against the wickedness and lawlessness of men. "I will therefore," he says, "put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

All this is most solemn, but we desire to present to the reader the charming picture of the Christian remnant given in the closing lines of this most searching scripture. As in Malachi we have, amid the helpless ruin of Judaism, a devoted band of Jewish worshipers who loved and feared the Lord

and took sweet counsel together, so in the Epistle of Jude, amid the more appalling ruins of Christian profession, the Holy Ghost introduces to our notice a company whom He addresses as "Beloved." These are "Sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." These he solemnly warns against the varied forms of error and evil which were already beginning to make their appearance, but have since assumed such awfully formidable proportions. To these he turns, with the most exquisite grace, and addresses the following exhortation - "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Here then we have divine security against all the dark and terrible forms of apostasy - "the way of Cain... the error of Balaam... the gainsaying of Core" - the "murmurers" and "complainers" - the "great swelling words" - the "raging waves" - "wandering stars" - "having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." The "beloved" are to build themselves up on their "most holy faith."

Let the reader note this. There is not a syllable here about an order of men to succeed the apostles, not a word about gifted men of any sort. It is well to see this and to bear it ever in mind. We hear a great deal of our lack of gift and power, of our not having pastors and teachers. How could we expect to have much gift and power? Do we deserve them? Alas! we have failed, and sinned, and come short. Let us own this and cast ourselves upon the living God who never fails a trusting heart.

Look at Paul's touching address to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20. To whom does he there commend us, in view of the passing away of apostolic ministry? Is there a word about successors to the apostles? Not one, unless indeed it be the "grievous wolves" of which he speaks, or those men who were to arise in the very bosom of the Church, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. What then is the resource of the faithful? "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

What a precious resource! To God Himself and the word of His grace. And hence it follows that, let our weakness be ever so great, we have God to look to and to lean upon. He never fails those who trust Him; and there is no limit whatsoever to the blessing which our souls may taste, if only we look to God in humility of mind and childlike confidence.

Here lies the secret of all true blessedness and spiritual power - humility of mind and simple confidence. There must, on the one hand, be no assumption of power; and on the other, we must not in the unbelief of our hearts limit the goodness and faithfulness of our God. He can and does bestow gifts for the edification of His people. He would bestow much more if we were not so ready to manage for ourselves. If the Church would but look more to Christ her living Head and loving Lord, instead of to the arrangements of men and the appliances of this world, she would have a very different tale to tell. But if we, by our unbelieving plans, and our restless efforts to provide a machinery for ourselves, quench and grieve and hinder the Holy Ghost, need we marvel if we are left to prove the barrenness and emptiness and confusion of all such things? Christ is sufficient, but He must be proved; He must be trusted; He must be allowed to act. The platform must be left perfectly clear for the Holy Ghost to display thereon the preciousness, the fullness, the all-sufficiency of Christ.

But it is precisely in this very thing we so signally fail. We try to hide our weakness instead of owning it. We seek to cover our nakedness by a drapery of our own providing, instead of confiding simply and entirely in Christ for all we need. We grow weary of the attitude of humble patient waiting, and we are in haste to put on an appearance of strength. This is our folly and our grievous loss. If we could only be induced to believe it, our real strength is to know our weakness and cling to Christ in artless faith from day to day.

It is to this most excellent way that the Apostle Jude exhorts the Christian remnant in his closing lines. "Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith." These words evidently set forth the responsibility of all true Christians to be found together instead of being divided and scattered. We are to help one another in love, according to the measure of grace bestowed and the nature of the gift communicated. It is a mutual thing - "building up yourselves." It is not looking to an order of men, nor complaining of our lack of gifts, but simply doing each what we can to promote the common blessing and profit of all.

The reader will notice the four things which we are exhorted to do; namely, "building" - "praying" - "keep" [ing] - "looking." What blessed work is here! Yes, and it is work for all. There is not one true Christian on the face of the earth who cannot fulfill any or all of these branches of ministry; indeed, everyone is responsible to do so. We can build ourselves up on our most holy faith; we can pray in the Holy Ghost; we can keep ourselves in the love of God; and, while doing these things, we can look out for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ

But, it may be asked, Who are the "beloved"? to whom does the term apply? Our answer is, To whomsoever it may concern. Let us see to it that we are on the ground of those to whom the precious title applies. It is not assuming the title, but occupying the true moral ground. It is not empty profession, but real possession. It is not affecting the name, but being the thing.

Nor does the responsibility of the Christian remnant end here. It is not merely of themselves they have to think. They are to cast a loving 'look and stretch forth a helping hand beyond the circumference of their own circle. "And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." Who are the "some"? and who are the "others"? Is there not the same beautiful indefinability about these as there is about the "beloved"? These latter will be at no loss to find out the former. There are precious souls scattered up and down amid the appalling ruins of Christendom, "some" of them to be looked upon with tender compassion, "others" to be saved with godly fear, lest the "beloved" should become involved in the defilement.

It is a fatal mistake to suppose that, in order to pluck people out of the fire, we must go into the fire ourselves. This would never do. The best way to deliver people from an evil position is to be thoroughly out of that position myself. How can I best pull a man out of a morass? Surely not by going into the morass, but by standing on firm ground and from thence lending him a helping hand. I cannot pull a man out of anything unless I am out myself. If we want to help the people of God who are mixed up with the surrounding ruin, the first thing for ourselves is to be in thorough and decided separation; and the next thing is to have our hearts brimful and flowing over with tender and fervent love to all who bear the precious name of Jesus.

Here we must close; and in doing so we shall quote for the reader that blessed doxology with which the Apostle sums up his solemn and weighty address. "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." We have a great deal about "falling" in this epistle - Israel falling - angels falling - cities falling - but, blessed be God, there is One who is able to keep us from falling, and it is to His holy keeping we are committed.

Collective Testimony: Individual Responsibility

"And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp." Exod. 33:7.

When the camp of Israel was defiled by a golden calf, separation from evil became all who sought the Lord, for He and evil cannot go on together. Moses acted with God given perception in placing the tabernacle "afar off" from that defiled place; and then, "every one which sought the LORD" went out to where the Lord was.

It is important to notice that each one had to act individually when he walked out from the camp to where the Lord was - in that, it was individual seeking of the Lord on the one hand, and testimony against evil on the other. Another important point comes out in the fact that when the individual reached the appointed place, he had two things: the Lord, and the fellowship of all his brethren who were likeminded.

While testimony in this day is individual in a certain sense, yet if one finds himself where the Lord is, he will of necessity be with others who are in the same place - in this it becomes collective.

The same things are seen in 2 Timothy 2, where this present day of Church defilement and ruin is described: "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ [the Lord] depart from iniquity," and "follow... with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (vv. 19, 22).

Today each Christian-one who names the name of the Lord-has individual responsibility for separation from iniquity and of seeking the Lord, but let no one say there is no such thing left as corporate or collective testimony; find the Lord and those seeking Him only, in separation from evil, and you will find corporate testimony as well.

Crowns

"Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns" (John 19:5). What a contrast is this humiliating picture of the Son of God, to the crowns of reward with which the Lord would encourage us! Yet this thorny, cruel crown preceded all others. Desirable and glorious are the crowns promised to Christians, but no thought of them can be divorced from that crown of shame and suffering which brought forth mocking and jeers from the crowners. Was it not enough that they had condemned Him to death, without lacerating His sacred head with those cruel spikes? Yet He bore it all patiently, knowing the crowns of glory that were to follow, and without which they could not be.

"Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame."

While we would not forget any part of our dear Lord's suffering for us, our hearts rejoice that this is not the end of the story. Paul reminds us, "We see Jesus... crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9). No longer the shameful crown of thorns, but crowned with glory and honor. The world cannot see this crown, but with the eye of faith we see our Lord Jesus now thus crowned. In a future time, not very far distant, we believe, we shall actually see Him wearing a "golden crown" (Rev. 14:14); and then, what a glorious moment when we shall lay our crowns before Him, the Author and Finisher of faith.

What are those crowns which we shall lay at His feet? The New Testament tells us of four which belong to Christians: "A crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8); "A crown of glory" (1 Pet. 5:4); "A crown of life" (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10); "Crowns of gold" (Rev. 4:4).

Crown of righteousness is a reward Paul was expecting, for he had previously said, "I have fought a good fight,... I have kept the faith." He assures us, however, that this crown was not for him only, but for all those who love His appearing.

Crown of glory, Peter tells us, is given to those who feed the flock of God. The reading of the previous verses would take away any feeling of superiority one might be tempted to assume by position, for responsibility is here coupled with meekness. But what a glorious crown to be won!

Crown of life. Everyone who believes on the Lord Jesus, and claims Him as his Savior, has life - eternal life. But here the crown is for those who endure temptation and are faithful unto death. Eternal life is a gift of God, but the crown here is held out as a reward for faithfulness.

Crowns of gold. Here we see the actual crowns and their substance. The rewards of God are rich, fitting for those who are partakers of His divine nature; but even in glory, where we shall be made perfect, and be like Him through His divine grace, we shall be conscious of our own unworthiness to wear them, and cast them down at His feet.

Is it any wonder that we are entreated to "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." No one can take away the life which we have in Christ Jesus - O praise the Lord! but this verse in Rev. 3:11 makes it clear that we can lose our crown.

Again, behold that crown of thorns, which made all other crowns possible. The insult and mockery of that crown, which was borne so meekly, draws out all our devotion to the One who suffered for such creatures as we.

May we never forget that crown on the cross at Calvary. Sweetly resting in His love, and safely sheltered by His precious blood, leave also the crowns in His care; for without Christ, we can do nothing.

The Decline in Moral Standards

The moral standards are being lowered each year in this and other English speaking countries-the very countries that took the lead in circulating the Word of God and spreading the gospel. Corruption has set in and is growing apace. This, however, need not cause alarm to the children of God, for His Word has foretold that such conditions would come.

One brother, well known among us, has said that the man of the world is governed by his lusts and popular opinion. General disapproval of a certain course or certain actions tends to restrain people; but when lewdness and immorality are accepted as the natural course, or the inevitable, then popular opinion has dropped, and the general standard of conduct will go down correspondingly.

Every bit of information about the growing percentage of "unlawful deeds" that is talked privately or published openly increases the rate of decline in popular opinion.

Deeds that would have been frowned at, and their doers ostracized, not many years ago, are now accepted and acknowledged without a shock or shudder.

Is God indifferent to all this? No! no! no! He has said that He will judge the doers of these things. The Old Testament gives the account of His governmental dealings with the world at the flood, of Sodom and Gomorrah, of the inhabitants of Canaan, and then of Israel when they followed in the ways of the heathen who before them had polluted the land. And it is common knowledge that the Roman Empire had lapsed into awful, sordid corruption before it fell. "God is not mocked," and men and nations shall reap the just consequences of their wickedness.

Further, God has told us that the moral conditions that prevailed before the flood and before the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah will again be general when the Son of man comes in judgment. (See

Luke 17:26-30.)

Now, what about the true Christian's attitude toward all this? Is he to accept the lowered and lowering standards around him? Is he to allow in himself, or sanction or condone in others, the customs of moral laxity that are prevalent? Is he to follow a course that leads in that direction? Most surely not. He is called to "holiness," "purity," and "virtue." "Be ye holy; for I am holy." 1 Pet. 1:16.

Christians who are in close contact with the world are in danger. Defiling influences are to be found in the schools, colleges, factories, and offices - in fact, anywhere where the world is met. May we seek to walk with God and guard against any allowance of the first steps of conduct unbecoming for a saint (holy one) of God; for God's standards of holiness have not changed, nor will He accommodate them to the falling standards of popular opinion.

When the epistles were first written, they were sent to Christians living in the days of the depraved Roman Empire. Was there any accommodation in them to the abysmal corruption of the time? Not in the least! Everywhere the testimony of God is the same:

"God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." 1 Thess. 4:7.

"Present your bodies... holy... unto God" (Rom. 12:1).

"The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:17).

"What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" (1 Cor. 6:19).

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. 4:30).

"Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9).

"He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." 1 Pet. 1:15.

"Ye... are... a holy priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:5).

"What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Pet. 3:11).

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith" (Jude 20).

May we read the Holy Scriptures and have our thinking formed by them; then our standards will not drop with the precipitous decline about us.

Devotedness of Women

The woman who anointed the Lord (Matt. 26:7) was not informed of the circumstances about to happen, nor was she a prophetess. But the approach of that hour of darkness was felt by one whose heart was fixed on Jesus.... But the perfectness of Jesus, which drew out the enmity, drew out the affection in her; and she (so to speak) reflected the perfectness in the affection; and as the perfectness was put in action and drawn to light by the enmity, so was her affection. Thus Christ's heart could not but meet it. Jesus, by reason of this enmity, was still more the Object that occupied a heart which, doubtless led of God, instinctively apprehended what was going on....

But yet a few words more on the woman who anointed Him. The effect of having the heart fixed in affection on Jesus is shown in her in a striking manner. Occupied with Him, she is sensible of His situation. She feels what affects Him, and this causes her affection to act in accordance with the special devotedness which that situation inspires.

As hatred against Him rose up to murderous intent, the spirit of devotedness to Him grows in answer to it in her. Consequently, with the tact of devotedness, she does precisely that which was suited to His situation. The poor woman was not intelligently aware of this, yet she did the thing that was meet. Her value for the Person of Jesus, so infinitely precious to her, made her quick-sighted with respect to that which was passing in His mind. In her eyes Christ was invested with all the interest of His circumstances, and she lavishes upon Him that which expressed her affection. Fruit of this sentiment, her action met the circumstances; and although it was but the instinct of her heart, Jesus gives it all the value which His perfect intelligence could attribute to it, embracing at once the sentiments of her heart and the coming events.

But this testimony of affection and devotedness to Christ brings out the selfishness, the want of heart, of the others. They blame the poor woman. Sad proof (to say nothing of Judas) how little the knowledge of that which concerns Jesus necessarily awakens suitable affection in our hearts!... But the narrative goes on. Some poor women-to whom devotedness often gives, on God's part, more courage than to men in their more responsible and busy position-were standing near the cross, beholding what was done to Him they loved. (Matt. 27:55, 56.)

The part that women take in all this history is very instructive, especially to them. The activity of public service, that which may be called "work," belongs naturally to men (all that appertains to what is generally termed ministry), although women share a very precious activity in private. But there is another side of Christian life which is particularly theirs, and that is personal and loving devotedness to Christ. It is a woman who anointed the Lord while the disciples murmured; women, who were at the cross when all except John had forsaken Him; women, who came to the sepulcher and who were sent to announce the truth to the apostles who had gone after all to their own home; women, who ministered to the Lord's need. And indeed this goes further. Devotedness in service is perhaps the part of man; but the instinct of affection, that which enters more intimately into Christ's position, and is thus more intimately in connection with His sentiments, is closer communion with the sufferings of His heart - this is the part of woman - assuredly a happy part.

The activity of service for Christ puts man a little out of this position, at least if the Christian is not watchful. Everything has however its place. I speak of that which is characteristic; for there are women who have served much, and men who have felt much. Note also here, what I believe I have remarked, that this clinging of heart to Jesus is the position where the communications of true knowledge are received. The first full gospel is announced to the poor woman that was a sinner, who washed His feet (Luke 7), the embalming for His death to Mary (John 12:3), our highest position to Mary Magdalene (John 20), the communion Peter desired to John who was in His bosom (John 13). And here the women have a large share.

The Dew of Hermon

Psalm 133

The expression at the head of this paper has, it seems, long proved "a geographical puzzle" to some. But to one who has the mind of Christ it is no puzzle, but a most striking and beautiful figure. Hermon is the very loftiest peak in all the land of Palestine, and from its snowy cap, when all the surrounding country is parched, the refreshing dew descends upon the mountains of Zion; and this is one of the figures used by the Holy Ghost to illustrate the beauty and pleasantness of brethren dwelling together in unity.

Let us quote the entire psalm.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

Here we have two lovely illustrations of unity among brethren. It is like ointment descending from the head of the high priest to the skirts of his garment; it is like the dew descending, in refreshing power, from Hermon's snowy cap.

How truly delightful! And yet they are but figures used to set forth the divine idea of unity among brethren. But how is the unity to be promoted? By living sufficiently near to our great priestly Head to catch the fragrant ointment as it descends from Him - to be living so near the Man in the glory as that the refreshing dew of His grace may drop upon our souls, thus rendering us fragrant and fruitful to His praise.

This is the way to dwell in unity with our brethren. It is one thing to talk about unity, and another thing altogether to dwell in it. We may profess to hold the "unity" of the body and "the unity of the Spirit" - most precious and glorious truths surely - and all the while be really full of selfish strife, party spirit and sectarian feeling, all of which are entirely destructive of practical unity. If brethren are to dwell together in unity, they must be receiving the ointment from the Head, the refreshing showers from the true Hermon. They must live in the very presence of Christ, so that all their points and angles may be molded off, all their selfishness judged and subdued, all their own peculiar notions, set aside, all their cues and crotchets flung to the winds. Thus there will be largeness of heart, breadth of mind, and depth of sympathy. Thus we shall learn to bear and forbear. It will not then be loving those who think with us as to some pet theory or other. It will be loving and embracing all who "love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

The blessed Head loves all His members; and if we are drinking into His Spirit, if we are learning of Him, we shall love all likewise. No doubt, those who keep His commandments enjoy His special love - the love of complacency - and so we cannot but specially love those in whom we trace most of His blessed Spirit. But this is a totally different thing. from loving people because they adopt our

line of, truth, or our peculiar views. It is Christ, and not self; and this is what we want, if we are to "dwell together in unity."

Look at that charming picture presented in Philippians 2. There truly we see, first of all, the divine Head Himself, and from Him the ointment descending to the skirts of His garments. Where did Paul get the grace to enable him to be ready to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice of his brethren? What was it that made Timothy care for other people? What led Epaphroditus to put his life in his hand to simply his brethren's lack? What is the one grand answer to all these questions? Simply this: these beloved servants of Christ lived so in their Master's presence and drank so deeply into His Spirit, they dwelt so near the Man in the glory, that the fragrant ointment and the refreshing dew fell upon their souls abundantly and made them channels of blessing to others.

This, beloved Christian reader, be assured of it, is the grand secret of getting on together. If brethren are to dwell together in unity, they must have the "ointment" and the "dew" dropping continually upon them. They must live close to Christ and be occupied with Him, so that they may show forth His virtues, and reflect His blessed image.

And then, what joy to be enabled in any little measure to refresh the heart of God! He delights to see His children walking in love. It is He who says, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Surely this ought to stir our hearts to seek in every possible way to promote this lovely unity. It should lead us to sink self and all its belongings, to surrender everything that might tend in any measure to alienate our hearts from one another. The Holy Ghost exhorts us to "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Let us remember this. It is the unity of the Spirit, not the unity of the body, we are to keep in the uniting bond of peace. This will cost us something. The word endeavoring" shows that it cannot be done without sacrifice. But the One who so graciously exhorts us to service will ever supply the needed grace. The ointment and the dew will flow down from Him in refreshing power, knitting our hearts together in holy love, and enabling us to deny ourselves, and surrender everything).which might tend to hinder that true unity which we are imperatively called upon to maintain.

Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon: Contrasted

The soul is much instructed by the different purposes of the Spirit of God in Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. Placed together in the progress of the oracles of God, they may naturally be looked at together. One penman also, under the divine Author, was employed in both; they will, however, be found to convey to our souls very different, though consistent, lessons.

In Ecclesiastes we are taught that he that drinks of these waters shall thirst again; in the Song we learn that he that drinks of the water that Christ gives shall never thirst. See John 4:13, 14.

In Ecclesiastes the soul is presented as having full capacity to try everything "under the sun." Solomon had been reared as such a one. What could any man do which he could not do? What within range of human attainments was beyond him? He could say, and it was not a vain boast, "What can the man do that cometh after the king?" Eccles. 2:12. And the only answer was, "Even that which hath been already done."

No one had, or could have, at his command more extended resources than Solomon, because God had so exalted and appointed him. He commanded wealth, and honors, and pleasures, and learning. He could wield the instruments and traffic in the markets of all human, natural, earthly, and carnal attainments and treasures without stint and difficulty. He tried them to the full; he tried them in all their variety, as he eloquently tells us in his Ecclesiastes. He found, however, that they would not do. They left his heart a parched ground and wilderness still. Instead of raising music there, it was all and only "vexation of spirit" that was felt, and "vanity" that was uttered over it all. He that drank those waters thirsted still.

In the Song of Solomon the soul is affected altogether differently. It is in a different attitude and with a different experience. It has but one object, but that one is enough. It is satisfied, and never for a moment thinks of looking for a second object. It has "the beloved" and cares for nothing else.

The soul here, it is true, has its griefs as well as in Ecclesiastes. But it is a grief of an entirely different character. Here it sighs over its want of capacity to enjoy its object fully; there, as we saw, it sighed over the insufficiency of its object. "Draw me, we will run after thee," is the ardent language of the heart here. It seeks for nothing but Jesus, but laments that it is not nearer to Him, more intimate with Him, more fully and altogether with Him. "I sleep; but my heart waketh" tells us in like measure that want of power in wakefulness is felt, but no want of an object, as indeed the sequel of that fervent breathing discloses; for when that drowsy soul is questioned about its object, it recounts His beauties from head to foot, and thinks not for a moment of searching for another (chap. 5:9, 16).

Such is the experience in the Song of Solomon, and such the character of the grief of the heart. It is conscious want of capacity to do justice to the object presented, to answer its worth worthily; it is a grief that deeply honors and, I may say, hallows it. We want a little more of this in ourselves. We want to find in Jesus a full and satisfying object, a corrective for the wanderings of the heart which, till it fixes rightly on Him, will in the spirit of Ecclesiastes go about and still say, "Who will show us

any good?"

The building of palaces, the planting of vineyards, the getting of singing men and singing women and musical instruments of all sorts, the multiplying of the children of men, all the trammels of the heart should end at the discovery of Jesus. Thus will the grief of the soul change. Then, as in the Canticles, it will be sorrow over our want of capacity in ourselves to enjoy what we have reached, though with the blessed assurance that there is no defect or insufficiency in our portion itself.

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." John 4:13, 14.

Some Words of Encouragement and Warning: From Joshua 23

When the outward props of divine order in the assembly are taken from us, and those who were to the front in the fight are no more, everything is apparently gone; but in reality, to faith there is no lack. "The LORD your God," said Joshua, "He it is that fighteth for you" (v. 10). Leaders may depart, and it is a blessed thing to consider the end of their conversation; but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Yes, nothing is lacking where there is faith; and where it is wanting, everything decays, as happened with Israel and the Church.

Henceforth, if the people were to maintain themselves at the height of their privileges, they must realize in their own souls, and in their entire lives, that power of the Spirit which led them on to victory in the person of Joshua. "Be strong and of a good courage," He had said to Joshua in chapter 1:6, "for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them." There lay the power for victory, and now Joshua says to the people, "Be ye therefore very courageous" (v. 6). This is realization in the soul.

Now how will this spiritual strength show itself in the people? In obedience to the written word "to keep"-and this is inseparable from practice-"and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses." To obey thus, the people had not only the power of God's Spirit with them, but they had before their eyes a man, Joshua, on whom the same things had been enjoined, who had followed to the end in the pathway of obedience, and who could say with Paul, "I have kept the faith." But we, dear readers, have before us the true Joshua, the perfect model, the author and finisher of faith.

Notice, too, how Joshua, like Paul, has a full sense of the changes which his departure would bring about. It would be the introduction of a new order of things. Decline would surely set in, as they both knew, but like a thread through a labyrinth, an infallible guide, they commend the Word of God: "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace" (Acts 20:32).

Ah! it is the Word which is able to build us up, and to give us an inheritance, but above all to sanctify us. It was from neglect of it that Israel sank by degrees to the level of the idolatrous nations and their abominations. See in verse 7 how imperceptible, and at the same time slippery, is the downward path; first they come among these nations, forgetful of separation from the world; then they make mention of the name of their gods; we become familiarized with the ruling principles of the world; then we cause to swear by them; it seems natural that others should acknowledge them; then we serve them, and finally bow down ourselves to them; a downward path truly!

But there are other means of retaining their blessings besides obedience to the Word; and to these Joshua directs their attention. The second is cleaving to the Lord (v. 8); the heart and affections must be set on the Person of Christ. Do you often think, beloved, of that verse in Psalm 63?-"My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me." Do we not feel-there is a heart which has given itself wholly to the Lord, and is able to tell Him so? for these are not experiences which

one would display before the world. It is a soul captivated by the beauty of its object, entirely surrendered to Christ, and discovering a power in Him to lift it above every difficulty, and preserve it from all danger. "Thy right hand upholdeth me." It is the same in our chapter (vv. 9, 10); in cleaving to Him, the people experience the strength of Jehovah. Oh! may we in our troublous days realize more of this close cleaving of soul to Christ; may we have hearts that seek and desire naught save Himself, which do not make a show before the world of our feelings or of our consecration to God, who do not say, "I am rich... and have need of nothing," but who say to Christ, in the silence of His own presence, and in accents which His ear alone can hear; "I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me, and also on account of Thy matchless beauty; O inimitable Pattern, some traits of whom, however feeble, I would fain reproduce! My soul followeth hard after Thee."

Third, we find vigilance. "Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God." v. 11. We have to be watchful over our hearts, so as not to tolerate the oftentimes subtle entrance of lusts which weaken our affections for the Lord, and by means of which He is replaced by objects unworthy of being compared to Him, and which oblige Him to judge us. (2 Tim. 2:16-22). "Flee also youthful lusts," says the Apostle. "Be ye... sober, and watch."

Esteeming Others Better Than Ourselves

When a soul that is in any measure spiritual, thinks of himself, what he feels is his immense falling short of Christ. He has habitually before him how greatly he fails, even of that which he desires in his ways before God. But when he looks at his brother-Christian, let him be the feeblest possible, and sees him as a beloved one of Christ, in full acceptance in, and the object of, the Father's tender affections, this draws out both love and self-loathing!

Thus, if grace be at work, what is Christ like in another saint rises at once before the heart, and what is unlike Christ in himself. So it is not a question of striving to cultivate high feelings about one's neighbors, and to think them what they are not, but really believing what is true about them, and feeling rightly about ourselves too. If one thinks of what a saint is in Christ and to Christ, and what he will be through Christ, then one's heart takes in the wonder of his love, and how much the Lord makes of him; but when the eye is turned to oneself, all the unworthy ways and feelings and shortcomings come up in humiliating remembrance.

Even Christ Pleased Not Himself

If you have Christ at all, you have Christ not only for atonement, but as your life. He that believes on the Son has everlasting life; and the everlasting life is Christ, just as truly as by being born into the world from Adam I have got an old natural life that loves evil, and which, as it grows in strength, grows in capacity for self-will. Even so, if I believe in Christ, there is this new life produced, which is developed in proportion as Christ is fed upon and looked to, and as Christ's words and ways are pondered over by the soul.

There is an assimilating power communicated thus to the believer by the Holy Ghost. The words of our Lord are spirit and life. It is not only that they produce life in the first instance, but they sustain the life, and are the means of its vigor. And this is what the Apostle Peter shows us (1 Pet. 1 and 2). He speaks of the incorruptible seed, the Word of God which lives and abides forever. But then he shows that the same Word of God which is the means of first imparting the life through the revelation of Christ, is also the provision for strengthening and refreshing it. Therefore he exhorts them that, as newborn babes, they should desire the sincere milk of the Word. The Word of God which is first used to introduce the life into the soul, through the making known of Christ, is that which now keeps up the life, draws it out, brings it into healthful exercise. And here is one way - "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." This was what Christ was doing when He was here below. He did not please Himself. He never chose the path of ease; but, on the contrary, every case of wretchedness and sin and sorrow was what occupied the Lord Jesus, provided it were the will of God.

When He took His place as man on earth, there was the continual exercise of communion between the Lord Jesus and His Father, the spirit of dependence upon the living God that never acted without His Father's direction. And so it should be with our souls. If we are thus laying ourselves out to bear one another's burdens, we need to wait upon God about it to know what the will of the Lord is. It is not the law, nor ordinances, but "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Faith

There is always strength in looking to God; but if the mind rests upon the weakness otherwise than to cast it upon God, it becomes unbelief. Difficulties may arise; God may allow many things to come in to prove our weakness; but the simple path of faith is to go on, not looking beforehand at what we have to do, but reckoning upon the help that we shall need and find when the time arrives.

It was no matter to David whether it was the lion, the bear, or Goliath; it was all one to him, for in himself he was as weak in the presence of one as in that of the other; but he went on quietly doing his duty, taking it for granted that God would be with him. This is faith.

The Faith of Rahab: Extract From a Letter

A report reached Jericho-all heard it. But Rahab believed the report. (Read Joshua 2 and 6, and Heb. 11:31.) She mixed it with faith. She had no more evidence of its truth than other people, yet she believed. There is power in God's Word. It should be believed because it is His Word. There is no one who does not act on the belief of man's word. If we were sitting in a train and an official came to the door and cried out, "This car is not going on; you had better change," we would all instantly get off. No one would think of saying, "He did not address me; I shall sit here until he speaks directly to me." Thus it is with the report of the gospel. It tells us that the train of self righteousness, of ordinances, ceremonies, or prayers does not go to heaven. It tells us to change to God's righteousness, which is by faith of Jesus Christ.

Rahab believed and was saved. The fruit of her faith is seen in her hiding the two men. Her house became the only safe spot in all the doomed city. There was perfect security for all in that house, under the shelter of "the scarlet line." All within that house were as safe as if they were already in the midst of Israel's victorious hosts, although the house was "upon the town wall" - the very thing that was first to come down. Rahab occupied herself in seeking to get as many as she could under the shelter of the "true token." People might say, "How can you promise me security? How can a scarlet line save a man? Would not a white flag do better? Ought we not to send a messenger to Israel to say we will become tributary?" No; come in! come in! There is safety here, and nowhere else. All beneath the scarlet line are as safe as God can make them. If anyone were outside the door of that house, no power could save him. But all within were perfectly safe. They were not hoping to be safe, or praying to be saved. They were not half or almost saved. They were saved. "Our life for yours" had settled all! and the "true token" gave perfect peace to the heart.

Fulfillment of Details: the Test of Prophecy

A man may pretend to know the future, and by mere coincidence some of his predictions might come to pass. If he knows the climate in a given part of the country, he may prophesy that it will rain on a certain day, and it might happen. Or he may say that someday you will meet a man who has a black mustache, and very likely you will. But should this pretender add some details, as for instance, saying that the rain will start at 2 o'clock and stop at 2:25, or that you will meet that man in a certain city, and specify the date, hour, and the place, there is less chance of its coming to pass. The more detail he adds, the sooner his fraud will be discovered.

But when God speaks of the future, it is as certain of fulfillment in all its details as though it were recorded history; and every detail given but enhances the beauty of the prophecy and displays the divine wisdom of Him who gave it.

The Old Testament abounds with prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ, and the very multiplicity of details concerning Him and His coming leave an "honest and good heart" no room for anything but admiration and praise. Let us consider

Some of the Details

The first mention of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into this sin-stricken world is found in Genesis 3. As soon as sin came in, God made known His purposes concerning the conqueror of Satan in these words to the serpent: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Here the coming One is called the "seed" of the woman. That He would come into the world as a babe is further told in Isa. 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The rest of the verse makes it plain that it refers to the Messiah.

Another point is brought forward in Isa. 7:14: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." He was to be born of a virgin.

Next we may trace the line through whom He was to come. It was said to Abraham in Gen. 22:18, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." This is the starting point from which to trace the line through whom Messiah must come.

Abraham had Ishmael as well as Isaac, but here again the Word of God is explicit: "As for Ishmael,... I will make him a great nation. But My covenant will I establish with Isaac" (Gen. 17:20, 21).

Isaac then had two sons- Jacob and Esau. Numb. 24:17 will settle it as to which of them shall be in the line: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel."

And when Jacob blessed his sons, he indicated through which one of the twelve sons the Messiah was to come: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people[s] be." Gen. 49:10.

The line being traced through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah, we shall next see what family in Judah is mentioned: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." Isa. 11:1.

Jesse had many sons, but Isa. 9:7 tells us, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David." And, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." Jer. 23:5.

He was to come into the world as a babe, and be born of a virgin, be the woman's seed, and come through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Jesse, and David.

Next let us notice the prophecy as to where He was to be born: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Mic. 5:2. He must be born in Bethlehem and in "Bethlehem Ephratah," in Judah - not the Bethlehem in Zebulun.

"Daniel the prophet" tells us when the Messiah was to

appear. We shall not go into the notable prophecy of Daniel 9 further than to state that there was to be a time when the Messiah was to appear, and the point of time from which calculations were to be made was definite and precise: "The going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem," which is found in Dan. 9:25. Those who have computed the years marvel at the accuracy with which it was fulfilled, some saying that it was to the very day of His presentation to Israel; and no doubt it was fulfilled exactly.

Then we have the character of His ministry foretold: "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." Isa. 61:1, 2. "The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding." Isa. 11:2.

He would feed the poor with bread according to Psalm 132:15, and open the eyes of the blind according to Psalm 146:8. The man who had his eyes opened in John 9 said, "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind." This was a special miracle reserved for the Messiah. God had acted through prophets in the Old Testament to cure lepers and raise the dead, but of none do we read that they opened the eyes of a blind man.

When John the Baptist became discouraged when he was in prison, he sent some of his disciples to the Lord with a question. The answer they returned from Him was, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Matt. 11:4, 5. Such was the testimony of the Lord's ministry; He Himself could say, "The same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." John 5:36.

But when the Blessed One came, according to the prophecies, He was not received, but despised and rejected. This also was foretold in the Old Testament: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was

despised, and we esteemed Him not." Isa. 53:3. And "To Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom the nation abhorreth" (Isa. 49:7).

Not only was He going to be despised, but actually "cut off" - to die. This is plainly stated in Dan. 9:26; after the presentation of Messiah to Israel at the appointed time "shall Messiah be cut off." So His rejection and death were as definitely foretold as His coming.

Isa. 53:8 even lets us know what would precede His being "cut off." "He was taken from prison and from judgment"; or, as given in Acts 8, where the Septuagint translation is quoted, "In His humiliation. His judgment was taken away." In other words, He was to be given a trial, but an unfair one where judgment would be wrested and the innocent One be condemned to death.

Other details of His sufferings from men are recorded thus: "They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek" (Mic. 5:1).

All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him." Psalm 22:7, 8.

"They pierced My hands and My feet" (Psalm 22:16).

"And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10).

"They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture." Psalm 22:18.

Judas, one of His disciples, was to betray Him. "Yea, Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of My bread, bath lifted up his heel against Me." Psalm 41:9.

"I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." Psalm 69:20, 21.

Scriptures could be multiplied that foretold of His rejection and the manner of it, but these are sufficient to show some of the details that God gave many centuries before His coming.

The first scripture we referred to (Gen. 3:15) indicates a conflict with Satan; this we know took place, first in the wilderness at the beginning of His ministry, and then again at the close.

That He would die for the sins of others was also foretold in Isa. 53:5: "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

Psalm 22 begins with those awful words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" David wrote the psalm as a prophet, but he was never forsaken of God, nor were his hands and his feet pierced; it is plainly evident that this psalm could refer to no other than Jesus, our Lord. The first words of the psalm are the words used by the Lord Jesus in that cry of abandonment, when He, the holy One, was made sin, and was forsaken of God.

No doubt it was the intent of those who crucified Him between two thieves to bury Him in like manner; but the prophetic utterance was, "And men appointed His grave with the wicked, but He was with the rich in His death" (Isa. 53:9; J.N.D. Trans.), and it had to be fulfilled. So we read of Joseph of Arimathea - a rich man - lovingly giving Him a rich man's burial.

But was He to stay in the tomb? was death to hold Him? No indeed, for the Scriptures said, "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell [sheol]; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." Psalm 16:10. "I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto Me, and heard My cry. He brought Me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set My feet upon a rock, and established My goings. And He hath put a new song in My mouth, even praise unto our [in resurrection victory He associates others with Himself] God." Psalm 40:1-3.

Now, reader, we have but very briefly touched upon the manifold details given centuries before the coming of Christ, which foretold His birth, of whom He was to be born, where and when, His ministry, His reception (or rather rejection), His cutting off, His mock trial, His sufferings (both from man, and for man), His burial, and His resurrection. All these prophetic details, and many more, were precisely fulfilled.

One thing we did not mention was that in many of the scriptures quoted His deity was carefully guarded and maintained-yes, He was and is "God blessed forever," "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Mic. 5:2). "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

What a treasure we have in the Bible-the Word of God! May this brief review open our eyes to see more of its beauty, its perfection, and its divine authorship, so that we shall praise Him from whom all blessings flow.

Satan Get Thee Behind Me: Blessed Art Thou, Simon

The two parts of this title stand out in sharpest contrast with each other, even though they were spoken to the same man by the same Speaker - the Lord Jesus Christ - and are found only six verses apart in the 16th chapter of Matthew.

Simon Peter was pronounced "blessed" after he had given expression to the wondrous truth concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus. The world at large and even the privileged Jewish people did not understand who He was. "He was in the world,... and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." But there was a little band attached to Him - attracted to His Person - although even to them it was only by revelation from the Father that they could see who the glorious One was.

The crowd had speculated as to who He was - a Jeremiah, Elijah, John the Baptist, or one of the prophets. When the Lord asked His disciples who He was, Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," whereupon the Lord calls him "blessed," for he was privileged to receive that revelation from the Father.

Happy Peter! happy disciples! to be able by faith to see in the lowly Jesus, the Christ - God's Anointed - the Son of the living God (v. 16).

O that our hearts may take in more of His beauty, His glory! He will fill the range of our enlarged vision in heaven; may He become increasingly precious to us here - here where He is still despised, and where men restrict His glory to that of a mere man - "one of the prophets."

When we come to the 21st verse, the Lord "began... to show unto His disciples,... that He must... suffer many things... and be killed." This was indeed a blow to them; they saw in Him God's Son and God's King, but were slow to take in His sufferings and death. They looked for Him to take the kingdom and reign, but instead He must first suffer. The sufferings must precede the glory; the cross must come before the crown. It was natural for them to shrink from rejection and suffering for their Lord and Master, for if He was to be rejected and suffer in this world, they must receive the same - "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord."

Such thoughts provoke Peter to dare to rebuke the Lord and to say, as in one translation, "be favorable to Thee, Lord, this shall in no wise be unto Thee" (v. 22). Blessed Lord! He knew the source of such thoughts; Satan had come to Him before, in the wilderness, to turn Him out of the pathway of dependence and obedience as a man; now he was using a chief Apostle to urge the Lord to shun the path of reproach and suffering. The Lord instantly recognized in Peter's words another effort of Satan, and promptly said to Peter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offense unto Me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." v. 23.

Poor Peter - only shortly -before he was called "blessed"; now he is rebuked as being the instrument in the hands of Satan. Once the receiver of divine revelation as to the Son, he now is the mouthpiece of the enemy. But such is man; he is not to be trusted. It is natural to the human

heart to shrink from reproach and suffering, and also to seek honor in and from this world. How easily Peter's mind was on the things that are of men.

And we, who have greater light than Peter had at that time, are so easily influenced by the things that are of men that we shrink from a little reproach for Christ, and seek some of this world's honor or favor. Sometimes we sing:

"Farewell, farewell, poor faithless world,

With all thy boasted store;

We'd not have joy where He had woe-

Be rich where He was poor."

And how easily we drop back from the expressions of our lips!

Sometimes we may be like Peter, when he enjoyed divine revelation, and rejoice in Christ Jesus our Lord; and at other times we may be engrossed with the things "that be of men."

Sadder yet!-we may speak of the glories of the Son of God and encourage others at one time, and at another, if not in the current of God's thoughts, give advice to fellow followers of a rejected Christ that will be the advice of Satan himself. How easily we are influenced by the "things... that be of men," and may be, by act or word, the instrument of evil persuading some young Christian (or older one either) to seek worldly gain, position, honor, or some of the applause of the very world that Christ died to, and died to deliver us from. May we be more careful in our thinking, that it may not be of this world's philosophy - "the things... that be of men" - and may we be on our guard against giving the advice of Satan to a follower of a rejected Christ.

On the other side of this point: may we be careful about receiving such advice. May "the things that be of God" so influence our thinking, that when we receive advice to seek the world's advancement, popularity, wealth, station, or such like, we may discern the voice of the enemy. This should not be construed to mean that an employee may not accept a better position in his work, but even in doing that he should first seek the Lord's guidance and weigh the consequences. One may well ask himself if he can carry out the duties of the better position heartily as to the Lord - whether there would be certain demands which he could not meet with a good conscience. The higher we get in the world, the closer we get to the prince of it. Many who went on happily with the Lord when in humbler stations, have been caught in the world's vortex, when in higher places, to the Lord's dishonor and their loss. We are responsible for our conduct, and must watch against the influence of the world, even though it may come from the lips of one who at another time may have thrilled our hearts as he spoke of heavenly things and the glories of the Son of God.

The Lord follows His word to Peter with a word to all the disciples: "Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." vv. 24, 25.

Gideon's Sevenfold Qualification for Service

Judges 6

The book of Judges has an especial claim upon our attention, for it is the record of Israel's failure in the land. God had brought them out of Egypt with a high hand and an outstretched arm, had brought them through the Red Sea, while He smote Pharaoh and his host and caused them to sink "as lead in the mighty waters." And He led them onward still, through the waste howling wilderness, accomplishing the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and set them in possession, under the leadership of Joshua, of the promised inheritance. They were now across the Jordan, the river of death and judgment; God had rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off them at Gilgal (Josh. 5:9); and as long as they walked in obedience and dependence, no foe could stand before their face. But man invariably fails when entrusted with blessing under responsibility, even under the most favorable circumstances; and Israel was no exception to - nay, was a most striking exemplification of - the rule.

No sooner was Israel's blessing at the flood tide mark than it began to ebb. It is true that they are said to have "served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua" (Judg. 2:7); but it is immediately added that "there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim," etc. (vv. 10, 11.) The consequence was that "the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel," but "nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of them that spoiled them" (vv. 14-16). Here indeed we have the two aspects of the whole book - Israel's failure, and the Lord's faithfulness. And out of God's faithfulness sprang His intervening grace, giving His people a little restoration and reviving in the midst of their departure, corruption, and bondage. The correspondence between this state of things and the present state of the Church will be apparent to all, and hence I propose to call attention to one of the most signal instances of God's intervention - I mean His raising up Gideon to be a judge and deliverer to His people. The object before my mind in taking this instance is, that we may learn, as the Lord may enable us, what are the qualifications which God seeks (and surely also they are of His own providing) in those whom He can use for service and testimony among His people.

The sixth chapter commences: "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years." (Read verses 1-6.) Midian was near of kin to Israel, having descended from Abraham through Keturah, his second wife; and again and again they are brought into contact with the chosen people. In the wilderness "the LORD spake unto Moses" (and Moses had married Zipporah, daughter of the priest of Midian), "saying, Vex the Midianites, and smite them: for they vex you with their wiles." (Numb. 25:16-18; 31:1-12.) But now they are in the land itself, though they had never followed the ark across the Jordan; "and Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites." How solemn the warning! But Israel cried unto the LORD, and it came to pass when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of

the Midianites, that the LORD sent a prophet." vv. 6-8. First, the Lord sent a prophet to bring their sin home to their conscience, and then He sent an angel to raise up a deliverer; and He finds Gideon threshing wheat by the winepress to hide it from the Midianites." v. 11.

1) We may name this first qualification - Feeding on Christ in secret. For wheat is surely a figure of Christ. (See John 12:24; 6:35.) It was a time of great difficulty; idols had usurped the place of Jehovah, so that those who remained faithful in the midst of the general ruin could only worship the Lord alone and in private. So it was with Gideon; Baal had an altar in his father's house; but this "mighty man of valor" threshed wheat alone that he might find sustenance, notwithstanding the watchful eye of the Midianites. Alone in his family, and alone in threshing wheat, he gathered strength from communion with the Lord.

And, beloved friends, may we not say that feeding on Christ in secret is the fountainhead of all qualification for the Lord's service? Thus it was that Joseph was sent into exile and a prison; that Moses was sent for forty years into the desert; Paul into Arabia, etc. For it is when we are alone with Christ that we learn both what we ourselves are (that in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing), and, blessed be His name, what He Himself is, in the infinite fullness of His grace and sufficiency; and the Lord can never use us as standard-bearers, until both of these lessons have been learned. More than this; not only do we thus apprehend (after we have come to the end of ourselves) the all-sufficiency of Christ for every need, but we learn also something of His unspeakable preciousness and beauty, so that we can go out afterward in His service with satisfied hearts, as well as with confidence in His infinite resources. To feed on Christ in secret is indeed the present and abiding need of all our souls.

2) The next qualification is evidently an exercised heart. "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." vv. 12, 13. These words show that Gideon identified himself with the condition of his people; for he says, "Why... is all this befallen us?" etc.; and that, entering into their state, he bore it on his heart before the Lord. And without this he had not been qualified to be their helper. It was so with Nehemiah (see chap. I); with Daniel (see especially chapter 9); and preeminently was it the case with our blessed Lord. Take an instance or two. They brought Him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and we are told that before He healed him, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said unto him, "Ephphatha, that is, Be opened" (Mark 7:32-35). Again too, before He raised Lazarus from the dead, we have the marvelous record that He wept; and that "groaning in Himself" He came to the grave - signs surely of His entering into and taking (if we may so speak) upon His spirit the condition of those to whose succor He had come - that in sympathy and grace He so identified Himself with them that He became the voice of their sorrow and grief; for "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8:17). The cross is of course the highest expression of His entering into our state; for on it He "bare our sins in His own body" (1 Pet. 2:24). The principle remains; for our power to succor others will be (not forgetting our entire dependence on the Lord) just in proportion as we have been able to enter into and to make their sorrows or difficulties our own.

It might be well to remember this in our desire to bring saints into their true place. The Lord will use us if we are qualified for it; but to be qualified for it, we must have felt deeply the character of the evil in which they are entangled, and have mourned over it before the Lord. Hence, in the case before us, no sooner does Gideon unburden his exercised heart than "the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" v. 14.

3) We now get another very important qualification - a sense of his own nothingness. He replies, "O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." v. 15. His exercises had thus not been without blessing, for he was now in the place where God's power could come upon and use him. It was so with the Apostle Paul after the exercises of heart produced by the thorn in the flesh; he was then brought face to face with his own utter impotence and want of natural adaptation for the Lord's service; and then the Lord could say to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. 12). And all the Lord's servants must learn this lesson sooner or later - that there is nothing in themselves, in their position, or in their circumstances, which can be used for God; that, in a word, the whole of their resources and strength lie outside of themselves, in Himself; that their sufficiency is of God (2 Cor. 3:5). It is then no longer a question of what the Midianites are, but what God is; for we go to meet them in His strength. Accordingly, the Lord now said to Gideon, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man" (v. 16).

4) Thereupon Gideon becomes bolder, and asks a sign that the Lord talked with him - prepares a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour, and bringing them, placed his offering, at the direction of the angel, upon the rock. "Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight." By this Gideon is made to know that he had seen an angel of the Lord face to face, and he is filled with fear. But "the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die." And thus he obtains from the Lord a further qualification for service; that is, a soul at liberty - in peace before God. God had revealed Himself to His servant, and the effect was terror; but the terror passed away before the peace-speaking word of Jehovah.

We need not enlarge upon this feature, as it is the history of every soul that is brought into the presence of God (see Isa. 6; Job 42; Luke 5, etc.). And everyone will understand that there cannot be any true or effectual service for the Lord while the soul is occupied with its own condition, until indeed it is set free, and is at home in God's presence. Thus, when the Lord Jesus came into the midst of His disciples, after the resurrection, He said, "Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." John 20:19-21. Here we have a direct connection between peace and service.

5) The immediate consequence in Gideon's case was- and this gives us a further qualification - that he became a worshiper. "Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom" (v. 24). That is, he worships God in the character in which He had revealed Himself-as Jehovah who had spoken peace to his soul. The sequence is very instructive. First peace, then worship; and the lesson is, that only those who have peace with God through our Lord

Jesus Christ can worship. What a commentary upon the "public worship" of our land!

But now we direct attention to this - that the true servant must first be a worshiper; for, indeed, to go out in service before we are worshipers, is to go out in ignorance of the character of Him we profess to serve; to misrepresent our Lord, and to expose ourselves to certain defeat. Let us then be careful to maintain the divine order.

6) Now the Lord calls upon Gideon to act, but he must first begin at home. "And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father bath, and cut down the grove that is by it: and build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down. Then Gideon took ten men," etc. vv. 25-27. Here we get obedience. Gideon was associated with evil in his father's house; and, as another has said, "Faithfulness within precedes outward strength; evil must be put away from Israel before the enemy can be driven out. Obedience first, and then strength this is God's order."

We have an illustration of this truth in the gospels. After the Lord Jesus had cast out the demon from the lad, the "disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." Mark 9:28, 29. So with Gideon; until he had dethroned the idol in his father's house, he could not be sent to smite the Midianites. There is ample ground in this direction, beloved friends, for heart searchings with us all. How often, when we have mourned over want of power in the Lord's service, might we have traced the cause to some lack of obedience, of self-judgment, of separation, of faithfulness! We were weak because we had not first dealt with some idol of our hearts or households. Satan is helpless in the presence of an obedient man; he cannot touch such a one, for he is armed with a coat of mail which not one of his fiery darts can ever penetrate. It was thus that the Lord Jesus vanquished him in the desert. The reply, "It is written," foiled him in every attack. And here too was Gideon's strength, for no sooner had he received the command than he "took ten men," and "did as the LORD had said unto him" (v. 27); and in obedience he overcame, and purged his father's house. And the subsequent anger of Baal's followers did but expose their own weakness, and the impotence of their god. The devil resisted in obedience is the devil vanquished.

7) Gideon is now a vessel sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and we get accordingly the crowning qualification of power. It is very instructive to note the course of the record. The vessel is now prepared for service; and immediately we are told, "Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them." vv. 33-35. Satan can never forestall God. While Gideon is being prepared, the Midianites, etc. are still; when Gideon is ready, God gathers them together for destruction. They marshal their forces to destroy Israel; but the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Gideon, and now it is God Himself against the Midianites. Ah, beloved, let us see to it that we never move forward against the foe excepting in the power of the Spirit of God.

Note another instruction. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet. This Gideon, who was threshing wheat to hide it from the Midianites, now puts a trumpet to his lips, and sounds forth defiance in the face of the foe. In like manner, the Peter who trembled before a servant maid, being clothed with power by the Spirit, charges home upon the rulers the sin of crucifying Christ. The Apostles also, being filled with the Holy Ghost, spoke the Word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).

We have now traced the qualifications of this "mighty man of valor" for testimony and service. He is now equipped, ready for the conflict. There will be weaknesses and failures, doubtless; but still he is one whom the Lord can now employ. May God grant that the sevenfold qualification of Gideon may be found in all who are engaged in His service and testimony in these closing days!

The Glory of God: Displayed in the Gospel

There will be a scene of glories when the KINGDOM comes. We commonly speak of "glory" as if it stood in that connection only. But this is wrong. Glory then will be displayed, it is true; glory will then be in the circumstances of the scene. But a much more wonderful form of glory is known already and that is, in the gospel. There God Himself is displayed a more wondrous object than all circumstances. The glory of the gospel is moral, I grant, not material or circumstantial. But it is glory of the profoundest character. There again, I say, God Himself is displayed. The just God and yet the Savior is seen there. Righteousness and peace shine there in each other's company - a result which none but God Himself, and in the way of the cross, could ever have reached.

The gospel calls on sinners to breathe the atmosphere, as I may say, of salvation, to have communion with God in love, and to maintain it in liberty and assurance - and there is a glory in such thoughts and truths as these which indeed excelleth.

Satan interfered or meddled with the work of God, and ruined it in its creature-condition. God at once interfered or meddled with Satan's work, and eternally overthrew it, bringing meat out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong.

Arise, Go up to Bethel: Down to Shechem

Genesis 35

The words which stand at the head of this paper contain in them a great practical truth to which we desire to call the reader's attention for a moment or two.

It has been well remarked by some one that "God, in His dealings with us, always keeps us up to the original terms." This is true, but some may not exactly understand it. It may, perhaps, savor of the legal element. To speak of God as keeping us up to certain terms may seem to militate against that free grace in which we stand and which has reigned through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Many, we are aware, have a kind of horror of everything bordering in the most remote way upon the legal system; and we may say, we most fully sympathize with such horror. But, at the same time, we must take care not to carry that feeling to such an extent as would lead us to throw overboard anything that is calculated to act, in a divine way, upon the heart and conscience of the believer. We really want practical truth. There is a vast amount of what is called abstract truth in circulation among us, and we prize it, and would prize it more and more. We delight in the unfolding of truth in all its departments. But then we must remember that truth is designed to act on hearts and consciences, and that there are hearts and consciences to be acted upon. We must not cry out, "Legal! legal!" whenever some great practical truth falls upon our ears, even though that truth may come before us clothed in a garb which, at first sight, seems strange. We are called to "suffer the word of exhortation"-to listen to wholesome words - to apply our hearts diligently to everything tending to promote practical godliness and personal holiness. We know that the pure and precious doctrines of grace- those doctrines which find their living center in the Person of Christ, and their eternal foundation in His work- are the means which the Holy Ghost uses to promote holiness in the life of the Christian; but we know also that those doctrines may be held in theory, and professed with the lips, while the heart has never felt their power, and the life never exhibited their molding influence. Yes; and we frequently find that the loudest and most vehement outcry against everything that looks like legality is sure to proceed from those who, though they profess the doctrines of grace, have never felt their sanctifying influence; whereas, those who really understand the meaning of grace, and feel its power to mold and fashion, to purify and elevate, are ever ready to welcome the most pungent appeals to the heart and conscience.

Still, the pious reader may desire to know what is meant by the expression quoted above; namely, "God always keeps us up to the original terms." Well, we understand it to mean simply this, that when God calls us to any special position or path and we fall short of it or wander from it, He will recall us to it again and again. And further, when we set out in the profession of some special principle of action or standard of devotedness, and swerve from it or fall below it, He will remind us of it and bring us back to it. True, He bears with us patiently and waits on us graciously; but He "always keeps us up to the original terms."

And can we not praise Him for this? Assuredly we can. Could we endure the thought of His allowing us to fall short of His holy standard, or to wander hither and thither, without uttering a word to urge us on or call us back? We trust not. Well then, if He does speak, what must He say? He must just remind us of "the original terms." Thus it is, and thus it has ever been. When Peter was converted at the lake of Gennesaret, he forsook all and followed Jesus; and the last words that fell on his ear, from the lips of his ascending Lord, were, "Follow thou Me." This was simply keeping him to the original terms. The heart of Jesus could not be satisfied with less, and neither should the heart of His servant. By the lake of Gennesaret, Peter set out to follow Jesus. What then? Years rolled on; Peter had many a stumble; Peter denied his Lord; Peter went back to his boats and nets. What then? Peter was thoroughly restored; and, when as a restored soul he stood by the side of his loving Lord at the sea of Tiberias, he was called to listen to that one brief, pointed utterance, "Follow... Me"-an utterance embracing in its comprehensive grasp all the details of a life of active service and of patient suffering. In a word, Peter was brought back to the original terms-the terms between Christ and his soul, and between his soul and Christ. He was brought to learn that the heart of Jesus had undergone no change toward him-that the love of that heart was inextinguishable and unalterable -and because it was so, it could not tolerate any change in his heart-any decline or departure from the original terms.

Now we see the same thing precisely in the history of the patriarch Jacob. Let us just turn to it for a moment. At the close of Genesis 28 we have the record of the original terms between the Lord and Jacob. We shall quote at length.

"And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Here then we have the blessed statement of what the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob undertook to do for Jacob and for his seed - a statement crowned by these memorable words, "I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Such are the terms by which He binds Himself to Jacob, which terms, blessed be His name, have been and will be fulfilled to the letter, though earth and hell should interpose to prevent. Jacob's seed shall yet possess the whole land of Canaan as an everlasting inheritance; and who shall prevent Jehovah Elohim, the Lord God Almighty, from accomplishing His promise?

Let us now hearken to Jacob. "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil

upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-el.... And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, 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."

This much as to Beth-el and the terms entered into there. God pledged Himself to Jacob; and though heaven and earth should pass away, that pledge must be maintained in all its integrity. He revealed Himself to that poor, lonely one who lay sleeping on his stony pillow, and not only revealed Himself to him, but linked Himself with him in a bond which no power of earth or hell can ever dissolve.

And what of Jacob? Why, he dedicated himself to God and vowed that the spot where he had enjoyed such a revelation and hearkened to such exceeding great and precious promises, should be God's house. All this was deliberately uttered before the Lord and solemnly recorded by Him; and then Jacob went on his journey. Years passed - twenty long and eventful years - years of trial and exercise during which Jacob experienced many ups and downs, changes and chances; but the God of Beth-el watched over His poor servant and appeared to him in the midst of his pressure, and said to him, "I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." God had not forgotten the original terms; neither would He let His servant forget them. Is this legality? No; it is simply the exhibition of divine love and faithfulness. God loved Jacob, and He would not suffer him to stop short of the old standard. He jealously watched over the state of His servant's heart, and lest it should by any means remain below the Bethel mark, He gently reminds him by those touching and significant words, "I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me." This was the sweet expression of God's unchanging love, and of the fact that He counted on Jacob's remembrance of Bethel scenes.

How amazing that the High and Mighty One who inhabits eternity should so value the love and remembrance of a poor worm of the earth! Yet so it is, and we ought to bear it more in mind. Alas! we forget it. We are ready enough to take mercies and blessings from the hand of God, and most surely He is ready enough to bestow them. But then we ought to remember that He looks for the loving devotion of our hearts to Him; and if we, in the freshness and ardor of other days, set out to follow Christ, to live for Him, and give up all for Him, can we suppose for a moment that He could coldly and indifferently forego His claims upon our hearts' affections? Should we like Him to do so? Could we endure the thought of its being a matter of indifference to Him whether we loved Him or not? God forbid! Yea it should be the joy of our hearts to think that our blessed Lord really seeks the loving devotion of our souls to Him, and that He will not be satisfied without it - that when we wander hither and thither, He calls us back to Himself in His own gentle, gracious, touching way.

"When weary of His rich repast,

I've sought alas! to rove,

He has recalled His faithless guest,

And showed His banner, love."

Yes; His banner ever floats, bearing its own inscription upon it to win back our vagrant hearts, and remind us of the original terms. He says to us in one way or another, as He said to Jacob, "I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar." Thus He deals with us in the midst of all our wanderings, our haltings, and our stumblings. He makes us to know that as we cannot do without His love, so neither can He do without ours. It is truly wonderful, yet so it is. He will keep the soul up to the old terms. Harken to those touching appeals of the Spirit of Christ to His saints in other days, "Thou halt left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works" (Rev. 2:4, 5). "Call to remembrance the former days" (Heb. 10:32). "Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?" (Gal. 4:15).

What is all this but calling His people back to the old point from which they had declined? It may be said, They ought not to have needed this. No doubt; yet they did need it and, because they needed it, Jesus did it. It may be said, further, that tried love is better than first love. Granted; but do we not find, as a matter of fact, in our spiritual history, that upon our first setting out to follow Jesus, there is a simplicity, an earnestness, a freshness, fervor and depth of devotion which, from various reasons, we fail to keep up? We become cold and careless; the world gets in upon us and eats up our spirituality; nature gains the upper hand in one way or another and deadens our spiritual sensibility, dampens our ardor and dims our vision. Is the reader conscious of anything like this? If so, would it not be a peculiar mercy if, at this very moment, he were called back to the old terms? Doubtless! Well, then, let him be assured that the heart of Jesus is waiting and ready. His love is unchanging; and not only so, but He would remind you that He cannot be satisfied without a true response from you. Wherefore, beloved friend, whatever has drawn you away from the measure of your earliest dedication to Him, let your heart now spring up and get back at once to Him. Do not hesitate! Linger not! Cast yourself at the feet of your loving Lord, and let your heart be only for Him. This is the secret spring of all true service. If Christ has not the love of your heart, He does not want the labor of your hands. He does not say, "Son, give Me thy money, thy time, thy talents, thine energies, thy pen, thy tongue, thy head"; all these are utterly unavailing, perfectly unsatisfying to Him. What He says to you is, "My son, give Me thine heart." Where the heart is given to Jesus, all will come right. Out of the heart come all the issues of life, and if only Christ have His right place in the heart, the work and the ways, the walk and the character, will be all right.

But we must return to Jacob, and see further how our subject is illustrated in his fruitful history. At the close of Gen. 33 we find him settling down at Shechem, where he gets into all sorts of trouble and confusion. His house is dishonored, and his sons, in avenging the dishonor, endanger his life. All this Jacob feels keenly, and he says to his sons, Simeon and Levi, "Ye have troubled me... among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house." Gen. 34:30.

All this was most deplorable; but it does not appear to have once occurred to Jacob that he was in a wrong place. The defilement and confusion of Shechem failed to open his eyes to the fact that he was not up to the old terms. How often is this the case! We fall short of the divine standard in our practical ways; we fail in walking up to the height of the divine revelation; and although the varied fruits of our failure are produced on every side, yet our vision is so dimmed by the atmosphere around us, and our spiritual sensibilities so blunted by our associations, that we do not

discern how low we are and how very far short of the proper mark.

However, in Jacob's case, we see the divine principle again and again illustrated. "And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother." Gen. 35:1.

Reader, note this. We have here a most exquisite feature in the divine method of dealing with souls. There is not one word said about Shechem, its pollutions and its confusions. There is not a word of reproof for having settled down there. Such is not God's way. He employs a far more excellent mode. Had we been dealing with Jacob, we should have come down upon him with a heavy hand, and read him a severe lecture about his folly in settling at Shechem, and about his personal and domestic habits and condition. But oh! how well it is that God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways like ours! Instead of saying to Jacob, "Why have you settled down in Shechem?" He simply says, "Arise, go up to Bethel"; and the very sound of the word sent a flood of light into Jacob's soul, by which he was enabled to judge himself and his surroundings. "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went."

This was, assuredly, getting back to the original terms. It was the restoring of a soul and a leading in the paths of righteousness. Jacob felt that he could not bring false gods and defiled garments to Bethel; such things might pass at Shechem, but they would never do for Beth-el. "And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.... So Jacob came to Luz which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Beth-el, he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el; because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother."

"El-beth-el." Precious title which had God for its Alpha and its Omega! At Shechem, Jacob called his altar "El-Elohe-Israel," that is, "God the God of Israel"; but at Beth-el, the true standpoint, he called his altar "El-beth-el," that is, "God - the house of God." This was true restoration. Jacob was brought back, after all his wanderings, to the very point from which he had started. Nothing less than this could ever satisfy God in reference to His servant. He could wait patiently on him - bear with him - minister to him - care for him - look after him; but He could never rest satisfied with anything short of this: "Arise, go up to Beth-el."

Christian reader, pause here. We want to ask you a question. Are you conscious of having wandered from Jesus? Has your heart declined and grown cold? Have you lost the freshness and ardor which once marked the tone of your soul? Have you allowed the world to get in upon you? Have you, in the moral condition of your soul, got down into Shechem? Has your heart gone after idols, and have your garments become defiled? If so, let us remind you of this, that the Lord wants you back to Himself. Yes, beloved, that is what He wants, and He wants it now. He says to you, "Arise, go up to Beth-el." You will never be happy, you will never be right until you yield a full response to this blessed and soul-stirring call. O yield it now, we beseech you. Rise up, and fling aside every weight and every hindrance; put away the idols and change your garments and get back to the feet of your Lord, who loves you with a love which many waters cannot quench, neither

can the floods drown; and who cannot be satisfied until He has you with Himself according to the original terms. Say not this is legal; it is nothing of the sort. It is the love of Jesus - His deep, glowing, earnest love - love which is jealous of every rival affection - love which gives the whole heart, and must have a whole heart in return. May God the Holy Ghost bring back every wandering heart to the true standard! May He visit with fresh power every soul that has gone down to Shechem, and give no rest until a full response has been yielded to the call, "Arise, go up to Beth-el, AND DWELL THERE."

Go Ye Out to Meet Him: Behold the Bridegroom

The early Christians not only accepted the doctrine of the Lord's coming as truth, but it was to them such a reality that they "went forth to meet the bridegroom." The Lord's return was their hope. It produced desires after the Lord Himself. They looked for the Savior. It was to them the "blessed hope." They felt it to be an eminently practical doctrine. They waited for God's Son from heaven. This was manifesting the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God; and will not this always be the case when the truth is held in the love of it?

But one of the most flagrant sins in Christendom, which Scripture has marked out, is the "evil servant" saying "in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming." It is not openly denying the doctrine, and joining the infidel in scoffing, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? but, while professedly holding the doctrine, to so let slip the hope as to indulge in fleshly lusts and worldly associations, because in heart such believe He is not coming for some time yet. It must then be a deeply important matter that we make no mistake as to the true state of our hearts, that we are day by day so taken up with Christ Himself in heaven, as to desire to see His face; that His coming again is such a hope to our souls that we are practically acting like those who, having heard the midnight cry, are going out to meet Him.

There are at least three points which appear to us to be involved in going forth to meet the Bridegroom-desire, purpose, and activity.

DESIRE

The heart must be going up to Him whom having not seen we love. There must be the longing to see His face. This is something more than being in a sinless and happy place, more than having a crown of life and a harp of gold; it is even more than bridal attire, or the consciousness of being where there is no more sorrow or death; yes, it is seeing Him as He is-being forever with the Lord, like the Lord, and near the Lord. Being now taken up with the Lord Himself as the commanding and satisfying object of our souls, and hope of our hearts, it becomes easy to abstract our minds from other objects, and to detach ourselves from other associations in order to go forth to meet the Bridegroom.

This desire after Him, it seems to us, is more or less in every one who is born of God, though in some persons it is stifled or hindered by worldliness, carnality, and bad teaching. But the desire is there, for "We love Him, because He first loved us." Until we see His face, how can we be satisfied? How can the heart be perfectly at rest until we are before the object of its love? Then the climax of our souls' longing will be reached. The consummation of our desire will be realized. We shall wish for nothing more. Then we shall fully know the truth of our Savior's words which we now in part enjoy, "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." John 6:35. Unutterable blessedness! When we see His face it will be perfect satisfaction and fullness of joy. This will be when He comes. We shall be caught up to meet Him in the air. What a meeting! What glory we shall then enjoy! What love encircling us we shall then know! What

perfect delight to the longing, waiting soul!

PURPOSE

Nothing is more to be dreaded among Christians than a pointless, purposeless kind of life. We may be sure it is not an occasional desire, a spasmodic impulse, or a desultory activity, but the steady pursuit of purpose that will mark those who go forth to meet the Bridegroom. It will stamp the springs and motives of our ways. It will give a heavenly complexion to all we do. When a man goes to meet a bosom friend, he steadily pursues his journey till they meet. He looks out on the way for his friend, but nothing stops his course; through rough and smooth, hill and dale, he perseveringly pursues his way. The fixed purpose of his heart is that nothing shall stop him till he meets the one he has gone forth to meet. And so with us; when the Lord is before us as the bright and blessed Object which, by grace, has made everything else seem poor, how can we but pursue our heavenly course, seek to please Him, to honor Him, to suffer for His sake, and go forth to meet Him?

In pursuing such a course, there will be the denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts; there may be the loss of friends and things of this life; the tongue of slander may be used against us, or the finger of scorn pointed at us; but when there is true purpose of heart cleaving to the Lord, we shall be unmoved by these things; we shall lay aside every impediment and overcome every obstacle which may stand in the way of our going forth to meet Him. When the Lord Himself has His rightful place in our hearts, we cannot but willingly pursue our purpose at all costs.

ACTIVITY

The hope of our Lord's return is eminently practical. "Every man that bath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3:3. It cannot be otherwise. The moment it ceases to be practical, we have let slip the hope. It is the awakening, comforting, purifying, and separating hope which Scripture sets before us. The announcement, "Behold, the bridegroom," is God's power for awakening slumbering souls. "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." Those who have heard the cry have been aroused. Few comparatively, perhaps, as yet have heard it; and even most of those are scarcely more than half awake. But those who are deaf to the midnight cry are slumbering still. How simple, and yet how very solemn! Who then are truly awake? Those who have been roused by the hope of the Bridegroom's coming, and have gone forth with trimmed lamps to meet Him. Be assured, dear Christian reader, we cannot sleep as do others, when going forth to meet the Bridegroom. The gladdening cry draws forth the energies and springs of divine life in us into real earnestness and activity. We then so stretch out in the ways of faith and hope and loving attachment to our Lord Jesus, that those who are not really the Lord's cannot keep pace with us. This is strikingly solemn. The eyes of truly awakened souls are on the Lord Himself, for it is He such are going forth to meet. The feet run toward Him. The hands are stretched out to Him. The heart cries, "Come," for it is the Lord from heaven whom such expect. They feel the ruggedness of the path, and sometimes taste the bitterness of outward circumstances, but they still go forward and onward to meet the Bridegroom.

On the other hand, those who merely hold the letter of Scripture, who have never bowed to the Son of God, whose hearts have not been touched with divine grace, have not known remission of sins, and therefore have not received the Holy Spirit-foolish virgins who have "no oil"-cannot walk

in the path of faith and hope; and alas! not only find that the faithful are detached from them, but discover when too late the fatal mistake of their lamps having gone out. Thus when the Lord's coming has real effect on souls, it must practically separate them from the heartless and powerless professors, and must also throw them into close and happy fellowship with others who are truly going forth to meet the Bridegroom. Thus this "blessed hope" will necessarily even now be connected with rendings and separations, as well as close and spiritual fellowship with those who are really hoping for His coming.

How comforting too is this blessed hope! When the Thessalonian believers were sorrowful because they saw their brethren in Christ die (fall asleep) instead of the Lord coming for them as they thought would be the case, the Apostle was inspired to instruct them that those who had died in Christ would come out of heaven with Christ when He comes to reign. He also tells them how they, as well as those who are alive when He comes, will get to heaven in order to all come out together in the reign with Christ. He says,

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.

How this must have comforted the bereaved! What solid consolation it must have given them to know that, when the Lord comes, the departed saints and living ones will be all together, and everlastingly happy, without another cloud or sorrow, in the Lord's most blessed presence. How many a mother has had her sorrow turned into joy by this blessed truth, when called to follow to the grave the remains of her precious offspring; and what multitudes of widows have wiped the tear of bitter anguish from off their sorrowing faces at the thought of how soon, how very soon, it may be before they and their departed ones will meet the Lord in the air, and be forever with the Lord. Is it any marvel then that the Apostle is instructed to enjoin those bereaved ones at Thessalonica not to sorrow as those who have no hope, but to be comforted-yea, to "comfort one another with these words"?

We cannot conceive anything that could more sweetly and powerfully comfort the bereaved heart, than this special revelation of the Lord through Paul, to assure such of his intense desire that they should have this comfort in their sorrow and bereavement during His absence. Can we find anywhere in the entire range of holy Scripture that which more touchingly brings home the Lord's warm desire for our consolation and sustainment during this time of tribulation and death? If the hope be bright in our souls, shall we not according to His loving desire be able to "comfort one another"? We gravely doubt whether any who have not the comfort of the Lord's coming themselves, will be able to "comfort one another with these words." We need to look plainly and unflinchingly into this very solemn matter, lest we be found trafficking in mere knowledge of doctrine, instead of comforting others "by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." Clearly then it is a comforting hope.

The hope too is purifying. "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3:3. As the Son from heaven is our bright and blessed hope, so is He the example for our walk. He is the standard of the daily purifying of those who go forth to meet Him. It needs but a moment's reflection to see what separation, what entire consecration, this involves; nay

more, it shows what the practical walk will be of those who really have this hope. It does not say, he ought to purify himself, but he does it; he "purifieth himself, even as He is pure." How intensely solemn this is! How decisive, how searching, how sweeping! How it admonishes us to quicken our steps in going forth to meet

Him; to be alive, awake, in earnest, to run with patience, looking off unto Jesus; and while looking for Him, find out the narrow path on earth of going forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. It is clear enough that those who step out in these divinely ordered ways of faith, and love, and hope, at all costs, must, however unwillingly, leave those far behind who linger in the world's excitement and advantages, instead of openly warning souls against its impending doom. Loss in the worldling's account there must be, as well as suffering with a rejected Savior, if not for Him, if we really go forth to meet Him; but

"How will recompense His smile

The sufferings of this little while."

No doctrine can be more eminently practical. If service is the subject, Jesus said, "Occupy till I come." If caring for the need of others, "Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee." Is it the consciousness of being in an evil world, where the Lord is not, that disturbs us? "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Are any of us caring for the Lord's household? "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods." Is it a groaning, mortal body which hinders us from carrying out all the service we desire? "We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Are we growing drowsy and lukewarm? Then we are warned that it was an "evil servant" who said "in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming." Are we not pondering over the Scriptures, and delighting in them as we ought? He saith, "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Are we losing freshness and fervency in His holy service? Then He encourages us by saying, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Is it death that any dear child of God dreads? It is by no means certain that we shall die; for "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," etc. We ask then, Can we imagine any truth to have a more practical bearing than the blessed hope of our Lord's coming?

The weighty and searching question, dear Christian reader, is, How far has the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ produced practical results in us? May the Lord enable us to deal honestly with ourselves as in His presence about this weighty matter. Has its purifying effect been so real in our consciences that we separated from worldly companionships, and desire for worldly advancement, worldly possessions, worldly honors? Have the interests of Christ and the hope of seeing Him, detached us from other interests, other objects, and other hopes? Are we caring for our Lord's household?

How vast the contrast between the worldling's doom of darkness and judgment, and the Christian's hope of unfading light and glory! Oh, that these thoughts may produce deep and solemn exercise in souls, lest any be found in the dreadful wile of Satan of talking about the Lord's coming when, like Judas, the "pieces of silver" have really more charm than the "Lord Himself";

and Pilate's place of worldly honor and power is esteemed more highly than the rejected Son of God. Oh, how can any be going forth to meet the Bridegroom if, like Lot's wife, they are looking behind!

God Displayed in His Works and His Word

Scripture is always perfect, but men are not competent to speak unless taught of God. Thus, humanly speaking, there are those who could appreciate the wonders of the heavens, but are dull to perceive the divine construction of a daisy; yet to anyone that estimates aright, the perfect hand of God, even in a daisy, is just as clear and certain as in the solar system. It is only a question of the place which each creature of God occupies in His own immense scheme. His wisdom and power are displayed no less in the minute than in the grand and massive and sublime.

Thus there is no doubt that if the telescope opens many a wonder to man, the microscope is not less impressive. They are both important instruments in the hand of man; and they are both intended, doubtless, in God's providence, to show man from the natural world a witness of divine power in what is above, and also in that which is beneath. But in all things, what ought to be gathered from it is not incense for man, but the wonders of God in what He has wrought.

A similar principle applies to the Word of God; for therein, if God displays Himself in what is vast, quite as much does He appear in ways whose minuteness might easily escape observation. Everywhere perfection is claimed for God, whether in what He has made, or, above all, in that which He has written; and in that which He has written, beyond that which He has wrought, because His mind and ways must transcend His outward works. For the Word of God is claimed the very highest place, as the expression of His wisdom-His inner wisdom. For that which is connected with matter must yield to what has to do with mind and the affections, and, above all, the display of the divine nature.

God Hath Spoken: Part 1

Before opening my subject, I would like to mention two instances that we get in The Acts of the Apostles. In chapter 16, when the Apostle Paul was speaking at Philippi, you find a woman there whose heart the Lord opened to hear the things that were spoken by Paul, and she got a blessing that day that she is enjoying still. In the next chapter we find that same servant of the Lord, Paul, under different circumstances. He is speaking in another city, and the people say, Let us go and hear what this babblers has to say. It is the same servant, preaching the same gospel, but think of the difference in the attitude of his hearers!

Any blessing that you or I can get depends upon our attitude of soul. Are you here thinking, What will this babblers have to say? or are you here to attend to what the Lord has to say? If that is our attitude of soul, we cannot help but get blessing.

I want to speak in a very simple way of some of the blessings that are ours because we have been called to heaven, and of the glories of that blessed Person who is there waiting for us. We have it brought out wonderfully in the Book of Hebrews.

We suppose that the Book of Hebrews was written to the church at Jerusalem. It is unlike the other epistles, because it has no salutation and no signature. Perhaps the reason why Paul hid himself (for no doubt he wrote it), was because he was conscious of the intense prejudice that existed at Jerusalem against him because he had turned aside from his pharisaical Judaism, and had cast it aside, and had accepted unreservedly the Messiah-ship of Christ. So, in order not to provoke antagonism against his message, he hides himself. Also, he does not care to direct their thoughts to any other apostle, because he is going to tell them about the Great Apostle and High Priest of their profession, Christ Jesus.

Think of the religious background of those to whom the Apostle brings out the truths he states in Hebrews. There in Jerusalem was firmly entrenched for ages that religious system of things which at the start was given by God, but like everything else committed to man, had become corrupt. Yet the more corrupt it became, the more boastful it became. When Paul was writing this epistle, no doubt the most outstanding thing in that great metropolis was the religion of the Hebrews. No doubt the grandest building there was the temple, with its gold and silver and magnificent stones, and all the grandeur that was attendant upon its ritual. And the people were proud of their ancestry, proud of their religion, and very much inclined to look with contempt upon anything outside their own circle.

In that great city were some believers. They were in the minority, and they were keenly conscious that they were surrounded by this great system of things that denied everything they held dear. That system of things laid claim to the earth, and if those in it were asked to demonstrate what they had religiously in this world, they could point with pride to many evidences of it. They could point to that temple, to the dignity of the priesthood, and to that magnificent and elaborate worship, and they could cite the generations that lay back of that system. But here in that same city were

little groups of simple believers in the Lord Jesus Christ; and if they were challenged to produce some credentials for what they held, there was nothing tangible to which they could point. They had no building, no temple, no ordained priesthood, no enlarged borders to their garments. All they had was the Word of God, and there were no promises connected with their system that gave them title to this earth. All their promises as Christians connected them with heaven. No wonder there was a temptation to give up attachment to the unseen and turn back to something which the senses could appreciate.

That is the situation in which these Hebrew Christians found themselves. Paul is writing this epistle, led by the Spirit of God, to encourage them in their heavenly hopes and to keep their eyes fixed above, where He is. He is saying in effect, Do not turn back to earth; hold on a little longer - just a little longer.

He starts out by opening up to them the glories and the dignity of that blessed One to whom they were attached by faith. Heb. 1:1-3 - "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." When one reads that opening of the epistle to Hebrews, he just feels how impossible it is to do justice in speaking of such a revelation. Our brother in preaching the gospel last night referred repeatedly to what we have here-"God hath spoken." Oh! what a thing that is! Have you heard Him? I wonder if everybody here is a child of God. Remember, "God hath spoken," and, friend, He has spoken to you! If it is God who has spoken, would you not do well to take heed?

In the room where we have been holding the three days' meetings, my glance wandered several times to that large picture of the King and Queen hanging on the wall, and 'I thought, "What a hush would come over this audience if they should come walking out on that platform." Then I thought, "Suppose they should start to speak from that platform. What a tremendous hush would fall over the audience, and what attention would be given to what they said!" And yet, in our midst is a greater than Solomon, a greater than King George, a greater than the Queen. Here we read that God hath spoken. Friend, it is worth listening to what He has said.

How has God spoken? In times past He spoke to the fathers by the prophets. It was God that spoke. But the marvel of marvels is that in these last days He has chosen to speak to us in the Person of the Son. We will never be able to fathom the wonder of that, but we will marvel at it through all eternity. God came down in the Person of the Son, and God has spoken to us. Isn't that wonderful! How much do we appreciate it?

If God had chosen to remain hidden in thick darkness, all the science in the world could never have penetrated one inch through that thick curtain of darkness. The battle-fleets nowadays have those mighty, million candle power searchlights that make the ocean as light as day; but they could never have pierced the thick darkness in which God dwelt until He was pleased to reveal Himself. He has done it, and done it in the fullest possible way. He has come forth in the Person of the Son of God. God has manifested Himself in the Son. What a privilege we have, who were born in this age. I have read history somewhat, and I read about men like Julius Caesar. He was born before the Lord Jesus ever came into this world, and he never heard of Christ. Why was I not born

then? Oh, I was born in what we call A.D. - the year of our Lord. You and I were born since that blessed One came into this world, and what a privilege we have! It was not our choice, but God chose to place you and me in this favored position. How our hearts ought to well up in thanksgiving to Him that ours is such a favored place!

God has spoken in the Person of the Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things. Everyone else is a usurper. The world is divided up into kingdoms and countries, and you can get books that will give you the list of all the countries and the size of their territories; but in one sense they are all usurpers, for it all belongs to Him, and He is heir to all things.

"Whom He hath appointed heir of all things" - not this poor little puny world only. He is heir of all things - and that is the One we read about in this same verse, who has made purgation for sins. When one stops to contemplate the plan of salvation, he is simply overwhelmed. The grandeur of the plan by which God has been pleased to deal with the question of your sins and mine is beyond all human comprehension. And it would have taken this same plan with all its marvelous sacrifice and its infinite wisdom, if you were the only sinner that ever lived. It would all have been necessary to take care of Adam's sin, if no other man had ever been born. Yes, by one man sin entered into the world, and so death passed upon all men. Yet, the One that put away that sin is the One who is heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.

Not so long ago, Brother M. and I were having meetings down in Iowa. It was a cold winter night, and when we got out of the car and turned off the lights, we were irresistibly led to gaze up into the canopy of heaven; and we simply stood aghast as we saw the expanse of the heavens. It was unusually clear that night. The milky way was just white with stars, and the glory of the heavens was an unforgettable sight. Of whom do you suppose we were thinking? We were thinking of the One who spread the canopy above our heads. Oh, the glory of that Person! - and He is the One who died for us! Can we put those two things together? Our poor little minds simply cannot take it in. You know, I think it is a good thing for all of us once in a while to take time to gaze into the heavens at night and think how great they are, and how small we are - and then to think the One who put them there made purgation for our sins! Our heads fairly reel as we gaze into that expanse, and I wonder if the human mind could stand it just to gaze and gaze, and let the vastness of it grow upon one. It seems to me that human reason would crack under the strain.

The One who hung on the middle cross made that expanse. How great is it? The most powerful telescope man has ever invented only sees more of what they have already seen. Out in California one of these days, if God permits, astronomers are going to gaze through a 200-inch reflector telescope, and they will be able to see four times as far as they have ever seen before. Christian, what will they see? Will they see an end to that expanse of starry heavens? You know they will not. They are just going to see more of what they have already seen - and yet some of those stars are so far away that if they had been blotted out of the heavens 2,000 years ago we would not know anything about it, because the light would still be coming from them. It takes only eight minutes for the light to get from the sun to the earth - but there are stars so far away that they might have been blotted out two millenniums ago, and we would not know the difference. Who made all that? We know it was the blessed Son of God.

God has spoken in the Person of the Son, by whom also He made the worlds. "Who being the brightness of His glory [or, the outshining of His glory], and the express image of His person [the

expression of His Person (or substance)], and upholding all things by the word of His power." I think creation is marvelous - but to me there is something more wonderful still, and that is the fact that not only did He create them, but all down through the untold millions of years that those orbs have been shining there, He has been upholding them. He upholds all things; and that is the One who died for us, and the One who is going to have us with Himself in heaven forever and ever.

"Upholding all things by the word of His power" - Oh, the marvelous dignity of that One! He upholds not just this world, but all the universe of God. I can take a baseball and toss it down this aisle, but the moment it leaves my hand my control over it ends; but that is not the way God by the Son made the universe. He started it on its way, but He did not let loose. Every planet and every universe, as it reels through endless space, is held and sustained and kept in its course by that blessed One.

You and I take to the road in our automobiles, and there is a fear attendant upon that kind of travel. Perhaps we do not go very far until we hear a crash, and there is a lot of excitement, and something has happened. It is such a common occurrence that everybody here has seen something like that. Things have gone crisscross. There has been a collision, and there is a racket and a noise - and perhaps there is suffering and possibly death. There is the same danger whether you travel by car or by train. Dear old Brother Close spoke along this line one time, and he said, "Whenever man makes anything, he always puts a repair shop right alongside of it." The moment you hear of an automobile, you hear of a garage where you can get it fixed; the moment you get a lovely watch, you immediately think of a shop that will fix it when it goes wrong.

Well, beloved, He upholds all things. How many of those planets and stars have had to be laid up for repairs? He upholds all things by the word of His power. That is the blessed Lord Jesus, the One who made purgation for sins, and in whose presence we are going to be forever and ever. We are going to enjoy what He enjoys, and be heirs and coheirs with Him. What a future! Would you not like to be a child of God? Would you not like to know that when you get through down here you are going to be with the Man who built the sky forever and ever? And you know, all the saints of God down through the ages, who have lived and gone on, have been made heirs of that same glory. They are going to be with Him, and in a certain measure they are enjoying the blessedness of His presence now. They will enjoy it in fuller measure a little later on. That is the portion of every one for whom He made purgation of sins.

God Hath Spoken: Part 2

"By the word of His power." What does that mean? I take it to mean this: All power in heaven and in earth is His, but the way He manifests that power is by His word. For instance, as He came up to the tomb of Lazarus, Lazarus had been lying there corrupting for four days. As the Son of God approaches that tomb, the power is all there, but it is the word that makes it effective. The word that said, "Lazarus, come forth," was in itself that which gave that carcass to be suddenly transformed into life-real, pulsating, human life-and come forth into light and life and joy, and association with the best that this world had-back to his loved ones, back to his home, and back to the side of the Son of God. It was the power manifested by the word. Is that not wonderful? Some day that same power is going to be manifested on behalf of every one of us in this room who knows the Savior. Oh, yes, it is going to work in you mightily, and when it works in you it is going to take you right up into the glory of God; and you will inhabit that place forever and ever with Him.

He upholds all things by the word of His power. O what a word that is! Dear soul, there is not the least thing in your life or mine that is not dependent upon the upholding power that dwells in Him. How dependent we are, even as creatures, apart from the fact that we are God's children. Did you ever think of how graciously God has placed things around you in order that you may enjoy the good things of life? We take these things for granted, and forget that there is an Intelligence that is controlling it all. The Christian owns that Intelligence, and he owns Him as the One who made purgation for sins.

A while back we were reading in Exodus about the plagues God visited upon the Egyptians through Moses. There were the lice and the locusts and the frogs-different forms of life -and when they came swarming over the land, man was utterly helpless. All he could do was cry out for mercy. Why do not those things happen today? Men go on their way-they make great powerful cranes and huge bulldozers that can turn over the face of the ground and make the landscape over, and they get boastful. But, you know, enough frogs or enough lice, or enough locusts, or enough flies, would spoil the whole thing. When the River Nile turned the frogs loose, they came up over the land, and it was impossible to get away from them. They were in the kneading troughs, and they were in the ovens when the women baked the bread. When they went to bed, there were the frogs-slimy, cold-blooded frogs everywhere. Horrible! Man thinks it cannot happen, but, friends, it did happen. And why?-because the One who upholds all things by the word of His power permitted things to slip a little out of balance, and the frogs came. Some of you have been farmers, and you know what a pest the flies are, and how they torment the stock. Did you ever stop to think why it is that all the flies within a 5-mile radius did not come to your farm? If they did, you would have to go out of business -you would have to quit right there.

So it is with everything else in the perfect plans of nature. There is a species of eel that inhabits the ocean. If it were not for the natural enemies that God has seen fit to put in that great sea, within six years the whole ocean would be solid eel. Yet, we move on day by day taking things for granted, and forgetting that He upholds all things by the word of His power.

Womenfolk complain a lot about the dust in their homes. They are always dusting, and they say, "This is the dirtiest town-there is dust everywhere." And yet, if it were not for the dust that God has seen fit to distribute through the atmosphere, none of us could live on the earth. We could not exist except for the dust that dissipates the harmful rays of the sun.

Astrologers turn heavenward their great telescopes, and they search the skies and examine this planet and that planet, and this universe and that universe. Why is it that with all their searching, they have never yet found another planet, another universe, another star, with an atmosphere in which human beings like you and me could live? Ah-"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God loved the world, and that is the only place in all that vast expanse where human beings could exist. He upholds all things by the word of His power, and everything here is for our good and blessing. The One who planned it all is the One who made purgation for our sins. What a wonderful Savior we have!

"When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." That is where He is now, beloved. He is not in Galilee now. People make pilgrimages there, and I suppose that if I had an opportunity, I would enjoy going there myself; but, after all, the Spirit of God is not directing our hearts tonight toward Galilee. He is directing us to the right hand of God, where this blessed One has set Himself down. He went up there in the dignity of His own Person, and there He sat down. He has the best right possible to be there.

What is He there for?-the rest of the Book of Hebrews tells us the purpose of His being there, and that is what we want to get before our souls. Why is He there? Where is He? -He is at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and that is the reason the Apostle gives that magnificent introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews. He wants them to get a glimpse of the glory of the Person that God has sent into this world. He wants them to look up there where He is, and then He is going to tell them all about Him there. It is the glory of the Person of the Son of God-the One who manifested the effulgence of His glory-the One who is the expression of the substance of God. He says, This is the One about whom I am going to talk to you. I want you to appreciate who He is, and where He is.

Chapter 2:7, 8-"Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst Him with glory and honor, and didst set Him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we see not yet all things put under Him." We do not see all things under Him. Those nations in Europe that blaspheme the Scriptures and have persecuted the saints of God, and have even been allowed to shed the blood of 2,000,000 of God's earthly people-they are not put under Him yet. As we look around us wherever we may go, whether it is in Canada or the United States or wherever it may be, we are reminded constantly that there is much that is not yet put under Him.

But here we are told that all things are going to be put under Him, and that is what faith is waiting for. In the meantime, what does faith see? "We see Jesus." Oh, that personal name! It does not say, "We see the Son of God"; it does not even say that we see Christ. But, "We see Jesus." Where do we see Him? Verse 9-"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." That is where Stephen saw Him. As the life was ebbing from Stephen's body, he saw the heavens opened, and he says, "Behold, I see the

heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." And then he says, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." If you are going to see Jesus, that is where you will have to look. When we start looking around at this poor scene of chaos and confusion, we get confused in our thinking; and if we keep looking in the wrong direction, it will have an unhappy effect on us. We will begin to think we belong down here. We will begin to think that Christianity belongs to the world, like the temple there in Jerusalem; and we will begin to think we are part of it. If we do not continue looking off to Jesus, that will be the result.

We see Jesus, but we see Him in the glory. We do not yet see all things put under Him, but we know they are going to be. That faith held in the soul is going to deliver us from all this modern effort to bring in by the clever intelligence of man what God has said can never be. How far, beloved Christian friends, have you allowed yourself to be swung into the spirit of what is around? If you think men are going to work out something satisfactory and more or less permanent for this world, you are thinking contrary to the Word of God, and you are denying the very thing with which we started our message-"God hath spoken." In Eze. 21:27 God speaks, and He says, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him."

You young folks have studied history, and I think it is a good thing to study history, within proper limits. You have found in history the life story, the panorama, of the rise and fall of nations. That is history, and if you take the rise and fall of nations out of history, what have you left? And yet, I suppose that each nation as it rose in its turn to the height of its prosperity, was just as sanguine, just as hopeful, just as conceited about what it could do, as men are in the present day. Man has always been like that. Nebuchadnezzar lived a long time ago, and as he looked out over the grandest metropolis in the world, he could strut back and forth, and could spread himself and say, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?" If you had looked upon that city, you would have said, "Surely it will endure for millenniums to come." What is it today?-just a few old mounds. Nobody lives there. It is just a few mounds of earth, scattered out over the plain of Shinar. Why?-God said by His prophet that that city was going to be destroyed, and that it would never be inhabited. There it lies today, a silent witness to the truth of the Word of God.

Dear saints of God, do not be deceived. One feels a constant battle in his own heart not to be taken away by all the schemes and plans of man that are so freely talked about today. Man has always been like that. He has never learned his lesson, and the only safe thing for you and me is to just say, "We see Jesus."

I do not want to close without reading the first verse of chapter 3-"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession [confession], Christ Jesus." We are holy brethren. I might ask you, "Are you one of the brethren?" Yes, by the grace of God, you are if you know the Lord Jesus. If He is your Savior and you have put your trust in Him, you are one of the brethren. But are you one of the holy brethren? Do you shrink from that? Suppose I come to you at the close of this meeting and say, "Brother, are you one of the holy brethren?" If you know the truth, you will have to say, "Yes." Who are the holy brethren? Why, they are the ones who are attached to the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus. He is up there in the glory, and He has been trying for over forty years to get my heart out of this world. Oh, how poorly I have responded to His love! He has been trying to

wean me from this poor scene and get my eye centered in heaven, and He is trying to do the same thing with you, because He wants us to be practically what He has made us positionally.

Now, holy brethren are separate brethren, are they not? They walk a separate life-and what makes them like that? Why, they are strangers and they are pilgrims. They are seeking a heavenly home, and that makes them misfits in the world down here-and the more they become conformed to that blessed One up there, the stranger they seem down here. When they speak of the things of the world, the people of the world understand each other. But when we speak the language of our heavenly calling, our heavenly hopes and aspirations, and the heavenly promises, the world does not understand what we are talking about. But you and I should be able to understand that language. Which do you understand better-the language that you hear at the meetings, or the language you hear at the barber shop? Where are you more at home if you join the conversation? That is searching, is it not?

"Partakers of the heavenly calling." What is the heavenly calling? It is the calling to heaven. What could be more simple? When God called the Jew, He called him to the earth-right to a spot of ground down here in this world. But, Christian, when He found you and drew you to Himself, He started you on the way to heaven; and the only reason you have not landed there long ago is the long-suffering patience of God that is waiting for somebody else.

"Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession [confession], Christ Jesus." Why Christ Jesus? Christ is the glorified One, and so it is the glorified Jesus. He is the Apostle and High Priest. Now, consider Him! Oh, think of Him. Think who He is, and think where He is-and the two things go together. You will find those two themes running all through Hebrews. If you and I consider Him-if that forms our thinking-we are going to be more like Christians. We are going to be more like heavenly citizens. We sometimes sing a hymn about being more like the saints that used to be. What is going to make us more like the saints of old who had heaven before them? We have it right here-"Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession [confession], Christ Jesus."

"The night is far spent, and the day is at hand;

No sign to be looked for, the Star's in the sky;

Rejoice, then, ye saints, 'tis your Lord's own command;

Rejoice, for the coming of Jesus draws nigh.

"Oh kindle within us a holy desire,

Like that which was found in Thy people of old,

Who tasted Thy love, and whose hearts were on fire,

While they waited, in patience, Thy face to behold."

God Is Light

1 John 1:5

The Apostle John had seen Jesus, and had beheld in Him the manifestation of "that eternal life, which was with the Father," and what he had "seen and heard" he declared unto the saints to whom he wrote, that they might have fellowship with him - a fellowship which was "with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Nothing could be more blessed than this wondrous association and fellowship into which the saints are brought, and so the Apostle had written them these things that their joy might "be full." All this is the expression of God's infinite grace to poor sinners whom He has been pleased to lift out of the depths of ruin, and to deliver from the power of sin and Satan, giving them divine, eternal life, and bringing them into His own presence, and establishing them there in a known and eternal relationship with Himself. This is pure, unmingled grace, the fruit of infinite, eternal love, and it is most blessed indeed.

But the human heart in its wretched perversity and wickedness is ever ready to abuse grace, yes, even to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, if it can; and so we find the truth of God guarded on every side. If God in infinite grace takes up vile sinners and brings them into His own presence and into fellowship with Himself, it is cause for profoundest joy and gratitude; but in doing this, God never does and never can set aside His own character. His unsullied holiness, His absolute purity, must shine out in all that He does, as well as His love and grace. If "God is love," "God is light" as well. "Light" and "love" are the very essence of what He is in His nature. And if we are made partakers of the divine nature, recipients of that life-that eternal life-which was manifested in Jesus the Son of God here upon earth, we must remember it is the nature of One who is light, absolute purity, necessarily detecting and excluding all evil. Hence the Apostle says, "This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."

No language could be used to describe more forcibly God's intrinsic and absolute purity. It is a purity that admits of no degree of evil. Not only is God "light," but no "darkness" can mingle with that light. Darkness is necessarily excluded by what He is as light. And if we have been brought to God, we are not "in darkness," but "in the light." It is the place and condition into which we have been brought. We were once darkness, but now light in the Lord (Eph. 5:8).

In our natural state we were "darkness"; now, as redeemed and brought to God, and made partakers of the divine nature, we are "light in the Lord." What a change, both of place and condition! Once afar off, but now in God's presence in Christ, brought nigh through His blood! Once enemies, now reconciled and in cloudless light, able to look up into God's face and say, "Abba Father"! Once incapable of having a common thought or feeling or desire with God, now possessed of the divine nature, and able to have fellowship with Him, and with His Son Jesus Christ!

Do we then say we have been brought to God and have fellowship with Him, and while claiming these things, walk in darkness? Then it is all a "lie," and we "do not the truth."

If we have been brought to God, we are in the light, for God is light; and we have been made partakers of the divine nature. God has been revealed in Jesus, and through this revelation we have been brought to Him, receiving the life which was manifested in Jesus. And thus we are brought into fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Only as possessing this life can we have fellowship with God.

And if we possess this life, and are in this fellowship, we are necessarily in the light. The light is what God is in the purity and holiness of His nature; and we participate in this nature, and thus are in the light. But if we say we participate in this nature, and in it have fellowship with God, while we walk in darkness, we connect darkness with Him who is light. It is to say darkness belongs to that pure and holy nature, that divine life, which was manifested in Jesus. And this is a lie, and we do not know the truth. We are still in the moral darkness of nature, and know not God.

"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." It is a solemn statement which shows the necessary exclusion of evil from His presence. The cross is the measure of this. There we see His awful abhorrence of sin when He abandons His own Son, and commands the sword to awake against Him as made sin for us. Abandoned of God on that cross, the suffering Victim was overwhelmed in darkness, in unfathomable sorrow, left to drink the cup of God's wrath against sin. That bitter cry of anguish, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" shows the utter impossibility of the darkness mingling with the light, or of sin having a place in the presence of God.

All this is unspeakably solemn if we look at the flesh or the old nature and what flows from it; and yet it is unspeakably blessed when we realize that we are in the Son, and that our life is in Him. We are brought to God in Christ. "As He is, so are we in this world." We are in the light, but it is as partakers of the divine nature, and thus in our nature morally, like God Himself, and this is most blessed indeed. But it searches the heart, and tests our practical state. Are we habitually walking in the fear of God, and judging the flesh with its lusts, so that nothing is seen in our walk or ways but what is Christ-like? Do we carry in our souls, daily and hourly, the sense that we are in God's presence? And do we realize the manner of life that becomes that place? We are not there today and someplace else tomorrow. It is the place we are in as Christians. May the power of this truth possess our souls, giving us that holy sobriety of soul, and abhorrence of sin, suited to the place we are in, and the nature and character God has given us as His own children.

Grace and Righteousness Seen in

God could not have us in His presence with sin upon us- could not suffer a single speck or stain of sin. The father could not have the prodigal at his table with the rags of the far country upon him. He could go forth to meet him in those rags; he could fall upon his neck and kiss him in those rags; it was the worthy and beautiful characteristic of his grace to do so. But then to seat him at his table in the rags would never do.

The grace that brought the father out to the prodigal, reigns through the righteousness which brought the prodigal in to the father. It would not have been grace had the father waited for the son to deck himself in robes of his own providing; it would not have been righteous to bring him in, in his rags. But both grace and righteousness shone forth in all their respective brightness and beauty when the father went out and fell on the prodigal's neck, but yet did not give him a seat at the table until he was clad and decked in a manner suited to that elevated and happy position.

He Looked for a City

He looked for a city and lived in a tent... A pilgrim to glory right onward he went... God's promise his solace, so royal his birth.. No wonder he sought not the glories of earth.

He looked for a city his God should prepare... No mansion on earth could he covet or share... For had not God told him that royal abode... Awaited His coming on ending the road?

He looked for a city; if sometimes he sighed... To be trudging the road, all earth's glory denied... The thought of that city changed sighing to song... For the road might be rough, but it could not be long.

He looked for a city; his hope, Lord, we share... And know that bright city, which Thou dost prepare... We'll dwell in forever, since willing to be... Just pilgrims with Jesus, our roof a tent-tree.

The Holy Scriptures

We desire to offer to all who may read these pages a few earnest words on a subject which we deem to be of commanding interest and importance at the present moment; it is this - The divine sufficiency and supreme authority of holy Scripture, and the urgent need of submitting ourselves absolutely to its guidance in all things.

And in thus stating our thesis we would not have our readers to suppose for a moment that we undervalue human writings in their proper place. We know that God does use, and that very largely, human writings. We receive them as refreshing streams from the fountain head, which often reach the beloved sheep of Christ in barren places where they have no ministry at all. And further, we would add, that we have rarely met anyone who affected to despise human writings on the plea of reading nothing but the Bible, that was not shallow, contracted, and one-sided.

We might just as well say that we would not listen to a brother speaking to us in the assembly, as refuse what God had given him to write. The more we love the Bible, the more we shall value whatever agent the Spirit may use to help us to understand and appreciate its contents. How often has a book or tract been made a rich blessing to the soul, either in bringing one to Christ, or building up, or leading on in Him! How often may we have read some passage of Scripture and seen nothing in it, until the Lord had used some paragraph in a human writing to unfold its treasures to our hearts! We are, none of us, self-sufficient. We are dependent one on another. We grow by that which every joint supplieth. We need all the "helps" which God has set in the body for our common profit and blessing.

And having said thus much to guard against misunderstanding, and to put human writings in their proper place, we return to our special object in this brief paper.

There is but one supreme and paramount authority, and that is the Word of God. Scripture is all-sufficient. We want absolutely nothing in the way of guidance and authority beyond what we possess in the holy Scriptures - that peerless, precious volume which our God has written for our learning.

No doubt it is only by the Holy Spirit we can understand, appreciate, or be guided by Scripture; and, moreover, God may use a human voice or a human pen to help us; but Scripture is divinely sufficient. It can make a child wise unto salvation; and it can make a man perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (See 1 Tim. 3:15-17.)

Now, having such a guide, such an authority, what becomes us as Christians - as children of God and servants of Christ? Why, clearly to submit ourselves absolutely and unreservedly to its teachings in all things; we are bound, by every argument and every motive which can possibly sway the human heart, to test everything in which we are engaged, or with which we stand associated, by the Word of God; and if we find aught, no matter what, which will not stand that test, to abandon it at once and forever.

And it is precisely here that we feel there is such serious failure in the professing church. As a rule, we do not find the conscience under the immediate action and government of the Word. Human opinions bear sway. Human creeds and confessions of faith govern the heart and form the religious character. Human traditions and habits of thought are allowed a formative influence over the soul. And if it be merely a question of personal salvation, profit, or blessing, Scripture will be listened to. People are glad to hear how they can be saved and blessed. Everything that bears upon the individual condition will get a hearing.

But the moment it becomes a question of Christ's precious authority over us, in spirit, soul, and body - when the Word of God is brought to bear upon our entire practical career, upon our personal habits, our domestic arrangements, our commercial pursuits, our religious associations, our ecclesiastical position - then, alas! it becomes apparent how completely the authority of holy Scripture is virtually thrown overboard.

In point of fact, the enemy seems to succeed as completely in robbing professing Christians of the real value, power, and authority of the Word of God, as when, during that long and dreary period of the middle ages, it was wrapped in the shroud of a dead language, and buried in the dark cloisters of Rome.

It is perfectly appalling, when we come in contact with the actual condition of things among professing Christians, to observe the ignorance of Scripture and the carelessness about it. Nor can any thoughtful person doubt but that the latter is the producing cause of the former. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." But if the Word of God be neglected and practically ignored as an authority, need we marvel when we find people ignorant of its precious contents?

We have been much struck of late in our intercourse with professing Christians, in noticing the little moral weight which Scripture seems to possess. You will rarely meet with anyone who is prepared to start with this one grand point, that the voice of the Holy Spirit in Scripture is absolutely conclusive - it admits of no appeal - it closes all discussion. We speak not now of man's interpretation of Scripture - of anything in which it can be said, "That is your opinion." We speak only of the written Word of God, which we possess and to which we are individually responsible to submit ourselves, in all things. God has put His precious Word into our hands and He has given us His Holy Spirit to enable us to understand the Word; and we are solemnly bound to be guided and governed by that Word in all the details of our practical career.

The Hours of the Lord Jesus

In reading the gospels I am very much struck with the way in which every hour of the time of the Lord Jesus is filled up.

There is no "loitering" in the path of the Blessed One through the world - no seeking (like we seek) for ease; life with Him is taken up with the untiring activities of love.

He lives not for Himself; God and man have all His thoughts and all His care. If He seeks for solitude, it is to be alone with His Father. Does He seek for society? It is to be about His Father's business. By night or day He is always the same. On the Mount of Olives praying; in the temple teaching; in the midst of sorrow comforting; or where sickness is, healing; every act declares Him to be the One who lives for others. He has a joy in God man cannot understand - a care for man that only God could show.

You never find Him acting for Himself. If hungry in the wilderness, He works no miracle to supply His own need; but if others are hungering around Him, the compassion of His heart flows forth, and He feeds them by thousands. O! that we were more like Him!

How Much Would You Be Missed Here?

The Lord lived here, died here, rose here; He ate and drank in this world, but He never was of the world; and so it is and should be with the Christian. Our Lord did not form such a part and parcel of this world as that His appearance in it or departure from it ruffled the stream for a moment. He would not have been missed in the world; and the moment that a Christian becomes an integral part of the motive power which carries on the wheels of the world, all is out of course, as far as his allegiance to Christ goes.

A Christian ought to be the means of constant blessing in this world. But how, and of what character? Bearing the testimony of Christ, of his Savior; but as He never sought His own things - was always doing good, yet doing it as the will of His Father- always acting upon motives that were not of the world, but from above - never uniting with men's plans for the purpose of bettering man, but realizing that the world was God's enemy, and yet that God's love was sending Him into it to do them good. Such was Christ, and so should it be with the Christian.

A Christian's business is to be the epistle of Christ. So the one clue and test for what comes before a person, is this: will my doing this or that be acting as an epistle of Christ? But in order to know what is consistent with an epistle of Christ, I must search His ways in the words of the Holy Ghost. There is always light in Scripture to show what is His mind for the present moment.

Kept by the Power of God

1 Pet. 1:5

"The LORD will go before you" (Isa. 52:12).

"The glory of the LORD shall be thy rearward" (Isa. 58:8). "The LORD is round about His people" (Psalm 125:2). "Underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27). "His banner over me was love" (S. of Sol. 2:4).

A Learnable Lesson

I find more and more that His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts. But all our blessing consists in our bending ourselves to Him, our ways to His, and counting our thoughts cheap in comparison to His. May God teach us more and more how to do this; for difficult as the lesson may seem, it is a learnable one, and one in which is all our peace and comfort while in the wilderness, to have it firmly in principle at least. When we come home (sweet word), His home and ours, then will every way of ours be conformed to His perfect mind; for we shall be like Him, seeing Him as He is.

Leviticus 2: Notes of an Address

How precious is this portion of the Word of God to our souls! In the offerings brought before us in Leviticus, we have in the first few chapters: the burnt offering, the meat offering, and the peace offering. They form, we may say, one group. The sin offering and the trespass offering form another. The first group we call the voluntary offerings-they speak of worship. The sin and trespass offerings speak of meeting the claims of God's holy nature, and man's guilt.

In the meat offering presented to us in Leviticus 2, we have Christ as the One who came down into this world to glorify God as man. We do not have in the meat offering that which speaks of putting away of sins, but One who walked down here, whose life was not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him.

One thing very striking in connection with the meat offering is that it seems to have been prepared at home. O brethren, that speaks to my heart, and I trust it will to all; I believe that it is in communion with God at home that our hearts in the secret of our lives learn the preciousness of Himself to our souls. It is blessed to be gathered together in this way, but how much of Christ do we enjoy in our home life? How much of Himself do we meditate upon when at home alone?

"Fine flour" speaks of evenness, which characterized the Lord Jesus as a man down here. Every part of that blessed walk of His was acceptable to God. Everything was perfect. Every part of the display of the heart of God comes out blessedly and perfectly in Him, does it not? How precious to meditate upon His walk and ways here! - to think of Him as the One of whom John speaks in the 18th verse of the first chapter, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

Suppose one asked the question, Why did God send His Son? Perhaps you would say, In order to put away my sins. This is true. Or perhaps you would say, Because He loved me. That would be perfectly true too; but the verse referred to says, God sent His Son in order that we might know what was in the bosom of the Father, that we might have the fullest unfolding of all that was in the heart of God. How that has come out as the heart of God has been revealed in the Person of Christ. He could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." What will heaven be, brethren? It will be the company, the companionship of the Lord Jesus, and the knowledge of all that God is as revealed in Him. Well now we know in part and prophesy in part, and that is what we have when we come to the next verse of our chapter.

In the first verse we have, "and he shall pour oil upon it." That is the blessed Lord down here as a man, as the anointed One. Every act of His was in the energy of the Holy Spirit of God, and together with that act was the frankincense that met the heart of God from that blessed One in every step of His journey.

The "handful of the flour" tells us that we can never take in all that Christ is, never fully apprehend all that He is to the heart of God, and all that He has accomplished for the glory of God; but we can each take our handful. Each may lay hold in his measure of that preciousness of the Person of the

Lord Jesus and enjoy Him in his soul.

In Eph. 3:17 we read, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." He does dwell there, but that faith might live in the good of it. "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height," etc. If there is going

to be fruit, there must be roots. "Grounded" is firmly established. It should be "apprehend," not "comprehend," because you could not take it all in. That is the "handful of the flour." I know that the 3rd

of Ephesians goes further than the 2nd of Leviticus, because in the 2nd of Leviticus, it is Christ as man glorifying God down here; while in Ephesians, it is Christ up in the glory. But how precious to know that the One up there in the glory is the One that has glorified God as man down here. And so we may "be able to apprehend" - how feeble our apprehension is! But in the measure in which these things are apprehended in our souls - the measure in which Christ is enjoyed - in that measure our hearts long for His glorious coming. Why is it that our hearts do not respond more readily to that blessed word in Revelation 22, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come"? Because there is a tendency with every one of us to settle down here. How we long to get things in a satisfactory state down here, do we not? How we would like to have everything go smoothly in our home life, our business, and in the assembly; but God will never order it so. Why? Because the difficulties of the way are just the opportunities that God uses to teach us more and more of the preciousness of Christ-His patient grace. If He teaches us our failures as we walk with Him, He teaches us too His own resources in grace; His patience; His love. How often He has encouraged us; how often He has taught us amid failure the blessed satisfaction of His love that abides.

It is a digression, but I want to speak of the case of Naomi's husband (Ruth 1). Why did he go down to the land of Moab? To escape the famine. How often in a time of difficulty, we try to escape it, instead of going through it with God! whether it be in our home life, business life, or in the assembly. I do not speak of being mixed up with what is contrary to God, for then we are to get out of those circumstances; but if in the path of His ordering, let us never leave it, however difficult the day, however trying the circumstances; and if the Lord does not come the difficulties will increase; trying circumstances will increase, but one finds in themselves a tendency to escape them-like Elimelech, to get out of that place where Jehovah had put His name, and go down to Moab. Let us never do that. Let us go through them with God, and learn the lesson He would have us learn. How we find that blessed One treading that path here, never turning aside, going on in that ministry of love and grace, meeting on every hand the rejection of man; but oh, those waters of divine love and grace that found their source in Him, flowed forth in all their blessed fullness. How that barren and perishing land of Israel received blessing from Him because of the One who was here walking in communion with the heart of God, and ministering the grace of God in spite of all He met with daily.

Returning now to the 2nd of Leviticus, "and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar." Fire speaks of trial. It is not here the fire of the altar-that wherewith God judges sin-but the One that trod that pathway here in this world to the glory of God, and was tried in every step of that pathway; and the trial only brought out the blessed perfection that was in Him. An illustration may help the younger ones. One was traveling some years ago and met a gentleman on the train. He

was speaking of the Lord Jesus in that temptation in the wilderness, and he said that the Lord could sin. One had to remark to him, "My dear sir, that expression is wicked." He said, "If He could not sin, where was the temptation?" He had a ring on his finger, and one said to him, "Possibly that ring is brass?" But he insisted that it was gold. How are we going to settle the difficulty that lies between whether that ring is brass or gold? We told him when we reached our destination, we would go into a jewelry store and have it put into a vial of acid and test it to ascertain of what metal it is. As it comes out of the vial, we find that it is pure gold. Then we merely told him this: that the temptation in the wilderness was only to prove that the Lord was "pure gold"-He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." There was no sin in Him. He was the "holy one of God." That trial in the wilderness was just to bring out that fact. God knew it all the time, but He would make demonstration before all that that One was the Holy One of God. He would have it made manifest that He was the Lamb of God foreordained before the foundation of the world. How our hearts delight to honor Him! To think of His pathway wherein every step manifested forth the fact that He was the Holy One of God; tried and tempted in every way, but proven to be the fine flour with the oil and frankincense. Every trial brought out the fragrance and perfection of who He was, the glory of His Person.

3rd verse: "And the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire." You and I can indeed joy and worship before God as we think of Him down here as the blessed perfect Man. Notice that it says, "It is most holy." I believe the Spirit of God thus guards the Person of the Lord Jesus as a man, and brings before our souls the delight that was in the heart of God toward that One who ever glorified God on the earth.

In verses 4, 5 and 6 we have the offering baked in the oven. I believe it is rather those hidden sufferings of Christ. It was the compassion of His heart that made the Lord a sufferer, and not the difficulties of the way. At the very moment that He was rejected, He could rejoice in Spirit and turn to the Father and say, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Luke 10:21. We find the Lord Jesus weeping only three times. At the grave of Lazarus, His heart was told out in sympathy. Think of who He was -the Son of God-God manifest in flesh. Tears coursed down His blessed cheeks. The compassion of His heart brought forth these tears, not the difficulties of His course, or trials.

Let me put it in another way: How often you and I can hear the blessed name of the Lord Jesus taken in vain, and perhaps in five minutes we have forgotten about it; but if it is you or me that is spoken against, it sometimes takes weeks and months to get over it. Sometimes our feelings are so badly hurt that we do not get over it for a year! What a heart the blessed Lord had! What an unfolding of the heart of God! You and I are going to live with that blessed One for eternity. What will it be to be in the company of the One whose heart was told out so blessedly in order to have our hearts won from this poor world, a world that will deceive you, young people, if you go after it; but the heart that seeks the company of Jesus will find that which brings joy and gladness, however dark and difficult the day. We find that brought out blessedly in the epistle of John. John had seen the Church as set up at Pentecost; he had seen those wonderful days of power and blessing; but he had seen decay too; he had seen "all... in Asia... turned away," but in the epistle of John, I believe, we get the secret of happy Christian life amid ruin. I believe we get that which will sustain the heart in the day of ruin - walking in communion with the Father and the Son.

"Fellowship" - knowing the heart of God revealed in Christ, and our hearts abiding in the joy and good of it.

"The frying pan" gives us the manifested sufferings of Christ. Perhaps as you and I read through the Scriptures, we are only able to discern the manifested sufferings. We might speak of those occasions upon which the Lord wept. His sufferings were manifest, but what about the hidden sufferings? I believe all His pathway was one of sorrow because His heart went out in sympathy with every one of those for whom He died, because of the sorrows and difficulties of the way. What a blessed Savior!

A Life of Continuance

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. 15:58.

We are urged in the Scriptures to a life of continuance. We are to continue in the grace of God (Acts 13:43); in the faith (Acts 14:22); in the Apostle's doctrine, or teaching (Acts 2:42 Tim. 4:16); in His Word (John 8:31); in His love (John 15:9); in prayer (Col. 4:2; Acts 1:14); and in praise (Heb. 13:15).

It is as we go on in these things, that the gift of continuance shall be ours. God's desire is that His people shall be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Little Foxes

Satan with his cunning will surely endeavor to mar the sweetness of communion and worship, probably not with any great temptation at first, but with "the little foxes, that spoil the vines." Some little extra pressure of business, some self-indulgence that takes up time we might have given to reading or prayer, some anxiety or care brooded over and magnified instead of being cast on the Lord, or even the veriest trifle to distract the mind. Let us then not spare ourselves, beloved brethren, in the matters of the "little foxes." Beware the beginnings of declension.

Love of Christ Which Passeth Knowledge

Eph. 3:14-21

In the prayer in chapter 3 the Apostle loses himself, as it were, and no wonder. After he has said, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," he adds, "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love" (that is what God is, the divine nature), "may be able to comprehend with all saints" (taking in the whole unity in which the Holy Ghost dwells) "what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" --he has now got into the infinitude of all God's thoughts and purposes of blessing, and he cannot say of what.

Just as the groanings could not be uttered, so the thought cannot be uttered. It is God that has come in; and Christ fills all things according to the power of redemption, from the throne of God down to the dust of death, and from the dust of death up to the throne of God. Having all things, and filling all things (he says), Here I am placed in the midst of this infinitude; and then he adds, "and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." He could go to no place without finding infinite love and power, the love that brought Christ down, and the power that took Christ up again.

This meets all the exercises of the heart. If brought down even as Christ came down, into the dust of death, the Holy Ghost comes down to the poor man who feels this power of death in his soul, and dwells in him, and carries him up by the knowledge of redemption into all the fullness of God Himself.

Well, that, beloved, is the result of the dwelling of the Holy Ghost down here, consequent upon redemption accomplished by Christ. The Holy Ghost can come and bring peace to our souls, and the effect of that peace to our souls is to make us pass through all the evil around "according to the power of God." When t h e Apostle speaks to Timothy, he says,

"Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." Where shall we stop? The soul rejoices in that which must be the joy and gladness of the heart that knows God has come down to dwell in it - the immutable blessedness of God's presence. Then, whatever the circumstances in which we are placed, if they be only those of sorrow and trial, what is the consequence? God ministers of the fullness of the sympathy of His love to our souls; and thus they become, so to speak, as a door or a chink to let God in. All the riches, "the unsearchable riches of Christ," are ours; and Christ fills everything. There is not anything we can think of but we find there of the fullness of Christ. If we think of death, we see Christ there; of sin, we do not know what sin is fully until we see Christ "made sin"; of God, it is only in Christ we can know God; of man, it is only in Christ we can see man raised to the height of his blessing; of peace, it is through Christ we know the peace of God; of life, Christ is our life; of glory, it is all in Christ.

There is not anything, no matter what we think of, whether in creation or above it, or between God and man, but we must think of Christ in it all. He is the Head of the body, the Church, which is "the

fullness of Him that filleth all in all." We can turn our thoughts to no one thing in which we do not find the fullness of Christ; and by the power of the Holy Ghost our souls are brought into the joy of this fullness, as that to which we are, through living union with Him, everlastingly and perfectly united.

There is another point which I have not touched upon, the practical effect of this. What would the effect be on our souls if we really felt we were builded together, etc., if we felt that in the whole world Christians were in truth the dwelling place of God? What a thought should we have to act upon as to everything! That by which the Church of God has been corrupted, ordinances and the like, would disappear as clouds before the sun. And what thoughts of glory should we have, what thoughts of holiness, what peace as to practical circumstances, what jealousy of grieving the Holy Ghost, what love toward all the saints, what joy, what confidence! How we should (not in pride, but in the sense that God was there) mock at all our enemies (Isa. 37:22, 23), how live and act among men as "sons" and "heirs" of God! What power for everything, in short, would be ours if we remembered the completeness, the peace-giving completeness, of redemption, and could really say that God was dwelling with us!

This is our portion; and whatever our weakness and infirmity (and, alas! it is very great), whatever our failure, still it remains true. We may grieve the Spirit, we may weaken the consciousness of our joy, but still God is with us. The Holy Spirit dwells among us.

May the Lord give us to know and to own what this presence of God in the earth, and that with men, is by reason of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

The Love of God

1 John 4:9-18

If we look at man, we shall find his whole history in the history of Adam. What Adam was in the garden, man has been ever since, from the garden to the cross. God tried man, but man only marred all he was trusted with.

When God chose a nation, it was no better. The people were idolaters, the kings rebellious, the priests soiled their garments, so that they could not stand before God. Whatever God has given in creation-providence, law, or grace - man has abandoned. When the Lord from heaven came, the iniquitous nation rejected Him. But He never fails, and God will prove His love and wisdom by meeting His own people in every single thing in which man has broken down. All will come out in glory, as the positive fruit of the cross. We learn a great deal more of what God is by knowing man; and we learn a great deal more of what man is by knowing God. If we look at the Church, man is just the same. The mystery of iniquity working, the spirit of demons among them, the love of many waxing cold, until there is not one righteous one left, but all closes in perfect ruin.

God gives a power apart from man. He gives a new life -a life in His Son. In virtue of Him, it cannot fail. It is eternal life - life in Christ. God was perfectly manifested in the Son, when He came down from heaven to give life. But this is not enough. What about my sins? Where are my sins? To have life without the question of sin being settled, will not do. Christ had them on the cross. Christ came down from heaven to put my sin away, and He died to put it away, and can say, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." Christ's life is in me-"eternal life, and this life is in His Son." I have His life, not His Godhead, of course. As surely as I have partaken of the life and nature of the first Adam, so have I life in the second Adam. "If anyone be in Christ, there is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17; J.N.D. Trans.). The divine nature is there. It is in a poor earthen vessel, it is true; but the nature is divine, and I should be showing it out in my life and character.

The more I know of God, the more shall I exhibit what He is. The more I look at Him, the more I shall be like Him. What made Moses' face to shine? Was it looking at himself? No. It was being with Jehovah, and looking at His glory. Moses did not know that his face was shining until he was asked to veil it. He was not occupied with himself; the Object before him was God. He had been looking at God, he was absorbed in God, and so shows out God's glory. It will be the same with us. If Christ is the Object before me, I shall not be thinking of myself, but of Him. I shall be exhibiting Him, dwelling upon what He is, and not upon what I am doing. If my eye is upon Christ, I shall resemble Him (feebly indeed) in holiness, and humbleness, and love. I find it in Him in all its blessedness and beauty; I see it in all its perfectness, and, in looking at Him, I am changed into His image. In Him there is all the new nature can crave or desire. In Him I can rest, and delight, and rejoice.

What never-ending joy to know the Son of God is come! Satan works, it is true, but "ye are of God." This settles the whole thing. No longer of the old nature, living and acting according to the life of the first Adam, but in the power of the new nature, that we derive from God. What a thing to be partakers of the divine nature, made higher than angels, "bone of His bone"! This is a most blessed truth. "Ye are of God," of Him whose nature is divine. And this divine nature cannot be met but by Himself. Christ has washed us from our sins in His own most precious blood. He has baptized us from above with the Holy Ghost, and sealed us with the Spirit of promise. "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." He has given us a power which is above Satan's power. "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." "Ye are of God." I am brought to God. I am born of God. I rest in God. I learn to know God, because I have got the nature that can know Him, just as I could only know what man is by having his nature.

I do not know all about God, that is true; but I have no uncertainty. Suppose I have a friend; I may not know all about him, but he is my friend, and I rejoice in him as such. I have no questionings as to his affections, because I do not know all about him. Well, God is my friend, and I have a blessed rest in knowing Him as my friend. If God is my friend, what more can I need? What can be more blessed? To know God, I must have His nature. I cannot know the nature of what I am not a partaker of. I do not know angels. I am not a partaker of the nature of angels.

We see two things in this chapter which give the soul immense delight. Verse 9 shows us the way God makes His love known. In verse 17 we see how His love is made perfect. In verse 9 God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might have life through Him. That we may have life who were dead, that we may be partakers of a life that flows from the manifestation of God's love—a life separated altogether from nature and nature's affections and pleasures. It cannot be hinged in with selfishness. And what is my nature? Is it not mere selfishness? If I look at my motives from day to day, what shall I find them? Are they not self? Take business (we are not speaking of the rightness of the thing); what is the motive? Is it not self? We have no idea how we are under the influence of self. Is it not true that the trifles of dress more occupy the thoughts of many than all God has done in sending down His Son from heaven to save sinners? It is a positive fact, and it is no use to try to hide it from ourselves. We cannot hide it from God.

On the other hand, the more I look at this love, the more I see of its perfectness. It is said, "for a good man some would even dare to die." But when there was not one single good thing in us, God commended His love to us. It was purely grace shown to us in the cross. We were just sinners and nothing but sinners when Christ died to save us. And I can never understand what God's love really is, until I can say I am merely a sinner. If you do not know what God's love is, it is because you have not learned that great truth, that you are but a sinner. What is it that God has given to save sinners? The very nearest thing to His

heart, the most precious boon He had to bestow, His own beloved and only begotten Son. There is no accounting for His love; there is no estimating it. The thing most of all dear to Him was the Son of His bosom, and Him He gave. There is no limit to His love. He has given me Christ, and there is no end to what I have in Him. The Son of God given for my sins, He goes down into these depths and brings up life. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." How can I know that God loves me? By looking at the perfect

Object of His love, and this gives me rest. Why? Because in Him I see how wondrous is the love that sent down His Son to give me eternal life, and be a propitiation for my sins. If I have not rest, what I need is a deeper sense of sin. I must learn what sin is at the cross; and then I shall see the love that has met it and suffered for it, and thus my soul gets rest.

Christ's love was not the theory of one who comes and merely tells what God is, but the practical exhibition of Him. He shows out God in all the variety of His unreserved and immeasurable love. Compare verse 12 with verse 18 of John 1- "No man hath seen God at any time"-He who "is [not was] in the bosom of the Father" must declare Him. The Son must tell what can be known of the Father. On Christ hangs everything. All hindrances are gone for the believer through Him; all sin is put away by Him. I here get a place of intimate nearness to God in Him. I have learned at the cross what God was to me as a sinner; and now I have to learn how He meets my needs as a saint, by feeling my need and bringing it to Him. To be hungry is not enough; I must be really starving to know what is in His heart toward me. When the prodigal was hungry, he went to feed upon husks; but when he was starving, he turned to his father's house, and then learned the love of the father's heart.

In verse 15, how low God comes! "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God. God dwelleth in him, and he in God." How He steps down to meet us, so that everyone shall be left without excuse. "Whosoever shall confess." The babe who can but just confess Christ has eternal life as truly as the strong man in Christ. It is not a question of what I am, but of what Christ is. I am lost sight of. All hangs on what God is. How can I know His love? Must I wait for its full display? No, He has shed abroad His love in my heart, by the Spirit He has given me. Verse 16: "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." If I am dwelling in God, I am dwelling in love, and should be showing out love by looking at Him and not at others. Verse 17; this is a wonderful thing to say- "As He is, so are we in this world." He has taken His seat at God's right hand, and brings me there.

We are now before God in the righteousness of Christ. He is my life, and I cannot be really, nor ought to appear in anything separated from Him. "Herein has love been perfected with us that we may have boldness in the day of judgment" (J.N.D. Trans.). Does the heart get exercised about judgment? Does the thought of standing before it distress you? Why should it be so? Is not He, my righteousness, the judge? Has He not perfectly put away my sin and purged my conscience from all guilt, so that I can rest in God without fear, having no longer any painful uncertainty, but calmly looking forward in the full assurance that Christ has been judged in my stead, and brought me into blessed fellowship with that love which gives me boldness in the day of judgment? "As He is, so are we in this world."

"There is no fear in love." If there is the smallest doubt or distrust in the heart toward God, you are not made perfect in love; for "perfect love casteth out fear." There are things to fear, it is true; we may well fear sin, and the influence of our own selfish interests. But the practical effect of resting on God is to cast out all fear, and make the heart perfect in love. His love is perfect. We have but to own it, bow to it, accept it as ours in Christ, and bless Him for it. This is to be made perfect in love.

Luke 12:35-36

Is the thought of the Lord's nearness welcome, or ungrateful, to the soul? Is the expectation of being with Him without notice or delay pleasant to the heart?

The true practical walk of a believer gives a right answer to these inquiries. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." Phil. 4:5. "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door." Jas. 5:9. Moderation or holy restraint in the use of present things, and gracious, liberal consideration of others, here approved as among the right ways of a saint, are such as would stand the light of the Lord, if He were at the moment to appear.

Are our ways then such as suit the thought of His nearness, and would abide the light of His presence? Have they, or have they not this voice in them, "Come, Lord Jesus"? Could vanity, could uncleanness, could the desire of gain, could the lust of distinction? Has the haughty look that voice in it? Has carnal levity or spiritual sloth?... Our behavior should be such as would introduce us to His presence without disturbance; for He comes not to regulate, but to gladden us- not to put us in a right path, but to close a right path in glory.

Man's Extremity, God's Opportunity

A familiar saying among us is, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." No doubt we fully believe it; but yet when we find ourselves brought to our extremity, we are often very little prepared to count on God's opportunity.

It is one thing to utter or hearken to a truth, and another thing to realize the power of that truth. It is one thing, when sailing over a calm sea, to speak of God's ability to keep us in a storm, and it is another thing altogether to prove that ability when the storm is actually raging around us.

And yet God is ever the same. In the storm and in the calm, in sickness and in health, in pressure and in ease, in poverty and in abundance, "The same yesterday, and today, and forever"; the same grand reality for faith to lean upon, cling to, and draw upon, at all times and under all circumstances.

Thus it was with the disciples as recorded in Mark 4:35-41. Let us meditate a little on the passage. "And the same day, when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him even as He was in the ship. And there were also with Him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow."

Here we have an interesting and instructive scene. The poor disciples are brought to their extremity. They are at their wits' end. A violent storm; the ship full of water; the Master asleep. This was a trying moment indeed; and assuredly we, if we look at ourselves, need not marvel at the fear and agitation of the disciples. It is not likely that we should have done better, had we been there. Still, we cannot but see wherein they failed. The narrative has been penned for our learning, and we are bound to study it and seek to learn the lesson which it reads out to us.

There is nothing more absurd and irrational than unbelief, when we come to look at it calmly. In the scene before us, this absurdity is very apparent; for what could be more absurd than to suppose that the vessel could possibly sink with the Son of God on board? And yet this was what they feared. It may be said they did not just think of the Son of God at that moment. True, they thought of the storm, the waves, the filling vessel, and, judging after the manner of men, it seemed a hopeless case. Thus it is the unbelieving heart ever reasons. It looks only at the circumstances, and leaves God out. Faith, on the contrary, looks only at God, and leaves circumstances out.

What a difference! Faith delights in "man's extremity," simply because it is "God's opportunity." It delights in being "shut up" to God-in having the platform thoroughly cleared of the creature in order that God may display His glory - in the multiplying of empty vessels in order that God may fill them. Such is faith. It would, we may surely say, have enabled the disciples to lie down and sleep beside their Master in the midst of the storm. Unbelief, on the other hand, rendered them uneasy; they could not rest themselves, and they actually aroused the blessed Lord out of His sleep by their unbelieving apprehensions. He, weary with incessant toil, was snatching a few moments repose

while the vessel was crossing the sea. He knew what fatigue was; He had come down into all their circumstances. He made Himself acquainted with all our feelings and all our infirmities, being in all points tempted like as we are, sin excepted. He was found as a man in every respect, and as such, He slept on a pillow, and was rocked by the sea's wave. The storm beat upon the vessel, and the billows rolled over it, although the Creator was on board in the Person of that weary, sleeping Workman.

Profound mystery! The One who had made the sea and could hold the winds in His almighty grasp, lay sleeping in the hinder part of the ship, and allowed the sea and the wind to treat Him as unceremoniously as though He were an ordinary man. Such was the reality of the human nature of our blessed Lord. He was weary; He slept; and He was tossed on the bosom of that sea which His hands had made. O reader, pause and meditate on this wondrous sight. Look closely; think deeply. No tongue, no pen, can do justice to such a scene. We cannot expatiate; we can only muse and worship.

But, as we have said, unbelief roused the blessed Lord out of His sleep. "They awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest Thou not that we perish?"

What a question! "Carest Thou not?" How it must have wounded the heart of the Lord Jesus! How could they ever think that He was indifferent to their trouble and danger? How completely must they have lost sight of His love, to say nothing of His power, when they could bring themselves to say, "Carest Thou not?"

And yet, dear Christian reader, have we not in all this a mirror in which to see ourselves reflected? Assuredly we have. How often, in moments of pressure and trial, do our hearts conceive, if our lips do not utter, the question, "Carest Thou not?" It may be we are laid on a bed of sickness and pain, and we know that one word from the God of all power and might could chase away the malady, and raise us up; and yet that word is withheld. Or perhaps we are in need of temporal supplies, and we know that the silver and gold, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, belong to God - yea, that the treasures of the universe are under His hand-and yet, day after day rolls on, and our need is not supplied. In a word, we are passing through deep waters; the storm rages, wave after wave rolls over our tiny vessel, we are brought to our extremity, we are at our wits' end, and our hearts often feel ready to send up the terrible question, "Carest Thou not?"

The thought of this is deeply humbling. To think of our grieving the loving heart of Jesus by our unbelief and suspicion should fill us with the deepest contrition. And then the absurdity of unbelief! How can that One who gave His life for us, who left His glory and came down into this world of toil and misery, and died a shameful death to deliver us from eternal wrath- how can such a One ever fail to care for us? But yet we are ready to doubt, or we grow impatient under the trial of our faith, forgetting that the very trial from which we so shrink, and under which we so wince, is far more precious than gold; for the former is an imperishable reality, whereas the latter must perish in the end. The more that genuine faith is tried, the brighter it shines; and hence the trial, however severe, is sure to issue in praise and honor and glory to Him who not only implants the faith, but also passes it through the furnace, and sedulously watches it therein.

But the poor disciples failed in the moment of trial. Their confidence gave way; they roused their Master from His slumber with that most unworthy question, "Carest Thou not that we perish?"

Alas, what creatures we are! We are ready to forget ten thousand mercies in the presence of a single difficulty. David could say, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul"; and how did it turn out? Saul fell on Mount Gilboa, and David was established on the throne of Israel. Elijah fled for his life at the threat of Jezebel; and what was the issue? Jezebel was dashed to pieces on the pavement, and Elijah was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire. So here, the disciples thought they were going to be lost, with the Son of God on board; and what was the result? The storm was hushed into silence, and the sea became as glass, by that voice which of old had called worlds into existence. "And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."

What a combination of grace and majesty is here! Instead of rebuking them for having disturbed His repose, He rebukes those elements which had terrified them. It was thus He replied to their question, "Carest Thou not?" Blessed Master! Who would not trust Thee? Who would not adore Thee for Thy patient grace and unupbraiding love?

There is something perfectly beautiful in the way in which our blessed Lord rises, without an effort, from the repose of perfect humanity into the activity of essential deity. As man, wearied with His work, He slept on a pillow; as God, He rises and, with His almighty voice, hushes the storm and calms the sea.

Such was Jesus-very God and very man. And such He is now, ever ready to meet His people's need, to hush their anxieties, and remove their fears. Would that we could only trust Him more simply. We have little idea of how much we lose by not leaning more on the arm of Jesus day by day. We are so easily terrified. Every breath of wind, every wave, every cloud, agitates and depresses us. Instead of calmly lying down and reposing beside our Lord, we are full of terror and perplexity. Instead of using the storm as an occasion for trusting Him, we make it an occasion for doubting Him. No sooner does some trifling trouble arise than we think we are going to perish, although He assures us that not a hair of our head can ever be touched. Well may He say to us, as He said to His disciples, "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?"

It would indeed seem at times as though we had no faith. But oh, His tender love! He is ever near to shield and succor us, even though our unbelieving hearts are so ready to doubt and suspect. He does not deal with us according to our poor thoughts of Him, but according to His own perfect love toward us. This is the solace and stay of our souls in passing across life's stormy ocean, homeward to our eternal rest. Christ is in the vessel.

Let this ever suffice. Let us calmly rely on Him. May there ever be, at the very center of our hearts, that deep repose which springs from real trust in Jesus; and then, though the storm rage, and the sea run mountains high, we shall not be led to say, "Carest Thou not that we perish?"

It is impossible that we can perish with the Master on board, nor can we think so, with Christ in our hearts. May the Holy Spirit teach us to make a fuller, freer, bolder use of Christ. We really want this just now, and shall want it more and more. It must be Christ Himself laid hold of and enjoyed in the heart by faith. Thus may it be to His praise and our abiding peace and joy!

We may just notice, in conclusion, the way in which the disciples were affected by the scene on which we have been dwelling. Instead of the calm worship of those whose faith had been answered, they manifest the amazement of those whose fears had been rebuked. "They feared

exceedingly. and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

Surely they ought to have known Him better. Yes, Christian reader, and so should we.

Memories of Bethany: He Led Them Out As Far As Bethany

"He led them out as far as to Bethany." Luke 24:50.

Bethany is not, so far as we know, once referred to in the Old Testament. It is not linked up, therefore, in any special way with the history of Israel, like Bethel or Bethlehem. All the interest that attaches to it is derived solely from association connected with the life of the Lord Jesus. His name and Bethany are inseparably entwined and encircled with the most hallowed memories. It was there He often found a home; it was there He appears always to have been welcome. It was the abode of "Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Here He resorted when He would not pass the night in Jerusalem. It was here they made Him a supper just before His betrayal and crucifixion.

All this helps us to understand why He led His disciples out as far as to Bethany. He leads them to the place where they valued Him. [It was there He retired when His testimony to the Jews was ended, that His heart might rest for a few moments among those whom He loved, who, through grace, loved Him.] It had no other recommendation. No special vision, no famous battle, no remarkable deliverance cast a halo of glory around it. It was enough that hearts beat there in which He was enshrined. To such a place, ere He went up to heaven, Jesus led His disciples.

Has this incident no special lesson for us? Does it not seem to say that what the Lord specially prized were hearts that valued Him? Can anything else atone for the lack of this? Can fine speaking, intellectual discourses, ornate services, priestly pretensions, claims to infallibility, and what not, or even correct scriptural form, make up for the absence of love to Him?

The first event connected with Bethany is Martha receiving Jesus into her house (Luke 10:38). Just previously (see Luke 9) He had been refused hospitality in a village of the Samaritans. How very sweet, therefore, must the hospitality afforded by the home at Bethany have been to Him. Thus Bethany is first of all distinctly connected with offering Christ a welcome to our innermost circle. And it is surprising how much Christianity is always connected with the home. If we are not right there, we cannot be right anywhere. That is, if Christ has not His rightful place at our hearth, He certainly has not in our heart.

Next, we find Mary sitting at Jesus' feet and hearing His word. It is the attitude of one who has learned how Christ has served her, as set forth in the parable of the good Samaritan. Martha was occupied with service to Him. Both are right. But His service to us must be learned first; otherwise we shall never know the true rest which sitting at His feet so perfectly expresses. It was there Mary learned to know the One who had served her.

Do we know anything of Bethany? Have we welcomed Christ into the home and found our place at His feet? Have we reached that spot? Are we sitting at His feet, learning all that He has been to us in death, what He is to us in life, and ever will be? "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

It was from Bethany that Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Thus Bethany becomes associated with Christ's glory as Son of David. It was also associated with His glory as Son of God. Referring to Lazarus, Jesus said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Are we at Bethany? Are these glories constantly before our eyes?

This was the place too that afforded the Lord a temporary haven from the storm that was gathering at Jerusalem - "Now the eventide was come, He went out unto Bethany with the twelve."

It was to the same place the Lord came six days before the last Passover. There they made Him a supper. The scene at supper is depicted by at least three of the evangelists, but to John we are indebted for the fullest particulars. The picture is altogether lovely, the prominent feature about it being that Christ is made much of. "There they made HIM a supper." "She hath wrought a good work upon ME." This, as we have said, is characteristic of Bethany; and this, we believe, is the reason why the Lord led His disciples there. Are we there? Have we the same spirit? The PERSON was everything to their hearts. The miracle lately performed at Bethany had assured them that He was indeed the Son of God. It is everything to know Him. And the three parts taken by Martha, Mary, and Lazarus all flow from that knowledge. Martha serves, but as knowing the One she serves. She would not now say, "Dost Thou not care?" Had He not raised her brother and given back to her one as dear as her own life? Lazarus sits at the table with Him, for he knew the Lord in a way no one else did - One whose voice had reached him in the silence and distance of death. He well knew the response that voice awakens, and he enjoys as a consequence the fullest communion. And Mary - she proves how well she knew Him, and also how well she knew what the occasion demanded. Her whole course tells how she had been impressed with Christ's glory and greatness. She sat at His feet to hear His word; she fell down at His feet when He came to raise her brother; now she is permitted to anoint His feet. It is this fine sensibility that so often seems lacking in us.

"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment." This is Bethany. Need we be astonished that Jesus led His own back to it, where there was a heart that would cheerfully bestow upon Him the very best she had, and that fully recognized His glory by the act of wiping His feet with her hair? "The house was filled with the odor of the ointment." Do we keep it filled? Alas! have we not often filled it with strife and bitterness and jealousy, and with anything but the fragrance of Christ Himself?

There were some - they exist still - who could not appreciate such attention to Christ. They call it waste, or venture to declare there are other objects more worthy. But such is not the mind of Bethany, nor is it the mind of the One who loved its society. "Let her alone," said Jesus; "the poor always ye have with you; but ME ye have not always." How much does that one word "ME" mean to us?

"He led them out as far as to Bethany." "He led them out." He did not conduct them to the temple, and leave them within the only divinely recognized shrine on earth. He did not forever re-consecrate that sacred building - as perhaps one might have thought He would - by taking His stand upon the pinnacle and ascending to heaven from thence. No! He led them out from all such surroundings and associations. He had been with them in Jerusalem. But by His own act He now

sets all that order aside - all that appears to mere sight and sense - and leads them away to what was of infinitely more worth, and incomparably more precious to Him - the associations of Bethany. What are these? The knowledge and appreciation of Himself. Alas, that so many should have made the return journey and have settled once more at Jerusalem! It will be said, But is not this just what the apostles themselves did? They did as to the place. But we are not speaking of a mere place, but of the tone of it. The tone of Jerusalem, as far as Christ was concerned, was either indifference or deadly hostility; that of Bethany, the truest loyalty, devotedness, and love. To which place are we attached? We may be at Jerusalem without being necessarily hostile. Christendom has reared its solemn temples and ordained its priesthood in imitation of Jerusalem; but it is mainly --though done in the name of Christ - a proof of its ignorance of Him, and for its own glorification. Bethany had nothing of this sort of thing to show, but it had something far greater. It was the scene of the glory of the only begotten Son when He raised the dead; it was where His love was known, for "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus"; it was where His sympathy had been fully displayed. "Jesus wept" - and considering who He was, more wonderful than His power were His tears - and it was there they made Him a supper, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

"He led them out as far as to Bethany" - His last journey. Again we ask, Has it no significance for us? There is no record that the Lord was seen by any but His own after His resurrection; and therefore, presumably, no one saw Him on this occasion, or the group that followed Him; and yet, even at this distance of time, it is possible to join that company, at least in heart. Can we hold back? Surely not, when we know who it is that leads. He is the Son of God, the King of glory, the Lord of all, the crucified and risen One. Behind Him the dark grave, the scene of crucifixion, the frowns and scoffs of priests and populace; before Him, glory and the Father's throne, and the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, and already the light of that supernal glory reflected on His brow. And that little band - were they afraid to follow? They had been once, but now all was changed. His mission and death and even His departure so near at hand were all explained, and they followed Him without hesitation or reluctance.

This was no mere excursion, but of momentous import, and to convey a lesson to every succeeding generation of believers. At what hour it occurred we know not. Whether the morning light was fringing the hilltops, or the evening shadows were hastening on, we are not told. At all events, it was the last day on earth for Christ until His return. And His last act was to lead them out - out from all they valued most, but into all He valued most. "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them." And how far did He lead them? He led them out as far as to Bethany. Is it not the character of things associated with that place we want today? May we not easily test ourselves by what occurred there, and find out whether or not we are in it?

Finally, it is the place of truest blessing. They did not go there to get blessing; they went because He led them. But we cannot be in His company without being blessed. "And He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them." He left them there at Bethany - the place connected with His glory and the affections of His people. It is to Bethany He will return. "His feet shall stand... upon the mount of Olives." "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." What have we to do in the meantime but remain in spirit at Bethany?

Is there a Bethany today? Yes, to those who know and value the Son of God. This was the secret of all we find there; and though everything else may have failed, He abides the same forever. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son."

Ministry Other Than Preaching

The caring for souls - the binding up of those that are broken in spirit - the interesting ourselves in the troubles and trials and difficulties of the saints of God - is of great price with Him; and this kind of ministering is, I am afraid, often sadly neglected today.

The Mirage of Life

A little book-"The Mirage of Life" - carries an important lesson, especially for young Christians. To them the world may seem very attractive and alluring; it may appear to offer something of real value that is within their reach. This book points out that the votaries of the world are often disappointed, for that which at first seemed very promising has either eluded them altogether, or brought with it sorrow and trouble. And the ones who have seemed to acquire most in the world, must one day lie down and die, leaving it all behind.

Even the world has a philosophy that the pleasure is in the chase, and not in the prize. How often has it been proved that the world's favors have vanished just as easily and as disappointingly as the wayfarer's mirage in the desert has fled from him when he was faint and famished. The alluring oasis with its promise of water and shade proved to be only a deception to mock him when the reality was most needed.

The world's history is strewn with examples of those who vainly sought for happiness only to find it vanish as quickly as a broken bubble. That this world has its glory is not to be denied; that it is a vain and fleeting glory which will not satisfy the heart of man, is likewise a weighty fact. Solomon was allowed to taste most of the glories and pleasures here, but he wrote after each and all of them, "vanity and vexation of spirit." Oh, why should anyone have to learn the disappointing lesson for himself?

"The Mirage of Life" cites just a few examples to show the character of all here - "the man of fashion, the man of wealth, the hero, the statesman, the orator, the artist, the poet, the monarch," etc. Another book, one too large to be bound in one volume, could be compiled of such cases since the turn of the century. Hitler, Mussolini, the great generals and admirals, kings, rulers, statesmen, captains of industry, financial experts, and countless others, including the Kaiser and the Czar of Russia, would find a place in its pages. Perhaps one of our readers may have the thought that all such cases are found in the records of other countries, and not here. Let us see what a large commercial enterprise in the United States wrote to some of its employees:

"FOOD FOR THOUGHT"

"In 1923 a very important meeting was held at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Attending this meeting were ten of the world's most successful financiers. They were:

"The president of the largest independent steel company.

"The president of the National City Bank.

"The president of the largest utility company.

"The president of the largest gas company.

"The greatest wheat speculator.

"The president of the New York Stock Exchange.

"A member of the President's cabinet.

"The greatest 'Bear' in Wall Street.

"Head of the world's greatest monopoly.

"President of the Bank of the International Settlements.

"We must admit that here was gathered a group of the world's most successful men- at least men who found the secret of 'making' money. Twenty-five years later, let us see what became of them!

"The president of the largest independent steel company, Charles Schwab, died a bankrupt. He lived on borrowed money for five years before his death.

"The president of the greatest utility company, Samuel Insull, died a fugitive from justice, and penniless in a foreign land.

"The president of the greatest gas company, Howard Hopson, became insane.

"The greatest wheat speculator, Arthur Cotten, died abroad, insolvent.

"The president of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, was released from Sing Sing Prison.

"The member of the President's Cabinet, Albert Fall, was pardoned from prison so that he could die at home.

"The greatest 'Bear' in Wall Street, Jesse Livermore, died a suicide.

"The head of the greatest monopoly, Ivar Krueger, died a suicide.

"The president of the Bank of the International Settlements, Leon Fraser, died a suicide.

"Life is tragic when one has plenty to live on, and nothing to live for. These men learned well the art of making money, but not one of them learned how to live! The effort to improve man's material conditions of life, without improving man himself, only hastens the hour of his destruction!"

Truly there is in this "food for thought" for anyone, saved or unsaved. This corporation sought to draw a moral lesson from the list of tragedies, but how, we ask, are you going to improve man himself? The world cast out God's Son and is heading for certain doom; Satan is its god and prince who deceives people with its attractive veneer; and man is lost, has a fallen nature, is an enemy of God, is a sinner on the road to hell, unless and until, through the grace of God, he turns to God in repentance and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. What man needs is a new nature-"ye must be born again"-and a new Object for his heart, entirely outside of this scene altogether.

To our young Christian readers we would say, You need never be disappointed by this world. Do you ask, How? Never expect anything from it. Always remember that it is the same world-even the polite and amiable part of it -that crucified your Savior. The Apostle Paul was never disappointed by it. He said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom

the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. 6:14.

To Paul, the world was as something fully rejected-crucified-and to the world, Paul was despised and rejected, for he was well known to have identified himself with the interests of the One they hated. He neither sought nor wanted its glories. His one object was to press on through it to reach

Christ in glory: "This one thing I do,... I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:13, 14.

Moses at an earlier date forsook Egypt - the world in its glory at that time. What enabled him to do that? He looked forward to another day and had respect unto the recompense of the reward (Heb. 11:24-26).

And you, dear young Christian, will be able to say from the heart,

"O worldly pomp and glory,

Your charms are spread in vain;

I've heard a sweeter story;

I've found a truer gain,"

when you have the Lord Jesus Christ as your great attraction on the one hand, and have God's estimate of the world on the other.

In closing we quote a verse from Isaiah 23, "The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth." v. 9. The world has many glories - political, military, commercial, educational, banking, manufacturing, professional, scientific, and many others-and has its great ones in the earth, but all is going to come down. All the pride of man is to be brought low. The child of God, however, belongs to another scene and cannot afford to indulge in seeking a place here where Christ has none-the day of his exaltation is coming. The same is true with the world's pleasures, and it has many; they are only "for a season" (Heb. 11:25), but for the Christian there are pleasures at His right hand that are "for evermore" (Psalm 16:11). When we walk with God, enjoy communion with Him, have the interests of Christ on our hearts, and have fellowship one with another in these things, then we can taste such lasting pleasures even now. There are pleasures - known only to the obedient child of God-that shall continue right on and be enjoyed more fully in a scene of perfect glory.

Moon Contrasts

They ascended-then descended.

Our Lord descended first. Now He has ascended back to glory.

They glorified man by accomplishing this great feat.

Our Lord glorified God by accomplishing the great work of redemption.

They picked up samples to bring to earth.

Our Lord picked up samples (us) to bring to glory.

They walked-sinners-on the MOON.

Our Lord walked (the sinless ONE) on the earth.

They were provided with uniforms-\$300,000 each.

Our Lord has provided us with ROBES of righteousness. Garments of Salvation. Cost?-no one knows or ever shall. He paid the price in full. Blessed be His Name.

They went to the MOON-knowing not what they would find. Our Lord came to earth, knowing full well what HE would FIND-

"A treasure hid in a field," "A pearl of great price."

Their wives were waiting for them on their return to earth. His BRIDE is waiting for Him from heaven.

On the MOON-they were dependent on men below on earth. On the earth-we are dependent on the MAN in the glory.

It took them four days to reach the MOON.

"In a moment" we shall be "translated" to "the third heaven."

Praise the Lord.

My Neighbor

Luke 10:25-37

It is ever the way of man to want to be accredited for what he thinks himself to be. He would justify himself. And to do this, he would have the way of life to accommodate his convenience. He goes about to establish his own righteousness, not submitting himself to the righteousness of God; for the blessed thing is, God has a righteousness to render to man (Job 33:26).

Yes, "grace reign [s] through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

How honoring to God, for man weighed is found wanting. "There is none righteous,... there is none that seeketh after God.... There is none that doeth good, no, not one." What a sweeping verdict! Who can gainsay it, when this "is written" as God's own summing up?

In Luke 10:25-37, we have man's valuation of himself rebuked, but oh, after the divine way, by showing the riches of grace meeting the reality of the need.

A certain lawyer, doubtless filled with himself, and thinking to tempt Christ, said, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" What should he do? The law had promised life to as many as continued doing all its requirements. It was holy, just, and good, asking nothing from man but what was right and equitable. It contained two tables-one in regard to God, the other in regard to man-and each must be lived up to the full standard; God, with all the heart and soul and strength; man, our neighbor, as ourselves. How simple the announcement! But, how about obedience to it? The lawyer evidently had a little conscience as to loving God, and, no doubt, thought that his untested feelings toward God would pass for obedience. Indeed, many are unconscious of the deep hatred toward God that is in them, while the very low estimate they form of what is due to Him is the very result and token of it.

Thus he passed to the second part of the commandments. And he, willing to justify himself, said, "And who is my neighbor?" Strange question! If he has not yet known his neighbor, what then of his state? If he has, how little he was acting upon this command, by tempting Jesus. There is in the stupid state of man's conscience a thought that somehow he does obey this. What do you say? If your neighbor's house were burning, or if he is evil spoken of, do you feel it as much as if it were yourself? Or, if he has lost money, is it quite so bad to you as if you had lost yours? But suppose he were one in an inferior circle to yours, or your enemy, would you class him as your neighbor? Were he degraded to the lowest place, would it be the same trial to you as though you were there? Men make grades and nationalities, and caste, and by these avoid the force of such a law. Their neighbor is one of their own rank, of whom they can receive again. Thus they make void the law of God.

Man, indeed, needs the act of a neighbor - one to love him where he is - for he is lost, guilty, and ruined by sin. Such is his real condition; and, withal, he is "without strength." Will anyone die for him? for death is what his condition and guilt incur. For a good man some would even dare to die.

But does any care enough for his fellow man to take him out of his place of wrath and sin, by taking his place? Alas, here man was powerless; this was what the law could not do.

There was One only that sold all that He had and gave to the poor, that gave up His place in glory, emptied Himself, and then gave up all that He had, as an obedient one, always pleasing the Father, and came to the cross to be forsaken of God, for the sake of man who was His enemy. Was not that loving His neighbor as Himself?

So, when the question was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" our Lord gave this striking story of how a neighbor is to be traced and recognized.

Here was a poor man, robbed, stripped, and left half dead. The priest and the Levite were not the ones who acted as neighbors. They were not "journeying," but only "by chance" going that way. All the ritual and the service under the law came in only "by the way" - came where man was, to be sure, but they could only look on him. If he were able to present himself before God as a worshiper, they might use their office; but out in the gutter, bruised and broken and half dead, their offices could avail nothing. They loved not their neighbor as themselves, for they passed by on the other side.

One must be "journeying" to find the lost, even as the merchantman in Matthew 13 was seeking goodly pearls. It is the activity of love, prepared by having the "oil and wine" to meet the object of need. So Christ told the young man to sell all that he had and give to the poor. The poor must be sought. Man's way is to let him be a beggar first, and then dole out a pittance, because of his continued coming, or to sound a trumpet before him-to be seen of men.

But this One that journeyed was a Samaritan, cast into the place of reproach, and esteemed an enemy by the Jew, for the Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans. So Christ was the hated One, coming to do good to those who spitefully treated Him. But He came this way and "saw" us in the condition in which Satan had left us. And here we have a lovely series of actions, all on His part, none on his who fell among thieves. He saw, had compassion, went to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, set him on His own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him, being chargeable for his entire maintenance while there, and finally gave intimation of a speedy return by leaving two days' support, with the possibility of a little tarrying beyond it! How thoroughly the case is met, and with what thoughtfulness, even to the wants of the heart. Ah! we see easily that this is none other than our heavenly Kinsman, our neighbor who "forasmuch" as we were "partakers of flesh and blood,... likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." "For He does not indeed take hold of angels by the hand, but He takes hold of the seed of Abraham" (J.N.D. Trans.).

Here was life and healing and joy, first of all, in the oil and wine. And it is blessed to see in type in the wine, that which makes glad the heart of God and man. Man, in his thought of remedy, goes no further than what he fancies will suit man, leaving God's joy out of the case. He would love his neighbor without loving God first, which is the divine order and manner. Yes, I can know that in being met in grace in Christ, my salvation gives God delight, intensely satisfies everything in Him, giving me life before Him, according to His own perfect mind. Is not that something wonderful to begin with?

But in this perfect picture, there is something far richer than simply meeting us down in our own low place of misery. We are called upon not only to know that we have been so loved that He gave His Son for us, but we are invited to behold the manner of His love, that we should be called the sons of God too. In this beautiful story it is told by the taking the man off from his own feet, and putting him in the place from which the helper had descended. He has a new position altogether. Instructive, indeed, is this; for man's thought is to be helped to stand on his own feet, to be made a better man, to have a new start, it may be, but to go on, on his own ground, and to look back upon a life well spent. God's way is the "new man." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]." "In Christ" is the peculiar title given to our standing, and it is a reality; for as to ourselves as sinners, we are dead, crucified. And the power of our walk is reckoning ourselves dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord; and thus sin shall not have dominion over us. He sets us "on his own beast." "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2:20.

There is a sweet suggestion of stranger-ship in bringing him to an "inn." Where else could the Samaritan take him in the land of the Jews? He himself was a stranger there, and a pilgrim, journeying. It was not home. And so he gives this object of his care a like character, and only a temporary home, sufficient for a pilgrim. The moment we are blessed by Him who had compassion on us, and set in His own place, lifted off of our own standing, and set on heavenly places, "set... on his own beast," we take His relationship here of stranger-ship. We are no more of the world. And as such we are living on Him. It is His money that keeps us while we are at the inn. Are we at the inn? Do we know only the content of "having food and raiment [covering]," getting nothing from the world? The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Do we know we are, as such, then, shut up to Him for everything?

But then there is a secret of the heart told us still further. The man is valued by his neighbor, and so he is coming again. His care does not cease at the door of the inn, nor does he delegate the case to the keeper of the inn entirely. For how could he delegate the love that carried the oil and wine, and got off his beast, and bore this object of his love on it? No! He values the one he has helped, and he is coming again! And for the little while, he is to be kept by the one he has appointed.

Here the story ceases; but it might be asked, Would not the heart of the man at the inn be looking forward with joyful anticipation to see the face of him who is so thoughtful of all his need, and is coming again? We are not told of his thoughts or feelings at all, but only his need, and how thoroughly it was met, as in the 15th chapter the prodigal son does not tell out his joy, but the father does his! Oh, these divine touches, giving us to understand that we have everything in God, all understood, all met, fully and according to His own heart! "Go, and do thou likewise." What a lesson in philanthropy! Nothing short of bringing man into the new creation, and nothing else than the preaching of the cross of Christ.

Blessed be His name! He came not to make us better sons of Adam, but to take us out of all this - not to cultivate something in us, but to pour in the oil and wine. and lift us into His own place, and keep us entirely for Himself, and thus to take us to Himself. "This is my beloved, and this is my friend."

From Sound Words

Do not have your concert first, and tune your instrument afterward. Begin the day with the Word of God and prayer, and get first of all in harmony with Him!

Natural Resources Cut off to Trust in God

There is one great truth connected with Christianity which we do not think enough about-the peculiar place the bodies of the Lord's people occupy in His dealings with them. We must not forget that the body is the Lord's, "the body... for the Lord; and the Lord for the body" (1 Cor. 6:13). Sometimes people make this a plea for indulgence, and sometimes for neglecting the body, but it ought to keep me from erring on either side.

It is an amazing fact that this body, once the vessel in which Satan's malignity was displayed against Christ, is now the vessel in which God is displaying the glory of His Son. I would call your attention to a passage in Phil. 1:20, where the Apostle speaks of his earnest expectation, and his hope that in nothing he might be ashamed, "but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." In this vessel of clay, our body, that is the very sphere in which God proposes to display the superiority of His Son. If we reckoned thus, how differently should we think of bodily trial; He wants everything to be tributary to His great end - the magnifying in us, the displaying of the excellence of His own dear Son.

When we get into a difficulty, what is our first thought? Is not our first question generally, How can I escape from it? Rather let it be, How shall I best glorify God? How shall Christ be magnified? How wonderful a thing it is! Think of the blessed Son, the anointed of God, magnified in my poor body. The Christ at God's right hand magnified in me! I cannot, of course, make Christ greater than He is-that were impossible, that's not the thought- but all that Christ is to God, and for God, should come out in this worthless weak vessel; nothing less is His thought.

There is danger of our making the things of Christ as so many doctrines to which we give our assent. Remember that Christianity is not a well framed statement of theology (though, of course, it is a most full and perfect revelation of God); but Christianity, true Christianity, is a living power which ought to be displayed in me, seen in me, every moment. God never intended that the truths of Christianity should be separated from the Person of Christ. It is the display of His Person that gives force and power, and God would make all circumstances contribute to our showing out Christ. The Apostle says, "For to me to live is Christ."

The first chapter of 2 Corinthians shows us the Apostle in circumstances into which he was brought by his testimony - all hope, humanly speaking, was gone. That was God's object. I suppose there are few but know more or less of what it is to prove something of this. When God closes every door, what are we apt to do? The tendency in us is to try and escape of ourselves. The force and energy of our natural character comes out amazingly when we are pressed. Here the Apostle gets the sentence of death in himself. God brings him face to face with circumstances that shut out every hope, in order that he might turn his eye to the living God. Do we see this is God's way - to cut us off from natural resources? Here the Apostle gets the sentence of death in himself, and looks up to the Quickener of the dead.

"We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead."

It is God who does this to meet the natural tendency of our hearts to turn to an "arm of flesh." The Apostle gets the sentence of death in himself that he might not trust in himself. It is wonderful how self-confidence sticks to us; we do not deny this truth as a matter of doctrine, but we do very much in practice. It is one of the last things we learn, to have "no confidence in the flesh."

What a living resource for the heart is God, the living God, who quickens the dead. I look to Him, and not only this, but all that He is in Himself is my portion, apart from the question of all that He does. I have this wonderful resource - God Himself- apart from deliverances, apart from how He will intervene for me. It is an unspeakable comfort this - we have the Deliverer before we get the deliverance. That is what the Lord wanted to teach the disciples in the storm. He said to them, as it were Have you so far forgotten the fact that you have the Maker of the bread in the boat with you? He would make my heart know the superiority of this knowledge-that I have the Deliverer Himself, who is above and beyond all circumstances.

We sometimes sing that hymn, "Jesus, Thou art enough!" Are we not wonderfully taken aback sometimes? Dear brethren, we must look for reality. God looks for it. Unreality is abroad. Two things characterize profession now - unreality and unrest. Now Christ gives both reality and rest. The Apostle could say, "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in. God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver."

He hath delivered, He doth, He will-past, present, and future. The Apostle knew God, knew Him as a delivering God, and thus he could speak as confidently of the future as he could of the past.

Nearness to Christ and Its Effects

This is the time of trial for the beloved brethren gathered to the name, and for the name, of the Lord Jesus, because the pretensions and energy of man are strongly manifesting themselves. It is not an easy thing to content ourselves with being simply that which we are in reality before God. Times of "revival" make manifest the thoughts of many hearts; but to learn, in a day of grace, to be still, and know that God is God, is completely above the education of the flesh.

The spirit of the age affects many Christians, who labor to restore old things for the service of God, instead of being broken before Him by the sense of their downfall. I do not at all doubt their sincerity, but I fear that they have not judged themselves; and they do not know the true state of ruin surrounding them, so that they cannot have an adequate confidence in the living God alone, as the God of all resources in the midst of a scene where man has failed everywhere and in everything. We ought never to be afraid of the whole truth. To confess openly that which we are in the presence of that which God is, is always the way to peace and blessing. Even when only two or three are together before God, if it be thus with them, there will be no disappointments or deluded hopes. If the wells dug in Abraham's day have been filled and stopped up by earth, we have to do with a God who can bring water out of the stricken rock, and make it flow in the dry desert, to refresh His thirsty, weary people. I do not envy the labor of those who dig channels in the sand for water courses which, after all, may take another direction.

God's ways of acting in all times of blessing consist in reproducing the glories and the work of the Lord Jesus. The darker becomes the long night of apostasy, the more distinctly the Light of Life makes itself seen. The word for the remnant is, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." He is the only center of gathering. Men may make confederations among themselves, having many things for their object or aim; but the communion of saints cannot be known unless each line converges toward this living Center. The Holy Ghost does not gather saints around mere views, however true they may be, upon that which the Church is, upon that which it has been, or that which it may be, on the earth; but He always gathers them around that blessed Person who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20. One may be certain that Satan and the flesh will seek to resist this work and this path of the Lord, or seek to overturn them.

We need to be watchful against boasting, as people do in these days; we need to be still in the presence of God. There is much independence and self-will almost everywhere. "We shall do great things" is the most inappropriate cry we can hear just at this time, when the light has shown how little we have done. God would have us know His truth as that which delivers us. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This liberty is not that of the flesh, because it penetrates our hearts with all the reality of a separation well known to God, who is holy. We enter unhindered into this position, with hearts broken and humiliated. If anyone speaks of separation from evil, without being humiliated, let him take care lest his position becomes simply only that which at all times has constituted sects and produced doctrinal heresy.

As to our service, we have seen our precious Lord and Master, in profound self-abasement, wash the feet of His disciples, making Himself an example - for whom? For us, surely. Now I know, at the present time, of no service which is worthy of Him, or agreeable to Him, if it is not done in humiliation. This is not the time to speak of a place for ourselves. If the Church of God, so dear to Christ, is dishonored in this world - if it is scattered, ignorant, afflicted - he who has the mind of Christ will always take the lowest place. True service of love will seek to give according to the need; and because of their need, he will never think of slighting the objects of the Master's love because of their necessity. Men taught of God, for His service, go forth from a place of strength where they have learned their own weakness and their own nothingness. They find that Jesus is everything in the presence of God, and Jesus is everything for them in all things, and everywhere. Such men, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, are real helps for the children of God, and they will not contend for a place, or a distinction, or for authority among the scattered flock. The communion of a man with God about the Church will show itself in a willingness to be nothing in himself, and such a one will rejoice in his heart to spend and to be spent.

In our personal recollections we have lessons to learn with fear and trembling. May the thought of power never occupy our hearts too much. "Power belongeth unto God." Many years ago there was a time of great excitement; everywhere people sought power, and would have crossed the seas to find it. Many thought of the Church, but it was rather the Church in power. Feeling that power was lost, they said, How are we to regain it? Thenceforth they again occupied themselves with earthly things, as if they could work deliverance on this earth. Many remember how, at that time, Satan was able to bring man forward; the result has been the same everywhere.

Whatever was the form that such efforts adopted, they were followed by deceptions, and invariably it was agreed to renounce them (for all failed of their end); and nothing but sects was the result. There were deadly marks of hostility against the Lord Jesus; or else, if His name was left without spot, the path was prepared for another terrible result, namely, to annul the presence of the Holy Spirit who alone can glorify Jesus.

The great Shepherd will not forget the work done in His name, with a willing heart, for His beloved sheep, so poor and needy. Abundant praise and an unfading crown of glory in the day of His appearing will be the portion of those who act thus. God will remember all He can remember, and nothing will lose its reward. I am not surprised at the disappointments which have followed all the efforts people have made in the Church to introduce some formal system of ministry, authority, or government. God cannot permit us to enlarge the ground upon which, in these days, He is pleased to find and to bless His saints. We know well what is the way of the flesh which has never concerned itself at all about the fall of the Church: it is to seek to occupy a position among men in the place where God has never granted it.

There is great instruction in the conduct of Jerubbabel, recounted in the book of Ezra. The son and heir of David takes his place with the remnant returned from the captivity; he is content to labor at Jerusalem without throne or crown. Building the altar of the Lord and the house of God, he served God and his generation in all simplicity. Heir of the place which Solomon had occupied in days of prosperity and glory, he spoke not of his birth, or of his rights. However, he is faithful in all the path of separation, of sorrow, and of conflicts he is obliged to pass through.

May the Lord give us to be more and more confident in Himself in these days of trial. "When I am weak, then am I strong," is a lesson Paul had to learn by a very humiliating process. If we speak of our testimony upon the earth, it will soon be evident that all is but weakness; and, like the seed lost upon the wayside, the testimony will likewise end to our shame. But if the living God has by us a testimony to His own glory upon the earth, then the sense of weakness will only bring us more directly into the place of His power. An apostle with a thorn in the flesh learned the sufficiency of the grace of Christ. A little remnant is reunited and gathered, having nothing wherein it can glory in the flesh; but it is thus that it is ready to remain faithful to the name of Jesus, when that which seemed to be something before men had failed.

Neither the anger, nor the prudence, nor the pretensions of man can do anything in the state of confusion in which the Church is now. I freely own that I have no hope in the efforts which many make to assure themselves an ecclesiastical position. When the house is ruined in its foundations by an earthquake, it matters little how one tries to make it an agreeable dwelling place. We shall do better to remain where the first discovery of the ruin of things by man's deed has placed us—with our faces in the dust.

Such is the place which belongs to us by right; and, after all, it is the place of blessing. In Revelation, it is in falling at the feet of Christ that John learns the actual state of the churches. Afterward, he was taken to heaven, that from thence he might see the judgments coming subsequently upon the earth; but the evil in the Church cannot be well known, unless one is humbled at the feet of Jesus.

I have read of a time when several were gathered together in such sorrow of heart, that for a long time they could not utter a single word; but the floor of the meeting room was wet with their tears. If the Lord would grant us such meetings again, it would be our wisdom to frequent these houses of tears. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Psalm 126:5. It is not only for the earthly remnant that this is true, it is also written for us. I would willingly take a long journey to join these afflicted ones; but I would not go a step with the object of receiving from the hands of most excellent men power to overturn all today, and reconstruct tomorrow.

All we can do is to walk watchfully, but quietly, thinking of the interests of the Lord Jesus, and having nothing for ourselves, nothing to gain, and nothing to lose. The path of peace, the place of testimony, is in seeking to please God. We need to watch over ourselves lest, after having been preserved from the corruption of the age by the very precious truths revealed to us in our weakness, we should be taken in the net of presumption, or thrown into insubordination. These are things which God can never recognize or tolerate, since we are called to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The Word of God remains the same today as always. Nothing which has happened has changed His purpose, which is to glorify the Lord Jesus. If we are humble before Him, all that which is for the glory of Christ will be of the greatest importance to us. What would we more?

No Difference

Explain the difference between "in Christ" in Romans and in Ephesians.

Answer: They are the same thing. In Romans you get the fact merely, but in Ephesians you get the counsels of God regarding us as in Christ.

Nothing but Christ

We have an excellent touchstone by which to try all sorts of teaching and preaching. The most spiritual teaching will ever be characterized by a full and constant presentation of Christ. The Spirit cannot dwell on aught but Jesus. Of Him He delights to speak. He delights in setting forth His attractions and excellencies. Hence, when a man is ministering by the power of the Spirit of God, there will always be more of Christ than anything else in his ministry. There will be little room in such ministry for human logic and reasoning. Such things may do very well when a man desires to set forth himself; but the Spirit's sole object - be it well remembered by all who minister - will ever be to set forth Christ.

One Who Had Lost an Only Son: Reflections and Experiences

The soul ought not to need it, but still it is conscious that what has happened in the midst of us has given a fresh sense of oneness with the Lord. The thought that one who has been my object for so many years is now in His company as His object, tells me that there is another link between the heart and heaven. One whom I-so lately appropriated here, my Lord now appropriates in paradise. In circumstances I am thus nearer to Him, and He is of a mind to have it so. The unjealous love of the blessed Lord allows this.

And this has been much prized by me lately. The Lord warrants our finding mere circumstances a help to our hearts, even in those cases in which He might have said to us, that He Himself was all-sufficient. He is a jealous God, I know, and will not allow us to have any other. He is a jealous Savior, I also know, and will not allow us to have any other. But in a great sense, He is not a jealous Friend. He allows other connections and affections to move our hearts, as well as Himself. When Paul saw the brethren he took courage (Acts 28:15). Did the Lord resent this? Did He rebuke Paul's experience at that moment as though it had done wrong to Him? Did He tell him that he had His presence before, and that that ought to have been enough for him? No. He warranted His servant thus finding refreshment in the countenance and companionship of brethren. And so to this hour He is well pleased and only well pleased when our poor hearts are open to like influences.

Yes, He allows all this, and more than allows it. Prayer too, and the sweetness of being alone with Him, are more to the soul than ever. And this He also warrants. He gives our hearts liberty to determine the character of our communion with Him. Let it be, He says, according to your condition. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." This is not the way of a master, or a patron. The patron's pleasure or humor must give color to the scene around him. It was dangerous to sully the presence of the Persian King with sadness. There was danger of death if one had a heavy countenance there (Neh. 2:1, 2). But God's presence gives play to the heart and its conditions, whatever they may be. If "such things have befallen" us (Lev. 10:19), we need not eat the sacrifices. If we be in a strange land, the harp of God may be hung by our hand, which should have awakened it, on the willows. "Is any afflicted? let him pray."

I have felt the grace of such a word as this. It indulges nature, and makes affliction welcome in the sanctuary. The full acceptableness of our communion with our Lord is not for a moment to be questioned, because the affections of nature are giving it its character.

The recollection of our boy is one of great delight to me, as a witness of the way of God with the soul. And in that recollection (vivid as it will be, I doubt not, for the rest of my days) what a companion for my journey onward has my God given me! But the loss of his presence and his voice is what the like trial alone can teach any to understand. Nothing remains to our hearts now of this joy from our child, but "the echo of it in memory's land." But I ask myself, What is the comfort that I desire to enjoy under this? I believe I can somewhat feel that it is this-that my Father still enjoys that cry of conscious adoption from my lips, as from thousands beside. Our God delights to

have His house and His ear filled with the living witness that it is children who are under His roof and at His side.

Was not God's hand known in giving Job a family at the beginning? Was not the same hand seen in taking them away as with a stroke? And was not the same hand still traced in giving him another family, and in making his latter end better than his beginning? And so in our little history. It was the Lord who gave us our child some twenty years ago; it was His hand that lately took him from the midst of us; and it was the precious power of His Spirit that has left with us the remembrance of such a work in his soul, as in a great sense makes our latter end, as parents, better than our beginning.

And I have learned with a fresh witness how dear to the Lord is a spirit of entire dependence. For there is nothing in the recollections of my child which so affects me as his state of dependence upon me, and the freedom with which at all times he used me. He wanted me by night and by day. He wanted me to do the smallest and meanest services for him. His helplessness, from the loss of one arm and the disease of the other, was such that I was as a nail or a finger to him, as well as an arm or a hand. But let the service be as trivial or as menial as it could be, he knew his heartiest welcome to it, and without apology used it at all times.

There is nothing to my heart like the recollection of this. I am sure that I can say that. It teaches me afresh to think of my Father. How sure am I at this moment that nothing in His saints is more acceptable with Him than this same ready and confiding use of Him. The recollection that my child needed me in all things, and used me in all things, is the sweetest and tenderest possession of my heart. And if we that are evil understand these affections and joys, how much more our heavenly Father! Our services are due to our divine Master, and acceptable with Him. But they are not to His heart what our confidence and use of Him is. To rest in His everlasting, personal love is the highest joy we can afford Him.

The Peace of God: Heart's Ease

"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:6-7. This is true heart's ease, and our God would graciously give it to us at all times. It matters not what our condition may be, it is our privilege to enjoy heart's ease, inasmuch as we are called to cast every care upon One who is as willing as He is able, and as able as He is willing, to bear it for us. "Cast thy burden upon the LORD." "What then? Is it, "He will remove it"? No; but "He shall sustain thee." This is far better. The heart may often long to have the "burden" removed altogether, but it is infinitely more gracious of the Lord to sustain us. This latter is the true secret of "heart's ease." It brings us into closer contact- deeper intimacy-with the Lord, and this is just what we want. He, in His tender love, desires to make a most blessed exchange with us; He takes our care, and gives us His peace. What an exchange! He would not have a single care upon our hearts. He would fain have our hearts as free from care as our consciences are free from guilt. He has given us righteousness instead of guilt, and He would give us peace instead of care.

How gracious of God thus to occupy Himself about us! He occupies Himself about our very failures and follies, in order to deliver us from them; and He occupies Himself about our anxieties in order to relieve us of them, and fill our hearts with His own ineffable peace. He positively says to us in language as plain as language can be, Give Me your care, whatever it is, little or great, it matters not- personal, domestic, commercial, or whatever else it be- just give it to Me and I will, assuredly, give you instead, My peace which passes all understanding. Precious grace! May there be a full response thereto on our part. Why should we keep our cares when God wants to have them? Why should we be careful about ourselves when God is caring for us? He is ever thinking of us. He has deigned to count the very hairs of our head. Could care possibly be more minute or tender? Could knowledge possibly be more intimate?

And what is the issue of all this? To what does it lead? Are our hearts thus freed from every care-left without occupation or object? No; blessed be God, His exchange reaches higher still. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you."

Here is the blessed issue to which the Holy Ghost conducts our souls. He introduces us to "the God of peace." Having freed our hearts from every care, and given us His own peace, He presents Himself as the Object to be enjoyed by our tranquilized hearts. In other words, instead of care, we have peace; and instead of self, we have God.

It is of all importance for the Christian to remember that he is brought to God now. He has not to wait till he gets to heaven to enjoy God; he can enjoy Him now. "Christ also hath once suffered for

sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." We are as fully brought to God now, so far as title is concerned, as ever we shall be. Christ died to put away our sins; He lives to take away our care and it is our privilege, with a conscience free from guilt and a heart free from care, to delight in God Himself. This is heart's ease.

Perfection

Hebrews 6

Nothing seemed to be a greater burden on the heart of Paul than to keep the saints up to their privileges. The Hebrews saw that Christ had died for them, though this had not the power over them which it ought to have had; but they were risen with Him also. They were in Christ in heavenly places within the veil, and the question was, were they realizing that?...

Freshness of affection and quickness of understanding go together. There is less spring, less apprehension, less clearness when our hearts are not happy. On the other hand, my judgment is clear when my affections are warm. Motives that acted before cease to be motives when my affections are warm. Freshness of affection being lost, the Hebrews were "dull of hearing," and so were "become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." And then the Apostle explains that those who use "milk" are unskillful in the word of righteousness and are babes; while "strong meat" belongs to those, not who have made great progress but, who are of full age - men in the truth in opposition to being children or babes - and who have "their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

But how can I separate the "knowledge of good and evil" from the knowledge of Christ? If I were to try to separate between them of myself, shutting Christ out, how could I? He is my standard of good; and it is what I find in Him that gives me power to judge what is evil. How can I walk as He walked without Him? "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ [or, the word of the beginning of Christ], let us go on unto perfection."

Instead of wasting your time with what has passed away, go on to the full revelation of Christ. Be at home there, and understanding what the will of the Lord is. For how can I walk as He walked without Him? I know not how to attempt it. The secret of everything is found in that truth, "Ye are complete in Him." As Christ Himself also has said, "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me." But what is that? and where is Christ now? In heaven. Then I am there too, and my affections should be there also. My hope is to be thoroughly identified with Him. For the portion I have is what He has - life, glory, all that He has risen to - and all my associations are with Himself. There is the difference between "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" and the full perfection. Of Christ Himself it is said (chap. 5:9), "Being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."

Now He was not made perfect down here, but in being glorified in heaven. He went through the experience down here; as it is said, "He... learned.. obedience by the things which He suffered," and then went into heaven to be Priest, because our blessings and associations and hopes are all up there. He is "made perfect" as our High Priest in heaven, and not down here. He had not received that point in the counsels of God in glory, when He was down here. Now that He is there, He has associated me with Himself in that place. I can see that Christ has been through this world so as to be able to sympathize with me in all my sorrows and all my trials; and He has also borne

my sins in His own body on the tree. But where is He now? He is in heaven; and I am there too in spirit, and He will soon bring me there in fact. Where He is, is His being "made perfect." The work is done, and now He is showing me the effect of its being done, and is teaching me the walk that belongs to the redemption He has wrought out. He has taken my heart and associated me with Himself, and He says that is the perfection I am to go on to.

Where did Paul see Christ? Not on earth, for long after He had left the earth he was a persecutor; but he saw Him, as we all know, in heavenly glory. His only knowledge of Christ at all was of a Christ in heaven. His course on earth he might learn; but the revelation of Christ that brought his soul into the presence of God in the power of an accomplished redemption, was the revelation of Christ in heaven and in glory. Hence he says, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." The Christ he wanted to "win" (as he says in Phil. 3) was a glorified Christ. It may cost me my life, but never mind. This is my object; after that I am reaching. I am alive from the dead, because Christ is; and I want to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. I am not in the flesh, but in Christ. I have the consciousness that this work of Christ has put me in a new place (not yet glorified in body, but) in a new place as to my life and associations and home; and this is the perfection we are to go on to....

In the example of Abraham, the Apostle presents an encouragement to their faith, which needed to be strengthened. Abraham had the promise of God, and he believed it; he had His oath, and he trusted it; but we have more. It is not to us that God presents a promise of future blessings, and adds an oath to assure us of their accomplishment; but He has performed all that He calls us to believe. We have a redemption now in the presence of God. Christ, having wrought the work, is sitting down in the presence of God, and in spirit has brought us there. But we have more than that; for, in hope, we are partakers of all the glory which belongs to that redemption.

We have life, redemption, the Holy Ghost as the seal, and more. The forerunner is gone in, and the Holy Ghost gives us the consciousness of our union with Him, and not merely that our sins are put away through the bloodshedding of Christ. We have the Spirit in virtue of Christ's redemption, and He is come to tell us that we are in that Christ, who wrought the redemption, and is now in the power of an endless life within the veil.

But what is the practical consequence of all this? Why, if the glory He has is mine, and I am going on after Him, then all the world is but dross and dung in my esteem. This will be faith's estimate of everything in the world, when Christ is filling the heart's affections, and when the soul is pressing on after Him, in the certain hope of being forever with Him. One moment's real apprehension of Christ in the glory is sufficient to dim the brightness and glitter of every earthly thing; but the soul must be occupied alone with Christ for this.

If our affections and desires are lingering on earth, or stopping short of a glorified Christ in heaven, as the One in whom our life is hid, and to whom we are presently to be conformed in glory, and that in the glory where He is, we shall find soon that earthly things are something more than dross and dung. Leave a stone on the ground for a time, and you will find that it will gradually sink into it. And our hearts, if they are not practically in heaven with Christ, will soon become attached to earthly things.

There is a constant tendency in earthly things to press down the affections. Duties are more apt to lead away the soul from God than open sin. Many a Christian has been ensnared by duties, whose heart would have shrunk from open sin. But we have only one duty in all the varying circumstances of life-to serve Christ. And we should remember that if things on earth are dark and the heart is tested in journeying through the world, all on the side of God is bright. "Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us go on unto perfection" (marginal reading).

Perhaps Today

A traveler was once being shown over a beautiful estate in northern Italy. He was charmed with the beauty of the garden, and the perfect order in which it was kept. He was much surprised to learn that for twenty-five years the gardener had labored there, and during those years his master had visited the place only four times; and for the past twelve years he had not been there at all. Also, the steward who was responsible to give the master's orders lived at a distance and never came.

"One would think that you were expecting your master tomorrow," observed the visitor.

"No, today, sir, today," was the faithful servant's answer.

Is this how we are acting? Are we doing our work in such a manner as though we were expecting our Lord today? He has promised, "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. 22:20), and He has told us to "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13).

Are we living as though we were not expecting Him at all, or can we say the thought before our hearts is, "perhaps today"?

The Epistles of Peter

I was thinking lately of the difference in character between the two epistles of Peter. I think you will see them to be thus:

In the first, he strengthens the saints against all kinds of suffering. In the second, he warns them of all kinds of deceit. He contemplates the enemy, as it were, as the lion in the first, and the serpent in the second. It may be for righteousness' sake, or it may be in conflict with the evil that works in our own members, or from the assaults of him who goes about as a roaring lion. It may be suffering then of very different kinds, but still what he looks at throughout. The first epistle is the suffering of the saints-faith cast into the trial, as gold is cast into the furnace, that it may be found unto "praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." And the temper of mind which he especially commends to the saints in connection with this suffering state, I think you will find to be subjection; he is constantly enforcing that in them. Whatever relationship he addresses, it is still the duty of subjection that he seems to have in mind; and there is a moral connection between these things; for if we own this to be the suffering age, we shall likewise see clearly that it is the age for exercising the spirit of subjection, or self-renunciation. If I am seeking to please myself, or do my own will, I cannot honestly confess that the Church is now to count on trial and sorrow.

But in the second epistle, it is deceit that he contemplates. He fortifies the saints against the false teachers and the scoffers, the error of the wicked; and the temper of mind which he seeks to cultivate in them, as security against all that, is the diligence of growing in grace and in knowledge; for in that indeed lies their security. If we are not exercising ourselves in the good, the evil will get ahead and find its advantage over us; and thus the moral connection here is as perfect and intelligible as in the first epistle. Growth in grace and knowledge is the security of the saint against the deceit of the serpent - subjection of mind, and self-renunciation, our strength in meeting the roaring of the lion.

The Need of the Exercise of Practical Grace

In Hebrews 12, two mountains are spoken of - one that speaks of law, and one that speaks of grace. And it is an important question for our souls, to which one of these mounts we are brought; for, in connection with one, we have to do with God as making demands upon us; while in connection with the other, we have to do with God as acting in grace. "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (for they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) but ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

God had spoken the law to Israel at Mount Sinai, and their responsibility was according to the just requirements of that law. In this they failed, and utterly broke down; and in the days of Eli, the ark - the only remaining link between Jehovah and His people - was taken by the Philistines. At the end of this career of failure, God came in grace, and chose David the king who, with his son Solomon, founded the temple on Mount Sion. This was the expression of God's grace to a failing people, when all was over on the ground of responsibility under the law.

And this is the grace according to which God had visited the Hebrew saints who accepted the Messiah. It is the same grace that has taken us up, and that goes on with us day by day. And on this principle only can we get on with God. God acts toward us in grace. This is an immense truth for our souls to grasp; for only as we lay hold of this can we realize the character of our relationships with God and with one another as Christians, and the principles that are to govern us in our ways with one another. Our sins have been purged through the blood of Christ. This is pure grace.

But is not holiness required? Without holiness no man can see the Lord, we are told in verse 14. Is this grace also? The need of holiness surely is not grace; but if God's character and nature are such that none can be in His presence without holiness, He furnishes it to us in grace, blessed be His name! We have it not of, or in, ourselves; but He makes us "partakers of His holiness," even if He has to chasten us in order to break our wills, and bring us into that exercise of soul in which we can receive all from Him. All blessing flows down from Him in perfect grace, and our place before Him is that of subject receivers.

But now if God acts toward us on the principle of grace, we are to be imitators of Him, as dear children. ("Grace is the principle on which we are to act toward one another. Do we sufficiently realize this in our souls, so as practically to act according to divine principles? We find in the

beginning of Hebrews 12, that we are in the race course, and weights are to be laid aside, and sin which entangles the feet; and then God comes in and helps us by chastening, making us partakers of His holiness. Now we are not alone in this path. There is a company - the whole company of God's people - moving on together toward Him who has finished the course of faith, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God, but who will soon rise up to receive His own. With this company we have to do. It is not a mere selfish running where only one receives the prize. We all journey on together, and, as in a flock of sheep, there are the weak and the lame, not to be left behind, but to be helped on. There are "hands that hang down," and there are "feeble knees." How are we to act toward such? The passage is plain: "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." This is not the terrible mount that burned with fire; it is the pure grace of God.

On the one hand, grace leads us to minister help to the weak and the faint. On the other hand, it will lead us to be watchful, taking heed to our own ways, lest the lame be turned out of the way. There are lame ones in the flock, and they do not get on well; but the whip would be no remedy for such. We must not act toward them on the principle of Pharaoh's taskmasters with the bond slave children of Israel. This is not God's way. He acts toward us in grace, and helps us in our infirmities; or if He chastens, when needs be, it is "that we might be partakers of His holiness." What should we think of a shepherd taking a whip to a poor, weak, lame sheep? Yet how often is this done among the flock of Christ! The whip instead of grace! Mount Sinai instead of Mount Sion! God's word is, "but let it rather be healed." It is not that holiness can be dispensed with, and therefore it is written: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Only let us remember, the whip and the burning mount will neither heal nor produce holiness. Grace only can do either; and so it is added, "looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God." If I lose in my soul the sense of that grace in which God is ever acting toward me, I shall fail in manifesting grace toward my brethren. And who can tell the loss and damage to the saints? Some root of bitterness springs up, and trouble arises, and many are thereby defiled. What sorrow is sometimes caused in the assembly of God, just because someone - a leader, it may be - has failed in the grace of God, and acted in the spirit of the law, rather than the Spirit of Christ! or someone, through greed of gain, has driven a hard bargain, or defrauded his brother! or some word has been unadvisedly spoken, and an evil seed has been sown in some heart, which springs up as a root of bitterness, producing trouble, which passes from tongue to tongue, thereby defiling many. Surely such conduct is most sad, utterly contrary to the Spirit of Christ, and if not unsparingly judged by those who so act, will bring down the hand of the Lord in discipline.

Oh, to realize in our innermost soul that we are saved by grace, and stand in grace, and that it is grace every step of the way to the end! and to realize that we are called to live, and act toward one another, in the power of the same grace in which God has acted, and ever acts, toward us.

The Priestly Garments

Exodus 28

This chapter speaks to us of the garments with which Aaron was to be clothed to present himself before the Lord. He was the representative of the people, of those twelve tribes of Israel whose names he bore - a type of what Christ is doing for us in heaven. The Lord is not priest after the order of Aaron, but He exercises priesthood now according to the type presented by Aaron. Now Christ is hid in God like the High Priest when he entered the holiest on the day of atonement.

A priest supposes temptations, distress, or, as in the epistle to the Hebrews, infirmities. He is the mediator to intercede on behalf of the people, and to represent them before God. I am weak, but all my weaknesses become, not a ground for judgment, but an occasion for God to display all His tenderness and all His compassion toward me, by means of our Priest. Down here Jesus washes our feet, but before God He represents us in His perfection. He displays to us down here the riches of God's grace toward us, and He presents us to God in His own perfection. Exodus 28 shows us how the priest presents us before God. The ephod was the garment characteristic of the High Priest; and two parts of it were joined by two shoulder pieces, which bore on two onyx stones the names of the twelve tribes. The girdle is typical of service - "Let your loins be girded." The breastplate was fastened to the ephod, and also bore on twelve stones the names of the twelve tribes. The garments were of fine twined linen; they were, as it were, ornamented with all possible graces, the groundwork representing purity itself.

Aaron was to bear the children of Israel before God. He carried them on his shoulders; all the burden of His people and the government are on the shoulders of Christ. Since Christ is our High Priest, we are on His shoulders, borne as a memorial before God. He bears the burden and the government; He does all. Efficacy depends entirely upon Him, even in what we do for the Church. Aaron also bore the names of his people on his heart, in the breastplate of judgment. There is not a ray of God's glory and love shining upon Christ which does not also shine on us, who are borne upon His heart. The heart of Christ presents us to God. It is not only to obtain special favors, but it is we ourselves that He presents according to the love there is between Him and God. The Urim and the Thummim are lights and perfections. Aaron bore on his heart before God the judgment of the children of Israel according to the perfections of God's presence. Our sins cannot pass by Christ, and interpose themselves between God and Him. He maintains us in righteousness continually before God according to the lights and perfections of that presence. God never hides His face. He may chastise us. By our failures we may lose communion with Him; but if God hid His face from us, He would hide it from Christ. It is hidden now from Israel, who is under the law. It is our shortcomings which raise a cloud between us and God; it is a consequence of our infirmity; but God's sovereign grace is by no means changed by it.

The "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" (which was graven upon the gold plate, and put on a blue lace on the miter) is always before God. Our prayers ascend in holiness to the Lord, because Christ is there. The iniquity in our holy things being borne by Him, our offerings (for there is iniquity, as all

our service is imperfect) are presented before God according to divine holiness in Christ. This chapter is enabling us to understand better the extent of the love and favor of which we are the objects, fills us with thanksgiving, and causes us to find in Christ ever new resources; for our knowledge of Him can always grow, and increase our joy.

Real Acquaintance With Christ: a Word About Our Hearts

There is a difference between intimacy and familiarity. I may be familiar with the condition and circumstances in which another commonly walks, but have very little real intimacy with himself-as in the case of servants. And this has its strong illustration in the history of the Lord.

The centurion, the Syrophenician, or Mary the sister of Lazarus, were comparatively but little with Him. They are not seen in company with Him wherever He goes, but cross His path, to say the most, only occasionally. But when they are brought to deal with Him, they do so with most bright and blessed intelligence. They show that they know Him - who and what He really is. They make no mistakes about Him, while even the apostles who waited on Him day after day betrayed again and again the ignorance and distance of mere nature.

Is there not a lesson in this for us? Is there not a fear lest familiarity with the things of Christ be much more than the soul's real acquaintance with Himself? I may be often, so to speak, handling these things. I may be reading the books which tell of Him. I may be busy in the activities which make His service their object. I may speak or write about Him, while others, like the centurion, may be a good deal withdrawn from all this; but their growth in divine knowledge and living understanding of Him may be far more advancing. Saul had David about him, even in his household, at his bidding, as his minstrel, when he needed or wished for him; but Saul did not know David.

Surely this is a lesson for us, beloved. The multitude who waited on the Lord, and watched His steps, must have been able to give even Mary of Bethany, had she sought it, much information about Him. Hundreds in the land, as well as the twelve, might have told her what He had been doing, where He had been journeying, the discourses He had delivered, and the miracles He had wrought. Information like this they had in abundance, and she but sparingly, save as she was debtor to them for it. But all that, I need not say, left them far behind her in real acquaintance with Him. And is it not so still? How many of us can give information about the things of Christ, and answer inquiries, correctly too, while the soul of the instructed sits and feasts on the things themselves far more richly. For the knowledge that a Mary may gather from the report of a multitude, or from the lips of the apostles, often becomes another thing with her, than it had previously been with them. A poor stranger, making her modest and yet earnest way to Jesus in the crowd may shame the thoughts of those who were entitled to be the nearest to Him; yes, of Peter himself (see Luke 8:45).

We need not so much to covet information about Him, as power to use divinely what we know-to turn it, through the energy of the Spirit, into a matter of communion, and the feeding and enlivening of our renewed affections. Then, and then only, is it what our God would have it to be. Col. 3:16 may teach us that, while inquiring after knowledge, and laying up "the word of Christ," the material of all wisdom, we should take care to nourish the simpler affections of the soul. Melody in the heart should be the companion of the indwelling word of wisdom and knowledge (Eph. 5:19). If it be not, the knowledge will be wanting in its savor, and in its power to refresh either ourselves or others.

This at the same time, let me say, is not to lead us to give up action or, if it may be, daily companionship with the interests and people of Jesus in the world. Perfection is likeness to Himself; and in that living pattern we see this -busy in service wherever or whenever a need called Him, but all the while, in spirit, in the deep sense of the presence of God. Here alone lies the way that is fully according to the Great Original. As one sweetly says, pressing on the soul this grace of communion combined with service-

"Childlike, attend what Thou wilt say,

Go forth and serve Thee while 'tis day,

Nor leave my sweet retreat."

Reconciliation

When the glory fills the tabernacle in Exodus 40, the whole congregation is regarded, I judge, as in the reconciliation. This appears from several considerations.

Because the glory had then taken the place of mercy - the throne of grace in their sight.

Because the tabernacle, which they had been building, was the witness of their repentance and faith, the very materials of it being contributed through the atonement money, and through the willing offerings of the people.

Because the Lord in principle was now speaking to them from heaven, or in Christ from amid the shadows of good things.

Because He was having respect to their offerings, which He could not have had, had He not also respect to themselves, or regarded them as clean, or reconciled.

This being so, the sacrifices of Leviticus, which immediately follow, are the acts of a reconciled people, the services or worship of accepted sinners. Thus the burnt, the meat, the sin, the trespass, the peace offerings, are so many forms telling out the character, the ground, and the value of the various services of God's sanctuary. (Chaps. 1-8.)

Then comes out the secret of all this acceptance of the people and of their offerings. The priest is brought forth. He gets the due raiment, and goes through the needed process of his consecration. Then he offers both for himself and the congregation, the congregation all the while standing, seeing this great sight. And at last down comes the fire from heaven to attest the acceptance of the sacrifices of the priest; and then the people fall down and shout for joy. For that was the full public testimony to the value of that on which all their acceptance rested, and they triumph with holy rapture in it (chap. 9).

The easy gliding thus from Exodus into Leviticus is very sweet, and there is as close a connection between them as there could be in any chapters of the same book. Israel had, by the golden calf, sinned away all their hope under the covenant from Mount Sinai (Exodus 32); but they repented, stripped themselves of their ornaments, and took the place of sinners, and of believers too, in looking after the mediator (Exodus 33). Then they bring forth the fruit of repentance and faith, in so willingly offering, not to the calf, but to the sanctuary; and this puts them at once on such new grounds, that the Lord can come into the midst of them and their services. They meet Him as pardoned sinners, and then have a shout of joy, and see the glory; but under the fiery mount of law and judgment, they did not stand for one moment.

Redemption in the Book of Exodus

"Redemption" is a large and blessed word in the New Testament and in the Old Testament too. Redemption takes the redeemed one out of one position and one state and brings him into another.

The character of the second book of the Bible is redemption. In the third chapter we find the blessed God come down in the burning bush, and He says to Moses, "I am come down to deliver." "I have surely seen... and have heard," and "I am come down." Go to the end of the book, 33rd verse of the 40th chapter. There we have God dwelling in the midst of His redeemed people, pitching His habitation among them.

In the 12th chapter, we get the way in which He did it. The first thing was to shelter that people from judgment. That could only be done by the blood of the lamb. The first thing God gives a soul to know, when really exercised, is security from judgment under the blood of Christ; but we must not stop there. Look at the first of Ephesians, speaking of Christ as the Beloved. "In whom [that is, Christ the Beloved] we have redemption" (v. 7). How far does that go? "Even the forgiveness of sins." Now go to the second chapter, verse 12: "without Christ.. and without God in the world." "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." That redemption we have in Christ through His blood, brings with it the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. It gives something else too; it takes me out of the old condition and gives me a place of nearness to God Himself. So we must not stop with being secured from judgment.

That blood on the two side posts and the lintel told that death had come in. It told that the stroke had fallen on a victim - a life had been given. There are those who have faith in the Lord Jesus who do not know much about the blood - about being covered. "The blood shall be to you for a token"; that is, something for those inside the house.

"When I see the blood, I will pass over you" has been dwelt upon almost to the exclusion of "the blood shall be to you for a token." God sees the blood, but it is my seeing it that brings me into peace. The blood speaks to the soul inside and wards off the stroke outside. It is the soul seeing the blood for himself that brings into the knowledge of safety.

"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." To whom was that day, that date, the beginning of months? Nobody else knew anything about it throughout the whole world. It was a particular day - day of redemption.

In the third chapter, God had come down, and what brought Him down was the bondage, misery, groaning, and oppression of His people. There He appears in the midst of the burning bush. "God called unto him [Moses] out of the midst of the bush." By way of comparison turn to the first of Leviticus. "The LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation." What a contrast! That gives the character of these two books. God comes down to deliver; then after He delivers, He sets His habitation in the midst of His people. Out of the midst of that habitation He appears and tells them how to approach Him. The subject of Exodus is

redemption; the subject of Leviticus is the redeemed drawing near to God, the Redeemer. There is more order in the Word of God than people think. It is not brought together at random.

Numbers gives us the wilderness journey. It is a redeemed people, and they are neither in Egypt nor in Canaan, but in the wilderness, journeying on to Canaan.

The book of Deuteronomy answers to the judgment seat of Christ. "Thou shalt remember all the way," etc. We will have a rehearsal when we get into our Canaan, and before we have entered fully into it. We Christians have a Deuteronomy before we get into the land too. We are in Numbers. Redemption has brought us into Numbers. We know all the way God has led us since He brought us out of Egypt. It must have been very humiliating as Moses called their attention to all their ways. But as it humbled them, it magnified the grace and goodness of God, and that is what our Deuteronomy will do too.

Rejoicing in God and Waiting for Christ

"And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." 2 Thess. 3:5.

There are two things that constitute the joy of a Christian while on his earthly journey, presenting an object constantly before his heart. The first is the hope of the coming of the Lord; and the second is present communion and fellowship with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. These two things cannot be separated without loss to our souls, for we cannot have real profit without both of them. If we are not looking for the coming of the Lord, there is nothing whatever that can separate us from this present evil world; if such be the case, Christ Himself will not be the object before the soul; nor shall we be able, in the same measure as when looking for Him, to apprehend the mind and counsels of God about the world.

Again, if this hope be looked at apart from present communion and fellowship with God, we shall not have present power, but on the contrary we shall be enfeebled through the mind being too much occupied and overborne by the evil around. We cannot be really looking for God's Son from heaven without at the same time seeing that the world has utterly rejected Him, and that the world is going wrong; its wise men having no wisdom; the principles of evil loosening all bonds; and all going on to judgment. Seeing this, the soul becomes oppressed, and the heart is sad; but if through grace the Christian is in present communion and fellowship with God, his soul is steady and calm and happy before God, because there is a fund of blessing in him which no circumstances can ever touch or change. The evil tidings are heard and the sorrow is seen, but his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, which carries him far above every circumstance. We all want this. To walk steadily with God, we need both this fellowship and this hope.

I do not believe that a Christian can have his heart scripturally right unless he is looking for God's Son from heaven. There could be no such thing as attempting to set the world right if its sin in rejecting Christ were fully seen; and moreover a correct judgment of the character of the world will never be formed until that crowning sin is apprehended by the soul. To a Christian who is looking for Christ and waiting for Him to come from heaven, Christ Himself is unspeakably more the object before the soul. It is not only that I shall get to heaven and be happy, but that the Lord Himself is coming from heaven for me and for all the Church. It is this that gives its character to the joy of the saint. As Christ Himself says, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." When He finds His delight, then will you also find yours - He with you and you with Him - because it will be, "Forever with the Lord."

You may think to find good, or to produce good, in man; but you will never find in many any thought of waiting for Christ. In the world the first Adam may be cultivated and civilized, but he remains the first Adam still. The last Adam, having been rejected by the world, will never be found there; and it is the looking for Him, the rejected Lord, that stamps its character on the walk of the saints.

Then again, there is another thing connected with my waiting for God's Son from heaven. I am not yet with the One I love; and while waiting for Him I am going through the world, tired and worn with the spirit and character of everything around me. The more I am in communion with God, the more keenly shall I feel the spirit of the world to be a weariness to me, although God still upholds my soul in fellowship and communion with Himself. Therefore the Apostle says in 2 Thess. 1:6, 7: "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense... to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven." So then I get rest to my spirit now in waiting for Christ, knowing that when He comes He will have everything His own way. For the coming of the Lord, which will be trouble to the world, will be to the saints full and everlasting rest. Still, we are not to be "weary and faint in our minds." It is not a right thing to be weary of the service and conflict. Oh, no! rather let us be victorious every day, remembering that tribulation and conflict come before the rest.

However, when walking with God, there is not so much thinking of combat as finding joy in God Himself. This I shall know all the better when I am in the glory; my soul shall then be enlarged and more capable of enjoying what God really is; but the kind of joy I have now is the same as I shall have when the Lord Jesus comes to be glorified in His saints, only it will be greater in degree. And if this joy in God is now in my soul in power, it hides the world from me altogether and becomes a spring of love to those in the world. For though

I may be tired of the combat, still I feel there are people in the world who need the love I enjoy; and I desire that they should possess it, because it is the joy of what God is for me. This it is that sustains me and carries me through all the conflict. So our souls should be exercised about both the fellowship and the hope; for if I look for Christ's coming apart from fellowship and communion with God, I shall be oppressed and shall not go on. When the love of God fills my heart, it flows out toward all who have need of it, toward saints and sinners according to their need. For if I feel the power of this love in my heart, I shall be going out to serve others, because it is the power of this love that enables me to go through the toil and labor of service and to suffer for Christ's sake.

Salt: What the Scriptures Say About Salt

Salt is of great importance to man. It makes savory what without it would be insipid. It checks the growth of nature in the vegetable kingdom; it preserves from corruption and decay what belongs to the animal kingdom.

Job speaks of its savory properties (Job 6:6). Moses and the prophets bear witness to its power in destroying the growth of nature (Dent. 29: 23; Jer. 17:6; Eze. 47:11); and Abimelech's action in sowing the city of Shechem with salt (Judg. 9:45), shows us that Israel was well acquainted with its influence on vegetation. But not less marked is its action on that which belongs to the animal kingdom, preserving that which is subjected to its influence from the corruption to which otherwise it would assuredly turn.

Now as salt acts in the realm of nature, so does grace in spiritual matters. It savors; it checks the outflow of nature from man. It is preservative too in its action from corruption.

Under the law, the meat offering was to be salted, typical of the Lord Jesus in His life on earth, in whom grace acted constantly (Lev. 2:13). With all their offerings they were to offer salt. Hence, a "covenant of salt" was a term Israel well understood (Numb. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5), meaning that such a covenant should never be broken; no element of corruption should enter into it, for it would last forever. That was the character of the provision God made for the support of Aaron and his house. The Lord's engagement to David and his sons was of that same character.

In the New Testament the figurative meaning of salt, as illustrative of grace in its savoring and preservative action, is met with more than once. The disciples were the "salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13). But, as the Lord reminded them, salt is useless if once it has lost its savor. So they would be of no use as salt, unless grace was really in them. What then man in nature has not, what the earth viewed morally does not possess, that the disciples were, and should be careful to continue to be. They were not merely salt for the earth, but the salt of the earth. And having salt in themselves, the working of nature would be checked, and they would have peace one with another (Mark 9:50). Moreover, that preservative and savoring character of grace would be felt if their speech was always with grace, seasoned with salt (Col. 4:6). They would know how to answer every man, and no corrupt communication would proceed out of their mouths, but only that which was good to the use of edifying, that it might minister grace to the hearers (Eph. 4:29). Moreover, the preservative character of grace would characterize all God's people, "for every sacrifice shall be salted with salt."

But there is another statement of the Lord, preserved only in one Gospel, that of Mark; and that statement, to which we now draw attention, is most solemn in its character, and universal in its application. "Everyone shall be salted with fire"; for as salt preserves things in the animal kingdom, so the fire of judgment will act on men. It will not consume them so as to terminate their existence, but burning up all that is perishable of men and their works (1 Cor. 3:13-15), will leave that which never can decay. To have one's works tried by fire is a solemn consideration for God's saints. To

be salted with fire is a dreadful prospect for the wicked. And in connection with these latter, it should be remarked, the Lord brings in, "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire" (Mark 9:48, 49). Even in things of nature in the animal frame there is a residuum which the fire does not consume. But after burning up all that is consumable, the fire dies out. Now it will not be so in the other world; all that can perish will assuredly perish, but the wicked 'shall never cease to exist, and the fire will never be extinguished.

Saul Spared Agag: Magnanimity and Results

1 Samuel 15

"Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways!" Psalm 81:13. It is. He alone who knows the loss incurred by the disobedience of His people.

Saul proved a failure. There is something pathetic in the way the Lord addressed Samuel: "It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments."

There was nothing ambiguous in the commandment given to the king about his dealings with the Amalekites. He was to "utterly destroy" them and their possessions. Many years before, Jehovah had said that the remembrance of Amalek was to be blotted out from under heaven (Deut. 25:19). Although Jehovah is slow to execute judgment - enters this place with reluctant step - the time was now come. The cup was full. Saul, instead of doing as he was commanded, spared Agag the Amalekite king, and also spared "the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them." Disobedience pure and simple. It was in vain for him to assure Samuel that he had performed the commandment of the Lord - the bleating of the sheep gave the lie to the statement. "And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" 1 Sam. 15:14.

If in another day the dumb ass spake and forbade the madness of the prophet, so at this time the poor sheep in their innocent bleating convicted the disobedient king who, instead of judging himself, made excuses, and meanly blamed the people. This was useless, for the Spirit of God says, "But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep," etc. The failing king pleaded that these latter had been spared to sacrifice unto the Lord - a lame excuse, and he was assured in solemn tones by the prophet, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

Saul was here plainly shown to be a complete failure, utterly coming short in laying hold of the mind of the Lord. He had been weighed and found wanting. If previously he failed as to prayer, he then completely failed as to the commandment of the Lord. The prophet reminded him of the time when he was little in his own eyes, and clearly indicated that he was so no longer. His magnanimity, as he supposed, might have been shown in the sparing of Agag. It, however, ought not to take us long to decide what grave results must follow magnanimity being shown to the devil. Moreover, the Lord wants His people's obedience more than their property.

With Saul there was no self-judgment. He was a great contrast to his successor. When David was in a strait he said, "Let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great are His mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man." 1 Chron. 21:13.

There is nothing in this about King David. Nothing! Since Saul had but the approval of the people, little care had he for the approval of the Lord. This is only too plainly seen in the desire he expressed, "Honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people."

Saul, however, was allowed to continue for some time, as many others are. But the link was broken, the die cast, the tree fallen. Rejected of the Lord and forsaken of Samuel, he gradually sank lower and lower. It is possible that some readers may find difficulty in the saying of the Lord that it had repented Him that He had set up Saul to be king, especially when put beside the statement used elsewhere (v. 29), "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man, that He should repent." Neither indeed does He; that is to say, He never repents of His original purpose. When man's responsibility is in question, then the matter is different and easily understood.

God knows everything, but His knowledge does not clash with the responsibilities of men. For instance, God sent the prophet Jonah to Nineveh to cry to the people of that city, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The Ninevites repented, judgment was averted, and the

Ninevites were spared. Saul's sparing of Amalek meant that they only lived to plunder and destroy later on (see 1 Sam. 30). So much for the result of magnanimity!

Self-Pleasing: a Basic Sin

There is one sin which leads men to the commission of all others- the desire to please themselves. If this has once been acted on, it constitutes that man a sinner, just as the breach of one law of the land stamps a man a criminal. We do not require him to run through the transgression of every law in the statute book in order to bring him in guilty. His having broken one is the evidence of his guilt; we need no further proof.

While acting then on this as a principle, we are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. There is no life, no love, in us; as our Savior said to those by whom He was surrounded, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." Now this is the real fact, that there is no assimilation to God in man's natural state, but the contrary principle - hatred, enmity.

But this is the position of every individual of the human race until called out of the general mass by divine grace. He is sprung from Adam, associated with him in his sin, as to its guilt not only of leaving God, but of positively rejecting Him. That is the world he loves, belongs to, and forms a part of; and whether his transgressions are few or great, he is doomed to destruction if he continues so to the end.

Just as in the case of the flood: doubtless there was a wide difference in the amount of actual delinquencies among the sinful inhabitants of the world at that time, but none were saved but Noah. Many might even have bid fair to be saved, so as to be near the ark; but none were saved except such as were in the ark. So in Sodom: many had not so openly exhibited their enmity to God as others; and yet, in the general conflagration, Lot alone escaped; and why? Just because all the others, without distinction, were opposed to God - were quite opposite to Him in every principle, and consequently had come to that state of exclusion from God's presence.

If so, we are at present without God in the world; and to be forever without Him is perfect misery. And is not this really the present position of the world, though men are unconscious of it? There is a veil cast on futurity as it regards them. They are occupied in the pleasure, amusements, profits, and pursuits of a Christ-rejecting world. But when the veil is raised, then will their position be disclosed. And whosoever is of Christ will have Christ's portion; they will enter on the enjoyment of that portion which by faith they now see is prepared for them.

By faith alone have we any of these exceeding great promises now. Now is the time for us to ascertain by faith our personal identification with Christ. Now are we to know our interest in Him.

Sent Forth Lacking Nothing

During a Scripture lesson given to a class of children, the question was asked,

"When the Lord Jesus sent out His disciples two and two into the world, to preach the gospel and to work for Him, did He give them any directions? Did He, for instance, say anything to them about their luggage, about what they would have to take with them?"

"Oh yes, He did," promptly answered a bright little fellow, "the Lord Jesus told them that He would see that they had all they needed, so they needn't trouble themselves about taking anything at all with them, and their clothes and shoes would do."

The child stroked his own clothes down complacently as he spoke, evidently with a boy's thorough appreciation of the feeling of relief which it must have given to each of the disciples to hear that he might thus start off at once, just as he was, free from all encumbrances.

O that all disciples of the Lord in this our day, whether evangelists, or those servants in their own home circles, may drink more deeply into this childlike spirit, this true idea of service, entire dependence upon the One who sends them forth, and freedom from all that would distract the heart or hinder the feet.

If encumbered by seeking riches, surely "the cares of this world," or "the lusts of other things" may prove to be an equally ensnaring and impeding burden. It is enough for every disciple that he be as his Master who sought no accumulation of treasure for Himself on earth, but simply to do the will of Him that sent Him.

The Shepherd of the Sheep

John 10

The more we study the gospels, the more we find what an Object we have for our souls to rest upon. We have Christ now in glory, and the remembrance of all He was; and our affections are drawn out after Him. "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the, sheep." The first thing is, He comes into the fold, comes in by the door; that is the place! for people to come in by. The folds in those days were places, of shelter for sheep, to protect them against wild beasts. The Lord comes in by the door, subjects Himself to what God has appointed. The moment His sheep took the first step, He took it with them, coming in by the door and subjecting Himself to do His Father's will (Phil. 2). So at the temptation, Satan says, Why don't You make these stones bread? but the Lord answers, I have no command for it You get His perfect lowliness-He goes always down. In the form of God, He goes down and takes the form of a servant, and then goes right on down to death. Then God highly exalts Him, giving Him a name which is above every name. As a servant, He never had a will of His own.

All that reveals Christ to us in this path is most precious. God opens to Him - in His governmental ways. The sheep hear His voice, He calls His own sheep by name, and leads them out. The Lord leads them out-the blind man in the previous chapter is turned out, then the Lord takes him up.

He had come in to get His sheep and save them: "He... leadeth them out." Leads them out; they were not to stay Jews any longer. God had set up Judaism. Who could have left it? But He was taking His sheep out - the nation was found at enmity with God. All that God had set up connected with the first man, He has set aside in Christ. God has done all He could for His vineyard, but at length He roots it up. You get it in the parable of the fig tree; there is the end of man under God's culture. They killed the Son, rejected and cast Him out; therefore there is judgment upon man in the flesh.

When He Himself came they were enemies; it was said, "They... have... both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (John 15:24). First He takes them out, then He calls His own sheep by name. What I see here is the personal care of the Shepherd. The Jews had the law, the ordinances, and so on; but here the blessed Lord Himself is concerned, and that in the personal knowledge of His sheep. You get a blessed instance of calling His own sheep by name in the case of Mary; He says, "Mary" - calls His sheep by name. When He leads them out, He goes before them. Now there I get a blessed thing- if a danger is in the way, the Shepherd meets it, or if there are two ways the Shepherd is before me - the sheep know His voice and they know the road. The sheep follow Him. Is there a doubt about the way? Well, there He is, if we are near enough to Him to know His voice.

"A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers." Take the case of a child. If it hears a knock at the door, it knows at once its mother's voice. There is another great principle I get here; that is, absolute, sufficient authority for it. Why do you leave the fold? There is the Shepherd's voice; in that voice there is what is sufficient to guide me and to

authorize me to follow Him.

"This parable spake Jesus unto them;... I am the door" (that is connected with authority)... "by Me if any man enter in" (Christ is the only way; as He entered in Himself, so He is the prescribed way). The Jewish fold kept them safe in a certain way, for a time; but it did not save people-being a Jew did not save, but following Christ you will be safe. The Jewish fold was a kind of safety, but safety by a person being shut up in it; but there was no pasture there. "By Me," says the Lord, "if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." There is liberty with God, and from the power of sin they go in and out, and there is pasture. The pasture is all God has set before us to feed upon. "I am come that they might have life," He says. Being a Jew did not give life; but Christ having come, the eternal life which was with the Father, He says, "I am come that they might have life." Then He says, I know those that are Mine, and am known of them - that is a blessed truth. I have One who laid down His life for me; and there is the revelation of Christ to the soul, making known that He takes knowledge of us; He knows us individually. It is not exactly, As the Father knoweth Me, even so I know the Father, but "As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father" (vv. 14, 15). That is, He is in the same relationship with us as He, a Man down here, was with the Father.

Here He is interested in them, as He says elsewhere to the armed band that came to take Him, "Whom seek ye?... if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." He stands in the gap that the sheep may go free. "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold [flock], and one shepherd." You get the interest the Father takes in them. "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." Christ laid down His life, glorified God perfectly in that place, in the place of sin-bearing. It is a remarkable word; no created thing could say, "Therefore doth God love me," so that he could give a claim to God; but here Christ could give a motive to His Father to love Him. He goes down to the very place of death, and is made sin. His love to the Father was perfect; His obedience was perfect when He was made sin; but He brings man out of the whole condition he was in, by redemption. And is not this a better state than Adam was in? Surely, for the position of the Christian now is the expression of l o v e, truth, holiness, in Christ.

What He did for us perfectly glorified His Father; it gave a motive to His Father to love Him. It was His one desire to glorify His Father- His obedience was infinite. His love to His Father was perfect (v. 18). He gives to His sheep eternal life; He has the power, being the Son of God, to give life - He that hath the Son hath life. We can say more. It is not only that He has given it, but that, having died and risen again, we have a Man in the power of divine life, out of death and judgment; He is my life, and I have been quickened together with Him. He has gone down into death, was made sin, and was under Satan's power and God's judgment; and it is not merely that He quickens us, but we have part with a risen Christ. Then you get the second thing-He refers to His works - "The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me." And then He proceeds to give their character as Pharisees; they were not of His sheep. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me"-through all and in spite of all.

Christ only had a right to say, "Follow Me." He says it to Philip in chapter 1 of this Gospel. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish"- "Because I live," He says, "y e shall live also" (chap. 14:19). Christ must perish before I can perish. "Neither shall any man pluck them out of My

hand." No force outside can pluck them; He keeps them according to the power He has. It is not only that they get His life in them, but He gives His life for them. Look at the case of Lazarus-"I am the resurrection and the life." He shows His power of life, and then passes on to die Himself. I get the One who could raise Lazarus, going to die. Then, after having manifested this life, He gives His life for us, to take us out of the condition we are in. "The wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.... I am the good shepherd." Here I have not merely the true Shepherd, but the good Shepherd-the One who cares for the sheep.

You get the danger of being plucked out, but for the constant keeping of Christ. "My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man [none] is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." The Father has given us to Christ, and then He does not close the account without bringing out Himself and the Father as one. What a blessed account of what He is as the good Shepherd! You get all that He is as giving life, and laying down His life. Having Him to follow, and His voice, they need not fear; it is a question of His faithfulness and power.

The Lord give us to have that entire dependence upon Him! We want that personal looking to Christ that keeps us in the apprehension of His love. The Lord give us hearts to cleave to Him!

(The foregoing are brief notes of an address on John 10 given by J. N. D. in Dublin, shortly before his death.)

Show Me Now Thy Way

"Right" and "left" are words that have come into common usage to describe politicians and governments in this day of ideological conflicts. Those who lean to the right are those who favor the rights of the individual, while those who go to the left are those who favor state socialism. We even hear of the "extreme left" by which we suppose are meant those who would go, in varying degrees, over to communism.

The divergence between Russia and the Western Nations has come from this ideological rift. Russia has gone all the way to the left; the Western governments have remained to the right—some more and some less. In such countries as the United States there is a strong conservative element that leans heavily to the right, but there is also an increasing amount of leftist pressure. This internal conflict of ideologies is growing in those nations that are to participate in the Roman Empire alliance, and perhaps will cause in it that lack of cohesion described in Daniel 2 as iron that "is not mixed with clay."

These turbulent crosscurrents may well provide the fuel to produce that awful massacre (in those days of trouble after the Christians are taken home) mentioned in Rev. 6:4 - "And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another." This is a description, not of international warfare but, of hand to hand wanton killing - anarchy. The forces of evil are already at work, but we can thank God that there is still that restraining Power who "lets," or "hinders," while He is here. (See 2 Thess. 2:7.)

Christians may also become extremists in their thinking and practice. They may turn to the right hand or to the left from that pathway which God has marked out in His Word. Now God does not want us to become "rightists" or "leftists," for neither is according to His mind. He knew the tendencies of the human heart and warned Israel four times in Deuteronomy (5:32; 17:11, 20; 28:14) and twice in Joshua (1:7; 23:6) not to turn to the right hand or to the left from all that was enjoined.

It is needful that we should take heed to all the Word of God if we are to be in the ordered path. What heresies! what divisions! have come into the Church on earth through stressing one-sided truth. When part of the truth is emphasized at the expense of the rest, it can become positive error.

The Lord Jesus said to the Father, "Sanctify them through Thy truth [not just a part of it]: Thy word is truth." John 17:17. And the Apostle Paul could say to the elders of Ephesus, "I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Acts 20:26, 27. Many have been the points of controversy where one part of the truth has been pressed. We might mention a few.

Much confusion has been caused by those who pressed God's sovereignty at the expense of man's responsibility, and vice versa. Both are perfectly true, and when kept in their respective balance are harmonious. There is no imbalance in the Word of God; all is perfect. The same was

true of the Lord Jesus Christ as man down here. He was the fine meal with no one feature more prominent than another. He was "full of grace and truth" - perfectly blended. Here again the imperfection of men comes out - we are apt to show grace at the expense of truth, or to display a decided lack of grace while pressing truth and righteousness. May we learn more of Him, and not "turn to the right hand or to the left."

Then there are those who put all the emphasis on the gospel; they measure everything in terms of getting people saved. These give little or no attention to leading saved souls in the truth. They forget that Paul was one of the greatest gospel preachers that ever labored for souls, but he said, "whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labor." Col. 1:28, 29. And to the Ephesians he wrote of the great spiritual blessings we have in heavenly places in Christ which go very far beyond the mere knowledge of salvation. Nor was he content with that alone; he prayed for them that they might enter into these blessings (chapter 1), and that they might walk in the good of them - "that Christ may dwell" in their hearts (chapter 3).

We would not say one word to discourage an evangelical spirit, but let us remember that the saving of the soul is only the beginning. Those who are saved should grow and make progress in the truth, and that truth should be reflected in their daily practice. Shallow indeed is that work which rests satisfied with the knowledge of sins forgiven and is remiss about growing in the knowledge of the Savior Himself, or is careless about walking becomingly down here.

We may go to one extreme and lose our interest in the gospel, but to do so is to be out of communion with the thoughts of God, for He is ever interested in the gospel of His Son. Or we may be carried away with evangelical zeal and stoop to use methods that our Lord cannot approve. We may see such methods succeed in others' labors, because God is sovereign and may bless His own Word although mixed with things He cannot sanction; nevertheless, we are to follow the rules and turn not from them to the right hand or to the left. Faithfulness, and not apparent success, is the gauge by which our Master measures - "well done,... good and faithful servant."

Paul was careful to communicate spiritual things by spiritual means (see N. Trans. of 1 Cor. 2:13). All that passes for the work of the Lord in present-day evangelism cannot meet such a requirement, nor will it receive a reward. Only that which is done according to the rules will be rewarded (see 2 Tim. 2:5). We are apt to forget that unless the Spirit of God works in the soul, all our human persuasion, eloquence, or pressure will not save one soul.

May the Lord increase our gospel zeal a hundred fold, but may it be balanced with doing it only by approved means, in separation from all that is not of Himself, and by seeking to lead saved souls on in truth. And may we seek out a right path ecclesiastically in which our feet may walk. This is a matter that many ignore, as though our connections were of no consequence. May the spirit of our hearts be, Lord "show me now Thy way," and, Lord, "where wilt Thou?" Then we shall be neither "rightists" nor "leftists."

Some Thoughts for Young People

Young people are today facing a different world than the adolescent of ten years ago. Educational curriculum is undergoing a change that will have an effect on the outlook of students in the future, but even now the influence is evident. The "Inquiry Approach" that is being implemented in the biological, chemical, and physical science fields encourages students through a process of discussion and peer group evaluation to seek to arrive at correct conclusions. In the social sciences and in the arts this discussion system is also being used, and instructors are working more in the role of a coach and referee than a lecturer. Many Christian young people may benefit in their secular education from these methods, but there is a danger of trying to project the sound learning practices of the world into the assembly where the Spirit of God teaches.

Many young people go through a period in life where they assess their role in their local assembly as well as the role of their older brethren. They try to reconcile what they think Scripture says with what is practiced by their brethren. With the "Inquiry Approach" being used in education this assessment will most likely arise at an earlier age and will come from a wider range of people, since every young person will be exposed to this new methodology from primary school to university.

We can see some negative results of this philosophy already. In the past year students in many places have rebelled against authority, and "student activism" has become a household cliché. Many students have set aside authority, and if the Christian student is not careful he may find himself influenced by such lawlessness. The smashing of a two-million-dollar computer center at Sir George Williams University in Montreal may seem like a horrendous example of student willfulness, but can the world expect anything else from a group of young people who have been socialized in an era when many would have God dead and the Bible a fable? Some of the student grievances may be valid, but their method of "setting the situation right" is not in accordance with the Word of God.

The Apostle Paul testifies in Acts 22:3 that he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. In the fifth chapter of Acts we find that Gamaliel stood up among his fellow citizens and students and told them to leave these men who talk of Jesus to themselves. He said that others, such as Theudas, boasted themselves to be something, but were brought to nothing; and if these men who were followers of Jesus were not of God, their work could come to nothing. Gamaliel knew that if the teaching of these men was of God, no man could overthrow it. Did Paul obey his instructor's advice? No, he was in effect a student activist. The next time we read of Paul (Saul), we find that he was consenting to the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1). He was persecuting the Christians with great zeal.

God spoke to Saul (Paul) on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) in a miraculous but solemn way. He accepted Christ as his Savior and immediately began to serve the Lord. What did Paul say of the days when he was a student activist? In 1 Timothy 1, after delineating what he was characterized by before he was saved, Paul refers to himself as the chief of sinners. He realized that what he

had been doing as a result of his independent, youthful ideas led him to a place of deep transgression against God.

Surely we young people can learn from Paul's experience. Granted, Paul was unsaved when he acted on his own counsel, and the circumstances in which he lived were unusual; but if we resent authority and do not bow to the Word of God by leading "a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty," we will find that God will speak to us. If a person accepts the word of one in authority only when it coincides with his own thoughts, then there is no authority. Authority implies that our own will is kept passive. We have the authority of the Word of God, and we are called to bow to it. The Apostle Peter says, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." 1 Pet. 5:5.

It is one of the hardest things to realize our complete nothingness before God; but if we read the Scriptures more and seek to study them, the Lord will speak to our hearts. There is a very real danger of traditionalism and legality among the Lord's people. The Roman system is a great departure from the truth as found in Paul's letters, but it began among the assemblies of God. The only safeguard against such declension is to know the Scriptures and in communion with the Lord discern God's will.

Paul gives many exhortations to a young person in his letters to Timothy; and, when we read them, the affection between the two is easily observed. In the first letter, Paul gives Timothy directives as to proper order in the assembly. Timothy was a godly young person, desiring to please the Lord, and Paul knew that he could be a help. He commended him as being one "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine." Could you or I be described by these words? Timothy knew the Scriptures and sound doctrine. As a result, Paul could say, "Let no man despise thy youth." If we do not have Timothy's measure of godliness, then how can we openly criticize a state which to our mind is not correct, and expect that the Lord will bless us for it? If we do judge others, and are not in a position to do so because of our walk, then the Lord will test us. Paul tells Timothy how to walk in order that no one would despise his youth. He was to be an example to believers in what he said, in his walk in the assembly, in his love to others, in his spirit and faith, as well as in his purity of life. Paul encouraged Timothy to read the Word; and then, when he had knowledge and wisdom derived from the Word of God, he would be able to exhort the brethren and maintain the doctrine that Paul had taught him.

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, the state of things in the assembly had deteriorated, and yet he urged him to "hold fast the form [outline] of sound words"; and there was no hint of his giving up in discouragement. May we seek to follow Paul's charge to Timothy: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim. 2:15.

The Spirit Is Life Because of Righteousness: the Body Is Dead Because of Sin

"THE SPIRIT IS LIFE BECAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS"

Rom. 8:10

Not only am I in Christ (Rom. 8:1), but Christ is in me as a believer (v. 10). The effect of knowing that I am in Christ is that there is no condemnation-not merely that I am not condemned in this or that, but all condemnation is absolutely annulled. There could not be anything of the sort for the Christian. God must condemn His own Son if He condemned those that are in Him; and every Christian is in Him.... The measure of His [God's] salvation is that, first of all, as to our standing, we are put in Christ risen from the dead, who is our life in the power of the Spirit. Next, there is the active working of the Spirit of God in the believer. This is what is spoken of here: "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." If I allow the body its own will, there is nothing but sin produced. How am I to get power against its dragging me into sin? Hold it [the body] for dead; this is the prescription. "If Christ be in you"-he is not speaking of unbelievers, but simply about Christians. To them the word is, "If Christ be in you." Remember, this is what you are to do- count the body as a dead thing-do not pamper it-never yield to it. If there be the allowance of the active will therein, it is not merely the body; it becomes then simply "flesh." Where rein is given to the will, irrespective, of course, of God's, the body is but the instrument of sin, not of righteousness.

Thus, the way for the Christian to get power against the sin that is in him, is to count the body dead. Is he that is dead to allow such and such an evil thing to work? When you cease to hold it for dead, there is sin; but if you do, the Spirit works in moral power. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness."

It is only so far as you do not yield to your own will that sin is practically null and void, and the Spirit of God acts freely. The Apostle is looking at the actual working of the Spirit of God in us. It is not life simply viewed as ours, but as in exercise-a matter of experience day by day. What is between the soul's deliverance (as in verses 1 and 2) and the resurrection of our bodies? "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Righteousness is not found simply by seeing that I am in Christ. This alone will not do. A man who merely talks about being in Christ and makes this his Christianity, will turn out very bad indeed. He is merely making Christ a means for getting off eternal condemnation and present responsibility, but this will not do. As sure as you have got Christ and you are in Christ, Christ is in you; and if Christ is in you, take care you do not allow self to work. Where the body is not treated as dead, but alive, and is allowed to have its way, sin must be the result. If you treat it as dead, its career is cut short, its course is closed, and the Spirit of God deigns to become the sole spring of what you are seeking.

And let no one suppose that this is bondage. It is Christian liberty. A slave thus works because he must; and we also, when in a low state, are apt to make a law of everything. When the affections are not flowing, we are only kept from what is openly evil, because there is a servile dread of doing what our consciences know is contrary to God. When this is the case, I am forgetting my ground of duty. What is it? Even now Christ is in me. If Christ be in me here, I am responsible to do His will. How is this to be done? I have got my body; if I allow it to have its own will and way, it will land me in sin. Treat it as dead; and let the one spring of what you desire be that which pleases the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness." There is no practical righteousness produced in the Christian, except by the power of the Spirit of God. If the body is allowed loose rein in what we desire, it is only sin. The Spirit, on the contrary, is life in the practical sense; and this is the only way of righteousness for our walk.

Suffering With Christ

If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. 8:17.

There is indeed the condition of suffering with Him in order that we may be glorified together; but this He makes good in all that are His. It is not suffering for Him, for all Christians do not. But all suffer with Him, who have the divine nature, even Himself as their life, in an evil world which constantly wounds and tries those who have that nature. This suffering flows from possessing life in Him while passing through a scene where all is opposed to Him; and the indwelling of the Spirit, instead of hindering this holy sorrow, is rather the spring of energy, both in keen apprehension and deep feeling of every way in which Christ is dishonored, and in meek endurance of all by which we may be tried according to the will of God. Hence, if this place of suffering in the world, as it now is, be a necessary consequence of divine life surrounded by all that is working out its way of misery, estrangement, and rebellion against Him, it is an immense privilege to suffer with Christ, cheered along the road by the prospect of sharing His glory.

The Sympathy and Grace of Jesus

Read Matt. 14:1-21; Mark 6:30-44

In these two parallel scriptures we are presented with two distinct conditions of heart, which both find their answer in the sympathy and grace of Jesus. Let us look closely at them, and may the Holy Ghost enable us to gather up and bear away their precious teaching!

It was, no doubt, a moment of deep sorrow to John's disciples when their master had fallen by the sword of Herod -when the one on whom they had been accustomed to lean, and from whose lips they had been wont to drink instruction, was taken from them after such a fashion. This, we may well believe, was indeed a moment of gloom and desolation to the followers of John.

But there was One to whom they could come in their sorrow, and into whose ear they could pour their tale of grief - One of whom their master had spoken, to whom he had pointed, and of whom he had said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." To Him the bereaved disciples betook themselves, as we read, they "came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus." Matt. 14:12. This was the very best thing they could have done. There was not another heart on earth in which they could have found such a response as in the heart-the tender, loving heart - of Jesus. His sympathy was perfect. He knew all about their sorrow. He knew their loss and how they were feeling it. Wherefore, they acted wisely when they "went and told Jesus." His ear was ever open, and His heart ever at leisure to soothe and sympathize. He perfectly exemplified the precept afterward embodied in the words of the Holy Ghost, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Rom. 12:15.

And oh! who can tell the worth of genuine sympathy? Who can declare the value of having one who can really make your joys and sorrows his own? Thank God! we have such a One in the blessed Lord Jesus Christ; and although we cannot see Him with the bodily eye, yet can faith use Him, in all the preciousness and power of His perfect sympathy. We can, if only our faith is simple and childlike, go from the tomb where we have just deposited the remains of some fondly cherished object, to the feet of Jesus, and there pour out the anguish of a bereaved and desolate heart. We shall there meet no rude repulse, no heartless reproof for our folly and weakness in feeling so deeply. No; nor yet any clumsy effort to say something suitable, an awkward effort to put on some expression of condolence. Ah! no; Jesus knows how to sympathize with a heart that is crushed and bowed down beneath the heavy weight of sorrow. His is a perfect human heart. What a thought! What a privilege to have access, at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, to a perfect, human heart! We may look in vain for this down here. Yes; look in vain, not merely in the world, but even in the Church. There may in many cases be a real desire to sympathize, but a total lack of capacity. I may find myself, in moments of sorrow, in company with one who knows nothing about my sorrow or the source thereof. How could he sympathize? And even though I should tell him, his heart might be so occupied with other things as to have no room and no leisure for me.

Not so with the perfect Man, Christ Jesus. He has both room and leisure for each and for all. No matter when, how, or with what you come, the heart of Jesus is always open. He will never repulse, never fail, never disappoint. If, therefore, we are in sorrow, what should we do? We should just do as the disciples of John did, go and tell Jesus. This, assuredly, is the right thing to do. Let us go straight from the tomb to the feet of Jesus. He will dry up our tears, soothe our sorrows, heal our wounds, and fill up our blanks.

We may now contemplate another condition of heart, as furnished by the twelve apostles on their return from a successful mission. "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught." Mark 6:30. Here we have not a case of sorrow and bereavement, but one of rejoicing and encouragement. The twelve made their way to Jesus to tell him of their success, just as the disciples of John made their way to Him in the moment of their loss. Jesus was equal to both. He could meet the heart that was crushed with sorrow, and He could meet the heart that was flushed with success. He knew how to control, to moderate, and to direct both the one and the other. BLESSINGS FOREVER BE UPON HIS HONORED NAME!

"And He said unto them, 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." Here then we are conducted to a point at which the moral glories of Christ shine out with uncommon luster and correct the selfishness of our poor narrow hearts. Here we are taught with unmistakable clearness that to make Jesus the depositary of our thoughts and feelings will never produce in us a spirit of haughty self sufficiency and independence, or a feeling of contempt for others. Quite the reverse. The more we have to do with Jesus, the more will our hearts be opened to meet the varied forms of human need which may present themselves to our view from day to day. It is when we come to Jesus and empty our whole hearts to Him, tell Him of our sorrows and our joys, and cast our whole burden at His feet, that we really learn how to feel for others.

There is great beauty and power in the words, "Come ye yourselves apart." He does not say, "Go ye." This would never do. There is no use in going apart into a desert place, if Jesus be not there to go to. To go into solitude without Jesus is but to make our cold, narrow hearts colder and narrower still. I may retire from the scene around me in chagrin and disappointment only to wrap myself up in impenetrable selfishness. I may fancy that my fellows have not made enough of me, and I may retire in order to make much of myself. I may make myself the center of my whole being, and thus become a cold-hearted, contracted, miserable creature. But when Jesus says "Come," the case is totally different. Our finest moral lessons are learned alone with Jesus. We cannot breathe the atmosphere of His presence without having our hearts expanded. If the apostles had gone into the desert without Jesus, they would, no doubt, have eaten the loaves and fishes themselves; but having gone with Jesus, they learned differently. He knew how to meet the need of a hungry multitude, as well as that of a company of sorrowing or rejoicing disciples. The sympathy and grace of Jesus are perfect. He can meet all. If one is sorrowful, he can go to Jesus; if he is happy, he can go to Jesus; if he is hungry, he can go to Jesus. We can bring everything to Jesus, for in Him all fullness dwells; and, blessed be His name, He never sends anyone empty away.

Not so, alas! with His poor disciples. How forbidding is their selfishness when viewed in the light of His magnificent grace! "And Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things." He had gone to a desert place to give His disciples rest; but no sooner does human need present itself than the deep flowing tide of compassion rolls forth from His tender heart.

"And when the day was now far spent, His disciples came unto Him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: send them away." What words to drop from the lips of men who had just returned from preaching the gospel! "Send them away." Ah! it is one thing to preach grace, and another thing to act it. No doubt, it is well to preach; but it is also well to act. Indeed, the preaching will be little worth if not combined with acting. It is well to instruct the ignorant, but it is also well to feed the hungry. The latter may involve more self-denial than the former. It may cost us nothing to preach, but it may cost us something to feed; and we do not like to have our private store intruded upon. The heart is ready to put forth its ten thousand objections: "What shall I do for myself? What will become of my family? We must act judiciously." These and similar thoughts the selfish heart can urge when a needy object presents itself.

"Send them away." What made the disciples say this? What was the real source of this selfish request? Simply unbelief. Had they only remembered that they had in their midst the One who of old had fed "six hundred thousand footmen," for forty years in the wilderness, they would have known that He would not send a hungry multitude away. Surely the same hand that had nourished such a host for so long a time could easily furnish a single meal for five thousand. This faith would reason; but, alas! unbelief darkens the understanding and contracts the heart. There is nothing so absurd as unbelief, and nothing which so shuts up the bowels of compassion. Faith and love always go together, and in proportion to the growth of the one is the growth of the other. Faith opens the floodgates of the heart and lets the tide of love flow forth. Thus the Apostle could say to the Thessalonians, "Your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity [love] of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." This is the divine rule. A heart that is full of faith can afford to be charitable; an unbelieving heart can afford nothing. Faith places the heart in immediate contact with God's exhaustless treasury, and fills it with the most benevolent affections. Unbelief throws the heart in upon itself and fills it with all manner of selfish fears. Faith conducts us into the soul-expanding atmosphere of heaven. Unbelief leaves us enwrapped in the withering atmosphere of this heartless world. Faith enables us to hearken to Christ's gracious accents, "Give ye them to eat." Unbelief makes us utter our own heartless words, "Send them [the multitude] away." In a word, there is nothing enlarges the heart like simple faith, and nothing so contracting as unbelief. Oh! that our faith may grow exceedingly, so that our love may abound more and more! May we reap much permanent profit from the contemplation of the sympathy and grace of Jesus!

What a striking contrast between "Send them away," and "Give ye them to eat." Thus it is ever. God's ways are not as our ways, and it is by looking at His ways that we learn to judge our ways - by looking at Him that we learn to judge ourselves. Jesus, in this lovely scene, corrects the selfishness of the disciples - first, by making them the channels through which His grace may flow to the multitude - second, by making them gather up "twelve baskets full of the fragments" for themselves.

Nor is this all. Not merely is selfishness rebuked, but the heart is most blessedly instructed. Nature might say, "What need is there of the five loaves and two fishes at all?"

Surely the One who can feed such a multitude with, can as easily feed them without, such an instrumentality." Nature might argue thus; but Jesus teaches us that we are not to despise God's creatures. We are to use what we have, with God's blessing. This is a fine moral lesson for the heart. "What hast thou in the house?" is the question. It is just that and nothing else that God will use. It is easy to be liberal with what we have not; but the thing is to bring out what we have, and, with God's blessing, apply it to the present need.

So also in the gathering up of the fragments. The foolish heart might say, "What need of gathering up those scattered crumbs? Surely the One who has wrought such a miracle can have no need of fragments." Yes; but we are not to waste God's creatures. If in the using of the loaves and fishes we are taught not to despise any creature of God, in the gathering up of the fragments we are taught not to waste it. Let human need be liberally met, but let not a single crumb be wasted. How divinely perfect! How unlike us! Sometimes we are penurious, at other times prodigal.

Jesus was never either the one or the other. "Give ye them to eat." But, let "nothing be lost." Perfect grace! Perfect wisdom! May we adore it, and learn from it! May we rejoice in the assurance that the blessed One who manifested all this wisdom and grace is our life. Christ is our life, and it is the manifestation of this life that constitutes practical Christianity. It is not living by rules and regulations, but simply having Christ dwelling in the heart by faith—Christ the source of perfect sympathy and perfect grace.

In closing we might be interested and profit by a reference to our Lord's allusion to the two occasions of feeding the multitude, as given in Mark 8:19-21. "When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto Him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And He said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?"

When the multitude was greater and the supply less, they had twelve large baskets of fragments; and, on the other hand, when the multitude was less and the supply greater, they had only seven small baskets. The greater the demand, and the deeper the need, the more the magnificence of divine grace shines out. Eternal and universal homage to the peerless name of our adorable Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

There Is a Time to Dance: for Young Christians

A message for young Christians

Some time ago the following question was asked in England: "Is it sinful for a Christian to encourage dancing, or to take part in it when entertained by Christian people who practice it, arguing that it is a harmless recreation?"

It would further seem that this subject is a perplexing one to young Christians in this day. Beloved young readers, are you willing to turn with me to the Word of God? Let us bear in mind that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). And faith can only act on the will of God.

It may be said, But do we not find dancing in the Scriptures? Yes, that is true, we do. "Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously." Exod. 15:20, 21. This was the great joy of redemption from Egypt. Is it so when those called Christians in this day entertain their friends with dancing? Are their hearts filled with joy because God has redeemed them? Do they sing to the Lord because He has triumphed gloriously? Do they think of the Lord, or dare they name His holy name at the dance? No; they never dance the dance of Miriam.

David also "danced before the Lord with all his might" (2 Sam. 6:14). But why did he dance? It was because the ark was brought into the city of David with gladness. The restoration of this symbol of Jehovah's presence filled the heart of David with gladness, and thus in its dispensation was a time to dance. Have we ever been filled with higher and holier joy, because the enjoyed presence of the Lord Himself has really been restored wherever two or three are gathered to Him? Does not David condemn us? Honestly, dear young friends, do you believe you are invited to dance with all your might before the Lord? Or is it not really that you may make yourselves as happy as you can be in Cain's world, and forget God? Is God in all their thoughts when they invite you to dance? You will not find a dance in modern Babylon that answers to Miriam's or David's.

Let us try another scripture. Israel had sinned exceedingly while Moses was away in the mount (Ex. 32). They had freely subscribed their gold and fallen into idolatry. They had really turned after demons. "And they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." And they offered offerings; indeed, they imitated the worship of God. "And said, To-morrow is a feast to the LORD." Read the full account. "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." And in verses 17 to 20 we learn they played at dancing till they shouted again. Was this a time to dance? Was this faith, or sin? Which?

Now is not this an exact picture of Christendom - of those very so-called Christians that invite you to sit down and eat and drink, and rise up and play at dancing? They have practically turned aside from the word of the Lord to the idolatry of paganism, and to the pagan festivals which they call feasts to the Lord. They sit down content in this world, to eat and to drink religiously, as many a one even takes the Lord's supper. And then, as it was while Moses was away in the mount, so

now, while Jesus, the once crucified, is away in heaven, they invite you to rise up and dance. Dear young souls, may God open your eyes.

But is there not a scripture which says there is a time to dance? There is; let us read it. "A time to mourn, and a time to dance" (Eccles. 3:4). The question then is this---Is it now, is this the time to dance?

If an enemy invaded these shores, and if disloyal men betrayed her Majesty the Queen into their hands, and she was with the greatest possible cruelty and indignity banished from her dominions, would that be a time for loyal subjects to dance, or to mourn? When David was driven from his kingdom, did his loyal friend Mephibosheth dance? When the king returned, "Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace." 2 Sam. 19:24. What would David have thought of him if he had called his friends together to amuse themselves with play and dancing?

Dear young readers, do you profess to be loyal Christians? to belong to the King of glory, who for the present has been rejected and mocked, and with the utmost possible cruelty has been rejected by this world, by Jew and Gentile-yea, who has been put to the most cruel and shameful death, and who is still hated and rejected by this world? And is this the time to mourn His absence, or to dance for joy with that world that hates your Lord?

That long-rejected Lord will soon return "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." 2 Thess. 1:8, 9. That blessed Lord has told us, it shall be in that day as it was in the days of Noah and of Lot. Was it a time to dance when the angel had warned Lot? His daughters and sons-in-law may have been at an evening party having a harmless dance. Was that a time to dance? There was eating and drinking, and perhaps dancing; marrying and giving in marriage, when Noah had long warned the world of coming judgment; but the flood came at last. If it was not a time to dance then, is it now? A far greater judgment is at the very doors. Men did not believe it then, but it came. It will be so again.

Do you say, "Oh, but I am a Christian, and I expect the Lord to come first and take me"? Do you look for the return of the Lord to take His Church? And do you really believe that all who have heard and rejected the gospel-your very friends, it may be-will be left behind for everlasting judgment; and can you amuse yourself and them with dancing? If you were sure the Lord would come tomorrow, would you spend tonight in dancing? Is not dancing a pleasure of that world lying in the wicked one? Has not God said in His Word, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"? 1 John 2:15. Oh, be not deceived; if you really are a Christian, then Jesus says, You are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Do not let the devil deceive you by telling you that you can have both the pleasures of the world now and heaven at last. Are we not baptized unto His death? Do dead men dance? We are to reckon ourselves dead with Christ and alive to God in Him.

Well, if it is not a time to dance now, will it ever be so? Yes, indeed, there will be a time to dance, even on this earth. Faith in the Word of God sees a blessed time beyond the darkness and the

judgments about to be poured upon this poor guilty world. The ancient people of God to whom the promises were given, the children of Israel, shall be gathered to their own land. "Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name in the dance: let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp." Psalm 149:2, 3. "Praise Him with the timbrel and dance" (Psalm 150:4). Oh what a change! The devil is the accepted god of this world now, and Jesus is rejected. It is a time to mourn. The Lord shall then be King in Zion. "For, behold. I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her." "For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river." (Read the context, Isa. 65 and 66.)

Yes, then will be the time to dance, for those who are spared to people the earth when Jesus, the Messiah, the King, shall reign in Zion. But notice the character of the dancing there. It is real joy in Christ, their King. It is with the heart filled with praise to Him. It is as if the body is thrilled with holy joy in the Lord, and expressed its joy in Him in the dance. Can you tell me where there is such dancing as this now? Is the name of Jesus ever named in the dance? Does the heart swell with praise to Him? There may be the mockery of mixing dancing with a form of family prayer, as there was around the golden calf.

In conclusion then, as dancing is not now in keeping with the time we live in (Jesus having been murdered and rejected), so it cannot be of faith, and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Is it possible for a Christian that is waiting for the Lord from heaven to be found dancing? We do not believe that the two things can exist together. May the Lord separate all that are His from this pleasure-loving world

Three Grand Realities: God Our Justifier, Hiding Place, Guide

Psalm 32

In this lovely psalm we have God presented to us in three ways. First, we have Him as our Justifier; second, as our Hiding place; third, as our Guide. These surely are "Three Grand Realities." Nor is it merely that God provides us with justification, security, and guidance, though even this were rich and abundant mercy and goodness; but there is far more than this-He Himself has become our Justifier, our Hiding place, and our Guide. Wondrous provision! Such is the moral grandeur of redemption-such the way in which the God of all grace has met our need. If God Himself is my Justifier, I must be perfectly justified. If He is my Hiding place, I must be perfectly hidden. If He is my Guide, I must be perfectly guided.

Let us then, as guided by the light of Holy Scripture, and in dependence upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit, proceed to consider, in the first place.

God Our Justifier

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Oh! the blessedness! Transgression forgiven - sin covered. There is deeply imbedded in man's religious mind the thought that he has to meet God as a judge-that he, as a sinner, has in some way or another to satisfy the claims of a righteous judge who will deal with him about his sins and exact the very last farthing. As the dying gypsy exclaimed, when told that he was standing at the very portal of the eternal world, "What! must I gang afore the Judge wi' a' my sins upon me?" Tremendous inquiry! If I have to meet God as my judge, it is all over with me. "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." Psalm 143:2. Hence, therefore, a soul looking at God as a judge must be filled with terror, inasmuch as he cannot answer Him one of a thousand. "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Mic. 6:6, 7. You cannot meet God as a judge. Condemnation must be the issue of a meeting between a righteous judge and a guilty sinner.

But, thanks be to God, He wears another character now. He is a righteous justifier. Yes, a justifier of such as cannot meet Him as a judge. God must be righteous in whatever sphere He displays Himself. Whether as a judge or a justifier, He must be just. But, in this day of grace, during "the acceptable year," "the day of salvation," He is revealing Himself as "a just God and a Savior" - a righteous Savior-God. What a character! What a stupendous triumph of redeeming love! What an answer to Satan! What a balm for the convicted conscience and stricken heart! A Savior-God! It is the very title which suits a lost sinner. It brings God near to me in the very condition and character in which I find myself.

If God is a Savior, it is precisely what suits me as lost. If God is a justifier, it is exactly what I need as guilty. None but a lost sinner can have to do with a Savior-God. None but a guilty sinner can have to do with God as a righteous justifier. Nothing can be simpler. It places salvation and justification on a basis as simple as it is solid, and as solid as it is simple. God reveals Himself as a Savior; the believing sinner walks in the light of that revelation, and is saved. God reveals Himself as a justifier; the believing sinner walks in the light of that revelation, and is justified. He is saved and justified according to the perfect standard of God's revelation of Himself. It is impossible to stand on more solid ground or occupy a more unassailable position than this. To touch the believer's salvation and justification is to mar the integrity of God's revelation.

And let the reader remember who it is that God justifies, for this point is only second in importance to the question of who is the justifier. Who then does God justify? Is it good people? Where are they? Is it those who have done their duty? Are any such to be found? Is it those who have fulfilled the law? Such would not need His justification, seeing that "the man which doeth those things shall live by them"

(Rom. 10:5). If, therefore, a man could fulfill the law, he should have no transgression to be forgiven, no sin to be covered, and hence a Savior-God-a righteous justifier-is not for him. This is obvious. A man who has wrought out a legal righteousness does not need an evangelical one. "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Gal. 2:21. There was no use in His dying to get us righteousness, if it could be had some other way.

Who then does God justify? He justifies the ungodly. Yes, such is the veritable language of Holy Scripture. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth, the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Rom. 4:4-8.

Here then we get our answer, full, clear, distinct, and conclusive. Two characters are placed in contrast; namely, "him that worketh," and "him that worketh not"; and this contrast completely upsets all man's thoughts. It never could have entered into man's mind to conceive that righteousness was to be had without working for it-that God could justify the ungodly. And yet this is the very doctrine of Scripture. If man could get righteousness by working for it, then clearly it would not be divine righteousness, for the simplest of all reasons-that this latter is to "him that worketh not." If God reveals Himself as the justifier of the ungodly, then it is a sheer denial of the revelation for man to come before Him in any other character. If I as a sinner bring my duties to God, I must meet Him as a judge; for surely He must judge my duties to see if they are all right. But if I bring my sins to Him, He meets me as a justifier with a full and free forgiveness and an everlasting righteousness. The peculiar glory of the gospel is that it reveals God as the righteous justifier of poor ungodly sinners.

This is a marvelous truth. And if it be asked, as it surely must, by every exercised conscience, On what ground does this grand reality hold good? the answer is as clear and satisfactory as the most anxious soul can possibly desire. It is this -God as a judge dealt with my sins at the cross, in order that God as a justifier might deal with me at heaven's side of the empty tomb of Jesus. The death of Christ, therefore, forms the ground on which God can righteously justify the ungodly. A

righteous judge condemned sin on the cross, that a righteous justifier might pardon and justify the guilty. What a profound mystery! Well may angels desire to look into it; and well may sinners, whom it so blessedly concerns, bless and praise Him who has counseled, revealed, and wrought it all for them through the accomplished atonement of Christ.

And here we would pause a moment in order to put a plain, pointed question to the reader. Dear friend, do you know God as your justifier? or are you still thinking of meeting Him as a judge? Are you looking forward to the judgment seat as the place where the question of your justification is to be settled? If so, you must be miserable. You can never enjoy true peace until you know and believe that God as a judge has nothing against you as a sinner—that He Himself is your Justifier—that in the death and resurrection of Christ He has revealed Himself as a just God and a Savior to you, an ungodly sinner. This is the solid and unassailable ground of peace, and we most earnestly pray you to ponder it. If you are really anxious about your soul's salvation, you need not lay down this paper until you possess divine certainty that you are justified, and that God is your Justifier. Blessed certainty! May you know it now, through simply believing on Him who justifies the ungodly, and you will then be able to follow us with intelligence and comfort while we dwell, in the second place, on

God Our Hiding Place

It is a remarkable fact that so long as the sinner is at enmity with God, he is at peace with himself; at peace with the world; at peace with the devil; but the moment he is brought into full peace with God, he is at war with himself, with the world, and with the devil. Hence, no sooner do I know God as my justifier than I have to cope with a host of spiritual enemies, within and around. This makes me conscious of another need; I need a hiding place into which I may retreat at all times, out of which I may never venture to show myself. Now, God is this Hiding place. "Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." What a difference between the condition of the soul here and in the third and fourth verses! "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." What a contrast between the "roaring" of a sin-burdened soul fearing judgment, and the "songs of deliverance" of a justified soul hidden in God! And yet it is far better to roar in disquietude of spirit, than to cry, Peace, peace, where there is no peace. True anxiety is vastly to be preferred to a false peace. But the believer has neither the one nor the other. His anxiety has been hushed into truthful repose by the knowledge of God as his justifier and hiding place; and therefore instead of the roaring of disquietude, he can sing songs of deliverance. Blessed exchange! Instead of crying out, O the wretchedness! he can sing aloud, Oh! the blessedness! "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place."

These are some of the "songs of deliverance" with which a Savior-God compasses His justified and hidden ones. Would that we were more filled with them! Alas! that we should be more characterized by murmurings and complainings than by songs of triumph. Surely, if we would but ponder our mercies and blessings more deeply, our songs would be more abundant. Who have such reason to be glad as those who are justified by, and perfectly hidden in, God?

But we must close this paper by a brief reference to the third point in this lovely scripture; namely,
God Our Guide

This we may truly say is a grand reality. Yes, and we need it as we pass along through the labyrinths of this wilderness world, in this day of perplexity and confusion. We need a guide, and God has undertaken to fill that office for us. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye." What precious grace! It is as though our God would meet us at each stage of our path and manifest Himself in the very character in which we need Him. When bowed down with guilt, and roaring in disquietude, our bones waxing old and our moisture dried up, He shines before us as our justifier-our Savior-God--pardoning our transgressions and covering our sins. When surrounded by hosts of spiritual enemies who would crush us in a moment, He opens His bosom to us and invites us to find in Himself a retreat and a hiding place from them all; so, instead of feeling ourselves compassed with foes, we are compassed with songs. And, finally, when called to pass through scenes of confusion and perplexity, He in infinite grace stands before us and says, "I will guide thee." What grace! What nearness! What intimacy!

And mark the way He guides. "I will guide thee with Mine eye." This, as we know, is the most tender, delicate, and affectionate description of guidance. We must be very intimate with a person and very near him in order to be guided by the movement of his eye. It is a far more refined and exquisite sort of guidance than the movement of the hand or the sound of the voice. I must be gazing directly into a person's face in order to catch the glance of his eye; and I must be intimately acquainted with his wishes and his ways in order to interpret the glance and act upon it.

O that we entered more fully into all this! Would that the guidance of our Father's eye were ever sufficient for us! Would that we could just place our hand in His, and, gazing up into His countenance, be ever guided by the movement of His eye! Then would our path be clear and safe, simple and happy. We should not, like the impetuous "horse," or the obstinate "mule," require the "bit and bridle" of circumstances; but through communion with His mind we should know His will. How often we are at a loss as to our path! How often we are ill at ease! And why? Because the guidance of the eye is not understood. We ask God for guidance in reference to movements which He does not want us to make, and as to paths in which He does not want us to tread. "I don't know which way to turn," said someone lately to a Christian friend. What was the reply? A very simple one. "Don't turn at all." Just so. If you do not see your way as to moving, it is very obvious you should stand still.

May all the people of God be enabled by His Spirit to walk as justified ones, to abide in their Hiding place, and follow their Guide!

To Him That Overcometh

It must be joy to anyone who loves the Lord Jesus, to think of having His individual peculiar approbation and love, to find that He has approved our conduct in such circumstances, though none know this but ourselves who receive the approval. But, beloved, are we really content to have an approval which Christ only knows? Let us try ourselves a little. Are we not too desirous of man's commendation of our conduct? or at least that he should know and give us credit for the motives which actuate it? Are we content, so long as good is done, that nobody should know anything about us? even in the Church to be thought nothing of? - that Christ alone should give us the "white stone" of His approval, and the "new name" which no man knoweth save only he that receiveth it?

Are we content, I say, to seek nothing else? Oh, think what the evil and treachery of that heart must be that is not satisfied with Christ's special favor, but seeks honor (as we do) of one another instead! I ask you, beloved, which would be most precious to you - which would you prefer - the Lord's public owning of you as a good and faithful servant, or the private individual love of Christ resting upon you, the secret knowledge of His love and approval? He whose heart is specially attached to Christ will respond - The latter. Both will be ours, if faithful, but we shall value this most; and there is nothing that will carry us so straight on our course as the anticipation of it.

The Trial and Proof of Faith

Glory belongs to God and to the Lamb. If the Church is looking for advantages on the earth, it takes on the character of Babylon. The Lord Jesus wills that the Church, His bride, should have the glory that belongs to Him, and that she should with Him wait until He enters into His glory to enjoy it with Him. If she is looking for an earthly glory, she becomes unfaithful to her heavenly Bridegroom; and this is the greatest unfaithfulness. We ought not to have any of the things which the prince of this world gives, but receive the heavenly things from the hand of God, and expect them from Himself. The Church ought to be the manifestation on the earth of that thorough detachment from the earth. She ought to be entirely independent of everything else, and in absolute dependence on God. This is the trial and proof of faith-to refuse the possession of things before God gives them.

It was the sin of Saul to have sacrificed before Samuel had come (see 1 Sam. 13:8-13). It is infinitely better to wait for the enjoyment of everything with Christ. "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:22, 23). And if this link is broken, the relationship between God and the creature is broken also. The Church must wait for the epoch of her glory, until the judgment of God be executed. Satan always tries to deceive the Church in this respect. He even endeavors to unite Christians in a spirit of human association to arrive at a spiritual millennium which is not promised, and which would exalt man and the means he has in his hand.

Nothing will make the bride happy but the presence of the Bridegroom. On the other hand, God will not exercise His power in the government of the world without Christ. Those who endeavor to produce a spiritual millennium want to use the resources of men. And as they must have money, they rest on what man can give. It is similar in principle to Babel (see Gen. 11), notwithstanding the excellence of the intentions; and Christians who expect the blessing before the judgment always rest on the energy of man.

The Trip to the Unfailing Physician

Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48

The daughter of Jairus the ruler of the synagogue, lay dying in her father's house. Everything that could be done for her had been done, but nothing could stay the relentless waves of death which rolled onward as if resolved to quench the light of that fair young life. Will then the father and mother of the damsel have to part with this dear child of their affection? It must be so, unless Jesus would come and raise her up; and happily for them Jesus was at hand. Jairus goes to Him, beseeches Him to come and bid his daughter live; and the blessed Lord, ever gracious, ever ready to answer the cry of need, would go and rescue this child from the gates of the grave, and place her again in her parents' bosom. On His way to the ruler's house, much people followed and thronged Him; and among them there is one to whose state and actions the pen of the inspired Evangelist now abruptly turns our attention.

For twelve long years she had been sick; and her case, like that of the ruler's daughter, baffled the skill of the medical men. Physician after physician was consulted, and fee after fee paid, till all that she had was gone, and she was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. Oh, those weary twelve years during which the heart of this suffering woman had been beaten about like a shuttlecock between hope and despair - one day thinking she was gaining strength, the next day finding she was not; one physician given up and another tried, but all alike impotent to do her any good, until poverty and a long unbroken series of disappointments bade her hope for health no more, but prepare for the final issue - the coffin and the grave.

What a picture have we here of the sinner's condition! How it speaks of that incurable disease - sin - from which humanity everywhere is suffering, and of the anxious but fruitless efforts of many a soul to find spiritual health and healing. Yes, sin is an awful reality; and death and sorrow and crying and pain and tears are the bitter fruits of it in this world; and how infinitely more sad and solemn its results in the world to come. And this cruel and malignant foe has made a prey of every heart, and manifests its presence and its power in man's insubjection to God, in lawlessness, for "sin is lawlessness." It is a terrible thing to be a sinner, and the fact that all have sinned does not lessen the terribleness of it any more than the power of cholera to kill would be lessened by every individual in the country being seized with it together. "All have sinned." Alas! alas! that it should be so.

Many are the means which well-intentioned persons have devised to repress or at least check certain forms in which sin shows itself. There are societies for the promotion of temperance, of social purity; societies for the circulation of wholesome literature, and for the suppression of vice; but all such agencies, when they have accomplished their highest measure of good, leave the sinner's state before God untouched. The sore healed upon the surface frets underneath; the chained demoniac is a demoniac still; the rotten ship is not made sound by being painted on the outside. Stanch the bleeding wounds of humanity as much as you may, man remains a sinner; and the question for each is, What do you purpose doing in reference to your having sinned against

God?

If you set yourself earnestly to work, determined to lead a better life in every sense of the word, in what way would that make your condition less hopeless than it is? If a man is deeply in debt, his circumstances are not improved by his resolve not to add to his indebtedness. If in the future he pays cash for all he buys, that does not liquidate his former debts - the past remains, and it is written that "God requireth that which is past" (Eccles. 3:15).

It is the natural impulse of the heart to have recourse to many physicians. No one likes to regard his case as hopeless. No one likes to believe himself lost as far as his own efforts go. When the prodigal's last penny was spent, and no man gave unto him, he did not begin at once to think of his father's house, nor determine to return thither. He will seek to mend his broken fortunes somehow; anything rather than go back in poverty and rags, and own the sin and folly of his ways. But if God is dealing with your soul, it is to that point you must be brought; and the longer you fight against it, the longer will your misery last. If you still resist, God will suffer you to go on till your last cent is gone, and your last interview with the physicians is over; and what will you then do? Poor and strengthless, sick and ready to die, to whom will you then turn?

The woman of our narrative had come to this when someone told her of Jesus. What her informant said we know not, but it is easy to imagine how hope sprang up afresh within her heart—hope which maketh not ashamed—as she heard of the One whose power had never been known to fail. Here was a new Physician to whom the poor were as welcome as the rich, and from whom healing virtue flowed at the first touch of those who felt their need of Him. To Him then she would go, and at once; so gathering her garments about her, she straightway mingled with the great crowd in the street.

Little by little did this afflicted soul elbow her way through the throng. Hope gave her fresh strength, and her faith led her to dare what otherwise she would have shrunk from; for, as men speak, the crowd was no place for her. But she said, "If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole"; and this was no small matter for one who had suffered many things of many physicians, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. Silently and unobserved she drew near and stretching out the hand touched the hem of His garment. The act was weak, but how rich in its results! The simple touch of this feeble woman ended in her perfect cure. What she had sought in vain all those long years now came to her in a moment, not as the reward of incessant labor or almost endless research, but the happy fruit of a faith that brought her into personal contact with Jesus.

Nor is it otherwise today. The sinner that comes to the Savior does not remain unblessed. The serpent-bitten Israelites lived when they looked on the serpent of brass; and the conscience-stricken jailor at Philippi was saved the moment he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation tomorrow might do very well for any who are sure of living till tomorrow, but for those who know the uncertainty of human life a present salvation is required. This is what God presents. Salvation now, free and everlasting, is found in Christ for everyone that believes. The soul that believes in Him is saved, everlasting life is his, into judgment he shall never come, he has already passed from death to life (John 5:24).

And this dear, timid woman, having received healing, would now return home as unheeded as she came. Little did she think that her faint touch had been noticed by the Savior; but it was happy for her that it had. So with His question and His look He called her from the clustering crowd. Fearing and trembling she came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. Everything was out. She who had secretly obtained the blessing is now in the presence of the Blessor, and what will He say? Will He blame her boldness in coming to Him as it were by stealth, and censure her lack of courage in not asking for healing in the open day? Far from that - He calls her to His feet that she might know the heart of Him whose power she had already proved. "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." She can now go back with the blessing confirmed in her possession, and her spirit rejoicing in the One who had blessed her thus.

When the soul has received eternal blessing from Christ, it is well that there should be a firm confession of His name. It was due to Him that this one should declare "before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately." Who can tell the effect of this personal and public testimony? By it the faith that was ready to falter may have received strength, and some hearing of what Jesus had done may have hastened to tell of Him to others whose case was as hopeless as hers.

Another point may be noticed. Numbers may flock around Jesus and touch Him, but at the touch of faith alone the healing streams flow forth. It is only when such a touch is given that the Savior can say, "Somebody hath touched Me." And has this no voice for those who crowd around Christ, so to speak, in places where His name is named?

There they like to go, as their going gives a tone to their respectability, which would not be complete without it. Moreover, it quiets the conscience and rocks it to sleep in the cradle of self-complacency. But alas! how few among the many who handle the externals of religion have touched the hem of His garment in faith and in felt need! How few know Him savingly, yet not to know Him thus is not to know Him at all.

"And didst Thou feel the gentle touch

Amid the noisy rabble throng;

Knowing that need of Thee had drawn

A weak one, that rude crowd among?

"With sickened frame, and trembling heart,

She crept unnoticed through the throng;

And, sheltered 'neath those healing wings,

She found, at once, her burden gone.

"Her need was answered-and unseen

As she had come, she hoped to go,

Alone to love that healing One

Whom soon she'd as Messiah know.

"But no-the words, 'Who touched My clothes?'

Gave birth to thoughts which none could tell;

She had spent all-had naught to give-

And trembling at His feet she fell.

"She knew Him not. 'Be of good cheer'

Threw peace, and joy, and light around,

As rainbow-drops from heaven descend

In grateful showers on thirsty ground.

"Her fears dispelled, she sees Him now

Her God and Savior, looking love;

He'd been her hope of comfort here,

And now her hope of joy above."

Turmoil or Peace

"What is wrong with the world, and why the unprecedented increase of crime?" Such is the question in many hearts and minds. Can you answer it? Here is one answer written to us by a young friend, a Jewish naval officer, during the Second World War.

"You will be interested to know that for the third time I have had my ship shot from under me. I am now home on leave, recuperating from injuries. It is hard for any active man to lie still and think, but I believe I have learned a lot during these days, and I wish I could make young America see that these facts are as important in fighting the war as bullets or bombs.

"Like most young moderns I was taught at home and in school that professional and financial success was what counted most. I looked forward to being a 'big shot' in law. I had a good family name and enough money and political pull to make a start. I was engaged to a wonderful girl and had fine friends. In fact, I thought I had the world by the tail.

"Then, overnight, I was plunged into the horror of the South Seas campaign. I had always known a well-ordered, refined home - filled with friends and family. Now I was on my own in a scene of chaos and death.

"You may not believe this, but for obvious reasons, we in America are glamorizing the story of army life, and of the juvenile delinquency which is sweeping the country. But the answer is to be found in the old verse, 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Pro. 29:18). And the tragic truth is, we younger Americans have no lasting vision toward which to steer our lives. We have nothing to withstand the vicissitudes of war, depression, the rising and falling tides of faith.

"And I trace it all to leaving God out of our homes and schools. We have made incredible advances in science and mechanics. But material progress has material limits.

There is a part of our lives which it does not nourish or satisfy. It seems strange that I should be saying these things, for neither I nor my people are orthodox Jews. Our ideals and standards are those of all modern Americans. But I have come to see a terrible lack in the training of America's young people.

"Our modern homes and schools are all wrong. They answer the needs of the body and mind, but they are indifferent to the needs of the soul. My best friend died beside me. For twelve hours he lay there dying in awful pain. No comfort was at hand, I had no medicine to help him. Then I thought of my Old Testament. I read him the twenty-third Psalm. Halfway through I saw his head relax. He was sleeping. He had dropped asleep - smiling - with such peace on his face as I had never seen.

"Our homes and our schools give our children so many things to meet life. Can't they give a boy such peace when he must meet death?"

What an indictment of those leaders who would banish God and His way of peace from this world! Of them all, God has said: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes." Rom. 3:10-18.

Only through Christ, our Passover, sacrificed for us (1 Cor. 5:7) can true peace, the peace that passes understanding, keep our hearts and minds.

Reader, can you say, "The LORD is my shepherd"? He bled and died to save your soul; He arose and lives to lead you through life. The Psalmist could say, "I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." This he could say because the Lord was his Shepherd (Psalm 23:6). Whatever the turmoil of the world may be, this same blessed assurance and a hope both sure and steadfast will be secured for you if you will but accept Him as your Savior NOW!

The Two Natures

The believer has two natures and not one. All teaching that sets forth the [old] nature improved is false. The old man in the saint is always bad. While we are living men here below, the will of the flesh is opposed to God; there is that which God does not improve, and which does not in the least degree admit of improvement.

Our old man is not extinguished, but crucified. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." It is not gone, but the allowing of it to reign over you is exhorted against. It is like a wild beast which you are to keep under lock and key; but the wild beast does not become tame by merely locking it up. And the overlooking of that point quite accounts for a Christian's falling into what is wrong. He sins when he is careless or off his guard.

There is in the believer, on the one hand, that old nature of the flesh which is always prone to evil; and, on the other, the new man, or the new nature (that which loves God and His will); and it is in virtue of this that man is said to be sanctified. He has got a nature he never had before. He is set apart to God and, being brought by faith under the power of Christ's work, he is said to be washed, sanctified, justified.

Waiting for Christ's Coming

That which should characterize Christians is, not merely holding the doctrine of the Lord's coming as that which they believe, but their souls should be in the daily attitude of waiting, expecting, and desiring His coming. But why? That they may see Himself and be with Him and like Him forever! Not because the world which has been so hostile to them is going to be judged, though God will smite the wicked.

The whole walk and character of a saint depends upon his waiting for the Lord. Everyone should be able to read us by this, as having nothing to do in this world but to get through it, and not as having any portion in it.

"Turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:9, 10). This is thought a strange thing now; but the Thessalonians were converted to this hope, for they belonged to a world which had rejected God's Son; therefore they had to turn from these idols "to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven."

What I desire to press upon you all, and myself too, is the individual waiting for the Lord; not as a doctrine merely, but as a daily waiting for Himself. Whatever the Lord's will may be, I should like Him to find me doing so when He comes. But that is not the question. Am I waiting for Himself day by day?

In 1 Thessalonians 2 the hope is connected with ministry. "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" Then Paul would get the reward of his service to the saints.

Then in the third chapter the hope is connected with our walk, as a motive for holiness.

"Unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."

Also in the fourth chapter the doctrine of the hope is unfolded, the manner of it comes out: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:16-17.

Thus we see what a present expectation the coming of the Lord was; therefore Paul says, "We which are alive and remain." But why does he say "we"? Because he expected it then. This was Paul's character, that of waiting for the Lord. And does he lose that character because he died before the Lord came? No; not at all.

Though Peter had a revelation that he should put off the tabernacle of his body, yet did he daily wait for the Lord's coming. And this will be Peter's character when the Lord does come; he will lose nothing by his death.

"Be ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord" (Luke 12:36). The character of their waiting was to be like servants at the hall door, that when the master knocked, they were ready to open to him immediately. It is a figure of course here; but it is the present power of the expectation that is alluded to. And the ruin of the Church has come in by practically saying, "My lord delayeth his coming" (Luke 12:45).

"Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching" (Luke 12:37).

We Belong to the Heavenly

"Our citizenship is in heaven." "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." What has a dead man to do with politics? But the Christian is one who has died in Christ-died to sin-died to the law-died to the world-and hence he has, in God's view of him, no more to do with these things than a man lying dead on the floor. He is alive in Christ-alive to God -alive to all that is spiritual, heavenly, divine. He is in the new creation. His morals, his religion, his politics are all in the new creation-all heavenly-all divine. He is done with the world in spirit and principle. He is in it, to walk as a pilgrim and stranger-in it to live as a Christian-a spiritual, heavenly man-but not of it to walk as a worldly, carnal, natural man. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." May we live in the power of these things.

What Do I Learn From Scripture? Preface

The following paper was drawn up on the request being made to the writer to give a statement of his faith.

It was replied that the writer would not sign a confession of faith which he had drawn up himself; that all human statement of truth was so inferior to Scripture, even when drawn from it [the written Word], that he could not do it; and the drawing up of this has only the more convinced him of it.

In the first place, there might be important points left out, or that put in which had better not be there. And supposing everything right that was there, it was like an artificial tree instead of a growing tree. The Word gives the truth in its living operations. It is giving [truth] in connection with God, in connection with man, with conscience, with divine life, and is thus a totally different thing. The writer had, however, no objection personally to say what he believed, to give an answer when asked the question. What follows is given with a deeper conviction than ever of the imperfection of a human assemblage of truth; the writer adding that there are many things more which he should teach. But he could say, "I believe this"; I have learned this from Scripture.

I learn from the Scriptures that there is one living God (1 Tim. 2:5; 4:10, and many more), fully revealed to us in Christ (John 1:18), and known through Him as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt. 3:16, 17; 28:19; Eph. 2:18), in the unity of the Godhead (John 5:19 Cor. 12:6), but revealed as distinctively willing (John 6:38-40; John 5:21 Cor. 12:11), acting (John 5:17 Cor. 12:11), sending, sent, I coming (John 15:26; 16:7, 8, 13), distributing (1 Cor. 12:11), and other actings; or, as habitually expressed among Christians, three persons in one God, or Trinity in Unity. God is the Creator of all things; but the act of creating is personally attributed to the Word and the Son, and the operation of the Spirit of God.²

I learn that the Word, who was with God and was God, was made flesh, and dwelt among us (John 1:1, 2, 14), the Father sending the Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14). That He, as the Christ, was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4), by the power of the Holy Spirit coming on the virgin Mary (Luke 1:35), true man,³ without sin (Luke 1:35 John 3:5), in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9), the promised seed of David according to the flesh,⁴ the Son of man (Matt. 16:13, and many more), and Son of God (John 1:18, 34, and many more), determined to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4), one blessed Person, God and man,⁵ the Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5), the anointed Man (Acts 10:38), Jehovah the Savior (Matt. 1:21. The word Christ or Messiah means anointed, and Jesus or Joshua, Jehovah or Jah the Savior).

I learn that He died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3), having appeared once in the consummation of ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26); that He has borne our sins in His own body on the tree, suffering for sins the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God (1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18); and that He is our righteousness before God (1 Cor. 1:30; Heb. 9:24).

I learn that He is risen from the dead (1 Cor. 15:20; Matt. 28:6, and many others), raised by God, by Himself, by the glory of the Father, 6 and ascended up on high, 7 having by Himself purged our sins, and sits at the right hand of God (Heb. 1:3; 10:12; Eph. 1:20, 21, and others).

I learn that after Christ's ascension the Holy Ghost has been sent down to dwell in His people individually and collectively, so that in both ways they are the temple of God. 8 We are sealed (Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:22) and anointed with this Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 2:20, 27), the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5:5), we are led by Him (Rom. 8:14), and He is the earnest of our inheritance (Eph. 1:14; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5); we cry, Abba, Father, knowing we are sons (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6).

I learn that Christ will come again to receive us to Himself (John 14:3), raising those that are His, or changing them if living, fashioning their bodies like His glorious body, according to the power by which He is able to subdue all things to Himself, 9 and that those of them who die meanwhile will depart to be with Him. 19

I learn that God has appointed a day in which He will judge this habitable world in righteousness by that Man whom He has ordained, whereof He has given assurance unto all men, in that He raised Him from the dead (Acts 17:31), and that at the end He will sit on the great white throne, and judge the dead, small and great (Rev. 20:11, 12).

I learn that every one of us shall give an account of himself to God (Rom. 14:12), and receive the things done in the body, whether they be good or evil (2 Cor. 5:10); and as the righteous inherit eternal life (Rom. 6:22, 23; Matt. 25:46), so the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, will go into everlasting punishment, be cast into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels; and that whosoever is not found in the book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire. 11

I learn that this blessed One, the Lord Jesus Christ, died for all, has given Himself a ransom for all, testified in due time, 12 that He has made propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the whole world.

I learn that He has thereby obtained an eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12), and that by one offering of Himself once for all, the sins of all that believe on Him are purged (Heb. 1:3; 9:22; 10:2), and that by faith in Him their consciences are also purged (Heb. 9:14; 10:2), and God remembers their sins and iniquities no more (Heb. 10:17); that being called of God, they receive the promise of an eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15), being perfected forever, so that we have boldness to enter into the holiest by His blood, by the new and living way He has consecrated for us (Heb. 10:14, 19, 20):

I learn that to enter into the kingdom of God we must be born of water and the Spirit, born again (John 3:3, 5), being naturally dead in sins, and by nature children of wrath (Eph. 2:1, 3; 2 Cor. 5:14). That which God employs in order to our being born again is His Word (Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23). Hence it is by faith that we become His children (Gal. 3:26).

I learn that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall have everlasting life (John 3:16), but that to this end, God being a righteous and holy God, the Son of man had to be lifted up upon the cross (John 3:14, 15); that there He bore our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. 1:24), and was made sin for us, that we might be made the

righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).

I learn that He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing (Eph. 5:25-27).

I learn that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. 1:4).

I learn that those that believe are sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is the earnest of our inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession (Eph. 1:13, 14; 2 Cor. 1:22); that by Him the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5:5), that we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; 13 that they who have received this Spirit not only cry, Abba, Father, but know that they are in Christ, and Christ in them; that thus not only He appears in the presence of God for them, but they are in Him who is sitting at the right hand of God, expecting till His enemies be made His footstool (Eph. 2:6; Heb. 9:24; 10:12, 13); that they are dead to sin in God's sight, and to reckon themselves so; having put off the old man, and put on the new; alive to God through Jesus Christ (Christ is their new life); crucified to the world, and dead to the law. 14

I learn thus that if they are in Christ, Christ is in them, and they are called upon to manifest the life of Jesus in their mortal flesh, 15 and to walk as He walked (1 John 2:6), God having set them in the world as the epistles of Christ (2 Cor. 3:3), whose grace is sufficient for them, and whose strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9).

I learn that they are converted to wait for God's Son from heaven, 16 and taught to do so; and that they have the promise that they shall never perish, nor shall any man pluck them out of Christ's hand (John 10:29), but that God will confirm them to the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:7-9).

I learn that they have part in these privileges through faith in Christ Jesus, in virtue of which righteousness is imputed to them; 17 that Christ, who has obeyed even unto death, and wrought a perfect work upon the cross for them, 18 is now their righteousness, made such of God to them (1 Cor. 1:30), and that we are made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21); that as His precious blood cleanses us from all sin, so we are personally accepted in the beloved (Eph. 1:6), that as by one man's disobedience many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of One many shall be constituted righteous (Rom. 5:19).

I learn that we are sanctified, or set apart to God, by God the Father, through the offering of Jesus Christ once for all, and by the operation and power of the Holy Ghost through the truth, so that all Christians are saints, 19 and that in our practical state we have to follow after holiness (Heb. 12:14; 2 Pet. 3:14), and grow up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, being changed into His image, to whom we are to be perfectly conformed in glory. 29

I learn that the Lord has left two rites, or ordinances, both significant of His death; one initiatory, the other of continual observance in the Church of God - baptism and the Lord's supper.²¹

I learn that, when Christ ascended up on high, He received gifts for men, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; and that from Christ the

whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love ²² I learn that, as the grace and sovereign love of God is the

source and origin of all the blessing,²³ so continual and diligent dependence on that grace is that by which we can walk after Him and to His glory, who has left us an example that we should follow His steps.²⁴

I learn from the example and authority of the Lord and His apostles that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are inspired of God, and are to be received as the Word of God, having His authority attached to it, and which works effectually in those that believe;²⁵ and that the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart, being understood, not by the wisdom of man, but by the teaching of God, being spiritually discerned, they are revealed, communicated, and discerned by the Spirit.²⁶

I learn that, while God alone is immortal in and by Himself (1 Tim. 6:16), the angels are not subject to death (Luke 20:36), and that the death of a man does not affect the life of his soul, be he wicked or renewed, but that all live still as to God, though dead,²⁷ and that the wicked will be raised again as well as the just (John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15).

I learn that every assembly of God is bound by the exercise of discipline, according to the Word, to keep itself pure in doctrine and godly walk.²⁸

Scripture References

1 John 14:26; 15:26; 5:24, 37; 1 Pet. 1:12; 1 John 4:14.

2 Gen. 1:1, 2; Job 26:13; John 1:1, 3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2.

3 Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14, 17; 1 John 4:2 John 7.

4 Rom. 1:3; Acts 2:30; 13:23 Tim. 2:8.

5 Phil. 2:6-10; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Heb. 1 and 2; 1 John 2:23; 3:3; 5:20; Rev. 22:12, 13; John 1:1, 14; 8:58, and many others.

6 Acts 3:15; John 2:19; Rom. 6:4; Eph. 1:20.

7 Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Eph. 4:8-10, and many others.

8 John 16:7; 7:39; Rom. 8:9; the Father sends, John 14:26; Christ sends from the Father, 14:16, 17, 26; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:19; 3:16; Eph. 2:22; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:30; 1:23, etc.

9 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 1 Cor. 15:23, 51, 52; Phil. 3:20, 21.

10 2 Cor. 5:8; Luke 23:43; Acts 7:59.

11 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:15.

12 2 Cor. 5:14; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 John 2:2.

13 Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; John 14:10.

14 Col. 3:3, 4, 9, 10; Rom. 6:6, 11; Gal. 2:20; 6:14.

15 John 14:20; Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 4:10.

16 1 Thess. 1:10; Titus 2:12, 13; Luke 12:35-37.

17 Rom. 5:1, 2; Gal. 3:11, 14, 24-26; Rom. 4:16; Eph. 2:8; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 11:4; Acts 13:39; Gal. 3:9, 6; Rom. 4:24, 25, and many others.

18 Phil. 2:8; John 17:4; Heb. 7:27; 9:25-28; 10:12, 18.

19 Jude 1; Heb. 10:10; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 6:11; John 17:17, 19 Pet. 1:22; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1, and many others.

20 Eph. 4:13, 15; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:2, 3; Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12; 5:23.

21 Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12, 16, 36; 9:18; Eph. 4:5; 1 Cor. 1:17; 1 Pet. 3:21; Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12; Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22, 23; Luke 22:19, 20 Cor. 11:23-26; 10:3, 4.

22 Eph. 4:6-13; Acts 2:33 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:6; 1 Pet. 4:10, 11; Matt. 25:14; Luke 19:13.

23 John 3:16, 27; 1 Cor. 2:12; 4:7; Eph. 2:7-10; Titus 2:11.

24 John 15:5; Phil. 2:12, 13; 1 Thess. 5:17; Rom. 12:12; Luke 18:1 Pet. 1:5-10; and many others. John 8:12; 10:4; 12:26; 17:10 Cor. 5:15; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; Rom. 14:7, 8; 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17; 1 John 2:6 Pet. 2:2.

25 Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Luke 24:25-27, 44-46; John 5:39; 10:35; Matt. 5:17, 18; John 10:9; Matt. 1:23; and a multitude of passages. Matt. 26:54; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21; Gal. 3:8; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 15:2, 3; 2:13; 14:36, 37; 2 Pet. 3:16.

26 Psalm 19:7; Heb. 4:12, 13; Luke 24:45 Cor. 2:10; 1 John 2:20, 27; John 6:45 Cor. 2:12-14.

27 Luke 12:4, 5; Matt. 10:28; Luke 16:23; 20:38.

28 Heb. 12:15-17; 1 Tim. 3:15; Titus 3:10, 11 Cor. 5:7, 13.

What Is a Christian?

A Christian is one who has bowed to God's testimony as to his guilty and lost condition as a sinner (Rom. 3:19-23), but who has been led through grace to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God (Rom. 3:26), who came into this world to save such. He is one who in believing has received the forgiveness of sins, and is justified from all things; he is already in the enjoyment of peace with God, a possessor of God's priceless gift, "eternal life" (John 3:36). Not one who hopes to be saved - for God describes us, in our natural state, as "without Christ,... having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12) - but one who is "saved by [in] hope" (Rom. 8:24) and can "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2). Cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, his sins are gone; the penalty of sin - death - has been borne by his blessed Substitute, judgment passed on Him in his stead, and now, united to Him who sits at God's right hand, one spirit with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17), he looks with joy to see his Savior face to face, and to dwell and reign with Him.

In the meanwhile, until that glorious hope shall be realized, he walks down here in the world as a pilgrim and a stranger (1 Pet. 2:11) in the conscious love of God, to whom he is reconciled. He knows and calls Him "Father" (Rom. 8:15), who has made him His child, and cares for him in that relationship.

He knows too, for God has told him in His Word, that he is a citizen of heaven (Phil. 3:20), that he is not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world (John 17:16), and is called to be a follower of that blessed One, by denying, himself, and taking up his cross (Luke 9:23). He discovers that he is down here in a world which has rejected, cast out, and crucified his Lord. Therefore he can have no fellowship with the world, but must testify against it (Eph. 5:11). This brings out the enmity of the human heart; like master, like servant, and hence he has to suffer for His name (1 Pet. 2:21).

How gracious then of his Lord to leave with him the sweet promise of His return, and, while away, to give him that other Comforter, Himself also coming to him, that he might not be left comfortless, or as an orphan in this dreary scene (John 14:16-18).

The world has yet to answer for the rejection and murder of Christ; the day of vengeance of our God will surely overtake the ungodly. But the Christian, through faith in the rejected One, is delivered from it, can look up with joy and confidence into the opened heaven, and there behold his Savior and his Lord at God's right hand, knowing that He who raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken his mortal body by (or, on account of) His Spirit that dwells in him (Rom. 8:11).

If he looks back, he sees a condemned world, from which he has escaped. If he looks around, he sees the fearful effects of sin on all sides. If he looks forward here, nothing lies before him but a waste, barren wilderness, a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, and where he may soon miss his way if he once steps out of the path of faith (2 Pet. 3:17). If he looks in, he sees that wretched self, and the workings of the flesh; for although not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, the flesh is still in him (Rom. 8:8, 9; Gal. 5:16-18). But if he turns away from the world and sin, the flesh and self,

altogether, and looks by simple faith into the glory, there he beholds the One so precious to his heart, the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely One, the fairer than the children of men (Psalm 45:2); and as he gazes, the heart is filled with

"The Person of the Christ

Enfolding every grace,"

and he longs for the moment when He who has said, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3), shall fulfill His parting promise. He longs for the moment when, surrounding Himself with His loved ones and His own, He shall have the full joy of His own heart, and shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Then shall he meet his Lord, leaving every trace of mortality and sin behind him forever, no more to go out (Rev. 3:12), but to spend an eternity in His own blissful presence.

"With Him I love, in spotless white,

In glory I shall shine;

His blissful presence my delight,

His love and glory mine.

"All taint of sin shall be removed,

All evil done away;

And I shall dwell with God's Beloved,

Through God's eternal day."

My dear reader, are you one of those who know the love of Christ, and whose heart beats with love to Him in return? Is this glorious One the treasure of your soul? Have you believed on Him? Are you a Christian? Such alone can enter into these things with joy. But if you are a mere nominal professor, wake up, ere it be too late! Come as a guilty sinner to the Savior. He will in no wise cast you out (John 6:37); and all your soul needs, you will find in Him. Come, oh, come to Him now! and peace with God shall be yours, and you with us will joy in God, and rejoice in hope of His glory (Rom. 5:1-11).

Who Made It? the World and Isaac Newton

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. 1:1.

Sir Isaac Newton had a friend who, like himself, was a great scientist; but he was an infidel, while Newton was a devout believer. They often locked horns over this question, though their mutual interest in science drew them much together.

Newton had a skillful mechanic make him a replica of our solar system in miniature. In the center was a large gilded ball representing the sun, and revolving around this were smaller balls fixed on the ends of arms of varying lengths, representing Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, in their proper order. These balls were so geared together by cogs and belts as to move in perfect harmony by turning a crank.

One day as Newton sat reading in his study with his mechanism on a large table near him, his infidel friend stepped in. He was scientist enough to recognize at a glance what was before him. Stepping up to it he slowly turned the crank, and with undisguised admiration watched the heavenly bodies all move in their relative speed in their orbits. Standing off a few feet, he exclaimed, "My! What an exquisite thing this is! Who made it?"

Without looking up from his book Newton answered, "Nobody!" Quickly turning to Newton the infidel said: "Evidently you did not understand my question. I asked you who made this thing?" Looking up now, Newton solemnly assured him that nobody made it - that the aggregation of matter so much admired had just happened to assume the form it was in. But the astonished infidel replied with some heat, "You must think I'm a fool! Of course somebody made it. He is a genius, and I'd like to know who he is."

Putting his book aside, Newton arose. Laying a hand on his friend's shoulder, he said: "This thing is but a puny imitation of a much grander system whose laws you know. I can't convince you that this mere toy is without a designer and maker; yet you profess to believe that the great original from which this replica is taken has come into being without either designer or maker. Now tell me by what sort of reasoning do you reach such an incongruous conclusion?"

No word of argument did the infidel offer. Instead, as a simple believer, at last he owned that "The LORD [Jehovah], He is the God" (1 Kings 18:39).

"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1:3.

The Word of God, and God

Have you ever noticed the transition of the Word of God to God Himself in the 4th chapter of Hebrews? Notice the 12th and 13th verses:

"For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

It is the living Word of God that reaches down into the conscience of men. There is nothing like it! It penetrates and judges all before it. It carries its own credentials. Men may seek to defend the Word of God, but their puny efforts are not needed. It has stood all the assaults of generations and remains the same living and operative Word of God as before. It has power to touch the inner being of a man today as much as it had a thousand years ago. It is sharp - it cuts. How do you know it? Sit down quietly and read it, allowing it to do its work, and you will find out.

If a man were to cut you with a knife, would you need any proof that the knife would cut? No, you would have it. Just so, the Word of God proves itself and brings a person consciously into God's presence, for behind the Word of God is God. He is the One with whom we have to do. No human being can escape having to do with the living God. How good it is then to have His Word search us and by its action bring us before Him.

The World and Its Friendship: the Character of It

"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." Jas. 4:4. Powerful testimony! which judges the walk and searches the heart. The world's true character has now been manifested, because it has rejected and crucified the Son of God. Man had been already tried without law, and under law; but after he had shown himself to be wholly evil without law, and had broken the law when he had received it, then God Himself came in grace; He Became man in order to bring the love of God home to the Heart of man, having taken its nature. It was the final test of man's heart. He came not to impute sin to them, but to reconcile the world to Himself. But the world would not receive Him; and it has shown that it is under the power of Satan and of darkness. It has seen and hated both Him and His Father.

The world is ever the same world; Satan is its prince; and all that is in it - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life - is not of the Father, but of the world. The heart of man -the flesh-has since the fall been always enmity against God. It is often thought and said, that since the death of Christ, Satan is no longer the prince of this world; but it was precisely then that he declared himself as its prince, leading on all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, to crucify the Savior. And although men now bear the name of Christ, the opposition of the world to His authority remains the same.

Only observe and see if the name of Christ is not dishonored. Man may indeed be taught to honor it; but it is nonetheless true that where he finds his enjoyment, where his will is free, he shuts out Christ, lest He should come in and spoil his pleasures. If left alone, he does not think of Him, he does not like to be spoken to of the Savior; he sees no beauty in Him that he should desire Him. Man likes to do his own will, and he does not want the Lord to come and oppose it; he prefers vanity and pleasures.

We have the true history of the world and its practical principles in Cain. He had slain his brother, and was cast out of the presence of God, despairing of grace, and refusing to humble himself. By the judgment of God he was made a vagabond on the earth, but such a condition did not suit him. He settled down where God had made him a vagabond; and he called the city after the name of his son, to perpetuate the greatness of his family. That his city should be deprived of all the delights of life would have been unbearable; therefore he multiplied riches for his son. Then another member of the family invented instruments of music; another was the instructor of artificers in brass and iron. The world being cast out from God, sought to make its position pleasant without God, to content itself at a distance from Him. By the coming of Christ, the state of man's heart was manifested, not only as seeking the pleasures of the flesh, but as being enmity against God. However great His goodness, it would not be disturbed in the enjoyment of the pleasures of the world, nor submit itself to the authority of another; it would have the world for itself, fighting to obtain it, and snatching it from the hands of those who possessed it. Now, it is evident that the friendship of this world is enmity with God. As far as in them lay, they cast God out

of the world, and drove Him away. Man desires to be great in this world; we know that the world has crucified the Son of God, that it saw no beauty in the One in whom God finds all His delight.

Plain Papers for Young Believers: Eternal Life

In the last paper we considered the two natures that are in the Christian, and the relation of the man himself to them. We saw that the great point was for the man himself to let the new nature be the life in which he lives every day, and to treat the old nature as a foreign body to be kept in death. Before passing on to consider the channel in which the new life flows, let us pause a moment to make this still plainer by a well known simile.

The Two Tenants

Suppose a landlord has let his house to a bad tenant who drinks, gambles, swears, is a disgrace to the neighborhood, and never pays his rent; and suppose that at last (the law allowing him) he forgives all the back rent and puts a new tenant, a quiet, respectable, industrious man, in the house, with full authority to keep the bad tenant in custody in one of the rooms, not to let him go about the house, and, above all, never to allow him to open the door. We should then have a rough picture of the Christian. His body is the house, his old nature the bad tenant, his new nature the good tenant, and God the owner of the property; for our bodies are not our own, but the Lord's. So to speak, we do not live in our own houses, but are merely tenants at will—a solemn and often forgotten truth.

The Comforter—the Holy Spirit

Now comes a difficulty. The bad tenant is a very strong old man; the new tenant is a weak young man, and, though he has full authority, he has no power to carry out the landlord's wishes. He appeals for help, and the landlord sends from his own house a strong friend to help him to overcome the old tenant, and to keep him in custody. This strong friend is the Holy Spirit—"Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16), and hence we often read of His overcoming the old tenant, rather than of the new tenant's doing so. See Galatians 5:17, 25. We must, of course, understand that this friend never interferes unless the new tenant wishes it.

Suppose now, I call with some boon companions at this house to spend a pleasant evening with my old friend who lives there. I hear there has been some change going on at the house, but I do not exactly know what. The door is opened by the old tenant, but he has a cowed look on his face; and when I tell him what I have come for, he says, "Well, of course I should like to ask you in, but I cannot, because the new tenant would not like it. You see he is responsible now to the landlord for this house, and he is very strict in having it kept quiet and respectable. I'm only out now because he is asleep, but if there was any noise in the house, he would soon shut me up again." It is clear, in this case, the same man answers whom I have known all along, the only difference being that there is a new tenant in the house, of whom he is afraid. Now, suppose that I call again in a few months to try and induce my old friend to come and spend a gay evening with me. It is quite dark when I knock at the door, so that I cannot see who opens it; but, supposing it is my old friend, I say, "Come along to the theater with me." "I never go there," is the reply. "I know that," I say, "for

you are afraid now.” “No, I am not afraid; I do not care for it.” “Come now,” I say, “that won’t do; I know you like it well enough, but you are afraid of the new tenant.” “I am the new tenant,” answers the voice.

Now, in this case, I do not find the old man, but a new man altogether, answering all my questions, and declaring that he does not care for worldly pleasures at all. Here is quite a new thing, but this is also the true Christian position; that is, always to let your new nature answer the front door, never the old. Suppose now that I continue calling for some months, and invariably get the same answer. No wonder that I think that the old man must be dead, for he never answers the door. So he is, as far as any outward expression of his existence is concerned. The new tenant, however, could tell me of many a desperate attempt he makes to break loose from his close confinement, when nothing but the strength of the friend prevents him from being as bad as ever.

We must remember this is but an illustration, but still it may help a little in understanding the two natures. Let us now pass on to consider the new nature—the eternal life the Christian possesses.

Christ Is Our Life

The eternal life that is in us is the life of Christ. In the Gospel of John we read of it being in Christ; in the epistle, in us. It has been manifested once in all its divine perfectness, in the walk of the man Christ Jesus. In us it is only shown in broken bits, and very imperfectly. Now Christ is this life, and He is also its Object. This is expressed in Colossians 3:11. “Christ is all [as object], and in all” (as life). This life gives a capacity of communion with the Father and the Son (1 John 1), also necessarily (being the same life in all) with one another.

Fellowship

“With the Father.” This life on earth was the object of the Father’s perfect complacency. “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” There were none then to share the Father’s joy, because Christ must be in all, before He can be all. We must have the life before we can understand or appreciate it. Now, however, we have fellowship with the Father in His pleasure in Christ. Again, “with the Son,” His Father was ever His object. We too have now an object outside ourselves. His will is ever our delight. In this we have fellowship with the Son. “With one another,” in our life, our hopes, our aspirations, our objects, our worship. Now, if God has given us no less an object than that which fills His heart, it is evident it must overflow ours. Therefore, if occupied with Christ, our hearts must overflow, and the overflowing of the heart is called praise.

The Conscience and Heart

Now the life of Christ was manifested in two ways, as grace and truth, or, in other words, as love and light. We, on the other hand, are complex beings, having both a conscience and a heart. The life is thus beautifully adapted to control the entire man, the conscience being guided by the light, and the heart ruled by the love. O beloved reader, well may we ask what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness! Consider for a moment our present glorious position—all our sins forever gone, justified and sanctified in Christ Jesus, and thus made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, having a new, a perfect, an endless life, strengthened by the constant presence of an Almighty Friend and Comforter, Christ’s love using and filling and swaying our hearts. His light guiding and controlling our consciences. Listen for a moment to these words,

and think that we ought to “walk, even as He walked.” “Christ was at once a conqueror, a sufferer, and a benefactor. What moral glories shine in such an assemblage! He overcame the world, refusing all its attractions and offers. He suffered from it, witnessing for God against its whole course and spirit; He blessed it, dispensing His love and power continually, returning good for evil. Its temptations only made Him a conqueror; its pollutions and enmities only a sufferer; its miseries only a benefactor. Jesus did good, and that, hoping for nothing again. Never, in one single instance, as I believe, did He claim either the person or the services of those whom He restored and delivered. Jesus loved, and healed, and saved, looking for nothing again. Surely there is something beyond human conception in the delineation of such a character.”

One cannot leave a subject like this without a sigh, as one thinks of how far, how very far, we come short of such a glorious example, and of the purpose God has in leaving us in this world. We see many men, godless men, men who deny everything we believe, seeking to lead upright, noble lives. Not knowing God, they are seeking to live unselfish lives for others, to spend and be spent for mankind; and shall we, with the whole horizon of our life lightened up with these eternal realities, live for ourselves? or shall we live for Him who died for us and rose again? “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.” May the Lord seal home to our hearts in living power the subject we have been considering, and give us each to feel the controlling power of the love of Christ that passes all understanding.

In our next paper, the Lord willing, we will consider some of the qualities of this eternal life or new nature.

Plain Papers for Young Believers: Righteousness and Sanctification

The object of these papers is to set the more advanced truths of the gospel before young believers in a simple and practical way. In doing this, we go over well-trodden ground and must not, therefore, look for much that is new, but rather that a consideration of these blessed truths may be to the increased glory of God, both in the praises of our hearts and in the tenor of our lives.

The Word of God, in speaking of the work of Christ and what it has done for us, says, not only “being now justified by His blood” (Rom. 5:9), regarding Christ as the great Paschal Lamb, but also “sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once” (Heb. 10:10), looking at Him as the great burnt offering, the One who died to fulfill God’s will.

Forgiveness, Justification, Sanctification

Now all Christians believe that their sins are forgiven. Many, however, do not know that they are perfectly justified before a righteous God, and still more have never heard that they are now perfectly sanctified by the same work that put away their sins. It is difficult to account for this, seeing that all are equally revealed in Scripture, but still it is the fact. This ignorance would not matter so much did the words mean pretty much the same thing; but not only are they distinct in themselves, but still more do they differ in their results. A man may owe a large debt; if this debt is forgiven, he is free from all penalty; if another pays it, he is justified from it. All this, however, does not fit or entitle him to enter the mansion of his creditor on familiar terms. But the work of Christ has done all these three things: by it we are forgiven, and thus saved from hell; by it we are justified, and can thus stand before a righteous God; and by it we are sanctified, and thus fitted to enter the presence of a holy God.

A Righteous and a Holy God

Righteousness is spoken of in Romans, sanctification in Hebrews. The scene in Romans is the throne, and a righteous God; in Hebrews, the sanctuary and a holy God. In Romans the point is the guilt of the sinner; in Hebrews, his defilement; while, with regard to the sacrifice of Christ (of which both speak), Romans sets before us its perfection as meeting the righteous claims of God; whereas in Hebrews we get its eternal character in being offered once for all.

On these two foundations our peace rests. Christ’s work must be perfect that we may have a standing at all, before a righteous God. It must also be of eternal efficacy that this standing may never be lost.

God’s Will, Christ’s Work, the Spirit’s Witness

Justification and sanctification alike stand on a threefold basis:

1. In Romans we are justified by the grace of God, by the blood of Christ, and by faith the operation of the Spirit (Rom. 3:24; 5:1-9).

2. In Hebrews we are sanctified by the will of God, the work of Christ, of which the Spirit is the witness (Heb. 10)

3. Righteousness and sanctification are both the combined work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the Father's will and grace gave the Son, the Son's blood and work accomplished our redemption, and faith and the witness of the Spirit cause us to accept this work, and without which all were in vain.

God's Righteousness, Not Mine

The righteousness is divine, not human. The righteousness of works had been sought for in vain for four thousand years, from the Gentile, the heathen philosopher, and the Jew (Rom. 1-3); but both the Jews, who had the law, and the Gentiles, who were a law unto themselves, had failed, and the trial is finally summed up in these words: "Therefore by the deeds of the law [lit.] {that is, by works of any kind] there shall NO FLESH be justified in His sight." And now a new righteousness, apart from law (of every kind) is manifested, a righteousness not of man but of God. This new righteousness is not on the principle of works at all, neither our own nor the works (or law-keeping) of another put to our account, for then would righteousness still come by the law, and Christ would be "dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21). It is most important to be clear on this. Righteousness comes to me through Christ's death and resurrection, not through His spotless life. Indeed, it is only in dying that He takes up my cause as my Substitute. It is here I am first connected with Him. So truly is this the case, that through all the epistles we hardly hear of the life of Christ before the cross at all. I believe there are but ten verses in all that speak of it, and of these, five are the merest allusions (Rom. 15:3, 8; 1 Cor. 11:23; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 5:7). The only two passages that really speak of it are Philippians 2:7-8, and 2 Peter 1:16-18; and in neither of these is there any question of Christ as our substitute, but it is Christ as our example!

God is Just and Justifies the Sinner

Righteousness is twofold in Romans 3. God's forbearance and grace had been shown in the remission (or passing over) of the bygone sins of Old Testament saints, in spite of His own words that the soul that sins shall die; but His righteousness had not been manifested (Rom. 3:25). He now shows, therefore, the righteousness of His own character by the cross of Christ, both in His past forbearance, and in now freely justifying the believing sinner. This last act is said to be the righteousness of God upon all them that believe. Hence, we get two things: first, that God Himself is just; and the next, that He is the Justifier of him that believes (Rom. 3:26). The finished work of Christ on the sinner's behalf, accepted by God as seen in His raising Him from the dead, has set Him free to show His grace in righteousness. Mercy and truth, and righteousness and peace, have thus met together at the cross for the first time (Rom. 5:1), and God no longer forbears with the believing sinner, but justifies him freely by His grace (Rom. 3:24).

A Wonderful Contrast

The full perfection of the believer's standing is seen by comparing these two passages:

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

"We have peace with God... and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1-2).

The perfection of Christ's work enables every believer to rejoice in the absolute certainty of entering that very glory from which he was hopelessly excluded by nature.

Standing and State

But so far we have only spoken of the believer's standing before a righteous God; and if we say nothing now of the state that must accompany it, as treated of in the following chapters, it is not because we undervalue the importance of practical righteousness, but because we must reserve this great question for future consideration.

Seven Eternal Realities

In turning now to Hebrews 9 and 10, one thing that strikes us is the words eternal and forever. We get in these chapters seven divine assurances of the eternal value of Christ's work. We find that Christ's offering was once forever, and that therefore He is seated forever; hence we have eternal redemption, and are perfected forever (Heb. 9:12; Heb. 10:10, 12, 14). We also read that there will be NO MORE offering on Christ's part, NO MORE remembrance of sins on God's part, and hence NO MORE conscience of sins on our part (Heb. 10:2, 17, 18). On these seven eternal realities our faith rests. Now the sanctification spoken of here, like the righteousness in Romans 3, 4, and 5, is perfect and complete, absolutely independent of our state, so that even the Corinthians, who were in anything but a holy state, could be addressed as "sanctified in Christ Jesus." Of practical sanctification, as of practical righteousness, we hope to speak, but not here. Let our souls first fully enjoy and enter into the work of Christ for us. Let us glory in our perfect justification and holiness in Him who of God is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30).

Another Contrast

Compare here, as in Romans, two passages, and see what a testimony they give to the value of Christ's work.

"The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest" (Heb. 9:8).

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way" (Heb. 10:19-20).

The worshipper, who in Old Testament times was rigorously excluded from God's presence, is now made, by the infinite value of the work of Christ, so holy, that he is able to come right into the holiest of all, standing in Christ without a spot.

Let us then glory in the work of Christ; nay more, let us boast in Christ Himself, through whom we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; and above all, let none of us ever harbor even for a moment a wretched unbelieving thought of His perfect work. Doubts and fears are impossible for the one who understands for himself the full meaning of the truth of Hebrews 10. Never, never allow a doubt of a salvation in procuring which you have had no part, but which from first to last is the perfect work of the Triune God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Plain Papers for Young Believers: the Two Natures

Our last paper was to show how perfectly and eternally all that was against the believer is cleared away forever, so that he can stand without fear before a righteous God, and enter the very presence of a thrice holy God. We saw that in Romans the scene was laid in the judgment hall; in Hebrews it was in the sanctuary, and that while in the former the death of Christ perfectly took away every penalty attaching to sin, in the latter the same death eternally took away its defilement; the summing up in the one case being that the sinner who had “come short” now rejoices in hope of God’s glory; in the other, that the one who was “afar off” now has boldness to enter the holiest. But if any think that these magnificent truths exhaust the value of the death of Christ for the sinner, they are greatly mistaken.

Sins Taken Away, Life Given

So far we have only touched upon what it takes away from us—our sins, death, and the judgment of God. On the other hand, it gives us something, for out of death we get life everlasting. “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This eternal life in us is in fact the new nature. We receive it when we are born again. When a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, the entrance of the Word of God for the first time into his soul in the power of the Spirit produces a new life; in scriptural language, he is born again “of water [see 1 Pet. 1:23] and of the Spirit.”

The New Nature Cannot Sin

This new nature is holy, it loves God, and it not only does not, but cannot sin (1 John 3:9), because it is born of God. It is this new nature that makes us desire the glory of God, that makes us love God’s presence; otherwise, although I might no longer be shut out, I should not care to enter in. It is this life alone that enables us to glorify God in this world. Had we nothing but the old nature, sin, we should still produce nothing but sins; for just as the new is holy and cannot sin, so the old is sinful and enmity against God; those who live in it, cannot please Him (Rom. 8).

Sin and Sins

The question of sins, as we have seen, is dealt with in Romans 3; 4, and 5, and they are shown to be all forgiven in perfect righteousness. But in what follows from the middle of chapter 5 to the end of chapter 8, the question is not one of sins but of sin (or the old nature). Hence we no longer read of forgiveness; for the old nature is not forgiven, but condemned and put to death. Nor do we now read of God’s righteousness, for it is no longer a question of justifying the sinner, but of his old nature being crucified with Christ. The righteousness, therefore, that we do read of (Rom. 6:13, 16, 19) is the practical righteousness of the new nature, not God’s, but mine. Now the old man is said to be crucified with Christ (6:6). I am also said to be crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20), for the old man was I; it was I myself. All my thoughts, words, and deeds flowed from this tainted source; they might please man, but could not please God. Our old man was judged and condemned at the cross of Christ. Tried by every test for 4,000 years he was found to be nothing but sin; and in raising Christ from the dead on the morning of the first day of the week, God began a new race in

the second Man, and set aside the seed of the first forever. The cross of Christ is the end of the old man, and if I am to have a standing before God, it is by no cultivation or improvement of self (the Old Testament is the history of the fruitlessness of this), but in the possession of a new life, a new nature.

Sin Still in Us

But although God has done with my old nature, I have not. All that we have spoken of is a question of faith; I still feel the old evil thoughts within my heart, and shall until I leave this world. "If we say that we have no sin [no old nature in us], we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1). Inasmuch as I have died to it (Rom. 6:2), that is, have done with it at the cross of Christ, and am to have (practically) no more dealings with it, I am to treat it as it is in God's sight. In short, I am to reckon myself "dead indeed unto sin." I am not to yield any member of my body to its service.

My Personality Changed

In saying all this we find that there are three things connected with this subject — my personality and the two natures and that you get the I (the old man) or the I (the new man) or the I apart from either. We get the three all in one verse, Romans 7:20—a most interesting passage, for it shows the "I" (or the man himself) discovering that he is no longer connected with the old man, but the new. Let us paraphrase it thus: "Now if I [the old nature] do that I [the new nature] would not, it is no more I [myself, the man] that do it, but sin [as a foreign body] that dwelleth in me." So also we read in Galatians 2:20, "I [the old man] am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I [the new man] live; yet not [it is not] I, but Christ [who] liveth in me." That is, the new nature is inseparably associated with Christ "who is our life."

"Is it Right?" and "Is it Wrong?"

The changing of the "I" from the old to the new man is most important. It does not always take place practically on our conversion. On the contrary, do we not often hear young believers say, "I want to go to certain things, but it would not be right now," or, "I should like to have a dress like so-and-so, or as much money as someone else"? Now here the I is plainly the old nature, for the new does not seek worldly pleasures, neither does it covet; only there is also the sense of the new life. It is not necessarily that I do the wrong things, but that I look on myself as the same person, only with a new nature within me.

Now let us look at a man when the "I" has changed places. I have "a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better," says Paul. Or take the case of a young Christian who could truly say, "I would rather not go to those questionable things; it would give me no pleasure." Now in both these, the I is the new nature (for the old does not desire to be with Christ), and it does not love carnal things.

I Am a New Creature

It will be readily seen from considering the above that a thousand things that were snares and temptations, when I was still allied with the old nature, are no longer so when I am living practically in the power of the new, when I no longer think of myself as a man who has a new life in him, but as a new creature in Christ Jesus, who still has indwelling sin. In the former case, the new life, and in the latter case, sin is treated as the foreign body, as the part that is not I.

We have gone over this subject again and again, because of its great importance. It is a wonderful step for the young believer when practically he finds that his thoughts, his feelings, his pleasures are changed, not that he does this or that, not because it is right merely, but because he delights in it "after the inward man."

The only way to attain to this truly happy Christian state is by daily seeking to please Christ, daily seeking to live the new life, always looking on myself as a Christian, never allowing such a thought as "Well, of course, I should like it, but now I am a Christian." No, if I AM a Christian, what would like it, is not myself but sin that dwelleth in me. You must own that you still have evil thoughts and passions, but always look on these as intruders, not as yourself.

Volunteers or Regulars

No doubt among the readers of these pages there will be Christians to whom sin is as a foreign body in them, and others whose old nature is still practically themselves. To use a simile, we may compare the one class to volunteers, the other to regular soldiers. Outwardly both wear a soldier's uniform, both carry arms, both are drilled, both are soldiers; and yet between the two lies an immense difference. If the volunteer is an artisan or a tradesman, when he has his uniform on, he is an artisan and a tradesman still. He thinks of his work or his shop and he feels that the volunteering is something put on, but that he himself is a civilian. Not so with the soldier of the line. He too may have been an artisan or a tradesman, but he is one no longer. It is not merely that he wears the uniform, but he himself is a soldier. A long course of separate life in the barracks, of constant association with fellow soldiers, and of daily drill, has so completely broken the old ties, that he can actually go back to the very shop where he worked and feel he is not of it. He does not belong to it; all his tastes, yes, he himself is changed. Now God has chosen us to be soldiers of the cross, not volunteers; not to put on Christianity as a cloak, but to be living Christian men and women; and the only way we can express what spirit we are of is by our bodies. Hence the whole question is, To what do I now yield my members? Is it to the old nature, the foreign body that still dwells in me? No; I will use them myself. I love truth, I love holiness, I love the Lord, and I will serve Him with my tongue, my hands, and my feet. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Think not, however, this is the work of a day. The old nature which has been yourself for the last thirty years, it may be, and has had sole control over all your members, is not to be turned out in a moment. It is only by keeping it in death day by day that our members get by degrees to forget the sway of the old master, and to become accustomed to the new. You will find the old and new occupation for lips, hands, and feet in Ephesians 4 and 5.

May the Lord make each of us true soldiers of Jesus Christ, men who have practically so broken the power of the old life as to be able to return to old scenes and associations as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

We have as yet said nothing as to the channel in which the new nature flows. As this paper is already long enough, we will therefore leave the unfolding of the new life for another time.

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