

CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 28

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A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 28, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

105 Chapters

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Christian Truth Volume 28

The Arab

With the Arabs so much in the news these days, we thought it might be profitable to reprint part of an editorial written some years ago.

Shall we ask, Who are these Arabs? Through the centuries there has been a mingling of the peoples of that area, but basically they are the descendants of Abraham and Isaac through Ishmael and Esau. How strange that they should have such open enmity toward their brethren! And yet it was so from the beginning. Did not Ishmael mock at the time of Abraham's feast at the weaning of Isaac? Were not he and his Egyptian mother cast out of Abraham's house at that time? (See Genesis 21.) And before Ishmael was born God said, "He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him" (Gen. 16:12). Is not the wild man now preparing to display his characteristics?

And what of Esau? He was the elder twin brother of Jacob; he sold his birthright to the grasping Jacob, and when he lost the blessing too, he determined to kill Jacob; but as time elapsed, peace was made between them. In the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, God refers to the unrelenting hatred of the descendants of Esau (or Edom) to the children of Israel.

Two other peoples, descendants of Abraham's nephew Lot, are also included in the present enemies of Israel - the children of Moab and Ammon (Gen. 19:37, 38). Their hostility to Israel in bygone days can also be traced in the Scriptures. At present, the capital city of the nation of Jordan is Amman, and in Old Testament times it was called "Rabbah of the children of Ammon" (2 Sam. 12:26). It was there that Uriah the Hittite was slain by "the sword of the children of Ammon" (v. 9).

In Psalm 83, where the future alignment of the neighboring enemies of Israel is given prophetically, we find the descendants of all four, among others, mentioned as saying, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance." v. 4. Steps leading up to this confederacy have been in the making for some time, and every fresh incident of trouble between the West and the Middle East propels the forces forward which will unite in their attempts to eliminate Israel. Nothing short of it will satisfy the jihad agitators.

In all likelihood, it will be such a war for the extermination of Israel (together with other international events) that will force the formation of the revived Roman Empire whose armies will rescue the Jews and give them back their land, including Jerusalem and its shrines, under their protection in a solemn compact for a period of seven years. For "he," the head of the revived Roman Empire, "shall confirm" a covenant with the mass of the Jews who will be placed back in Palestine for a period of "one week," or a period composed of seven years. It is decreed and it will come to pass.

As an Eagle, so the Lord

Deut. 32:11, 12

A mountain climber wrote of seeing an eagle's nest on a ledge of rock, cut off from all exit except the steep vast precipice below. He watched with intense emotion the parent eagles break up the nest, shaking the little eaglets out. The father eagle kept flying just outside the ledge of rock as one by one were shaken into space. All but the last one at once began to fly, but it seemed afraid and clung to the nest. At last the mother, as if impatient, pushed the little one over to what seemed certain destruction. But the father eagle, waiting, swooped down and caught the little eaglet in his wing!

The mother eagle wrecks the nest

To make her fledglings fly,

But watches each with wings outstretched And fierce maternal eye,

And swoops if any fail to soar

And lands them on the crag once more.

God at times breaks up our nest

Lest ruled by fear or ease.

Our soul's wings molt and lose the zest For battle with the breeze;

But waits with arms of love and skill

To bear our souls above all ill.

As and so: Two Words in John's Writings

These words convey to us some of those wonderful comparisons and measures of divine things which God has given us in the Scriptures. Let us look at a few of the places where they occur. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so much the Son of man be lifted up." John 3:14.

Once sin came in, nothing short of the lifting up of the Son of man -the cross - could meet and satisfy God's holy and just requirements with respect to it. The brazen serpent was the divinely appointed remedy for that day; so the Son of man lifted up is the alone source of eternal life to all who believe. Nothing short of this work could meet at the same time God's holiness and our need. But it is also the righteous outlet for God's love - not now to one nation, but world-wide in its aspect. Here we have the measure of our distance as sinners - what we were as seen in the light of God's holiness. Nothing less than the lifting up of the Son of man could meet the case and lay the groundwork, according to God, for the gift of eternal life.

"As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." Chap. 6:57.

The Lord Jesus was indeed the Sent One, the dependent Man on earth who ever walked in perfect communion with, and dependence on, His Father. His words, His works, were those which the Father had given Him to speak, and to do. Now He is not only the giver of life, but food to sustain the life He gives. So our life is to be regulated on these principles - communion, obedience, and dependence on Him, drawing the resources to sustain the divine life, and carry us on from day to day, from Him.

"I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father." Chap. 10:14,15. The sheep had heard His voice; He had called them by name; but what a measure of the intimacy of knowledge between Him and them, flowing from the divine life and nature possessed, is expressed in the words, "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father." "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love." Chap. 15:9. Can we take in fully the extent of the Father's love to the Son? Such is the measure of the Son's love to His people; we cannot grasp its extent, its breadth, its fullness, its abiding and unchangeable character. Love that would serve, cost what it might - love that led Him to give Himself up to death and the enduring of God's wrath against sin - love that rose superior to all that could try and test, and prove it to the last extremity - it is divine love, absolute perfection.

Thou "hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me" (chap. 17:23). Here is the Father's love to them whom He had given to the Son, seen in all its fullness when they shall be manifested before the universe in the same glory with Christ as truly one. Loved as His own Son. Is it not true now to faith?

"As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). As the accomplisher of redemption, the risen and glorified Man, the Son has taken His place on the Father's throne, waiting the day when He shall

sit on His own throne. We are before God our Father, now in this world, in all the unclouded favor and acceptance in which Christ is.

"As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." (Chap. 20:21; 17:18.)

The gospel of John speaks of the Son as the Sent One of the Father. He is thus mentioned more than forty times. We are not of the world, as He was not, but sent into it as not belonging to it, just as the Father had sent Him. His path as the Man on earth - the Servant (He was God too, as we know) - was one of absolute, undeviating obedience, terminating only in death itself. The servants of God and saints of past ages, had trodden the path of faith some little way; but here was One who never swerved from the path of submission to His Father's will for a single moment. Passing through a world where every element was opposed, where everything bore the marks of sin and ruin, where the manifestation of perfect goodness drew out perfect hatred, He could draw His resources as the dependent One, the perfect Servant, from His Father. How truly He has marked out the path and principles of true service! And surely how great the distance at which we follow His steps.

Let us then sum up a little of what is expressed in these two words, "as" and "so." We find in chapter 3:14 the measure of God's requirements with regard to sin - what His holiness demands - the lifting up of the Son of man. In chapter 6:57, the measure of dependence in the one who, through receiving Him, has got this new life and nature. In chapter 10: 14,15, the measure in which Christ knows His sheep, and they know Him. In chapter 15:9, the measure of Christ's love to His people. In chapter 17:23, the measure of the Father's love to them to be displayed in glory. In 1 John 4:17, the measure of our present acceptance. In chapter 20:21, the measure and principle of true service.

Basis for Judgment

Nations, like individuals, will be held responsible for the profession they make; and hence those nations which profess and call themselves Christian shall be judged not merely by the light of creation, nor by the law of Moses, but by the full-orbed light of that Christianity which they profess - by all the truth contained within the covers of that blessed Book which they possess, and in which they make their boast. The heathen shall be judged on the ground of creation; the Jew, on the ground of the law; the nominal Christian, on the ground of the truth of Christianity.

Now this grave fact renders the position of all professing Christian nations most serious. God will most assuredly deal with them on the ground of their profession. It is of no use to say they do not understand what they profess; for why profess what they do not understand and believe? The fact is they profess to understand and believe; and by this fact they shall be judged.

The Bible

I have a profound, unfeigned (I believe divinely given) faith in the Bible. I have, through grace, been by it converted, enlightened, quickened, saved. I have received the knowledge of GOD by it, to adore His perfections - of JESUS, the Savior, joy, strength, comfort of my soul. Many have been indebted to others as the means of their being brought to God - to ministers of that gospel which the Bible contains, or to friends who delight in it. This was not my case. That work which is ever God's was wrought in me by means of the written Word. He who knows what the value of JESUS is, will know what the Bible will be to such a one.

If I have, alas! failed it, in nearly thirty years' arduous and varied life and labor, I have never found it fail me. If it has not failed for the poor and needy circumstances of time through which we feebly pass, I am assured it never will for eternity. "The word of the Lord endureth forever." If it reaches down even to my low estate, it reaches up to God's height, because it is from thence: as the love that can reach even to me, and apply to every detail of my feebleness and failure, proves itself divine in so doing - none but God could do this, and hence it leads me up to Him. As Jesus came from God and went to God, so does the Book that divinely reveals Him come from and elevate to Him. If received, it has brought the soul to God, for He has revealed Himself in it. Its positive proofs are all in itself. The sun needs no light to see it by.

I avow in the fullest, clearest, and distinctest manner here my deep, divinely taught conviction of the inspiration of the Scriptures. While of course allowing, if need be, for defect in the translation and the like, when I read the Bible, I read it as of absolute authority for my soul as GOD'S WORD. There is no higher privilege than to have communications direct from God Himself.

My joy, my comfort, my food, my strength for nearly thirty years, have been the Scriptures received implicitly as the WORD OF GOD. In the beginning of that period, I was put through the deepest exercise of soul on that point. Did heaven and earth, the visible Church, and man himself crumble into nonentity, I should through grace since that epoch, hold to the Word as an unbreakable link between my soul and God. I am satisfied that God has given it me as such. I do not doubt that the grace of the Holy Spirit is needed to make it profitable, and to give it real authority to our souls, because of what we are; but that does not change what it is in itself. To be true when it is received, it must have been true before.

And here I will add that although it requires the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit to give it quickening power, yet divine truth, God's Word, has a hold on the natural conscience from which it cannot escape. The light detects the wrong-doer, though he may hate it. And so the Word of God is adapted to man, though he be hostile to it - adapted in grace (blessed be God) as well as in truth. This is exactly what shows the wickedness of man's will in rejecting it. And it has power thus in the conscience, even if the will be unchanged. This may increase the dislike of it, but it is disliked because conscience feels it cannot deny its truth. Men resist it because it is true. Did it not reach their conscience, they would not need to take so much pains to get rid of and disprove it. Men do not arm themselves against straws, but against a sword whose keen edge is felt and

feared.

Reader, it speaks of grace as well as truth. It speaks of God's grace and love, who gave His only begotten Son that sinners like you and me might be with Him, know Him deeply, intimately, truly know Him - and enjoy Him forever, and enjoy Him now - that the conscience perfectly purged might be in joy in His presence without a cloud, without a reproach, without fear. And to be there in such a way, in His love, is perfect joy. The Word will tell you the truth concerning yourself; but it will tell you the truth of a God of love, while unfolding the wisdom of His counsels.

Let me add to my reader, that by far the best means of assuring himself of the truth and authority of the Word is to read the Word itself.

The Bible: to Whom Does It Speak?

If there was ever a time in which it was necessary to press upon people the importance of the study of Holy Scripture for themselves, in humble dependence upon God for guidance, it is now. The Ritualists would have us take the Bible through the church, or the Bible and the church, to take the church's meaning; for, say they, if you do not, you will have all sorts of new sects arising through individuals taking their own meaning from Scripture.

Even if we allowed the principle that the church teaches, we should first have to settle what church's interpretation we are to receive - is it the Roman, Greek, Anglican, or what? Or where, in this quagmire of human opinions, is the Christian to find a divine and solid foundation for faith? But Scripture itself does not allow this principle of church authority as teacher; on the contrary, it is the Church which is taught.

The Scripture was written by inspired men, vessels chosen and fitted by God for the purpose, and did not come from any church. Nearly all the New Testament writings were addressed to the people, to the assemblies of Christians and, in some cases, it is expressly said that they were to be read "unto all the holy brethren," or that, as in Colossians, "When this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."

Even in the ordinary affairs of life the principle of direct responsibility is admitted. If the father of a family goes abroad and sends letters to his children for their instruction and guidance, the persons who carry these letters would have no right to say, You must take our interpretation; you must understand these letters in the sense we give; if you do not, you will all take different ideas of your own from them. To so act would be to interfere with the authority of the writer to speak directly to his children and in a manner suited to them, and to meddle with the right of those children to be guided by his words.

The Scripture is a revelation from God to man, and surely He has perfect wisdom; He knows how to speak in a way suited to the needs of all. To say He does not would be blasphemy. If Christians take a wrong meaning out of the Bible, who is to blame? Certainly not the Author of the Book, but themselves. If we bring our own preconceived notions to the Scripture, and then try to make it square with our ideas, we cannot expect divine guidance; but if, feeling our own need of wisdom, we humbly ask of God, we shall find that He "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." The Apostle Peter tells those to whom he wrote, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"; and Timothy from a child had known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation, and to fully equip the man of God to all good works.

We have a perfect example in our Lord Himself; He met and overcame Satan with "It is written," quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures. The apostles themselves, when about to leave the churches they had watched over with such care, always cast the faithful over on that unfailing safeguard in a day of departure from the faith once delivered to the saints - the Scriptures. Thus

Paul, when addressing the Ephesian elders for the last time, does not commend them to a church for wisdom, or a line of successors, but to God and the word of His grace; and the Apostle John, after warning his beloved children in the faith of the evil that was coming in, says, "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning." New doctrines were continually springing up, but the true foundation for faith is in what they had heard from the beginning; that is, for us, the written Word of God. So Peter says he would endeavor that after his decease they would have these things always in remembrance; this we have today in the inspired epistles. In Revelation, the last voice of inspiration, he who has an ear to hear is told to hear (not the Church, but) what the Spirit saith to the churches; this is contained in the Scriptures.

To look for the truth in the agreement of the various churches of Christendom, or in what people call the unanimous consent of the Fathers, would be a vain and fruitless task, for the doctrines in which the leading churches really agree are not many; and even if they were, their agreement is no guarantee of truth. As for the unanimity of the Fathers, it exists only in people's imagination. If the Bible be an inspired revelation from God - and no one can deny that it is, without taking infidel ground - then it must contain the truth pure and undiluted, adapted to those to whom it comes; and it must carry divine authority, as the voice of God to the soul. This, no human writing can claim. That it is all that has been said, and much more, is an immense blessing; for in it the simple and upright Christian has an all-sufficient light and guide in the darkest and most difficult times, and in days when truth once held is being given up in exchange for medieval speculations.

The Bitten Israelite: Part 1

Numbers 21

Very happy it is to be discovering the glories of Scripture; specially in days when the infidel insolence of men is challenging it. Amalek of old dared to come out and withstand the camp of Israel, though at that moment the cloud which carried the glory was resting on the camp, and by-and-by the great infidel confederacy of the last days will rise so high in pride and daring as to face the army of the white-horsed Rider descending from heaven. (Ex. 17; Rev. 19.)

In like spirit is the heart of man now challenging the Book which carries the precious and mysterious glories of the wisdom of God. It is therefore good service to draw forth these glories and let the oracles of God speak in their own excellency, for the confusion of this iniquity. And one of these glories, a part of this excellency, is this, that it is found to be one breath that animates, one light that shines, one voice that is heard, in all the regions of this one divine volume. For, in a manner, Moses may be said to re-appear in Paul, Isaiah in Peter, David in John, and the like. The light of the morning is the light of noonday and of evening though, it is true, in different measures and conditions.

In turning now to the narrative which this scripture gives us we shall see this illustrated. We find, in the first instance, that the Lord refuses to cancel the judgment He had pronounced. The camp had sinned, and fiery serpents, messengers of death, were sent among them. Though Moses may pray and the people cry out in anguish of heart, the Lord will not remove those executioners of His righteous judgment. And this is His way in the gospel. The sentence of death pronounced at the beginning on sin is not reversed. That could not be. That would be the acknowledging of some mistake or infirmity-and that could not be. But God has His provisions in the face of the sentenced death. This is His way. Wonderful to tell it, He provides the sinner with an answer to His own demands in righteousness! At the beginning this was so, and so has it been again and again; so is it in the Gospel, and so is it in this narrative.

God brought the bruised Seed of the woman into the death-stricken garden of Eden, and Adam, the self-ruined sinner, is provided for. Noah got from God the ark in the day of the flood, and Israel the sprinkled lintel in the day of the judgment of Egypt. David was told to raise an altar in the despised threshing-floor of an uncircumcised Jebusite, and that altar there had virtue to quiet the sword of the angel of death that was traveling on high over the doomed city, as the blood of Calvary had virtue to rend the veil from top to bottom, and open the high heavens to the captives of sin and death.

This is one of the beautiful unities in the revealed way of God.

It is not God canceling His judgments, but providing the sinner with an answer to them. This little narrative finely and vividly exhibits this. Israel had sinned, as we have seen, and fiery serpents were sent into the midst of them. They prayed that the serpents might be taken away, but no such prayer could prevail. The executioners of righteousness must remain in the camp - death must

follow sin, for God had said at the beginning, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." But the Lord commands Moses to make a serpent of brass and set it on a pole, and then proclaim, as in the hearing of the whole camp, that every bitten Israelite who looked to that uplifted serpent should be healed and live.

This was life confronting death - a secret spring of life and healing in the midst of the powers of death - it was as the revelation of the bruised Seed of the woman in the freshly death-stricken garden of Eden. But this was not the withdrawing of the fiery serpents, as the camp had craved - it was not the canceling of the sentence which had been passed upon their sin; it was another, a different and a higher thing; it was enabling the Israelite in the wilderness to triumph over that miserable estate in which he had involved himself. This is what it was. It was not simply an escape from it, but a triumph over it - for an Israelite bitten by a fiery serpent, if he but looked at the brazen serpent, might then smile at the fiery serpents though still abroad in the camp - just as Noah long before, on the vantage-ground where grace and salvation had put him, might have smiled at the waters as they were rising around him - or as the Israelite in Egypt, under the sprinkled lintel, might have smiled at the sword of the destroying angel as he was passing through the land.

How excellent all this is! And this is still the gospel - so consistent with itself is the way of God, and shadowed in like beauty in the story of Noah in the flood, or of the Israelite in Egypt, or of the bitten man of the camp in the wilderness who had looked at the serpent of brass. Such a one could not be bitten a second time; the sin against the Lord of the camp, which had quickened these ministers of death, had been met by the provisions of that same Lord of the camp Himself, and this was his security and his triumph. He was now in a better state than had he never been bitten. His state was then vulnerable, now it is impregnable - then he might have been wounded by the messenger of death, now he could not. As Adam, clothed of God is beyond Adam in the nakedness of innocency; Adam the pardoned and accepted sinner, beyond Adam the upright creature.

God's riddle - "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" - is expounded again and again. We have seen it before, and we see it here again. And in connection with all this, giving another look at Adam, I may say, that when his lips were opened over the woman the second time, they uttered a happier word than they had uttered the first time. "She shall be called Woman" did not express a joy equal to that which he tasted when, as we further read, "he called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living." To celebrate life from God in the face of self-wrought death, is a far higher occupation for the heart, than to celebrate even the closing, crowning gift of God in creation or in providence.

Now all this which we have here traced in this little narrative in Numbers 21, is, again I say, the gospel. This is as the salvation of God. Nothing that was threatened has been canceled. All by the process of ruin and redemption is met and answered and satisfied. The blood of the everlasting covenant has given "the God of peace" to raise from the dead, Jesus, as "the Shepherd of the sheep." God Himself is righteously, gloriously justified, and the sinner victoriously brought into a condition of certainty and impregnableness, and of holy thankful defiance of all the enmity and the attempts and the resources of the old Destroyer.

But there is this further feature of the gospel impressed on this little narrative. The life or healing was to be individual - the bitten Israelite must look himself to the uplifted serpent. "Every one that

is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live," said the Lord to Moses - and then the history tells us, "If a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." vv. 8,9. So is it now as between us and God personally and individually in the gospel - and we may deeply bless Him that it is so. He individualizes and separates us to Himself, to talk to us about our sins, and settle the question of eternity with us. He sits with us alone at the well of Sychar, or sees us, our own very selves, under the fig tree, or feels our own touch in the midst of the busy crowd, or looks up to the sycamore tree to catch our eye, or meets us alone outside the camp, or on the floor of the temple. His word in John 3 is like His word in Numbers 21: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." A look will do it, but the look must be a personal, individual act. Faith is the act of the soul in immediate dealing with God. Another cannot believe for me, nor can ordinances or human religious provisions take God's place in relation to me. I must look, and Christ must be lifted up. Blessed to tell it, He and I are to have to do with one another.

Thus is it, as reflected in this little narrative, and thus is it in the world-spread gospel. And surely these are wondrous witnesses of the way the grace and salvation of God have taken with us. God did not prevent sin. Nor has He canceled the judgment which He attached to it. Nor has He simply made things again as once they were. He gets out of the ruin something better than that which had been ruined - and He has accomplished this in a way of unsullied righteousness, and of infinite display of His own name and glory. It is redemption and resurrection, life in victory, life won by Himself from the power of death.

The Bitten Israelite: Part 2

"Numbers 21

The moment recorded in our narrative was no time for anything but a look, and that too, a look at the uplifted serpent. It would not have done for a bitten Israelite to occupy himself with any other object. Death was before him, if he did not look there. And it would have been the gracious service of any brother Israelite to have recalled him to that object, if he saw that his eye, or feared that his thoughts, were disposed to take up with any other.

It is such a part as this, which the Lord Himself acts with Nicodemus in John 3. Nicodemus had come to Him as to a Teacher. The Lord at once turns him into another direction, and lets him know that he must come to Him as a Savior or Life-giver. Nicodemus was seeking instruction. The Lord tells him that he needed life. And then, He so orders His speech with him as to withdraw him from every thought and every object but the serpent of brass lifted on the pole in the wilderness. He lets him know that he and all men, like bitten Israelites, were on their way to death, but that the brazen Serpent, the Healer or Life-giver, God's salvation, was in the camp again, and that the look must again be given, must interpose again as between the bite and death, or the kingdom would be lost, and the sinner would perish.

Indeed it is according to this, or in the spirit of One who was withdrawing the eye of every one who comes to Him from every object but the uplifted Serpent, that the Lord Jesus conducts His ministry all through that Gospel by St. John. For He refuses to act in any character but that of a Savior. Men may come to Him in other relationships and for other ends, but He will not receive them. One may appeal to Him as a Doer of wonders, another may flatter Him as a King, another may be seating Him on a throne of judgment, another, like Nicodemus, may come to Him as a Revealer of the deep, mysterious lessons of heaven; but He has no welcome for such; He does not entertain approaches and appeals like these. He does not commit Himself to any or either of these. But when a convicted sinner comes to Him or stands before Him, when, in that way, a bitten Israelite looks to Him as the uplifted Serpent, the God-appointed Healer or Quickener of man, then He answers at once, and life and salvation are imparted.

What consolation! What grace in Him, what deliverance and blessing for us! What joy to meet God in such a character, and to see Him thus, as the Jesus of John's Gospel, so jealously holding Himself before us in that character, refusing to be received in any other. His loved Nicodemus was under long and patient training, ere he gave Him the look of a bitten Israelite. But he did at the end, and then did it blessedly and vigorously. (See John 19.)

Precious truth indeed, and precious Savior who has provided us sinners with it! The look that was preached so long ago, in the midst of the camp of Israel in the wilderness, in the day of this twenty-first of Numbers, the Lord Jesus, the Jehovah of Israel and the true Serpent of Brass, preaches it still and again, and with all fervency and earnestness, in the Gospel by John.

But again, the Lord lets us further know in that same Gospel, how He welcomes that look when it is given Him, and how immediately He answers it with the healing and salvation of God. Mark this in the case of Andrew and his companion, and of Nathanael in the first chapter. See this welcome finely and heartily expressed in His most gracious dealings with the Samaritan in the fourth chapter; and again read it in His words to the woman in the eighth chapter; and listen to it in His words to Peter, in the sixth, when He turns to him, upon the multitude refusing to give Him that look. And we have another witness of the same in chapter 12, when He speaks of Himself again as the uplifted Brazen Serpent, and exults in the thought of gathering all men to Himself in that character. (See verse 32).

Now these are characteristics in the true ordinance which we could not have gotten in the typical ordinance of Numbers 21. We do not there find an Israelite, in the sweet affection of the Jesus of John, earnestly and carefully guiding the eye of his bitten brother to the uplifted Serpent. That was an affectionate exercise of heart that was reserved for the Savior Himself to practice and exhibit. Nor do we (for we could not) find the uplifted Serpent there welcoming and encouraging the eye that turned to it. But this also was reserved for the true, the living, the divine Healer of sinners ruined by the old fiery serpent of death. In Him we get these things. And thus, in a great sense, the half is not told us by the type - the original exceeds the fame that we had heard of it. Happy those poor sinners, who stand before the Brazen Serpent who is now lifted up before their eyes in John's Gospel. They get the healing of God there, and a hearty welcome likewise.

We have, however, something more. We have this same earnestness and affection in the Holy Ghost as we have seen to be in the Son. We find it in the Epistle to the Galatians. How zealously is St. Paul there, in the Spirit, occupied in either keeping the eye of the Galatians on Christ crucified, or turning them back to that object! He would alarm them by the fear of some witchery. He would challenge and rebuke them, and that sharply. He would yearn over them, and fain consent to travail in birth with them again. He would, in deepest affection, remind them of past days of blessedness, and solemnly contrast them with the present. He reasons with them also. And he tells them his own story, and the purpose of his heart touching this great object, the crucified Christ of God, the true uplifted Serpent of Brass, how he had looked at it, and meant still to gaze, to live by the faith of it, and glory only in it.

All this is surely excellent. The Spirit in the Apostle is in company with the Son of the Evangelist - and the shadow is outdone by the substance. Affections are exercised in the divine originals, which could never have been expressed in the typical ordinances.

Do we still discover a further secret, I may yet ask, when we compare this chapter in Numbers with John? Yes - the light that shines there, though the same light, is still brighter here. We discover this again in chapter 3.

There the Lord connects this look at the uplifted Serpent with the new birth. This had not been done in Numbers 21 - though it might have been derived from it. The new, eternal life might have been discovered in the Israelite who had looked at that Serpent, because he was then breathing resurrection-life, which is eternal life. He was enjoying a life which had been provided for him by One who had met, in his behalf, the wounding of the old serpent, the serpent who had the power of death. When he looked, he lived; and that life was a life won from death, a victorious life. In principle it was eternal life, such as the healing power of God, the salvation of God, the risen,

victorious Son breathes into the elect. I say not, that every Israelite who looked was introduced to this eternal life. It is not necessary to say that; but it is the expression of it - and this, in its substance and reality we get in John 3, and are instructed by the Lord Himself to know that faith's look at the true Brazen Serpent carries eternal life with it. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

And this truth is taught distinctly in 1 Peter 1: "Being born again," says the inspired Apostle, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." And then he further teaches us where this word is to be found, where this seed of eternal life is to be picked up - "and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" - the gospel being, as we know, the publication of the virtue of the true Serpent of Brass, the Lamb of God, the Healer of sinners destroyed by the lie of the old serpent of death.

Blessed Is the Man: Proverbs 11:25

"Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors."
Prov. 8:34.

Begin the day with God;

Kneel down to Him in prayer;

Lift up thy heart to His abode,

And seek His thoughts to share.

Cause of Strife

Every age of the Church's history illustrates and proves the truth of the statement that self and its odious workings are the producing causes of strife, contention, and division, always. Turn where you will, from the days of the apostles down to the days in which our lot is cast, and you will find unmortified self to be the fruitful source of strife and schism. And, on the other hand, you will find that to sink self and its interests is the true secret of peace, harmony, and brotherly love.

Communion

Beloved reader, nothing can make up for the loss of communion, bear in mind; it can only be had when we are in the path of obedience, of separation from the world. If we are walking carelessly, gratifying the desires of the flesh instead of mortifying them - if we are mingled up with the world, not taking our place "outside the camp" - we may gain exemption from opposition and scorn in our various circles, but we will lose communion. How bitter an exchange!

In our folly we may think that by compromising a little, by accommodating ourselves to the ways of the unconverted around us, by being a little more like other people (as the expression is), we will secure for ourselves a smoother path; but ah, we do not so in reality.

No, rougher far is the unrough path "toward Sodom," without conscious companionship with Christ, without the sweetness of His smile of approval. Smoother far the unsmooth path of faithfulness to an absent Lord, of testimony against the world which has rejected and crucified Him, and which "lieth in wickedness," with the capacity to enter, in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, into His thoughts.

Oh, the unutterable joy of this fellowship! May we know it all along our dreary desert journey, and then, when finished, we will go where there will be no possibility of aught ever marring it. What communion, what fellowship, will then be ours in unhindered fullness!

Conference Quote

These are days when we should be with our faces in the dust instead of aspiring to great things. We cannot go low enough.

Conference Quote

There is no spiritual strength unless there is affection for the Lord Jesus.

Conference Quote

As we see the lowering of standards by the world, what a privilege for the believer to be an example in purity.

The Meaning of the Cross

It is the cross which stains the pride of man and puts all his glory in the dust. Hence the Apostle brings Christ crucified before the Corinthians. This to the Jew was a stumbling block, and to the Greek foolishness. These Corinthians were deeply affected by the judgment of both Jews and Greeks. They were under the influence of man. They had not realized the total ruin of nature. They valued those that were wise, scribes, or disputers of this world. They were accustomed to the schools of their age and country. They conceived that if Christianity did such great things when those who possessed it were poor and simple, what might it not do if it could only be backed by the ability and the learning and the philosophy of men! How it must ride triumphantly to victory! How the great must bow, and the wise be brought in! What a glorious change would result, when not the unlettered poor only, but the great and the noble, the wise and the prudent, were all joined in the confession of Jesus!

Their thoughts were fleshly, not of God. The cross writes judgment on man, and folly on his wisdom, as it is itself rejected by man as folly; for what could seem more egregiously unreasonable to a Greek than the God that made heaven and earth becoming a man and, as such, being crucified by the wicked hands of His creatures here below? That God should use His power to bless man was natural; and the Gentile could coalesce as to it with the Jew. Hence too, in the cross, the Jew found his stumbling block, for he expected a Messiah in power and glory. Though the Jew and the Greek seemed opposite as the poles, from different points they agreed thoroughly in slighting the cross, and in desiring the exaltation of man as he is. They both, therefore (whatever their occasional oppositions, and whatever their permanent variety of form), preferred the flesh, and were ignorant of God - the one demanding signs, the other wisdom. It was the pride of nature, whether self-confident or founded on religious claims.

Hence the Apostle Paul, in the latter part of chapter 1, brings in the cross of Christ in contrast with fleshly wisdom, as well as religious pride, urging also God's sovereignty in calling souls as He will. He alludes to the mystery (chap. 2), but does not develop here the blessed privileges that flowed to us from a union with Christ, dead, risen, and ascended, but demonstrates that man has no place whatever, that it is God who chooses and calls, and that He makes nothing of flesh. There is glorying, but it is exclusively in the Lord. "No flesh should glory in His presence."

This is confirmed in chapter 2, where the Apostle reminds them of the manner in which the gospel had entered Corinth. He had come there setting his face against all things that would commend himself. No doubt, to one of such eminent ability and such varied gifts as the Apostle Paul, it was hard, to speak after the manner of men, to be nothing. How much it must have called for self-denial utterly to decline that which he could have handled so well, and which people at Corinth would have hailed with loud acclamation. But what absorbed his soul, in entering the intellectual and dissolute capital of Achaia, was the cross of Christ. He determined therefore, as he says, to know nothing else - not exactly to know the cross alone, but "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." It was emphatically, though not exclusively, the cross. It was not simply redemption, but along with

this another line of truth. Redemption supposes, undoubtedly, a suffering Savior, and the shedding of that precious blood which ransoms the captives. It is Jesus who in grace has undergone the judgment of God, and brought in the full delivering power of God for the souls that believe. But the cross is more than this. It is pre-eminently the death of shame. It is utter opposition to the thoughts, feelings, judgments, and ways of men, religious or profane. Accordingly, this is the part that he was led in the wisdom of God to put forward. Hence the feelings of the Apostle were distrust of self and dependence on God according to that cross. As he says, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." Thus, as Christ Himself is said in 2 Corinthians 13 to be crucified in weakness, such was also the servant here. His speech and his preaching was "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Accordingly, in this chapter he proceeds to supplement the application of the doctrine of the cross to the state of the Corinthians by bringing in the Holy Spirit; for this again supposes the incapacity of man in divine things.

All is opened out in a manner full of comfort, but at the same time unsparing to human pride. Weigh from the prophecy of Isaiah the remarkable quotation - "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." There is first the great standing fact before our eyes. Such is the Savior to the saved. Christ crucified is the death knell on all man's wisdom, and power, and righteousness. The cross writes total condemnation on the world. It was here the world had to say to Jesus. All that it gave Him was the cross. On the other hand, to the believer, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God, because he humbly but willingly reads in the cross the truth of the judgment of his own nature as a thing to be delivered from, and finds Him that was crucified, the Lord Himself, undertaking a deliverance just, present, and complete; as he says, "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Flesh is absolutely put down.

Man cannot go lower for weakness and ignominy than the cross on which hangs all the blessedness God gives the believer. And therein God is glorified as He is nowhere else. This in both its parts is exactly as it should be, and faith sees and receives it in Christ's cross. The state of the

Corinthians did not admit of Christ risen being

brought in - at least here. It might have drawn a halo, as it were, round human nature - this presenting the risen Man in the first instance. But he points to God as the source, and Christ as the channel and means, of all the blessing. "Of Him," says he, "are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." But then, as he shows, there is not only this great source of blessing in Christ, but there is the power that works in us. Never is it the spirit of man that lays hold of this infinite good which God vouchsafes him. Man requires a divine power to work within him, just as he needs the Savior outside himself....

Man is not more capable of fathoming the depths of divine things than a brute can comprehend the works of human wit or science. This doctrine was utterly repulsive to the pride of the Greeks. They might admit man to have need of pardon and of moral improvement. They fully admitted his want of instruction, and refinement, and, so to speak, of spiritualization, if it only might be. Christianity deepens our estimate of every want. Man not only wants a new life or nature, but the Holy Spirit. It

is not merely His grace in a general sense, but the power of the Holy Spirit personally dwelling in him. It is this alone which can lead us into the deep things of God. And this, He lets us see, affects not merely this particular or that, but the whole working of divine grace and power in man. The whole and sole means of communicating blessing to us must be the Holy Spirit. Hence he insists that it is the Spirit of God in the first place who reveals the truth to us, so it is the same Spirit who furnishes suitable words, as finally it is through the Holy Spirit that one receives the truth revealed in the words He Himself has given. Thus, from first to last, it is a process begun, carried on, and completed by the Holy Spirit. How little this makes of man!

This introduces the third chapter, and gives point to his rebukes. He taxes them with walking as men. How remarkable is such a reproach! Walking as men! Why, one might ask, how else could they walk? And this very difficulty - as no doubt it would be to many a Christian now (that walking as men should be a reproach) - was no doubt a clap of thunder to the proud but poor spirits at Corinth. Yes, walking as men is a departure from Christianity. It is to give up the distinctive power and place that belongs to us; for does not Christianity show us man judged, condemned, and set aside? On the faith of this, living in Christ, we have to walk. The Holy Spirit, besides, is brought in as working in the believer, and this, of course, in virtue of redemption by our Lord Jesus. And this is what is meant by being not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, which is proved by the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

Here the Apostle does not explain all this, and he gives a very withering reason for his reticence. These Corinthians had an uncommonly good opinion of themselves, and so they must be told plainly the reason why he does not open out these deep things. They themselves were not fit; they were but babes. What! the polished Greek believers no more than babes! This was rather what they would have said of the Apostle or of his teaching. They thought themselves far in advance. The Apostle had dwelt on the elementary truths of the gospel. They yearned after the fire of Peter and the rhetoric of Apollos. No doubt they might easily flatter themselves it was to carry on the work of God. How little many a young convert knows what will best lead him on! How little the Corinthians dreamed of depreciating the second Man, or of exalting the first. Hence the Apostle tells them that he could not speak unto them as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat." Far from denying, he owns that their insinuation was true - he had brought before them only elementary truths. They were not in a condition to bear more. Now this is full of meaning and importance practically at all times. We may damage souls greatly by presenting high truths to those that want the simples rudiments of divine truth.

The Apostle, as a wise master builder, laid the foundation. The state of the Corinthians was such that he could not build on the foundation as he would have desired. His absence had given occasion of their breaking out of their carnal wishes after the world's wisdom. They were making even the ardor of a Peter and the eloquence of an Apollos to be a reason for dissatisfaction with one that, I need not say, was superior to both of them. But the Apostle meets them in a way most unexpected to their self-satisfaction and pride, and lets them know that their carnality was the real reason why he could not go on with them into deeper things.

Their party spirit, their feeling of narrowness, the disposition to set up this servant of Christ or that, was not only a dishonor to the Master, but a real loss to themselves. Not that there is any ground

to suppose it was the fault of Peter or Apollos any more than of Paul. The evil was in the saints themselves, who indulged in their old zeal of the schools, and allowed their natural partiality to work. In point of fact, this never can be without the most grievous impoverishment to the soul, as well as a hindrance to the Holy Spirit. What faith must learn is that "all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas;... all things are yours." Thus the subject enlarges, as is his wont, taking in an immense breadth of the Christian's possessions - life, death, things present, and things to come. "All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

Crucifixion

Crucifixion includes the thought of death, but death is not necessarily brought about by crucifixion. The Lord became obedient unto death, the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8). To say simply that He died would not have been, in His case, a full statement of the truth. He stooped so low as to die that death to which ignominy and shame were attached.

Death is the termination of that condition of existence in the body upon earth, which is called life. The cross was a judicial way of accomplishing it. Hence, in the eyes of men it was no honor, but the contrary, to be crucified. Men can admire one who dies as a hero, or as a martyr to his convictions; but in the eyes of the world, no glory can attach to one who is crucified. So the preaching of Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness (1 Cor. 1:23). The Jew could neither understand nor accept a crucified Messiah, unless God touched his heart. A crucified Christ as his Savior, the Greek regarded as foolishness. To have heard of one who had died might have affected him differently, but to be told that He had been executed on the cross, was sufficient to make him, unless his conscience was reached, treat the tidings of the Apostle with extreme contempt.

Again according to the teaching of the law, death by crucifixion made the one subjected to it accursed of God - "He that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut. 21:23). Men might burn sweet odors for some who died, but who would so act for the one who had been in this manner put to death? It was by His death upon the cross that Christ redeemed from the curse of the law those who were under it, being made a curse for them (Gal. 3:13). The manner then of His death had an important meaning for one who understood about the law, and was under its curse by virtue of his infractions of it.

But not only was the Lord crucified, submitting thereby to the death of shame and ignominy, redeeming by that those who were under the law from its curse (as many of them as believed on Him) but other purposes were accomplished by that manner of His death - purposes of great importance as regards us. Our old man was crucified by God with Christ (Rom. 6:6); and by the cross of Christ, the world is to be crucified to us, and we unto the world (Gal. 6:14). Thus in both these cases crucifixion is dwelt on, not simply death. And why? Because since crucifixion was a judicial dealing with the one placed on the cross, we are to understand that our old man has been judicially dealt with by God, that the body of sin might be annulled, that thenceforth we should not serve sin; and that the world is to be regarded by us as judicially dealt with for us, and we for it. See also Gal. 5:24. Substitute death in such places for the cross, and we should lose the force of the teaching intended to be conveyed. Regard the cross as simply a lingering death, and you lose the truth of the passage. Keep clear in the mind that the cross was a judicial manner of dealing with the one subjected to it, and the bearing of the instruction is made plain.

David Sat Before the Lord

1 Chronicles 17

At the opening of this chapter we read that David was sitting in his house where he had been considering certain plans which he intended to carry out. David made known his thoughts to Nathan the prophet, and the latter encouraged David to proceed with his plans.

No doubt we have many times sat in our own houses and considered what we would like to do, and in some cases have made known our intentions to others. And perhaps like David we have forgotten to ask the Lord about what we hoped to do, and to seek His mind in such matters. We need to ask the Lord what He would have us to do. Saul of Tarsus once thought to do many things (Acts 26:9), but the mind of the Lord was otherwise and Saul was stopped in his course; and we read that he fell to the earth and said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

So we find in David's case that the Lord intervened and that same night He spoke to Nathan and told him to go to David and tell him that he would not be allowed to carry out his intentions. On the other hand, David was to be told what God had done for him and what God would yet do for him, his seed, and for the children of Israel.

After David had listened to God's word, he left his own house and went and sat before the Lord (v. 16). Now he was no longer occupied with his own thoughts and plans. He owned his own nothingness and acknowledged what great things God had done for him. He realized that God had done him great honor in making known to him all God's thoughts and purposes. David believed what God had told him and he desired that the name of the Lord be magnified (v. 24). Further, David asked that God would bless his house, for he knew that if God is pleased to bless, it will be forever (v. 27).

We can learn much from this incident in the life of David. To sit before the Lord is the privilege of every believer, and indeed it should be the place of our choice. There are other examples in the Word of God which also illustrate this point. When the Lord was on earth he healed a poor man who was possessed with demons. This man knew no rest, for he was wild and untameable and dwelt apart from his fellow men - in the tombs and in the desert. But when the blessed Savior had cast out the demons, the people who knew the man came to see him. They found him now in his right mind, clothed, and sitting at the feet of Jesus. No longer wild and restless, now he is at peace and rest as he sat before the Lord. (Read Luke 8:27-35.)

Then there was Mary of Bethany, and the first thing we read about her is that she sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. It was the place she chose, and the Lord called it "that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:39-42.)

In chapter 11 of the Gospel of John we read of Mary and Martha at a time of great sorrow when their brother Lazarus had fallen ill. They both knew to whom they could turn in their sorrow, but the Lord did not go to them at once. However, as soon as Martha heard that the Lord was coming, she

went immediately to meet Him.

But Mary sat still in the house. It was not that Mary was less concerned than her sister, but no doubt she knew that if Jesus was coming, she could quietly wait for Him. In fact as soon as Mary heard that Jesus had called for her, she rose up and went to Him, and fell down at His feet. There in her sorrow she would know His sympathy. Soon she would witness His power in raising her brother from the dead.

Beloved, have we made the place of our choice to sit "at the feet of Jesus"? There we find peace and rest, there we can listen to His word, and there is the place where we shall find comfort in time of sorrow. Then like one of old we can say, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste" (S. of Sol. 2:3).

Death and Blood

QUESTION: Please explain why it was necessary that the spear should be thrust into the side of Christ, seeing He was already dead. Was His death not full payment to God for sin? Why is it said, "It is the blood [not the death] that maketh an atonement for the soul"? M.B.

ANSWER: The spear thrust into the side (the heart) of Christ showed to all that His death was real, and moreover drew out those tokens of atonement and purification (blood and water) on which we rest, and by which we are cleansed. The death of Christ was a full atonement for sin, but blood out of the body, apart from it, is a proof of death (in the body, it is the life of it); and hence the blood is everywhere used for the atoning value of the death of Christ; not that blood is different from death, but because it is a proof of it. The blood "making atonement" is a more beautiful thought than the death, because it means the perfect life given up in death. The blood which was the life, now poured forth in death, is that which is so precious in God's sight. You will observe that when the death is spoken of, it is more often in connection with resurrection, presenting the truth of deliverance from sin (Rom. 6), rather than atonement for sins (Rom. 3).

Do We Trace Things to the Hand of God? Do We Go No Further?

I trust I may never forget one lesson I learned of God some years ago; and, as He who takes to Himself (and oh, so rightly) the title of "The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort," comforts those that are in tribulation, not only that they may be comforted themselves, but that they may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith they themselves have been comforted of God, I will just jot it down, hoping that it may be used to help and comfort others. Many years ago, and not long before being called to pass through a very heavy trial and sorrow, I went up to London (England). While there I went one evening to where I knew a Bible reading was to be. During the meeting, the old brother in whose house the meeting was held, made the following remark (I forget now what the connection was): "We often speak of tracing things up to the Lord's hand, but do we give His heart credit for moving His hand." I was much struck by the remark at the time (little knowing what was before me), and my mind reverted to it occasionally; and I saw that the hand was but the servant of the heart, even in ordinary things. For instance, if a thief steals anything, the heart has first coveted it, and the hand is merely the agent that appropriates what the heart longs for.

Well, I returned to my home, and about six weeks after, one very very dear to me was taken rather suddenly. In my sorrow (and deep it was) the above mentioned remark came before me.

Others spoke about so and so having been the means of bringing the infection, etc. But to me (and I thank God for the grace given) there were no second causes to be looked at. No, to God Himself I must trace it, and not to His hand only but to His heart. What, His heart? Yes, the same heart that gave Jesus. Oh, the exquisite sweetness and infinite preciousness of the thought were inexpressible! And I knew what it was to have God Himself wiping away the tears from my eyes.

Another incident comes before me which I will mention as being in every way in keeping with what has gone before. A young sister in the Lord had just lost her babe, her first-born, and was, as might be supposed, in deep grief. An old brother who knew her well wrote to her. In the letter was the following (as nearly as I can call to mind): "May you know the joy of having Jesus wipe away the tears from your eyes, and know that it is more blessed to have Him wipe away your tears than to have no tears to wipe away."

In conclusion I would add that I have found in my own experience the truth of what I once heard another say: "There is no bitterness, even in the deepest sorrow, unless the will is at work. It is the working of the will that brings the bitterness."

Don't Live Tomorrow Today: Matthew 6:24

We learn from Matthew 6:34 the precious lesson not to bring the "evil" of tomorrow into today -not to foredate sorrow. We have only to live by the day, and we shall find God's grace amply sufficient for the need of each day as it arises. But if we attempt to grapple today with the anticipated difficulties of tomorrow, we must do so at our own charges, and shall not be able to meet the demand.

"Let each day upon its wing, its allotted burden bring;

Load it not beside with sorrow that belongeth to tomorrow.

Strength is promised, strength is given, when the heart by God is riven;

But foredate the day of woe, and alone thou bear'st the blow."

Epistles of Christ

2 Corinthians 3

In the third chapter of 2 Corinthians the Apostle Paul brings Christ before our souls in three ways.

First, Christ is presented as written upon the hearts of the believers that formed the assembly at Corinth (v. 3).

Second, Christ is presented as manifested to "all men" by this assembly (vv. 2,3).

Third, Christ is presented as a living Person in the glory - the Object before these believers (v. 18).

Thus there passes before us God's intention that, during the absence of Christ from this world, there should be gatherings of believers on earth who have Christ written upon their hearts; Christ manifested in their lives; and Christ before them as an Object in the glory.

As we read the last touching instructions of the Lord to His disciples, and as we reverently listen to the Lord's prayer to the Father, we are made conscious that underlying both the discourses and the prayer, there is ever kept before us the great truth that believers are left in this world to represent Christ, the Man that has gone to glory. It is God's intention that though Christ personally is no longer here, yet Christ morally should still be seen in His people. Further, it is manifest, that all the epistles press upon us our privilege and our responsibility as believers to represent the character of Christ to a world that has rejected and cast Him out.

In the addresses to the seven churches in Revelation, we are permitted to view the Lord walking in the midst of the churches, taking account of their condition, and giving us His judgment as to how far they have answered to, or failed in, their responsibility. We learn that, near the end, the great mass of those who profess His name have not only entirely failed to represent His character before the world, but have become so hopelessly corrupt and indifferent to Himself that, at the end, they will be spewed out of His mouth and thus utterly rejected. Nevertheless, we also learn that in the midst of this vast profession there will be some who, though they have but a little strength, will answer to His mind by setting forth something of the loveliness of His character.

Seeing then that it is still possible, even in a day of ruin, to express something of the character of Christ, surely everyone who loves the Lord will say, I would like to answer to the Lord's mind and be of the number who in some little measure manifest something of the beautiful traits of Christ to the world around.

It is true that it is possible for the world to form some estimate of Christ from the Word of God; but, apart from the Word - which they may call in question or fail to understand, even if read - it is God's intention that in the lives of His people there should be a presentation of Christ "known and read of all men."

This being so, it becomes a searching question for us all, If the men of this world are to gain their impression of Christ from the gatherings of His people, what conclusions will they reach as to

Christ as they look upon our individual lives, as well as the collective life of God's people? Let us remember the Lord's searching words, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Apply such a test to the gathering with which we may be connected, and should we not have to hang our heads with shame as we recall occasions when envy, evil speaking, and backbiting, were more in evidence than the meekness and gentleness of Christ? Let us remember that whatever the circumstances - even if called to face reproach and insults - our one business should be to set forth the character of Christ. One has said, "It is better to lose your coat than to let go the character of Christ."

If then we would answer to the Lord's mind and set forth His character before the world, we shall do well to heed the teaching of the Apostle in this portion of the Word.

1) Christ Written on the Heart. First, let us notice that the Apostle speaks of these believers as "the epistle of Christ." He does not say, Ye should be the epistle of Christ, but, "Ye are... the epistle of Christ." Entertaining the wrong thought that we ought to be the epistles of Christ, we shall set to work to become such by our own efforts. This would not only lead us into legal occupation with ourselves, but would also shut out the work of "the Spirit of the living God." The fact is that we become epistles of Christ not by our own efforts, but by the Spirit of God writing Christ upon our hearts.

A Christian is one to whom Christ has become precious by a work of the Spirit in the heart. It is not simply a knowledge of Christ in the head, which an unconverted man may have, that constitutes a man a Christian, but Christ written in the heart. As sinners we discover our need of Christ, and are burdened with our sins. We find relief by discovering that Christ by His propitiatory work has died for our sins, and that God has set forth His acceptance of that work by seating Christ in the glory. We rest in God's satisfaction with 'Christ and His work, and our affections are drawn out to the One through whom we have been blessed. "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." Thus Christ is written on our hearts and we become the epistle of Christ. If we are not the epistle of Christ, we are not Christians at all.

2) Christ Manifested to All Men. Having set forth the true Christian company as composed of believers upon whose hearts Christ has been written, the Apostle presents the second great truth, when he says not only, "Ye are... the epistle of Christ," but also, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ," "known and read of all men."

It is one thing for a gathering of believers to be an epistle of 'Christ, and quite another for the gathering to be in such a right condition that they manifest to all men something of the character of Christ. The responsibility of any gathering of saints is, not to walk well in order to become an epistle, but, seeing they are an epistle of Christ, to walk well in order that the epistle may be read of all men. If anyone writes a letter of commendation, it is to commend the person named in the letter. So when the Spirit of God writes Christ on the hearts of believers, it is in order that they together may become an epistle of commendation to commend Christ to the world around. That by their holy and separate walk, their mutual love to one another, their lowliness and meekness, their gentleness and grace, they may set forth the lovely character of Christ.

Thus it was with the Corinthian saints. They had, indeed, been walking in a disorderly way; but, as the result of the Apostle's first letter, they had cleared themselves from evil, so that the Apostle can

now say, not only that as an assembly they were an epistle of Christ, but, that they were an epistle "known and read of all men."

Alas! the writing may become indistinct, but it does not cease to be a letter because it is blotted and blurred. Christians are often like the writing on some ancient tombstone. There are faint indications of an inscription, a capital letter here and there would indicate that some name was once written on the stone. But it is so weather-worn and dirt-begrimed that it is hardly possible to decipher the writing. So, alas! may it be with ourselves. When first the Spirit writes Christ upon the hearts of a company of saints, their affections are warm and their collective life speaks plainly of Christ. The writing, being fresh and clear, is known and read of all men. But, as time passes, unless there is watchfulness and self-judgment, envying, strife, and bitterness may creep in, and the gathering cease to give any true impression of Christ.

Nevertheless, in spite of all our failure, Christians are the epistle of Christ; and it ever remains true that it is God's great intention that all men should see the character of Christ set forth in His people. Here then we have a beautiful description of the true Christian company. It is a company of individual believers, gathered to Christ, upon whose hearts Christ has been written, not with ink, but "with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." As in the tables of stone of old, men could read what the righteousness of God demanded from man under law, so now, in the lives of God's people, the world should read what the love of God brings to man under grace.

3) Christ the Object in Glory. How then, we may ask, is the writing of Christ on the hearts of God's people to be kept clear and legible, so that, in the gathering of God's people, the character of Christ can be manifest to all men?

The answer to this question brings us to the third great truth of the chapter. Christ will be manifested to all men only as we have before us the living Christ in the glory as our Object. So the Apostle writes, "We all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory" (v. 18; J.N.D. Trans.). There is a transforming power in beholding the Lord in glory. This transforming power is available for all believers - the youngest as well as the oldest; "We all," not simply, "We apostles," beholding the glory of the Lord "are changed into the same image." This change is not affected by our own efforts, nor by wearying ourselves in the endeavor to be like the Lord. Nor is it by seeking to imitate some devoted saint. It is by beholding the glory of the

Lord. There is no veil on His face, and as we behold Him, not only every veil of darkness will pass from our hearts, but morally we shall become increasingly like Him, changing from glory to glory. Gazing upon the Lord in glory we are lifted above all the weakness and failure that we find in ourselves, and all the evil around, to discover and delight in His perfection. As the bride in the Song of Songs can say, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

In the course of the epistle the Apostle gives us a taste of some of this precious fruit. Turning to chapter 5, we read in verse 14, that "the love of Christ constraineth us." Here the love of Christ is presented as the true motive for all ministry, whether to saints or sinners. The greatest expression of that love was His death. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his

friends." Again we read, "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." With such love before his soul the Apostle can well say, "that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." In the light of this scripture we may well challenge our hearts as to the motive that actuates us in all our service. Is it the love of Christ that constrains us, or is it the love of self? Are we living unto ourselves, or are we living "unto Him," and thus, like Him, willing to forget self in order to serve others in love. One has said, "Alas! how often have we to reproach ourselves with going on in a round of Christian duty, faithful in general intention, but not flowing from the fresh realization of the love of Christ to our souls".

Epistles of Christ

2 Corinthians 3

Passing to chapter 8, and verse 9, we come to another lovely characteristic of Christ. There we read of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Apostle is pleading on behalf of the poor Jewish believers, urging the richer Corinthian saints to help in meeting their necessities. In both verses 6 and 7 he speaks of giving as a "grace." Then he sets before us Christ as the One in whom we have a transcendent example of the grace of giving. He was rich, surpassingly rich; and yet to meet our deep needs He not only gives, but, such is His grace that He becomes poor to give. "For your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." By the incarnation He became poor, and His poverty is witnessed by the manger at Bethlehem and the humble home at Nazareth, and that in the days of His ministry He Himself said, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Luke 9:58. To reach a poor fallen woman and bring heaven's best gifts to earth's worst sinners, He became a poor, needy, and lonely man by a well side. The very moment when He is enriching us with a fountain of water springing up unto eternal life, He Himself has become so poor that He has to ask for a drink of water (John 4:7, 14).

Turning to chapter 10 and verse 1, we find some more refreshing fruit that marked the life of Christ. First we read of "the meekness... of Christ." The Apostle is correcting the spirit of rivalry that had been working among the Corinthian saints, whereby some of the gifted servants were measuring themselves with one another, and seeking to commend themselves. So doing, they were walking in the flesh, and warring after the flesh, glorying in their gifts, talking about themselves, boasting in their work, and belittling the Apostle. To correct their vanity and self-assertiveness, he brings before them the meekness of Christ who never asserted His rights, or defended Himself; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again. The chief priests may defame Him, but "Jesus held His peace"; He is falsely accused before Pilate, but "He answered him to never a word." He is mocked by Herod, but "He answered him nothing." Good for us if, in the presence of defamation and insults, we could catch something of the spirit of the Lord, and show the meekness that refuses to assert our rights, stand upon our dignity, or defend ourselves.

Then the Apostle speaks of the "gentleness of Christ." Another lovely quality that He ever exhibited in the presence of opposition. Seeking to obey the word of the Lord and maintain the truth, we shall soon find that there are those who will oppose and raise questions that lead to strife. But the servant of the Lord "must not strive," but seek to act in the spirit of the Lord and be "gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient." The gentleness of Christ speaks of the manner in which He acted and spoke. How often, with ourselves, even if our motive is right and the principles

we stand for are true, all is spoiled because our manner is lacking in graciousness and gentleness. Let us remember the striking words of the psalmist, "Thy gentleness hath made me great" (Psalm 18:35). Our vehemence may easily generate into violence by which we belittle ourselves in the eyes of others; but gentleness will make us great. Violence draws out violence, but gentleness is irresistible. "The fruit of the Spirit... is gentleness."

Finally, in chapter 12, verse 9, we read of "the power of Christ." The Apostle is speaking of bodily infirmities, insults, necessities, persecutions, and distresses. He learned by experience that all these things only become an occasion for the manifestation of "the power of Christ" to preserve the believer through the trials, and lift him above them. Thus we learn that whatever the trial, His "grace is sufficient," and His "strength is made perfect in weakness."

Thus, with our eyes upon Christ in the glory, we are reminded by the Apostle of the perfections of Christ as He passes before us.

"The love of Christ";

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ";

"The meekness... of Christ";

"The gentleness of Christ"; and

"The power of Christ."

As we look at Christ in the glory and admire these lovely moral traits set forth in all their perfection in Christ, we find His fruit sweet to our taste, and, almost unconsciously to ourselves, shall begin to exhibit something of His gracious character, and thus become changed into His image.

Thus the Holy Spirit not only writes Christ on the heart so that we become epistles of Christ, but, by escaping our hearts with Christ in glory, He transforms us into His image, and so keeps the writing clear that it may be read of all men.

What a wonderful testimony it would be if the world could look upon any little company of the Lord's people and see in them "love," and "grace," and "meekness," and "gentleness," and a "power" that enables them to rise above all circumstances.

May we realize in deeper measure that it is the mind of God that His people should be the epistle of Christ to manifest Christ to all men, by having Christ in the glory before us as our one Object.

Ever Awake

A ship named Zamzam was torpedoed. Passengers were forced to leap into the sea, were picked up by an armed freighter and were placed in the hold of the ship.

The next morning they asked each other, "Were you nervous?" "Were you cold?" "Were you afraid?" "Could you sleep?"

An elderly missionary answered, in substance: "The floor was terribly hard. But the Lord reminded me of His word in the 121st Psalm, 'He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.' So I said, 'Lord, there really isn't any use for both of us to stay awake tonight. If Thou art going to keep watch, I'll thank Thee for some sleep.' And, said he, 'I got it.' "

Everlasting Judgment: Knowing the Terror of the Lord

Everlasting punishment is indeed an awful affair, and many are trying to disbelieve it. But does that alter the fact? When Noah preached the coming flood of universal destruction, someone might have said, "What an awful affair"; and who believed him? But did that alter the fact? And when God announced the destruction of Sodom, that was an awful affair. Lot himself scarcely believed it. But it came.

Many learned men are denying eternal punishment, and maintaining that the soul is not immortal; were there not many mighty men, men of renown, all of whom rejected the preaching of Noah, or the warning of God (Gen. 6:4)? Have you weighed the alternative? If you say that the soul of man ceases to exist at death, then you must give up the whole Word of God as false, and thus be left in darkness even now. Let us see. If a man was not created with a soul that is to exist forever, what was he? Simply a slightly superior beast, here a little while, and then off the scene. Now there is no sin in a beast; there is no conscience of sin in a mere animal. There is no responsibility toward God in an animal. There would be no need for or sense in an atonement. An animal has no nature, no capacity, to know God or the things of God.

But in contrast with the formation of all mere cattle, beasts, birds, or fishes, we read, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and he became a living soul." Here was a totally different creature from the beasts and cattle of the field. Here was a living soul capable of conversing with God, placed as head of creation, but under responsibility. And mark, while a beast could not be so placed, man was so placed as a living soul, and one sin has involved the whole race in ruin and misery. And what we read in the Word of God, we find around us today. There is the same distinction between man and the animals around, as there was when he came out of the hands of God. Not another creature is there on earth to which you can communicate the idea of God or a future existence. Take away man's immortality, reduce him to a mere beast, though a superior beast, and then we must allow you overthrow everything revealed in the Word of God.

That man as to his bodily existence is mortal, liable to death like the beasts, is clearly revealed; but that is not our question. And that the Old Testament is chiefly occupied with the body and the things of the body, we do not dispute for a moment. That the word soul is used to denote man in the body, or persons, as we say, is frequently the case, as "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The person under the government of God would be put to death. The context will make this plain.

But now we have the complete revelation of God in the New Testament. What is the certain teaching of the complete Word of God? Is there such a thought as that at death, man, like the beast, ceases to exist? Far from it. Is there then distinct teaching that as to the wicked rejecters of the gospel, they do not cease to exist at death? Could anything be more certain than the following? "And as it is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. 9:27. Can there be judgment after ceasing to exist? If man ceases to exist, there is nothing to judge. You

may say, They will be raised again to be judged. True, they will, for the Word says so (Rev. 20:11-15). And they shall be cast into the lake of fire; and they shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Now that torment is declared to be forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night. (See Rev. 14:10, 11.) Now honestly, is this ceasing to exist after death? Infidels may teach so, but not the Word of God. And that Word never contradicts itself.

Does the Lord Jesus teach that going into hell fire is ceasing to exist? No, over and over again He declares it is fire that never shall be quenched. (Read Mark 9:43-48.)

Did He teach that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ceased to exist? "For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him." Luke 20:38. It may be objected that they were saved men, and therefore existed after death. Now as to this the Lord makes no difference whatever; He teaches that both the saved and lost live after death, as to the soul, and that they are equally conscious as if they were alive in the body.

The rich man died; did he cease to exist? Not a bit more than Abraham. He lifted up his eyes, being in torments. Did he cease to exist? Oh, hear his dreadful cry for a drop of water to cool his tongue. The rich man no more ceased to exist at death than Lazarus the saved beggar. The one was comforted and the other was tormented. If any say that they deny the Scripture, then we understand them. But they should not pretend to be Christians, and all the while teach doctrines that would make Christ a deceiver.

He is the truth, and could teach only the truth. In the plainest possible language He tells us, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment [or torment]: but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. 25:46. He uses the same word to denote the everlasting existence of both. Many may not be aware how Satan is leading them on into this debasing error that man is not an immortal soul and will not exist forever and ever. But it is a direct attack on all Scripture. Prove it false in one part, and all true faith is destroyed in every other part. It must lead practically to infidelity on every subject. Already its dire effects are seen. The progress of darkness and lawlessness has set in and advances with rapid strides.

No one can deny that wherever this doctrine of non-eternity of torment has got a footing, reasoning and doubt on all Scripture truths is following. Let us pause. Abundance of scripture might be brought to show that "death" is not "ceasing to exist." How could the soul of the dead child have returned into it, if it had ceased to exist? yet it was dead and was restored to life (2 Kings 4:32-36). And so of the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7). There was a dead man. Yet at the word of Jesus the dead arose, sat up, and began to speak. No, beloved reader, if we give up the immortality of the soul, we give up everything and reduce man to a mere beast. There is no real sin, and no need of true expiation, if man before the new birth is a mere intelligent beast or mere animal, and when he dies he ceases to exist. Is it not astonishing that man can shut his eyes to the Scriptures as the revelation of God, and become so dark?

Crafty men will pervert the Scriptures to deceive souls. Many may secretly wish it to be so, that they may indulge in sin, and see no judgment before them. But, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." "Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." "For we must all appear

[or be made manifest] before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened... and they were judged every man according to their works." "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers [called now Spiritualists], and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

All this would be utterly false if the wicked ceased to exist at death. We cease to exist here in this state as to the body; but if the soul ceases to exist, what is there to be judged? How can there be a second death of that which does not exist? Let God be true, though every man be a liar. We repeat, if you give up the immortality of the soul, you give up the whole Bible. If we own the mortality of the body and the immortality of the soul, and the future resurrection, and judgment of all rejecters of the glad tidings of God, then all is clear. You and I must be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, either justified from all things through the death and resurrection of the very One before whom we are manifested, or we must stand at another time to be judged for our sins. And if thus judged, we shall be cast into the lake of fire - into torment that never ends.

Oh, think of the terror of that day! Think of the wrath of God - forever and ever. And think of God now, with arms of mercy ready to receive and pardon the vilest that comes to Him - that believes on the Lord Jesus. Surely God has shown His estimate of sin by the death of Christ, His only begotten Son. Yes, "God so loved."

An Exercised Soul

The men of this world can only take cognizance of that which lies on the surface. The outward show, the pomp and glare, the assumption of strength and greatness in the flesh, are well understood by the world; but they know nothing of the reality of a soul exercised before God. And yet this latter is what the Christian should most earnestly seek after. An exercised soul is most precious in the sight of God; He can dwell with such at all times. Let us not assume to be anything, but simply take our proper place in the sight of God, and He will surely be our spring of power and energy, according to the measure of our need.

Extract

There is nothing that gives the soul such marvelous power over enemies, as an obedient, holy walk. Every step we take in obedience to Christ is so far a victory gained over the flesh and the devil; and every fresh victory ministers fresh power for the conflict which follows - thus we grow.

Faith and Its Object: Lines Written to an Anxious Soul

What determines faith to be true or false is not anything in the faith itself. If your faith rests on a true object, it is true faith; if it rests on a delusive object, it is delusive faith; but in either case the faith is the same - the difference lies in its object. One man believes in the stability of a certain bank, and invests his money there; the bank fails, and his money is lost. Another with equal certainty places his elsewhere, and receives it again with interest. The confidence in both instances was identical, but how vastly different the result!

The individual who believes the gospel believes God, for the gospel is "the gospel of God,... concerning His Son Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:1-3). Now "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" Numb. 23:19. And again, "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Heb. 6:17, 18. The man therefore who believes God may justly have the firmest assurance, seeing that with Him there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.

But it is evident that before a soul can believe the gospel he must know what that gospel is, for "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard" (Rom. 10:14)? Many think they know it, but a few moments' conversation with them reveals the appalling fact that they are entirely in the dark as to the gospel of God. In the sacred Scriptures this gospel is set forth in words which the Holy Spirit has chosen, and by the mouth of His messenger; be it from the pulpit, the public platform, or the printed page, God proclaims His good news to all. What is it? Listen! "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10:9. Pause, dear friend, and go over that verse again; read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. What news it contains! What a joyous proclamation! What a blessed report! How suited to your actual need! And this report reaches you sealed with the seal of the true and living God whose Word shall abide though heaven and earth shall pass away.

But what is to be believed? This: that God has raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead. Mark, that GOD has done it. Not simply that Christ is risen, but that GOD has raised Him from the dead. What a testimony on God's part to the perfection and all-sufficiency of the work of atonement wrought out in suffering and death upon the cross! For it was there that Jesus was forsaken of God, there God hid His face from Him, and there He was left alone to bear the full weight of divine and holy wrath against sin. And now that solemn work is ended, and in raising up the Lord Jesus from the dead God bears witness that what divine Justice required, Justice has received. But what has become of the sins the Savior bore? They are gone even as a debt is gone when full payment has been made. To believe this, to believe it with the heart, is to be saved.

Faith is the eye of the soul; without it the precious things of God's Word cannot be seen in their truth and beauty. But who thinks of his eyes? You may not have thought of yours since you began

to read this paper, yet without them all would be dark. Do not then be occupied with your faith, and puzzling your poor weary brain as to whether you believe aright. After all is said that can be said about it, faith is not your savior, though no one is saved apart from faith. Christ is your Savior.

To be always peering into one's own heart to ascertain whether ours is true believing, i' like a person constantly examining his eyes before a mirror to find out whether his sight is good. Had you the most convincing proof of the soundness of your faith, and rejoiced on that account, your joy would proceed from what you found your faith to be, and not from what Christ is. Thus self and not Christ would be the spring of it.

Fix your thoughts on an object outside yourself, and forget your faith in thinking of that which the soul should believingly receive and rest upon, even the sure Word of the Lord. Think of Him whose love has been shown in the gift of His only begotten Son (John 3:16), and who commendeth His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Think of Him who came into the world to save sinners, even to save the chief of them (1 Tim. 1:15), and who once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God (1 Pet. 3:18). Think of Him who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification (Rom. 4:25). Behold Him now in heaven without our sins. See in the very fact of His being there the great proof which God sets before our eyes that our sins have been put away according to the requirements of the eternal throne. Search into these things, and blessing after blessing shall flow into your soul. Self will be displaced by Christ, and your faith will be forgotten in the joy and peace which you will have in being engaged with the true Object of faith, even God, and the precious revelations of His Word concerning Christ and His work.

Finally, dear friend, if you believe Jesus to be the Son of God, and put your whole trust in Him and in His precious blood, YOU ARE SAVED. The knowledge of a present salvation is a different thing from a hope of being saved one day, however sure that hope may be. That blessed knowledge His blessed Word imparts. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." John 6:47. Receive this short and simple verse as spoken for you by the Lord Himself. Believe it because He says it. He that believeth on Me hath, hath, HATH everlasting life.

A Faithful Promise

The Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

Deut. 31:8.

He was better to me than all my hopes;

He was better than all my fears;

He made a bridge of my broken works,

And a rainbow of my tears.

The billows that guarded my sea-girt path

But carried my Lord on their crest;

When I dwell on the days of my wilderness march

I can lean on His love for the rest.

Never a watch on the dreariest halt

But some promise of love endears;

I read from the past that my future shall be

Far better than all my fears.

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness." Deut. 8:2

"Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you."

Josh. 23:14

The Father's House

John 14

The Lord is leading His disciples away from earth to associate their minds with Himself up in heaven; all that He was is borne witness to, in spite of His rejection as Son of God, Son of David, Son of man. The Greeks come up to worship Him; then He states, If I am to take this place, I must die. He takes the ground of having given up having to say to His disciples as on earth; and He tells them, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." His having part with men, as men on earth, is all over; all have turned against and rejected Him. He is doing entirely another thing; instead of bringing blessing down to them, He is taking them up there. The key to it all is, "part with Me." He gives us our portion on the ground that He is thus going away. "Let not your heart be troubled." How were they to get the comfort of God? Not now by seeing Christ in bodily shape, but by believing in Him for what He is. Therefore, He says, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." You must believe in Me. I am going to prepare a place for you; I have brought you by redemption into the same place as I am Myself. He is your God as He is Mine - your Father as He is Mine. I am not going to be alone in the Father's house.

He had not deceived them; He knew where He was taking them - that place above where He would prepare an abode for them. And what He is putting before their hearts had this specific character, that it was where the children were at home. He had brought them into the place of children, and when the time came He would take them to their Father's house. It is the thing He sets before us in a distinct and definite way - what God was about, namely, to have us like Christ and with Christ in the Father's house. That, He says, is where I am - where I, as Son, find My joy, rest, blessedness, and glory - and that is where you shall find it too. Your portion is with Myself in My Father's house. First we get what His purpose is, and our relationship with Him and with the Father. This is full of richest blessing to us. Whatever blessedness He has gone to, He will in deepest personal interest come to fetch us there. After His Father, His redeemed ones are everything to Him. He will come and meet them and bring them up to Himself in His Father's house. This is the basis of all His teaching here. He tells us all we have, and we are to be realizing this while He is away. How far do we really know it as a definite object before our souls? Are we living in these things now before we are really there?

With the world, as it is, He has made a total breach. He is going to the Father's house, and that is in direct opposition to the world. When the world entirely rejected Him, He went up to sit at God's right hand. The Accepted of the Father is the Rejected of the world; the world sees Him no more; it is all over with the world. We get this blessed, obedient One, one with the Father always, but upon the accomplished work accepted of the Father, taking His redeemed ones up with Him. We are to be in the glory, conformed to the image of the Son, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren.

Then we see how we are to realize this now. First, it is the object before us; second, what I know of the place, and how I know the place. The Father is there; that is the thing that makes it valuable

to the child, if he has the affection of a child. If I have found the Father in Christ, I feel the blessedness of being with the Father and the Son. In Christ we get the revelation of the Father, and what brings us to the Father - "I am the way." If I know the Father, I know where Christ has gone, and that is where I am going. If, in coming to Him, I have found the way to the Father, I have found the way as well as the place, and know the blessedness of the Father's house, because I know that is the center of it all. I am in the consciousness of the love and divine favor that put me in this place, and I am able to cry, "Abba, Father." How can I see this - know it? In Christ. When the heart gets hold of this, it has the spring of all the blessedness which we shall have when Christ comes to take us up there; and the spirit enjoys it now because it is all for us as a present thing. We shall not get a thing there that is not revealed to us now as our portion while we are on earth. We have not seen the glory yet. We get the work of Christ as our title, and the Father's love to enjoy. We do not apprehend it all, but it is a blessed thing to be able to say, I have got Christ's own thought of the blessedness of heaven, what His joy was in thinking of the Father's house. We have got that now. He says, There is the One that My delight is in; there is the One that I have walked with while on earth - the One I can say that I am one with, the One I have brought you to be with now. Thus I know what I am to get in the Father's house; I know where I am going; and I know the way. What a settled quietness of spirit it gives! "In Me ye might have peace." What confidingness of heart in Him! I have got into that place by what I have seen in Christ. He is the way; I have been that way; it has brought me to the Father; I have found the Father in Christ.

Now when He has set an object before our hearts, He insists upon the second part, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter." He had to go away to prepare the place, and to return for us; but He desires for us that we should have the power and the truth of a present Holy Spirit as that by which we apprehend these things. "Ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." The Holy Spirit is only known by being in us. Christ ought to have been known by all; He came out as the blessed manifestation of God in love. The world was called upon to see this blessed testimony of what God was in love in the Father sending the Son. He was there to be received, but of the Holy Ghost the Lord says, "It [the world] seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." The world ought to see the fruits of the Spirit in works and power, but there was no personal manifestation when the Holy Spirit came, no object of faith. Christ came visibly, God manifest in flesh, but the Holy Spirit is known only where He dwells. The Lord says He will abide with you, He will not go away like Me. He will be in you and not leave you comfortless. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." "Rooted and grounded in love." The Holy Spirit brings in that sense Christ into our hearts. You shall not be comfortless, you shall see Me. He will make you conscious that you live by Me. The power of divine life which triumphed over death. When a person believes in Christ, Christ is brought into that man's heart, much more really than if Christ were on earth. So that He might not leave us comfortless, He says, I am going to be in you in a far better way. The Holy Ghost brings Christ down to our hearts, and there He dwells. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" I am brought into immediate intercourse with Christ, the One who is everything to me. "Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." I have got everything that is in heaven; I, a poor vessel, cleansed by blood, and inasmuch cleansed, fit for God. God comes down and dwells in the vessel. I have got Christ back, not palpably now, but I know that I am not left comfortless; I know it is to hear His voice, to hear the testimony of the Spirit who is present with me. I have rest in Him - His peace.

And mark what flows from this presence of the Comforter. "But ye see Me," and, "Because I live, ye shall live also." It is the life that has overcome death; He has been down under death for us, and if He lives as triumphant over all, I live too. Blessed to have it from, with, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. How anxious He is to make us happy! Do you know how to walk in it, to live in it? It is not by the sight of the eyes, but what is unseen and eternal, in the knowledge of the Father and the Son. The consciousness of belonging to these things makes us heavenly in walk and ways. We have the consciousness of being a present object with the Father and the Son. In verse 21 He takes up the practical present reality of it. If you love Me, the way to show it is by keeping My commandments, not by regretting Me when I am gone; he that loveth Me is the one that has My commandments and keepeth them. And here we get the positive manifestation of Himself to us in the path of obedience. Obedience is what characterizes you. You keep His commandments when you know them. When I get this close relationship with the Father and the Son, the proof of being in them is to act according to them.

Can a child be in the house and not know his father's wishes? If he can, he must be a very inattentive child. If you are living in the relationship of a child, you must be in the power of what the Father likes. You could not be otherwise. The soul must be attentive to Christ's wishes. Christ said, "He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned." If we were walking like Christ, with our ear opened as attentive children, we should understand what His wishes are; we should learn then and answer to them. He delights to make us know His will. Here it is not that sovereign grace and love which gave His Son for me when I was a sinner, but it is the Father dealing with the children according to the children's walk. It is the manifestation of Christ's life and ways; it is all very feeble in us, but the Lord's heart is always true, if our hearts are not; the attentive child listens for His commandments, and seeks them, wants His will, wants it because he loves it. If we love the Lord Jesus Christ, we should want only that, no matter what the rest is; if I can only please Him, I live in the present enjoyment of Christ, because my heart is abiding with Him. What an anticipation of heaven it is - walking with the Father and the Son! And they come and make their abode with us. The Lord seeks to strengthen and encourage us in the path of obedience; and until the time comes for us to abide with Him, He will come and abide with us, if we keep in it; and what He gives us here is His peace, while putting us in His own place in that uninterrupted intercourse with His Father.

The Lord give His people thorough self-judgment in the thorough consciousness of what we are, as set aside before God in the cross, and the consciousness of the place God has set us in Christ. May we walk in peace and confidence of heart as His children, and in the quiet lowliness which Christ did in passing through the world.

Five Words of Exhortation

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind."

This is a beautiful word for the Christian pilgrim. Diligence, devotedness, and unworldliness are all implied in the girded loin. The loose flowing robes of the East would obstruct a man in labor, impede him in walking, and certainly contract injury or defilement over rough or dirty ground. Hence the necessity for a girdle, essential to secure the robe when any great work was in hand or an arduous journey taken, and more especially when the path was rugged, thorny, or defiling. How fitting then in its moral application is the exhortation to use the girdle which, be it said, is ever in Scripture expressed as righteousness, faithfulness, or truth. How could we allow our robes to flow in such a scene as this, wet, as we may say, with the blood of Christ crying from the ground? O for girded loins! Is it not a time for diligence, seeing that on the one hand the fields are white unto harvest, and on the other the sheep have but little pasture? Is it not a time for devotedness when "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's"? and Paul's doctrine and manner of life are equally an offense? Is it not a time for unworldliness when more and more palpably the world exerts its every effort to be happy without Christ, so that what is not unmitigated evil is religious worldliness, worldly religiousness, or Christless Christianity?

"Be sober," or self-restrained.

What a truly needed word is this! How many there are who know deliverance from their sins, and deliverance from this scene, but who know not practical deliverance from dominant self. Self allowance is closely akin to self-assertion. On the other hand, self-judgment is the parent and the power of self-restraint. Every germ of self-allowing or self-asserting is in principle disloyalty to Christ. The true heart loves to confess there is no word more true and few more comforting than this, that we are not our own, but bought with a price.

3) "Hope to the end."

Hope on, perfectly or steadfastly. Diligence and sobriety are here followed with confidence. Hope unto the end signifies fully, perfectly, the full assurance of hope (Heb. 6:11) - hope which makes not ashamed. Be it remarked that the New Testament sense of hope is never uncertainty, but immature or deferred certainty. Confidence, therefore characterizes it as much as expectation, and thus, instead of being in doubt and uncertainty, in quietness and in confidence is our strength. The world has its hopes, but they are so steeped in uncertainty that the word hope has become almost synonymous with doubt; whereas, the believer is so confident as to that which constitutes his hope that he can say, "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Rom. 8:25. "The grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" we surely see not. With patience then we wait for it, because our hope is steadfast and blessed. He will surely come; He will not tarry; and oh, what tides of blessing will His presence usher in! "The grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

"He who, with hands uplifted,

Went from this earth below,
Shall come again all gifted, -
His blessing to bestow."

"As obedient children."

The fourth thing is obedience - "as obedient children." Not the obedience of a servant or a slave, but the obedience of a child; or, to put it more forcibly and more accurately, "as children of obedience," the opposite of "children [or sons] of disobedience," which we were in our sins. (See Eph. 2:2 and 5:6.) Such obedience is never irksome when the heart is right with God and the will broken before Him. Could we conceive the will of the Father to have been ever irksome to Christ? Did He chafe under it? "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." If then we ever find His will irksome, let us get into His presence in confession, being convinced that there is something radically wrong which only self-judgment can correct. "Children of obedience" is a lovely term for God's saints, implying as it does that that which is characteristic of us, and which we should sedulously cultivate, is spontaneous filial obedience. Who among us has not viewed with admiration the obedience of a loving and devoted child, unhesitating, unquestioning, uncalculating, and with the ready grace that stamps it as a service of love? "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3.

"Be ye holy in all manner of conversation."

Finally we have holiness. That which marked us in our unconverted state was lusts and ignorance; and that which is to mark us now is divine holiness. "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." 1 Thess. 4:7. And He who has called us, being Himself holy, says, "So be ye holy in all manner of conversation," or in every bit of your deportment; for if it savor of any contravention of holiness, this is a libel upon our calling, and upon Him who has called us. That which should characterize us as saints is, on the contrary, that having got manumitted from sin and become bondsmen unto God, we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

The Lord grant us to have girded loins in this day of general indifference and worldliness, and give us sobriety in place of laxity, confidence instead of the doubtful mind, obedience in place of self-will, and the scrupulous observance as saints of that holiness which becomes Himself and His house forever.

The Friendship of the Word

"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 his 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 none the less 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 the 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 from the enjoyment of the pleasures of the world, or 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.

The Fullness of the Divine Word

The purport of this paper is not to dwell at length on the general teaching of Psalm 110, but simply to call attention to the fullness there is in the opening verse of it, as taught us by the Lord Jesus, the subject of it, and by the Holy Spirit who indited it. We tread therefore on sure ground, for we deal not with conclusions or surmises of men, which may or may not be correct, but have before us divine teaching as to that which the words were intended to contain and to convey.

The first, as far as we know, who drew attention to this portion of the Word was the Lord Jesus Himself when in the temple at Jerusalem shortly before His crucifixion. Having been questioned as the teacher successively by the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees, and having given them each an answer, which silenced these different classes of questioners, He whom they professed to regard as a teacher, in His turn interrogates the Pharisees: "What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He?" To this they returned a ready response, "The Son of David." Again the Lord interrogated them: "How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?" (Matt. 22:42-45.) This question none could answer. Had they known the solution of that which seemed like a riddle, truth as to the Person of the Lord would have been understood, and statements which they characterized as blasphemous, would have been made clear to subject hearts. To us who have the advantage of fuller divine teaching, the answer is simple enough. Yet, although the Pharisees were in ignorance about His Person, the Lord by His reference to this Psalm made it clear to all, to them if they would receive it, as well as to us, that David, when he penned it, was really writing of the Christ.

The general subject of the Psalm having thus been stated, further teaching about it was postponed till its partial fulfillment could be asserted. The opportunity for this was not far distant. A few weeks later, Peter on the day of Pentecost called the attention of his numerous listeners to its statements, and pressed upon them its legitimate teaching. The Lord's ascension to heaven had in part fulfilled it. For of whom did David write? Not of himself, said Peter, for his sepulcher was with them to that day. David therefore had not risen, but Christ had; and, further, He had ascended to heaven, in proof of which He had shed forth that which they saw and heard. A bodily ascension then David sang of, not a spiritual one; an ascension in person with a human body, not one in spirit, was what the Holy Spirit by David here taught. David's sepulcher, still tenanted by its occupant, proved that David had not ascended into heaven; and the language of the verse proved that the king was not writing of himself. But He of whom the words spoke - Christ - had ascended; and on the authority of this Psalm, which spoke of Him, Peter announced that God had made him Lord and Christ. The Master had declared David thus wrote of the Christ. The Spirit by Peter calls attention to His being made Lord, a title of dignity, but not an assertion of divinity.

Yet He was, He is, God; and this same verse is quoted in support of the teaching of His divinity.

His Lordship as owned by God is clear; His divinity as declared by God is equally indisputable. "But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies

Thy footstool?" Heb. 1:13. Here it is the Apostle Paul who takes up the Psalm, and draws attention to the place now occupied by the Lord Jesus as demonstrative of the truth of His Person. For while Psalm 102, quoted in that same chapter of the Hebrews, takes us back to the past, and Psalm 45 carries us on in thought to the future, the quotation from our Psalm tells us of the present, thus together forming a threefold witness to His divinity. Peter then in the Acts notices the title bestowed on the man Jesus, Paul in the Hebrews reminds his readers of the place He now occupies. His ascension to heaven, and the dignity conferred on Him, were Peter's theme, so he quotes the whole verse. His divinity was the subject of Paul's teaching, so he brings forward only the latter part of it.

But we have not exhausted the teaching of these few inspired words. For the Apostle Paul refers to them three times, once more in this same epistle, and again when writing to the Corinthians.

Where the Lord is, is a testimony to His divinity; for who could sit there but one who is God? It is a Man who sits there, it is true; for before He sat down on high, He had drunk of the brook by the way; but Jehovah alone could be by the side of Jehovah in heaven. Not only, however, are we reminded of His present place, but His attitude also we learn is instructive. He sits as High Priest for a continuance (Heb. 10:12; Gr.), whereas the priests on earth were standing daily. These latter stood, because their work was really never done; each day, each week, each month, each year, called for renewed service at the altar. He sits, because His sacrificial work is ended. To the divinity of His Person we see this Psalm bears witness, since it reveals to us where He is now; to the perfectness of His work, as never to be resumed, it also calls attention, since it expressly tells us of His attitude on high. He sits, the token that His work is done. Where He sits, throws light on His Person, and by consequence on the value of His atoning work. That He sits for a continuance, speaks volumes as regards the completeness of it. But more. He sits in expectation. But of what? To minister again, as it were, at the altar? To offer Himself afresh? No, that has been done once for all. He awaits now only God's recognition of the service He rendered to Him, by putting all His enemies under His feet. Do we rest then on our estimate of the work of Christ? No, it is Christ's estimate of it in which we are invited to share - God's estimate of it too, as witnessed by the expectation of Christ, and attested to by the Spirit's presence on earth, and by His teaching through the Word.

But further, our Psalm speaks of His enemies. "Thine enemies." God will treat them as His own enemies surely, but they are written of as the enemies of Christ. Who then are these? What will be classed in this category, when God puts Christ's enemies under His feet? When too will that be effected? On these points the Psalm, which is silent, receives elucidation from the New Testament; and this serves to remind us that there is at times more in the Old Testament scripture than what at first sight appears, needing, however, the teaching of the Holy Spirit to disclose it. In this instance, it is 1 Cor. 15:25, 26 which declares it. "For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Here by the omission of the pronoun, the thought of the Psalm is expanded to its full dimensions, and the duration of time during which that clause of its first verse will be in process of fulfillment is revealed to us. "Thine enemies" wrote David; "all enemies" wrote Paul. Nothing which can be classed as an enemy of God or His people will be exempted; but, till death itself shall be destroyed, of which Rev. 20:14 gives the account, the full mind of the Spirit, who revealed the truth by David, and commented on it by Paul, will not have been carried out.

How full then is this word! Of the Christ and Lord, David wrote, of His divinity he taught, and by the Spirit's reference to the words he penned, a light is cast both on the finished character of Christ's work, and on the enemies which are to be put under His feet. With all this in so few words, we may well remember the importance of not merely skimming the surface of the Bible, but of digging, as it were, more into its depths, as far as the Holy Spirit gives us light on its pages, its clauses, and its words.

Gilgal: Part 1

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Rom. 15:4. These few words furnish a title, distinct and unquestionable, for the Christian to range through the wide and magnificent field of Old Testament Scripture, and gather therein instruction and comfort, according to the measure of his capacity and the character or depth of his spiritual need. It is in the strength of these words that we invite the reader to accompany us back to the opening of the book of Joshua, that we may together contemplate the striking and instructive scenes presented there, and seek to gather up some of the precious "learning" there unfolded. We shall learn some fine lessons on the banks of the Jordan, and find the air of Gilgal most healthful and bracing for the spiritual constitution.

"And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; and they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore." Josh. 3:1-4.

There are three deeply important points in Israel's history which the reader would do well to ponder. There is, first, the blood-stained lintel in the land of Egypt; second, the Red Sea; third, the river Jordan.

Now in each of these we have a type of the death of Christ in some one or other of its grand aspects; for, as we know, that precious death has many and various aspects, and nothing can be more profitable for the Christian, and nothing, surely, ought to be more attractive, than the study of the profound mystery of the death of Christ. There are depths and heights in that mystery which eternity alone will unfold; and it should be our delight now, under the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, through the perfect light of Holy Scripture, to search into these things for the strength, comfort, and refreshment of the inward man.

Looking then at the death of Christ as typified by the blood of the paschal lamb, we see in it that which screens us from the judgment of God. "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." (Exod. 12)

Now we need hardly say it is of the deepest moment for the exercised, consciously guilty soul to know that God has provided a shelter from wrath and judgment to come. No right-minded person would think for a moment of undervaluing this aspect of the death of Christ. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Israel's safety rested upon God's estimate of the blood. He does not say,

When you see the blood. The Judge saw the blood, knew its value, and passed over the house. Israel was screened by the blood of the lamb - by God's estimate of that blood, not by their own. Precious fact!

How prone we are to be occupied with our thoughts about the blood of Christ, instead of with God's thoughts! We feel we do not value that precious blood as we ought - who ever did or ever could? and then we begin to question if we are safe, seeing we so sadly fail in our estimate of Christ's work and in our love to His Person.

We are saved by grace - free, sovereign, divine, and eternal grace - not by our sense of grace. We are sheltered by the blood, not by our estimate of the blood. Jehovah did not say on that awful night, When you see the blood and estimate it as you ought, I will pass over you. Nothing of the kind. This is not the way of our God. He wanted to shelter His people, and to let them know that they were sheltered - perfectly, because divinely sheltered - and therefore He places the matter wholly upon a divine basis; He takes it entirely out of their hands by assuring them that their safety rested simply and entirely upon the blood, and upon His estimate thereof. He gives them to understand that they had nothing whatever to do with providing the shelter. It was His to provide. It was theirs to enjoy.

Thus it stood between Jehovah and His Israel in that memorable night; and thus it stands between Him and the soul that simply trusts in Jesus now. We are not saved by our love, or our estimate, or our anything. We are saved by the blood behind which faith has fled for refuge, and by God's estimate of it, which faith apprehends. And just as Israel within that blood-stained lintel screened from judgment - safe from the sword of the destroyer - could feed upon the roasted lamb, so may the believer, perfectly sheltered from the wrath to come - sweetly secure from all danger, screened from judgment - feed upon Christ in all the preciousness of what He is.

We are specially anxious that the reader should weigh the point on which we have been dwelling, if he be one who has not yet found peace, even as to the question of safety from judgment to come, which, as we shall see, is but a part, though an ineffably precious part, of what the death of Christ has procured for us.

We have very little idea indeed of how much of the leaven of self-righteousness cleaves to us, even after our conversion, and how immensely it interferes with our peace, our enjoyment of grace, and our consequent progress in the divine life. It may be we fancy we have done with self-righteousness when we have given up all thought of being saved by our works; but alas, it is not so, for the evil takes new forms; and of all these, none is more subtle than the feeling that we do not value the blood as we ought, and the doubting our safety on that ground. All this is the fruit of self-righteousness. We have not done with self. True, we are not, it may be, making a savior of our doings, but we are of our feelings. We are seeking, unknown to ourselves perhaps, to find some sort of title in our love to God or our appreciation of Christ.

Now all this must be given up. We must rest simply on the blood of Christ, and upon God's testimony to that blood. He sees the blood. He values it as it deserves. He is satisfied. This ought to satisfy us. He did not say to Israel, When I see how you behave yourselves; when I see the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, the girded loins, the shod feet, I will pass over you.

No doubt all these things had their proper place; but that proper place was not as the ground of safety, but as the secret of communion. They were called to behave themselves, called to keep the feast; but it was as being, not in order to be, a sheltered people. This made all the difference. It was because they were divinely screened from judgment that they could keep the feast. They had the authority of the word of God to assure them that there was no judgment for them; and if they believed that word, they could celebrate the feast in peace and safety. "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the first born should touch them." Heb. 11:28.

Here lies the deep and precious secret of the whole matter. It was by faith he kept the passover. God had said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you," and He could not deny Himself. It would have been a denial of His very nature and character, and an ignoring of His own blessed remedy, had a single hair of an Israelite's head been touched on that deeply solemn night. It was not, we repeat, in any wise a question of Israel's state or Israel's deservings. It was simply and entirely a question of the value of the blood in God's sight, and of the truth and authority of His own word.

What stability is here! - what peace and rest! What a solid ground of confidence! The blood of Christ! The Word of God! True, divinely true - let it never be forgotten or lost sight of - it is only by the grace of the Holy Spirit that the Word of God can be received, or the blood of Christ relied upon. Still, it is the Word of God and the blood of Christ, and nothing else, which give peace to the heart as regards all question of coming judgment. There can be no judgment for the believer. And why? Because the blood is on the mercy seat as the perfect proof that judgment has been already executed.

"He bore on the tree the sentence for me,

And now both the Surety and sinner are free."

Yet, all praise to His name, thus it stands as to every soul that simply takes God at His word and rests in the precious blood of Christ. It is as impossible that such a one can come into judgment, as that Christ Himself can. All who are sheltered by the blood are as safe as the Word of God is sure - as safe as Christ Himself. It seems perfectly wonderful for any poor sinful mortal to be able to pen such words; but the blessed fact is, it is either this or nothing. If there is any question as to the believer's safety, then the blood of Christ is not on the mercy seat, or it is of no account in the judgment of God. If it be a question of the believer's state, of his worthiness, of his feelings, of his experience, of his walk, of his love, of his devotedness, of his appreciation of Christ, then would there be no force, no value, no truth in that glorious sentence, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you"; for in that case the form of speech should be entirely changed, and a dark and chilling shade be cast over its heavenly luster. It should then be, "When I see the blood, and -."

But no, beloved, anxious reader, it is not and it never can be thus. Nothing must ever be added - not the weight of a feather - to that precious blood which has perfectly satisfied God as a judge, and which perfectly shelters every soul that has fled for safety behind it. If the righteous Judge has declared Himself satisfied, surely the guilty culprit may well be satisfied also. God is satisfied with the blood of Jesus; and when the soul is satisfied likewise, all is settled, and there is peace as regards the question of judgment. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in

Christ Jesus." How can there be, seeing He has borne the judgment in their stead? No doubt the believer's exemption from judgment is to make God a liar, and to make the blood of Christ of none effect.

The reader will note that thus far we have been occupied only with the question of deliverance from judgment - a most weighty question surely. But, as we shall see in the course of this series of papers, there is far more secured for us by the death of Christ than freedom from judgment and wrath, blessed as that is. That peerless sacrifice does a great deal more for us than keep God out as a judge.

But for the present we pause, and shall close this paper with a solemn and earnest question to the reader: Are you sheltered by the blood of Jesus? Do not rest, beloved, until you can answer with a clear and unhesitating "Yes." Remember, you are either sheltered by the blood, or exposed to the horrors of eternal judgment.

Gilgal: Part 2

In our last chapter we had before us Israel under the shelter of the blood. What human language could suitably unfold the deep blessedness of being screened from the judgment of God by the blood of the lamb - of being within that hallowed circle where wrath and judgment can never come?

But blessed as this is, there is much more than this. There is far more comprehended in the salvation of God than deliverance from judgment and wrath. We may have the fullest assurance that our sins are forgiven, that God will never enter into judgment with us on account of our sins, and yet be very far indeed from the enjoyment of the true Christian position. We may be filled with all manner of fears about ourselves - fears occasioned by the consciousness of indwelling sin, the power of Satan, the influence of the world. All these things may crop up before us with the gravest apprehensions.

Thus, for example, when we turn to Exodus 14, we find Israel in the deepest distress, and almost overwhelmed with fear. It would seem as if they had for the moment lost sight of the fact that they had been under the cover of the blood. Let us look at the passage.

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honored upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so.

And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have left Israel go from serving us?" - mark these words - "And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with a high hand. But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, besides Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD."

Now we may feel disposed to ask, Are these the people whom we have seen so recently feeding in perfect safety under the cover of the blood? The very same. Whence then these fears, this intense alarm, this agonizing cry? Did they really think that Jehovah was going to judge and destroy them after all? Not exactly. Of what then were they afraid? Of perishing in the wilderness after all. "And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of

Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee, in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness."

All this was most gloomy and depressing. Their poor hearts seem to fluctuate between "graves in Egypt" and death in the wilderness. There is no sense of deliverance, no adequate knowledge either of God's purposes or of God's salvation. All seems utter darkness, almost bordering on hopeless despair. They are thoroughly hemmed in and "shut up." They seem in a worse plight than ever. They heartily wish themselves back again amidst the brick kilns and stubble fields of Egypt. Desert sands on either side of them; the sea in front; Pharaoh and all his terrific hosts behind!

The case seemed perfectly hopeless; and hopeless it was so far as they were concerned. They were utterly powerless, and they were being made, to realize it; and this is a very painful process to go through, but very wholesome and valuable, yes, most necessary for all. We must all in one way or another learn the force, meaning, and depth of that phrase, "without strength." It is exactly in proportion as we find out what it is to be without strength, that we are prepared to appreciate God's "due time."

But, we may here inquire, Is there anything in the history of God's people now answering to Israel's experience at the Red Sea? Doubtless there is, for we are told that the things which happened to Israel are our examples, or types. And most surely the scene at the Red Sea is full of instruction for us. How often do we find the children of God plunged in the very depths of distress and darkness as to their state and prospects! It is not that they question the love of God, or the efficacy of the blood of Jesus, nor yet that God will reckon their sins to them, or enter into judgment with them. But still they have no sense of full deliverance. They do not see the application of the death of Christ to their evil nature. They do not realize the glorious truth that by that death they are completely delivered from this present evil world, from the dominion of sin, and from the power of Satan. They see that the blood of Jesus screens them from the judgment of God, but they do not see that they are "dead to sin"; that their "old man is crucified with Christ"; that not only have their sins been put upon Christ at the cross, but they themselves, as sinful children of Adam, have been by the act of God identified with Christ in His death; that God pronounces them dead and risen with Christ. (See Col. 3:1-4; Rom. 6.) But if this precious truth is not apprehended by faith, there is no bright, happy, emancipating sense of full and everlasting salvation. They are, to speak according to our type, at Egypt's side of the Red Sea, and in danger of falling into the hands of the prince of this world. They do not see "all their enemies dead on the seashore." They cannot sing the song of redemption. No one can sing it until he stands by faith on the wilderness side of the Red Sea, or, in other words, until he sees his complete deliverance from sin, the world, and Satan - the great foes of every child of God.

Thus, in contemplating the facts of Israel's history as recorded in the first fifteen chapters of Exodus, we observe that they did not raise a single note of praise until they had passed through the Red Sea. We hear the cry of sore distress under the cruel lash of Pharaoh's taskmasters, and amid the grievous toil of Egypt's brick kilns. And we hear the cry of terror when they stood "between Migdol and the sea." All this we hear, but not one note of praise, not a single accent of triumph until the waters of the Red Sea rolled between them and the land of bondage and of

death, and they saw all the power of the enemy broken and gone. "Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and His servant Moses. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel."

Now what is the simple application of all this to us as Christians? What grand lesson are we to learn from the scenes on the shores of the Red Sea? In a word, of what is the Red Sea a type? And what is the difference between the bloodstained lintel and the divided sea?

The Red Sea is the type of the death of Christ in its application to all our spiritual enemies - sin, the world, and Satan. By the death of Christ the believer is completely and forever delivered from the power of sin. He is, alas! conscious of the presence of sin, but its power is gone. He has died to sin in the death of Christ, and what power has sin over a dead man? It is the privilege of the Christian to reckon himself as much delivered from the dominion of sin as a man lying dead on the floor. What power has sin over such a one? None whatever. No more has it over the Christian. Sin dwells in the believer, and it will do so to the end of the chapter; but its rule is gone. Christ has wrested the scepter from the grasp of our old master, and shivered it to atoms. It is not merely that His blood has purged our sins, but His death has broken the power of sin for the believer.

It is one thing to know that our sins are forgiven, and another thing altogether to know that "the body of sin is destroyed" - its rule ended - its dominion gone. Many will tell you that they do not question the forgiveness of past sins, but they do not know what to say as to indwelling sin. They fear lest, after all, that may come against them and bring them into judgment. Such persons are, to use the figure, "between Migdol and the Red Sea." They have not learned the doctrine of Romans 6. They have not as yet, in their spiritual intelligence and apprehension, reached the resurrection side of the Red Sea. They do not know what it is to be dead to sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

How do I know this? Is it because I feel it? Certainly not. How could I feel it? How could I realize it? How could I ever have the self-consciousness of it while in the body? Impossible. But God tells me I have died in the death of Christ. I believe it. I do not reason about it. I do not stagger at it because I cannot find any evidence of its truth in myself. I take God at His word. I reckon myself to be what He tells me I am. I do not endeavor to struggle and strive and work myself into a sinless state which is impossible. Neither do I imagine myself to be in it, which were a deceit and a delusion; but by a simple, childlike faith I take the blessed ground which faith assigns me, in association with a dead Christ. I look at Christ there, and see in Him, according to God's Word, the true expression of where I am, in the divine Presence. I do not reason from myself upward, but I reason from God downward. This makes all the difference. It is just the difference between unbelief and faith - between law and grace - between human religion and divine Christianity. If I reason from self, how can I have any right thought of what is in the heart of God? - all my conclusions must be utterly false. But if, on the other hand, I listen to God and believe His Word, my conclusions are divinely sound. Abraham did not look at himself and the improbability, even the impossibility of having a son in his old age, but he believed God and gave glory to Him. And it was counted to him for righteousness.

Furthermore, it is a grand and essential point for the soul to apprehend that Christ is the only definition of the believer's place before God. This gives immense power, liberty, and blessing. "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). This is something perfectly wonderful! Let us ponder it. Let us think of a poor, wretched, guilty slave of sin, a bond-slave of Satan, a votary of the world, exposed to an eternal hell - such a one taken up by sovereign grace, delivered completely from the grasp of Satan, the dominion of sin, the power of this present evil world, pardoned, washed, justified, brought nigh to God, accepted in Christ, and perfectly and forever identified with Him, so that the Holy Spirit can say, as Christ is, so is he in this world!

All this seems too good to be true; and, most assuredly, it is too good for us to get; but, blessed be the God of all grace, and blessed be the Christ of God! it is not too good for Him to give. God gives like Himself. He will be God, in spite of our unworthiness and Satan's opposition. He will act in a way worthy of Himself, and worthy of the Son of His love. Were it a question of our deservings, we could only think of the deepest and darkest pit of hell. But seeing it is a question of what is worthy of God to give, and that He gives according to His estimate of the worthiness of Christ, then, verily, we can think of the very highest place in heaven. The glory of God and the worthiness of His Son are involved in His dealings with us; and hence everything that could possibly stand in the way of our eternal blessedness has been disposed of in such a manner as to secure the divine glory, and furnish a triumphant answer to every plea of the enemy. Is it a question of trespass? He has forgiven us all trespasses. Is it a question of sin? He has condemned sin at the cross, and thus put it away. Is it a question of guilt? It is canceled by the blood of the cross. Is it a question of death? He has taken away its sting, and actually made it part of our property. Is it a question of Satan? He has destroyed him by annulling all his power. Is it a question of the world? He has delivered us from it and snapped every link which connected us with it.

Oh, that the blessed Spirit may open the eyes of God's people, and give them to see their proper place, their full and eternal deliverance in association with Christ who died for them, and in whom they have died, and thus passed out of the power of all their enemies!

Gilgal: Part 3

Having glanced at two of the leading points in our subject, namely, Israel freed from guilt under the shelter of the blood, and Israel freed from all their enemies in the passage of the Red Sea, we have now to contemplate for a few moments Israel crossing the Jordan and celebrating the paschal feast at Gilgal, in which they represent the risen position of Christians now.

The Christian is one who is not only sheltered from judgment by the blood of the Lamb, not only delivered from the power of all his enemies by the death of Christ, but is also associated with Him where He now is, at the right hand of God; he is, with Christ, passed out of death, in resurrection, and is blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. He is thus a heavenly man and as such is called to walk in this world in all the varied relationships and responsibilities in which the good hand of God has placed him. He is not a monk or an ascetic or a man living in the clouds, fit neither for earth or heaven. He is not one who lives in a dreamy, misty, unpractical region; but, on the contrary, one whose happy privilege it is, from day to day, to reflect amid the scenes and circumstances of earth, the graces and virtues of Christ, with whom, through infinite grace, and on the solid ground of accomplished redemption, he is linked in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Such is the Christian, according to the teaching of the New Testament. Let the reader see that he understands it. It is very real, very definite, very positive, very practical. A child may know it and realize it and exhibit it. A Christian is one whose sins are forgiven, who possesses eternal life and knows it; in whom the Holy Spirit dwells; he is accepted in and associated with a risen and glorified Christ; he has broken with the world, is dead to sin and the law, and finds his object and his delight, and his spiritual sustenance, in the Christ who loved him and gave himself for him, and for whose coming he waits every day of his life.

This, we repeat, is the New Testament description of a Christian. How immensely it differs from the ordinary type of Christian profession around us we need not say. But let the reader measure himself by the divine standard, and see wherein he comes short; for of this he may rest assured, that there is no reason whatsoever, so far as the love of God, or the work of Christ, or the testimony of the Holy Spirit is concerned, why he should not be in the full enjoyment of all the rich and rare spiritual blessings which appertain to the true Christian position. Dark unbelief, fed by legality, bad teaching, and spurious religiousness, rob many of God's dear children of their proper place and portion. And not only so, but, from want of a thorough break with the world, many are sadly hindered from the clear perception and full realization of their position and privileges as heavenly men.

But we are rather anticipating the instruction unfolded to us in the typical history of Israel in Joshua 3-5 to which we shall now turn. "And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; and they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and

the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore." Josh. 3:1-4.

It is most desirable that the reader should with all simplicity and clearness seize the true spiritual import of the river Jordan. It typifies the death of Christ in one of its grand aspects, just as the Red Sea typifies it in another. When the children of Israel stood on the wilderness side of the Red Sea, they sang the song of redemption. They were a delivered people - delivered from Egypt and the power of Pharaoh. They saw all their enemies dead on the seashore. They could even anticipate in glowing accents their triumphal entrance into the promised land. "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou has redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O LORD, which Thy hands have established. The LORD shall reign forever and ever."

All this was perfectly magnificent and divinely true. But they were not yet in Canaan. Jordan - of which, there is no mention in their glorious song of victory - lay between them and the promised land. True, in the purpose of God and in the judgment of faith, the land was theirs; but they had to traverse the wilderness, cross the Jordan, and take possession.

How constantly we see all this exemplified in the history of souls! When first converted, there is nothing but joy and victory and praise. They know their sins forgiven; they are filled with wonder, love, and praise. Being justified by faith, they have peace with God; and they can rejoice in hope of His glory, yes, and joy in Himself through Jesus Christ our Lord. They are in Rom. 5:1-11, and in one sense there can be nothing higher. Even in heaven itself we shall have nothing higher or better than "joy in God." Persons sometimes speak of Romans 8 being higher than Romans 5, but what can be higher than "joy in God"? If we are brought to God, we have reached the most exalted point to which any soul can come. To know Him as our portion, our rest, our stay, our object, our all to have all our springs in Him, and know Him as a perfect covering for our eyes at all times and in all places and under all circumstances, this is heaven itself to the believer.

But there is this difference between Romans 5 and 8, that 6 and 7 lie between; and when the soul has traveled practically through these latter, and learns how to apply their profound and precious teaching to the great question of indwelling sin and the law, then it is in a better state, though most assuredly not in a higher standing.

We repeat, and with emphasis, the words "traveled practically." For it must be even so, if we would really enter into these holy mysteries according to God. It is easy to talk about being "dead to sin" and "dead to the law" - easy to see these things written in Romans 6 and 7 - easy to grasp in the intellect the mere theory of these things. But the question is, have we made them our own? Have they been applied practically to our souls by the power of the Holy Spirit? Are they livingly

exhibited in our ways to the glory of Him who at such a cost to Himself has brought us into such a marvelous place of blessing and privilege?

It is much to be feared that there is a vast amount of merely intellectual traffic in these deep and precious mysteries of our most holy faith, which, if only laid hold of in spiritual power, would produce wonderful results in practice.

But we must return to our theme; and in doing so we would ask the reader if he really understands the true spiritual import of the river Jordan. What does it really mean? We have said that it typifies the death of Christ. But in what aspect? for that precious death, as we are now considering has many and various aspects. We believe the Jordan sets forth the death of our Lord Jesus Christ as that by which we are introduced into the inheritance He has obtained for us. The Red Sea delivered Israel from Egypt and the power of Pharaoh. Jordan brought them into the land of Canaan.

We find both in the death of Christ. He, blessed be His name, has by His death on the cross - His death for us - delivered us from our sins, from their guilt and condemnation, from Satan's power, and from this present evil world.

But more than this: He has by the same infinitely precious work brought us now into an entirely new position in resurrection and in living union and association with Himself where He is at God's right hand. Such is the distinct teaching of Ephesians 2: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." vv. 4-6.

Note the little word "hath." He is not speaking of what God will do, but of what He hath, done - done for us and with us in Christ Jesus. The believer has not to wait till he passes out of this life to enjoy his inheritance in heaven. In the Person of his living and glorified Head, through faith, by the Spirit, he belongs there now, and is free to all that God has given to all His own.

Is all this real and true? Yes! as real and true as that Christ hung on the cross and lay in the grave; as real and true as that we were dead in trespasses and sins; as real and true as the truth of God can make it; as real and true as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the body of every true believer.

Mark, reader, we are not now speaking of the practical working out of all this glorious truth in the life of Christians from day to day. This is another thing altogether. Alas, alas, if our only idea of true Christian position were to be drawn from the practical career of professing Christians, we might give up Christianity as a myth or a sham.

But, thank God, it is not so. We must learn what true Christianity is from the pages of the New Testament, and, having learned it there, judge ourselves, our ways, our surroundings, by its heavenly light. In this way, while we shall ever have to confess and mourn our shortcomings, our hearts shall ever more and more be filled with praise to Him whose infinite grace has brought us into such a glorious position, in union and fellowship with His own Son - a position, blessed be God, in nowise dependent upon our personal state, but which, if really apprehended, must exert a powerful influence upon our entire course, conduct, and character.

Gilgal: Part 4

The more deeply we ponder the typical instruction presented in the river Jordan, the more clearly we must see that the whole Christian position is involved in the standpoint from which we view it. Jordan means death, but, for the believer, a death that is past - the death we have gone through as identified with Christ, and which, through resurrection, has brought us on the other side - the Canaan side - where He is now. He, typified by the ark, has passed over before us into Jordan to stem its torrent for us, and make it a dry path to our feet, so that we might pass clean over into our heavenly inheritance. The Prince of life has destroyed, on our behalf, him that had the power of death. He has taken the sting from death; yes, He has made death itself the very means by which we reach, even now, in spirit and by faith, the true heavenly Canaan.

Let us see how all this is unfolded in our type. Mark particularly the commandment given by the officers of the host. "When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it." The ark must go first. They dared not to move one inch along that mysterious way until the symbol of the divine Presence had gone before.

"Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore." It was an awful flood ahead of them. No mortal could tread it with impunity. Death and destruction are linked together. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. 9:27. Who can stand before the king of terrors? Who can face that grim and terrible foe? Who can encounter the swelling of Jordan? Who, except the Ark go first, can face death and judgment? Poor Peter thought he could, but he was sadly mistaken. He said to Jesus, "Lord, whither goest Thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterward."

How fully these words explain the import of that mystic "space" between Israel and the ark. Peter did not understand that space. He had not studied aright Josh. 3:4. He knew nothing of that terrible pathway which his blessed Master was about to enter upon. "Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake."

Poor dear Peter! How little he knew of himself or of that which he was - sincerely, no doubt, though ignorantly - undertaking to do! How little did he imagine that the very sound of death's dark river, heard even in the distance, would be sufficient so to terrify him, as to make him curse and swear that he did not know his Master! "Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice."

"Yet there shall be a space between you and it." How needful! How absolutely essential! Truly there was a space between Peter and his Lord. Jesus had to go before. He had to meet death in its most terrific form. He had to tread that rough path in profound solitude - for who could accompany Him? "There shall be a space between you and it... come not near unto it, that ye may

know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore."

"Thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterward." Blessed Master! He would not suffer His poor feeble servant to enter upon that terrible path until He Himself had gone before and so entirely changed its character that the pathway of death should be lighted up with the beams of life and the light of God's face. Our Jesus has "abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel."

Thus death is no longer death to the believer. It was death to Jesus in all its intensity, in all its horrors, in all its reality. He met it as the power which Satan wields over the soul of man. He met it as the penalty due to sin. He met it as the just judgment of God against sin - against us. There was not a single feature, not a single ingredient, not a single circumstance, which could possibly render death formidable which did not enter into the death of Christ. He met all; and, blessed be God, we are accounted as having gone through all in and by Him. We died in Him, so that death has no further claim upon us, or power over us. Its claims are disposed of, its power broken and gone for all believers. The whole scene is cleared completely of death, and filled with life and incorruptibility.

And hence, in Peter's case, we find our Lord in the last chapter of John most graciously meeting the desire of His servant's heart - a desire in which he was perfectly sincere - the desire to follow his beloved Lord. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst where thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God." Thus death, instead of being the judgment of God to overwhelm Peter, was turned into a means by which Peter could glorify God.

What a glorious change! What a stupendous mystery! How it magnifies the cross, or rather the One who hung thereon! What a mighty revolution, when a poor sinful man can, by death, glorify God! So completely has death been robbed of its sting, so thoroughly has its character been changed that, instead of shrinking from it with terror, we can meet it, if it does come, and go through it with a song of victory; and instead of its being to us the wages of sin, it is a means by which we can glorify God. All praise to Him who has so wrought for us! to Him who has gone down into Jordan's deepest depths for us, and made there a highway by which His ransomed people can pass over into their heavenly inheritance! May our hearts adore Him! May all our powers be stirred up to magnify His holy name! May our whole life be devoted to His praise! May we appreciate the grace and lay hold of the inheritance!

But we must proceed with our type. "And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people. And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee." Joshua stands before us as a type of the risen Christ, leading His people in the power of the Holy Spirit into their heavenly inheritance. The priests bearing the ark into the midst of Jordan typify Christ going down into death for us, and destroying completely its power. "He passed through death's dark raging flood, to make our rest secure"; and not only to make it secure, but to lead us into it in association with Himself now, in spirit and by faith - by-and-by in actual fact.

"And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites.... Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan."

The passage of the ark into Jordan proved two things; namely, the presence of the living God in the midst of His people, and that He would most surely drive out all their enemies from before them. The death of Christ is the basis and the guarantee of everything to faith. Grant us but this, that Christ has gone down into death for us, and we argue with all possible confidence, that in this one great fact all is secured. God is with us and God is for us. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" The difficulty of unbelief is, "How shall He?" The difficulty of faith is, "How shall He not?"

Israel might wonder how all the hosts of Canaan could ever be expelled from before them; let them gaze on the ark in the midst of Jordan, and cease to wonder, cease to doubt. The less is included in the greater. And hence we can say, What may we not expect, seeing that Christ has died for us? There is nothing too good, nothing too great, nothing too glorious, for God to do for us and in us and with us, seeing He has not spared His only begotten Son, but delivered Him up for us all. Everything is secured for us by the precious death of Christ. It has opened up the everlasting floodgates of the love of God, so that the rich streams thereof might flow down into the very depths of our souls. It fills us with the sweetest assurance that the One who could bruise His only begotten Son on the cursed tree for us, will meet our every need, carry us through all our difficulties, and lead us into the full possession and enjoyment of all that His eternal purpose of grace has in store for us.

Having given us such a proof of His love, even when we were yet sinners, what may we not expect at His hands now that He views us in association with that blessed One who glorified Him in death - the death that He died for us? When Israel saw the ark in the midst of Jordan, they were entitled to consider that all was secured. As our Lord also said to His disciples before leaving them, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"; and in view of His cross He could say, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." True, Israel had, as we know, to take possession; they had to plant their feet upon the inheritance; but the power that could stem death's dark waters, could also drive out every foe from before them and put them in peaceful possession of all that God had promised.

Gilgal: Part 5

In closing this series of brief papers on Gilgal, we must turn our thoughts to the practical application of that which has been engaging our attention. If it be true - and it is true - that Jesus died for us, it is equally true that we have died in Him; as one of our own poets has sweetly put it:

"For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,

And I have died in Thee;

Thou'rt risen - my bands are all untied,

And now Thou livest in me.

The Father's face of radiant grace

Shines now in light on me."

Now this is a great practical truth - none more so. It lies at the very foundation of all true Christianity. If Christ has died for us, then in very deed He has taken us completely out of our old condition, with all that appertained to it, and placed us upon an entirely new footing. We can look back from resurrection ground on which we now stand, into the dark river of death, and see there in its deepest depths the memorial of the victory gained for us by the Prince of life. We do not look forward to death; we look back at it. We can truly say, The bitterness of death is past.

Jesus met death for us in its most terrible form. Just as the river of Jordan was divided when it presented its most formidable appearance - "for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest" - so our Jesus encountered our last great enemy, vanquished him in his most fearful form, and left behind, in the very center of death's dark domain, the imperishable record of His glorious victory. All praise, homage, and adoration to His peerless name! It is our privilege, by faith and in spirit, to stand on Canaan's side of Jordan and erect our memorial of what the Savior, the true Joshua, has done for us.

"And it came to pass when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man. And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night. Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man: and Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: that this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever." Josh.

4:1-7.

The great fact was to be seized and practically carried out by the whole assembly, "of every tribe a man" - "every man of you a stone upon his shoulder," a stone taken from the very spot where the priests' feet stood firm. All were to be brought into living personal contact with the great mysterious fact that the waters of Jordan were cut off. All were to engage in erecting such a memorial of this fact as should elicit inquiry from their children as to what it meant. It was never to be forgotten.

What a lesson is here for us! Are we erecting our memorial? Are we giving evidence - such evidence as may strike even the mind of a child - of the fact that our Jesus has vanquished the power of death for us? Are we affording any practical proof in daily life that Christ has died for us, and that we have died in Him? Is there anything in our actual history from day to day answering to the figure set forth in the passage just quoted - "every man of you a stone upon his shoulder"? Are we declaring plainly that we have passed clean over Jordan - that we belong to heaven - that we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit? Do our children see anything in our habits and ways, in our spirit and deportment, in our whole character and manner of life, leading them to inquire, "What mean these stones?" Are we living as those who are dead with Christ - dead to sin - dead to the world? Are we practically freed from the world - letting go our hold of present things in the power of communion with a risen Christ?

These are searching questions for the soul, beloved Christian reader. Let us seek to meet them honestly, as in the divine presence. We profess these things, we hold them in theory. We say we believe that Jesus died for us, and that we died in Him. Where is the proof - where the abiding memorial - where the stone on the shoulder? Let us judge ourselves honestly before God. Let us no longer rest satisfied with anything short of the thorough, practical, habitual carrying out of the great truth that "we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God." Mere profession is worthless. We want the living power - the true result - the proper fruit.

"And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan" - stones of peculiar import - no other stones could tell such a tale, teach such a lesson, or symbolize such a stupendous fact - no other stones like them - "those twelve stones... did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up from before us, until we were gone over: that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God forever." vv. 20-24.

Here then we see Israel at Gilgal. "Everything was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua." Chap. 4:10. Every member of the host had passed clean over Jordan - not one had been suffered to feel the slightest touch of the river of death. Grace had--brought them all safely over into the inheritance promised to their fathers. They were not only separated from Egypt by the Red Sea, but actually brought into Canaan across the dry bed of the Jordan, and encamped in Gilgal, in the plains of Jericho.

And now mark what follows. "And it came to pass when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

"At that time" - note the words! - when all the nations were paralyzed with terror at the very thought of this people - "at that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time."

How deeply significant is this! How suggestive are these "sharp knives"! How needful! If Israel are about to bring the sword upon the Canaanites, Israel must have the sharp knife applied to themselves. They had never been circumcised in the wilderness. The reproach of Egypt had never been rolled away from them. And ere they could celebrate the passover and eat of the old corn of the land of Canaan, they must have the sentence of death written upon them. No doubt this was not agreeable to nature, but it must be done. How could they take possession of Canaan with the reproach of Egypt resting upon them? How could uncircumcised people dispossess the Canaanites? Impossible! The sharp knives had to do their work throughout the camp of Israel ere they could eat of Canaan's food or prosecute the warfare which of necessity belongs to it.

"And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt.... And their children, whom He raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.... And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal [rolling] unto this day.

"And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

"And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Josh. 5:3-12.

Here then we have a type of the full Christian position. The Christian is a heavenly man, dead to the world, crucified with Christ, associated with Him where He now is, and, while waiting for His appearing, occupied in heart with Him, feeding by faith upon Him as the proper nourishment of the new man.

Such is the Christian's position - such his portion. But in order to enter fully into the enjoyment thereof, there must be the application of the "sharp knives" to all that belongs to mere nature. There must be the sentence of death written upon that which Scripture designates as "the old man."

All this must be really and practically entered into if we would maintain our position or enjoy our proper portion as heavenly men. If we are indulging nature; if we are living in a low, worldly

atmosphere; if we are going in for this world's pursuits, its pleasures, its politics, its riches, its honors, its fashions, and its distinctions - then verily it is impossible that we can be enjoying fellowship with our risen Head and Lord. Christ is in heaven, and to enjoy Him we must be living in spirit and by faith where He is. He is not of this world; and if we are of it, we cannot be enjoying fellowship with Him. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." 1 John 1:6.

This is most solemn. If I am living in and of the world, I am walking in darkness, and I can have no fellowship with a heavenly Christ. "Wherefore," says the blessed Apostle, "if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances...?" Col. 2:20. Do we really understand these words? Have we weighed the full force of the expression, "living in the world"? Is the Christian not to be as one living in the world? Clearly not. He is to live in spirit where Christ is. As to fact, he is obviously on this earth, moving up and down, and in and out, in the varied relations of life, and in the varied spheres of action in which the hand of God has set him. But his home is in heaven. His life is there. His object, his rest, his proper all, is in heaven. He does not belong to earth. His citizenship is in heaven; and in order to make this good in practice from day to day, there must be the denial of self, the mortification of our members.

All this comes vividly out in Colossians 3. Indeed, it would be impossible to give a more striking exposition of the entire subject of "Gilgal" than that presented in the following lines: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." vv. 1-4. And now comes the true spiritual import and application of "Gilgal" and its "sharp knives" - "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth."

May the Holy Spirit lead us into a deeper and fuller understanding of our place, portion, and practice as Christians. Would to God that we better knew what it is to feed upon the old corn of the land, at the true spiritual Gilgal, that thus we might be better fitted for the conflict and service to which we are called!

The Glories of Christ As the Son of Man: the Son of Man Lifted up

It is only in the Gospel of John that the term “lifted up” is used for the crucifixion of Christ. It is, moreover, a striking thing that the word so rendered means also “exalted”; and it will be seen in our meditations that while it signifies, as the evangelist tells us, the character of the Lord’s death (John 12), it includes, in the presentation of the truth in connection with it, His exaltation. It occurs only three times, and each time it is employed in different connections as to the teaching, so that taken together these scriptures set forth an immense scope of truth, embracing indeed the whole of the present interval, the manifestation of Christ to His earthly people, and His exaltation and glory in “the world to come,” that is in the Millennium when He will shine forth unhinderedly as the Sun of Righteousness. We may then proceed to consider each occurrence of the phrase, “lifted up,” hoping to be enabled to give an outline of its various teachings.

The first time the words are found is in John 3, where, as indeed in each case, it falls from the lips of the Lord Himself. Speaking to Nicodemus, after pressing the absolute necessity of the new birth, He says, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life...” (John 3:14-16).

It will be noticed even by the most casual reader that the necessity for the Son of man to be lifted up is as absolute as it is for man to be born again. Both necessities are indispensable — one for man, and the other for God. It is sometimes, indeed, advanced that the necessity for the Son of man to be lifted up was for man, inasmuch as he could not otherwise have approached God. This is undoubtedly true, but the question is whether this is the aspect of the truth presented in this scripture. Attention to its terms will show, we judge, that it is not that it teaches us, rather that it was a necessity for God in the accomplishment of His purposes for the bestowment of eternal life upon those who should believe in His beloved Son. For this end it was necessary that the judgment of death should be borne and its power set aside if life out of and beyond death were to be revealed, into which the believer could be brought in association with Christ. This might be illustrated in another way. Before God could reach the heart of man, and shed abroad His love there through the Holy Spirit, three things were required: 1) man, the man in the flesh, must come up under the eye of God for judgment, and this came to pass in the cross of Christ, and so effectually that he has disappeared forever from before God; 2) Christ must be exalted in virtue of His death; 3) the Spirit of God must be given (see John 7:39). In this way God, if we may use the expression, was set free to work according to His own eternal thoughts in Christ Jesus. And it may be added, that these eternal thoughts of His have already been accomplished in the One whom He has glorified at His right hand, for He is the true God and eternal life.

The Son of man then was lifted up, and the One who has been thus lifted up is presented as the Object for faith. He has been lifted up “that whosoever believeth in Him.” This will explain the remark already made that His lifting up includes His exaltation; for where is He presented to men

as the object of faith? Is it on the cross? No; it is as glorified at God's right hand; it is to Him there that the gospel directs men, and it is to Him there that men must believingly look if they are to enter upon the blessedness here unfolded.

To whom then, it may be inquired, is this gospel proclaimed? It is to the whole world, not only to the Jew, but also to the Gentile; for the rejection of Christ by the Jew was but the occasion for the out flowing of the grace of God to all men of every clime and race. There is, therefore, absolutely no limit; for as the Apostle Paul teaches, after he has demonstrated by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified, the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ is unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. This much indeed is involved in the "whosoever," for this term includes the possibility of any one in the wide world receiving the testimony of God.

And together with believing in the Son of man having been lifted up, but now glorified, is linked eternal life — that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. Rescued from the judgment of God under which he lay, from the wrath of God (vs. 36), and from Satan's power, so that he should not perish, the believer has eternal life. "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Eternal life is thus connected with the knowledge of the Father as revealed in and through the Son; and it is enjoyed when in the experience of our souls we have reached Him on the other side of death, where in association with Him we are as sons before the Father's face. If anyone should earnestly inquire how Christ may be reached on the other side of death, the answer may be given in the Lord's own words, "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:54). It is then by the appropriation of (making our own) the death of Christ, so becoming identified with it in this world, that we pass morally (not actually, but in spirit) out of this world and join Christ where He is, and thus enter upon the enjoyment of eternal life. Every believer in the One who has been lifted up has an undoubted title to eternal life; but it is only through the appropriation of the death of Christ that eternal life can really be possessed. When, however, we are raised up at the last day according to the Lord's promise, that we shall be actually in association with Christ, and all alike will possess, in a sphere where death can no more enter, this divine and unspeakable gift.

One thing more has to be observed. All this blessedness proceeds from the sovereign love of God — God so loved the world. We have said the sovereign love of God; for surely, as everyone will admit, there was nothing in the world itself to call forth this expression of His heart. Pity there might have been, but not love; on the contrary, there was everything to call down the execution of His judgment, for all had gone out of the way, and there was none that did good — no, not one. And yet He loved — such is God!

And remark that the greatness of the love is seen in the greatness of the gift; He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. It was the Son of His bosom whom He gave; and the Son became man that He might accomplish the will of Him that sent Him; and in His death on the cross He endured all the judgment which lay upon man to open up the way by which God could righteously satisfy His own heart in bringing to pass His eternal counsels for the blessing of His people. What a theme for meditation! And it is a theme which, the more it is considered, the more it will beget in the soul thoughts of praise and adoration in the contemplation of such ineffable love

and grace.

The second occurrence of the expression, “lifted up,” as applied to the Son of man, is found in chapter 8. Surrounded by the unbelieving Jews who had refused the plainest testimony to Christ as being the Sent One from the Father, Jesus said to them, “When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things” (John 8:28).

The first thing to notice is that it is not now, The Son of man must be lifted up, but it is, When ye have lifted up the Son of man. If in chapter 3 it is, as we have seen, divine necessity, here, as evidently, it is the guilt of the Jew. On this account we are here in altogether a different circle. In John 3 it is all the saints of this present period who are in view; here it is the Jew (but including as representing the Jews of a later date) who is brought before us in these words of our blessed Lord.

Wherein, we may inquire first of all, lay the guilt of the Jew as here indicated? It may be seen in two ways — in their rejection of the word and works of Christ, and finally in His crucifixion. For the Jew, as indeed for every soul to whom Christ is presented, everything depended upon who He was. If He were the Sent One of the Father, if God were His Father, as the Jews themselves alleged that He claimed, thus making Himself equal with God (John 5:18); if, moreover, the plainest possible testimony to the truth of His Person were brought to them (John 5:32-47; 8:18-19), then they had no excuse for their sin in rejecting His claims. In truth they had not, for in their willfulness they had closed their eyes both to the testimony of John the Baptist and to that of Christ Himself; and they waxed harder and harder in their opposition to His claims, so that, while confessing that they could not deny that He did many miracles (John 11:47), they persevered in their determination to put Him to death. Besides this, they were so obdurate in their enmity that in order to accomplish their end, they denied before Pilate all their national hopes and expectations in declaring that they had no king but Caesar (John. 19:15).

Such was their shameless guilt; and the Lord, knowing all from the beginning, charged this home upon them in the words, “When ye have lifted up the Son of man.” Pilate, indeed, was willing to let Jesus go — to release Him at the feast — and in passing judgment upon Him, he only yielded to the passionate demands of the Jews in giving sentence as they required (Luke 23:24).

Coming back again to the terms of our scripture, two things would follow upon His being lifted up by the Jews: 1) they should “know that I am. He”; 2) “that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things.” When they asked Him, “Who art Thou?”

He replied (we give another translation), “Altogether that which I have said to you”; that is, His word was the perfect expression of Himself; but, as we have pointed out, they refused this testimony, and yet the time would come when they would know who He was, and whence His testimony — whether as connected with His word or His works — had proceeded. To what time then does the Lord refer? First of all, there may be, and undoubtedly is, an allusion to what took place at Pentecost, when a multitude were smitten at heart with the sense of their sin in crucifying their Messiah. They knew then, and they confessed who He was. Great, however, as was the blessing in these Pentecostal days, there cannot be a doubt that the meaning of these words of our blessed Lord requires a vast extension beyond that period, and that they will include the time spoken of by Zechariah, when God will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of

Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; “and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn” (Zech. 12:10).

In the full interpretation, therefore, of this scripture, the Lord undoubtedly looks onward to the time of His appearing, and the effects of it upon His unfaithful people, when, like Thomas, who typifies this remnant, many will see and believe. It may be also that, as Revelation 1:7 seems to imply, some among them will be convinced when they see the Son of man coming in His glory, that Jesus of Nazareth was their Messiah, and yet still resist His claims. This indeed would seem plainly taught, awful as is the testimony to the character of the heart of man in Matthew 24-25, and other scriptures. But it should be remembered that Christ is the test of men now, as He will be then, and consequently that our relationship to God depends upon our attitude toward His beloved Son. One remark may be added for the better understanding of this scripture. As will be seen, it is not only that the Jews will know after they had lifted up the Son of man, that Jesus as presented to them in His humiliation was their Messiah, but they will also acknowledge that He was the Sent One and the Revealer of the Father.

The Glories of Christ As the Son of Man: the Title of Son of Man

Every intelligent and devout reader of Scripture must have discovered to some extent the vast range of truth which is unfolded and displayed in the various titles of our blessed Lord. Not one of them is without significance; they all indeed present some rays either of His essential or acquired glory. To study them, therefore, if guided and taught of the Holy Spirit, is the way to attain a deeper knowledge of His Person, and thus to be filled with God's thoughts of His beloved Son. We may then well be encouraged to embark upon the consideration of the subject, even if we confine our attention in these pages to the one mentioned at the head of this chapter; that is, that of the Son of man.

It is found, as the reader will remember, in the Old Testament, and is used, as may be afterward shown, in a prophetic way of Christ. Both Psalm 8 and Daniel 7 introduce it, and manifestly in connection with the future glory of our blessed Lord. It is also used of Ezekiel (chaps. 2, 3, 4, etc.), and its application to the prophet in his especial circumstances will greatly help us to determine its meaning as assumed by Christ Himself.

We may then pass at once to consider the term as adopted by our Lord and Savior. Two things will aid us to apprehend its force and meaning — its place in the 8th Psalm, and the period of its adoption in the synoptical gospels; that is in Matthew, Mark and Luke. The subject of the first Psalm is the Righteous Man; in the second Psalm, God's King is introduced, but "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psalm 2:2-3). The apostles cite and apply this scripture to the action of Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in the rejection of Christ; and they also emphatically declare that the Jews in crucifying their Messiah, did but accomplish whatsoever God's hand and His counsel had determined before to be done (Acts 4:25-28).

Thus, while God's purposes can never be frustrated — for He will yet set His King upon His holy hill of Zion — Christ, when presented to the Jews for acceptance, was rejected. The next four psalms depict — to speak generally — the state of things among the Jews consequent upon their refusal of their Messiah, and also the feelings and experiences of the godly remnant who have attached themselves in heart to Christ before He establishes His throne; that is, during the period of His rejection by His ancient people. This brings us to Psalm 8 — a very important one in the way of God. Its opening sentence, "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!" gives the key to its interpretation. It is no longer a question of Israel or of the Messiah, but the whole earth is in view, and all things are put under the feet of the SON OF MAN. Now, inasmuch as Adam was not the Son of man, it would be plain, even if we had no further light upon the subject, that a greater than Adam was here set forth. But we have an inspired interpretation of the psalm in Hebrews 2, where the writer of the epistle shows that Jesus, who for the suffering of death was made a little lower than the angels, is now crowned with glory and honor; and he proceeds to show, beyond all contradiction, that it is under the feet of the glorified Man at God's right hand, He

having tasted death for every man (or everything), all things are put. Indeed, in two other epistles this is directly stated (see 1 Cor. 15:27-28; Eph. 1:22).

The conclusion then is, from the foregoing considerations, that on the rejection of Christ by the Jews He assumes the title of the Son of Man, and as such passes in prospect into a wider circle of glory in which all men and all things will be subjected to His sway. This conclusion will be confirmed by a reference to the teaching of the gospels. In Luke we read, for example, that on one occasion our blessed Lord put this question to His disciples, "Whom say the people that I am?" After they had answered, "John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again. He said unto them, but whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God." Then we find that he immediately charged them and commanded them to tell no man that thing; namely, that He was God's Christ — the Messiah — saying, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day." (Luke 9:18-22; see also Matt. 17:9; Mark 8:27-31; 9:9, 12, 30-32).

From these passages it is abundantly clear that the Lord adopted the title of Son of man in view of His rejection, suffering, and death; and second, it is as manifestly taught that it is in this chapter as the Son of man that He will have universal rule throughout the world. Daniel thus says, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. and There was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him" (Daniel 7:13-14).

Allusion has been made to the fact that the prophet Ezekiel is addressed by the same title, and the remarks of another upon this may aid the reader in understanding its general purport. He says, "The throne of the supreme and sovereign Lord God is seen in Chaldea — in the place where the prophet then was — among the Gentiles. It is no longer seen at Jerusalem in connection with the land; nor have we any law embodied, so to speak, in the throne, according to which an immediate government was exercised. Consequently, the voice of God speaks to Ezekiel as to a 'son of man' — a title that suited the testimony of a God who spoke outside of His people, as being no longer in their midst, but on the contrary as judging them from the throne of His sovereignty. It is Christ's own title, looked at as rejected and outside of Israel, although He never ceases to think of the blessing of the people in grace. This puts the prophet in connection with the position of Christ Himself. He would not, thus rejected, allow His disciples to announce Him as the Christ (Luke 9), for the Son of man was to suffer."

To apprehend this teaching concerning the title in question will enable us to pursue our subject with greater intelligence and profit, especially if it be remembered that it is only through the ministry of the Holy Spirit we can know the things that are freely given to us of God (1 Cor. 2).

God Is Love and Holy

If we are to walk with God, or, rather, if He is to walk with us, we must judge and put away everything inconsistent with His holy presence. He cannot sanction unjudged evil in His people. He can pardon, heal, restore, and bless; but He is intolerant of evil. "Our God is a consuming fire." 'The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.'

Should the thought of this discourage or depress any truehearted child of God, or servant of Christ? Certainly not. It should neither discourage nor depress, but it should make us very watchful over our hearts, very careful as to our ways, our habits of thought and conversation. We have nothing to fear while God is with us, but He cannot possibly sanction evil in His people; and every true lover of holiness will heartily bless Him for this.

God's Care to Great and Little

Manna was a thing unknown to Israel when they went into the wilderness; neither had their fathers known it, and they themselves could do nothing toward producing it - they were dependent. Had God omitted to send it even for one or two mornings, they must have perished. The water from the rock was equally miraculous. There was no water in the desert, and God gave it by a miracle. There was no path marked out in the wilderness, and they might have wandered from the way; but God performed another miracle, for a cloudy pillar was their leader. But it was not only in great things that God took care of them, or that He does so of us in the wilderness; we have to admire His precious care in the smallest things, and in our tiniest wants. There is a particular as well as a general providence (see Deut. 8:4). "Thy raiment waxed not old." It may be that the Israelites had taken but little notice of the fact, and so it is with us. How many details of God's care for us pass unobserved by us!

God's Way of Rest, Power, and Consecration: Part 1

It is a mournful fact that the majority of Christians are not happy, and that they, if they would frankly confess it, have been sadly disappointed in their Christian life. When they were converted, the prospect was full of promise: it seemed to them like the dawn of a cloudless day of peace and joy. Scarcely, however, had they started on their journey, when clouds of every kind darkened the sky; and, with perhaps a few fitful gleams of sunshine, these have more or less continued. In many cases it has been worse still. Conflict was expected, but the conflict has generally issued, not in victory, but in defeat. The evil within and the enemy without have again and again triumphed; so that a spirit of dejection and hopelessness has supplanted that of confidence and joyous expectation.

The sorrow, too, has been deepened by the discovery that such an experience by no means corresponds with that given in the Word of God. True it is that we are in a hostile scene, that Satan is unceasingly endeavoring to entangle us with his wiles, that we are pilgrims and strangers, that we cannot therefore expect rest and comfort in the scene through which we are passing. Therefore, our bodies are exposed to sufferings of many kinds, but not one of these things, nor all combined, ought to cloud our souls with gloom and darkness. Take the apostle Paul, for example. Having shown us that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" and that through Him "we have access by faith into present favor, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," he proceeds to say, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:1-5). If, moreover, you would learn the possible experience of the Christian, read the epistle to the Philippians. In this book, we find that a believer can be perfectly happy though in prison, with daily possibility of being put to death, - that Christ can be his sole motive, object, and aim, - that his only desire may be to be with Him and to be like Him; and that therefore he may be entirely superior to his circumstances; and that it is possible to learn, in whatsoever state he is, to be content, and able to do all things through Him who gives him inward strength.

Could any contrast be greater between this experience and that of most believers?

You may reply, This was the experience of an apostle, and we can scarcely expect to reach his standard.

We admit that the standard is high, but not even Paul, whatever his attainments, is our perfect model, - only Christ. Bear also in mind that the apostle had not a single blessing (except his special gift) which does not equally pertain to the humblest believer. Was he a child of God? So are we. Had he the forgiveness of sins? So have we. Did he possess the priceless possession of the indwelling Spirit - the Spirit of adoption? So do we. Was he a member of the body of Christ? So are we. We might thus enumerate all the blessings of redemption, and we should find that Paul was in no way a privileged exception; for we with him are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

If, then, this be so, how can we account for the fact that so few have a like experience - that abiding rest and happiness are so little known?

It is to the answer to this question that we invite the earnest attention of the reader.

The fundamental cause of the difficulty alluded to is the unwillingness or neglect of God's people to go on to learn what has been secured for them in Christ. Many rest content with being born again; others, with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins; so that their own salvation is the aim and goal of their desires. The consequence is, that the first days of their Christian life are often their best days; and hence the spectacle is seen on every hand, of believers once bright and fervent, now careless and indifferent, if not worldly.

Let it be said, then, with all plainness, yet with all tenderness, that if a Christian desires nothing beyond the forgiveness of sins, he will soon discover that he has no power to resist either the solicitations of the flesh or the temptations of Satan. It is indispensably requisite for a happy Christian life, that the truth of death with Christ should be practically known. Stopping short of this, the characteristic experience will be unrest and hopeless conflict.

Permit me, then, to explain the reason of this in a few simple words. There are two things that need to be dealt with for our redemption: our sins, and the nature that produced the sins, - the bad fruit, and the tree whence the fruit had sprung. Our need in respect of the first thing has been met by the precious blood of Christ. There is no other method of cleansing from our guilt (See Heb. 10; 1 John 1:7). But though we have been made whiter than snow through the precious blood of Christ, and notwithstanding we have been born again, and have thus a new nature and a new life, the evil nature remains; and remains in all its corruption, and can neither be purified nor improved. It was the sense of this, and the realized powerlessness of the new nature in and by itself, in its struggles with the flesh, that led to the cry in Rom. 7: - "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The same bitter cry still ascends from multitudes of the saints of God.

How, then, has God met this need of His people?

The answer is found in Romans 6. There we read, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him [Christ], that the body of sin might be destroyed [annulled], that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed [or justified] from sin" (vs. 6, 7). The term "old man" is used to express what we were in Adam. "The flesh," or the "old nature," is the evil principle within us; and the "body of sin" is just sin in its totality and completeness. We gather, therefore, from this Scripture (see also Rom. 8:3), that God has already dealt with our old man in the death of Christ, that therein He condemned sin in the flesh. The apostle says, "I have been crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2). It is not only that the Lord Jesus, in His infinite grace, bore our sins in His own body on the tree; but God, in His unspeakable mercy, associated us with the death of Christ: so that He has already passed judgment upon what we are - that is, upon our flesh, root and branch. He has thus made a twofold provision in the death of Christ, namely, for our sins, and for our old man; and both alike are gone judicially from before His face.

Such is God's testimony to us in His Word; and if I set to my seal, through His grace, that His testimony is true as to the efficacy of the blood of Christ, why not also when He bears witness to me that He has associated me with the death of His beloved Son? It is on this very ground that the

apostle exhorts, in Romans 6, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (vs. 11). That is, God's declaration to me is received by faith, and acted upon, so that I refuse the incitements of the flesh, on the ground that I am dead to it, having part in the death of Christ. In other words, I accept my death with Christ as the truth before God, and henceforward take the place in this world of a dead man.

Let us now look a little further into the consequence of accepting such a position. The first of these is that we are freed, or justified (see margin), from sin (Rom. 6:7). It is important to note that it is sin, not sins - that is, the flesh, "sin in the flesh," the evil principle of our corrupt nature, "the old man," has no further claim upon us. It is still within, and will be to the end of our pilgrimage; but as long as I reckon myself to be dead, accept death upon what I am as born of the flesh, it will have no power over me. Having been in bondage to it, I am now delivered from it - and how? By means of death - my death with Christ. My old master, therefore, has no further claims upon me; I have passed, by means of death, out from under his yoke. For example, suppose you had, while reading this paper, a dead man lying in the room; and suppose, further, you were to seek to bring him into captivity to sin, by presenting to him every kind of fascination or allurements, would you not at once perceive the folly of the attempt? No, you would say, whatever he was while alive, sin will have no dominion over him now. Satan himself could not tempt a dead man. And thus it will be with ourselves if, by grace, we go on from minute to minute and from hour to hour reckoning ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Christ Jesus our Lord.

And this is the only way of victory. Many seek to overcome by a resolute effort of will, others by seeking to die to sin; but God's method is that which we have shown. It is because we are dead that we are told to mortify our members (Col. 3) - that is, to apply death to ourselves - to bear about in our body the putting to death of Jesus, so that every movement of sin, of the flesh, may be arrested and judged. Man's way leads to asceticism, and, in the end, to a worse bondage; but the divine way issues in deliverance and happy liberty.

The second consequence is deliverance from law. Thus Paul writes, "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." Again, "Now we are delivered from the law, having died to that wherein we were held" (Rom. 7:4-6, etc.; see also Gal. 2:19). As the apostle explains, the law has dominion over a man only as long as he liveth. Having, then, died with Christ, we are emancipated also from the power of the law; and blessed for us that it is so, "for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse" (Gal. 3:10). This indeed ought to be an evangel of good tidings to every believer. By nature, we are all legal, and our tendency to legality remains with us after we become the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. It is inwoven, we may say, into the very texture of our being, so that it crops up continually in our words and actions. The effect is that many know little of the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, and are groaning daily under their self-imposed bondage.

But, you reply, we are not under law. The Jews were, but can this be said of Gentile believers?

Certainly not in the same sense; but the principle of law is as native to us as to the Jew. For example, if after I am converted I feel that I ought to love the Lord Jesus more, and try to do so, or that I ought to pray better, and am cast down or depressed because I have not discharged this duty, as I think, more perfectly, I am in principle as much under law as were the Jews. The essence of the law lies in its "Thou shalt," and hence, if I turn even the precepts of our blessed

Lord into, Thou shalt do this or that, I put my neck under the yoke of the law. And the moment I do so, I am on the sure road to failure, distress, and a bad conscience.

What, then, we have all to learn is, that through association, in the grace of God, with the death of Christ, we are delivered both from law and from the principle of law. We are married to Another, even to Him that is raised from the dead that we should bring forth fruit (not works, but fruit,) unto God. Christianity has no "thou shalts," but it substitutes for the works of the law and the works of the flesh, the blessed fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5); and these are produced, not as the works are, by human effort, but by divine power.

The difference between these two things is as great as possible. Knowing now that fruit for God cannot be obtained by any effort or labor of our own, we are delivered from all expectation from self; and learning, at the same time, that the power which can bring forth fruit is in another (who works, indeed, by the Spirit that dwells in His people), our eye is upward to Him, in the confidence that He will use us for His glory according to His own will. Instead, therefore, of working, we trust; instead of seeking fruit within, we desire that Christ may work in us according to the energy of His own divine power.

God's Way of Rest, Power, and Consecration: Part 2

Another consequence is, that we are delivered from the world. The apostle, in opposition to certain legalists, who desired to escape persecution and to glory in the flesh, says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom (or whereby) the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." As we read in the gospel of John, the world was judged in the death of Christ. His crucifixion was the utter and entire condemnation of the world that rejected Him. God thus morally judged it in the cross; and Paul, in communion with the mind of God, held it therefore as crucified to him through the cross, as also himself, in the same way, as crucified to it. He was thereby completely delivered from it; for if both were crucified the one to the other, there could be no attraction between the two. The world with all its charms and fascinations could not allure one who held it as morally judged in the death of Christ neither indeed had one who held himself as crucified through the cross any attractions for the world. Thus regarded, the cross is an insurmountable barrier between -the Christian and the world; and not only a barrier, but also the means by which the true character of the world is detected and exposed. Thereby he yearns that the friendship of the world is enmity with God, inasmuch as he ever views it in relation to the cross of Christ.

There is yet another consequence, and that is, deliverance from man. "If," says the apostle, "ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living (or rather, alive) in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (such as, for example,) 'Touch not; taste not; handle not,' etc?" It is religious man who is in question, whose object is the improvement of the flesh; but instead of amending, he only gratifies it. Now this important Scripture teaches that the believer, as dead with Christ, is entirely freed from man and his religious claims. If he owned them, he would take the place of being alive in the world, and deny the fact of his association with the death of Christ. He thus loses sight of (indeed refuses) man altogether, denies his assumed authority, because he is subject only to Christ. Hence, even in all the relationships of life, he obeys, whether it be magistrates, masters, or parents, because he is put in the position of subjection by Christ Himself. Thus a poor slave - a Christian - in obeying his master, obeys the Lord Christ (Col. 3:22-25).

There is, therefore, complete deliverance for the believer who holds himself as dead with Christ - deliverance from sin, law, the world, and man. It might be said, in language applied to Israel, of the believer, that he takes them captive whose captive he had been. Every enemy is conquered, and Christ alone is acknowledged as Lord.

If this is true, how is it, do you ask, that so few enter upon this path of deliverance and holy liberty?

The answer to this question leads us to the next part of our subject. It may be thus stated, and we entreat special attention to it, That while these truths may be doctrinally apprehended, they must, if the power of them is to be enjoyed, be experimentally learned. There are four things which must be acquired through experience, in order to enter upon their blessed enjoyment.

First Lesson

First and foremost, the character of the flesh must be practically known. God has declared this to us even in the Old Testament (Gen. 6), and in the New has set it forth again and again; and we may receive His testimony, unhesitatingly assent to it, but, we repeat, unless we have learned the nature of the flesh by experience, we shall always, more or less, be expecting something good from it. Thus how often does the saint think, "I shall do better next time," or, "If I had my time over again, I would avoid this mistake or that failure"! Now such reflections as these could only be made in the entire forgetfulness of the real and incurable nature of the flesh; for if our evil nature is wholly corrupt, how could it act differently in the future from what it did in the past? No; we may indeed look to the Lord to keep us, by His grace, from former sins; but if we have really detected what the flesh is, we know at once that we shall continue to do in the future as we have done in the past, unless guarded by divine power.

Now in Rom. 7 we have the case of one who, having life, but ignorant of the full "grace of God in redemption, is trying under law to produce some fruit for God. What is the conclusion he comes to? It is this, that what he would do, he does not, and that what he hates, he does. He then proceeds to say, "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." That is, he has now discovered that the flesh will (in such a case as his) have its own way, and that having its own way, it is always sin. Hence he tells us, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." He has learned his lesson, and will therefore cease henceforward to expect anything from the flesh but evil. And surely this is a blessed conclusion at which to arrive for the soul.

Now there are two ways in which we may learn the same thing; either in the presence of God, and in communion with God, or in the presence of Satan through -failure and sin. Paul himself would seem to have been an example of the former. As a Jew, he was so moral and upright, that, -led of the Spirit of God, he could afterward say of himself, that "touching the righteousness which is in the law," he was "blameless." He had every temptation therefore to think there was something good in himself. As he said, "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more." But when a glorified Christ was revealed to him, an entire revolution was wrought in his soul. He saw everything now in the true light - the light of the glory of God which shone from the face of Christ and he instantly perceived the worthlessness of the flesh and its fairest works. Now he could say, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I (do) count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ (or, have Christ as my gain)." His first estimate was the abiding one of his life, and he consequently refused the flesh in every shape and form as utterly evil - knowing that, like the fig tree in the gospel, however it might be cultured and educated, it could never bear any fruit for God.

Peter is an example of one who learns the character of the flesh through sin. A warm-hearted, impetuous man, he loved his Master with an ardent affection. When, therefore, the Lord warned His disciples, "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written, 'I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered'," Peter replied, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I" (Mark 14). He was ready, he said, to lay down his life for His Master's sake (John 13). And what produced this unwavering trust in his own fidelity? Confidence in the flesh in his

affection; but what was the result? Ah! what a commentary upon this evil nature of ours! step by step, Peter went down into the deep abyss of utter denial of his Lord. He had been forewarned and admonished, but the flesh asserted its own corruption, and dragged Peter through the mire of sin and iniquity. His fall was overruled for the Lord's glory, and for the blessing of Peter; but in his fall and humiliation there is left for our instruction the plainest revelation of the fact that in the flesh, the flesh even of a true and devoted disciple, there dwelleth no good thing.

Now in one of these two ways every one who would know what the grace of God in our redemption is must also learn the same lesson. If we do not, we shall always be expecting something from ourselves, though we shall be always disappointed. A bad tree must always bear bad fruit; and when we have practically bowed to this truth, we shall have done with ourselves altogether, and shall expect nothing - except from the Lord. Through unwatchfulness, the flesh may still assert itself and betray us into sin; but we are not deceived. We have learned our lesson; and while we judge ourselves in the presence of God for our failure, we seek grace, at the same time, to be kept more watchful in days to come. Beloved reader, we press this point upon you most earnestly; for until you have gone through this experience, you can never have solid peace. Turn away from it, and you expose yourselves, like the children of Israel in the desert, to trials, chastenings, and failures of every kind; whereas, if you accept God's testimony as to the flesh, and so learn its truth in your own soul that you habitually take His part against yourself, you would enter upon the dawn of another day - a day characterized, whatever your trials and sorrows, by the sunshine of grace and joy, and one that will be spent with God.

Second Lesson

The second lesson to be learned is, that we have no strength - that we are utterly powerless in conflict with the flesh; that while, as the apostle says, "to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom. 7:18, 19). And is not this, beloved reader, the exact description of the experience of thousands, and perhaps of your own? And the effect has been, that they have sunk into a state of listless indifference, if not of despondency, so that, ceasing even to attempt to stem any longer the rapid current setting against them on every side, they conclude that nothing now remains for them but to float down the stream against which they cannot contend. Ah! if souls would be honest, many would confess that this has been their condition for years, - a condition which brings no glory to God, and no happiness to themselves. What, then, is the cause? Simply the mistake of thinking that all depends upon our own efforts, instead of accepting the truth that they are utterly without strength, and that therefore everything depends upon God. Even the sinner has to learn, not only that he is guilty, ungodly, but also that he is helpless (Rom. 5); and the believer must likewise understand, not only that in his flesh there dwelleth no good thing, but also that he cannot of himself do a single good thing. And when the eyes are opened by the Spirit of God, the discovery is made that this is the lesson God has been teaching by the past long series of unbroken defeats. You have fought with your foes again and again, with undaunted courage, but you have never gained the victory. Still you have again entered upon the conflict, resolved, if possible, to overcome; but, alas! you have again been conquered. Pause, then, for a moment, and ask this simple question, What am I to learn by this sorrowful experience? The answer is clear as the noonday. It is that the enemy is too strong for you, that you cannot cope with his power. Still you may say, May we not grow stronger? Shall we not grow in grace? And when we have found

out the character of the enemy a little more fully, is it not possible that we may succeed?

No! we hesitate not to answer; for if you continue upon the present line of effort, it is only to court defeat in the future as in the past. Your case is, as far as your own strength is concerned, hopeless.

If, on the other hand, you receive the truth of your own perfect impotence, and come thus to the end of your own strength, it will bring rest to your soul, because, together with that, you will understand, that your help, strength, and succor come from without, and not from within, - from Christ, in a word, and not from yourselves. Oh, the unspeakable blessedness of such a discovery! Ceasing henceforward to struggle, you will know what it is to rest in Another, and be able to take up the song of David, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" For if, on the one side, you have come to know that you are without strength, you will rejoice, on the other, to learn that His strength is made perfect in weakness.

God's Way of Rest, Power, and Consecration: Part 3

The third thing to be known is the fact that the believer has two natures: one which he has received through Adam, called in Scripture the flesh, or sin, etc.; and the other which he has received through the new birth from God. These two are utterly antagonistic. Thus John says, speaking of the latter, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9). And Paul, speaking of the former, writes, as we have seen, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." It is impossible to conceive of two more directly opposite statements; and now we find that the soul who is passing through the experience detailed in Romans 7 learns to distinguish between these two contrasted natures. We thus read, "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (v. 20). That is, he has learned to identify himself with the new nature: hence he says, "No more I" (comp. Gal. 2:20, where Christ becomes the "I" of the apostle); and at the same time he regards the flesh, his old nature, as nothing but sin; and he traces back to it, all the evil from which he has been suffering. This nature, though within (and will always remain there as long as the believer is upon earth), he now treats as an enemy, as one who always seeks to hinder his doing the good, and to compel him to do the evil. He thus proceeds: I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man [and hence he desired to do good]; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (vv. 21-23).

Not only, therefore, is he helpless in the struggle against the enemy - indwelling sin, but he is worsted in the conflict, and overmastered; he is completely in the grasp and power of his foe. Still he has now learned that "sin," the flesh, is his foe, and that he delights in the law of God after the inward man. And this, beloved reader, is a happy discovery; for the want of which, many godly souls in all ages have been kept groaning in bondage, and writing bitter things against themselves, deeming that such was a necessary experience all the days of their lives. If you read, for example, the published diaries of some of the most devoted servants of the Lord, you will find that they are mainly made up of self-analysis and self-condemnation, springing from occupation with self instead of with Christ, in the vain effort to eradicate the evil found within their own hearts; and often leading to the question, If we are children of God why is it thus with us? Ah! they had misread, as many continue to misread, Romans 7; and hence, while they had their seasons of enjoyment of the presence and favor of God, they only alternate with times of darkest gloom and depression.

It is a blessed gain, therefore, when we know we have the two natures, and when we learn to distinguish between them; and it is still more blessed when we are brought, through our conflicts and struggles, as far as we ourselves are concerned, into hopeless captivity to the law of sin which is in our members. It is a painful but necessary experience, because thereby we are taught to have done with ourselves. The end of all flesh, so to speak, is come before us, as it had long before with God; and we know now, that vain is the help of man (self), that we are completely without resource, and, alas! at the mercy of our inward foe.

Fourth Lesson

This prepares the way for the fourth lesson. Flesh has gained the victory - has its foot, if we may speak figuratively, upon the neck of the struggling and helpless soul; but its victory ends in defeat, and in the emancipation of its victim. Until this moment, the soul has been battling in its own strength; but now, in the sorrow of its defeat and helpless bondage, it looks, not within, but without, and cries in its agony, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And the deliverance is reached. The moment the eye is upward, and not within upon itself, the victory is assured; for the answer comes immediately, thank God, "I am delivered "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Deliverance is found, just as salvation is found, not through self, and the labors of self, but through Christ. It will consequently be noticed, that whereas we have nothing but "I" in the preceding verses, "I" now disappears, and it is all "Christ" instead. Blessed deliverance! Self is now done with and refused, Christ is accepted in its place; and, as we shall yet see, we find that we have in him the answer to our every need: for of God are we, "in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30).

But before the Spirit of God proceeds to unfold the blessed portion of the delivered soul, one word is added: "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." This is added both as instruction and warning. It teaches us that we shall always possess, whatever our attainments, these two natures, and, giving their character, admonishes us that they will never alter, - that the flesh, though we are now delivered from its mastery, will always remain flesh, and can never be changed or improved. The enemy cannot be dislodged, or be converted to a friend; but we now know his character, and the sources of our strength, and we keep watch accordingly.

We proceed now to point out the wondrous results in grace which may be the enjoyed portion of the emancipated soul. We may at once name them; they are REST, POWER, and CONSECRATION. Let us look at these separately.

Rest

(1.) REST. - This is not only the rest that follows upon the cessation of the struggle with indwelling sin, but also the positive rest which flows from the knowledge now enjoyed by the soul, of deliverance. Hence the first words of chapter 8 are, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." This is not simply the assertion that the believer is freed from all condemnation, but rather the discovery that those who are in Christ Jesus are delivered from all possibility of it. Such is the blessed goal which the soul has now reached. Let us, then, examine a little into what is thus involved. There is now, then, the knowledge that the believer has been brought out of his old standing and condition, and set down in a new place before God in Christ, - in Christ who is risen from the dead, and has passed into a new sphere beyond and on the other side of death, into which neither death nor condemnation can enter. Through death with Christ, as has been already shown, the believer is dissociated from the first man - from Adam; so that now, reckoning himself to be dead unto sin, he also counts himself as alive unto God in Christ Jesus. In the death of Christ God has judged, once for all, sin in the flesh - judged its root and branch; and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus as risen out of death has made the believer free from the law of sin and death. Sin and death have to do only with those who are in the flesh; and since the believer is not in the flesh (v. 9), but is in the Spirit, he has his standing where the law of the Spirit

of life in Christ Jesus prevails. Yes, -

"The Lord is risen: the Red Sea's judgment flood Is passed, in Him who bought us with His blood.
The Lord is risen: we stand beyond the doom Of all our sin, through Jesus' empty tomb."

We stand, we repeat, in a new place - a place, because in Christ Jesus as risen, to which the flesh, and therefore condemnation, cannot have anything to say. As the blood of Christ cleansed us from our guilt, so in the death of Christ (for we were, in the grace of God, associated with Him in that death,) the flesh - sin - met its judgment and doom, and we now in Christ are therefore completely delivered, and as such, freed from all condemnation. We can now rest - rest in Him in whom we stand before God.

Together with this, the soul discovers another thing. What had been the cause of all its dissatisfaction and sorrow? Its own state and condition - the condition springing from the presence of sin within. Now, it learns that the question is, not what we are, but what Christ is. Is God satisfied with what Christ is? Then we may be satisfied too, for we, remember, are in Him, and what He is, and not what we are, marks our standing before God. In Christ, therefore, we answer to even God's own thoughts, so that He can rest in us with the same complacency as He rests in Christ. We are indeed accepted in the Beloved. Inasmuch, then, as every desire of God's heart is met, we have nothing left to desire; we are as perfect, as to our new standing, as God Himself can make us, and we have perfect rest. As to the flesh, we have learned that it could not be worse, and that it could not be better; as to our being in Christ, we have been taught that God Himself is satisfied with us, inasmuch as we are before Him, in all the perfection of what Christ is, as the glorified Man. It is not possible to desire more, and thus we enter upon the enjoyment of perfect rest - perfect rest in Christ; for just as we were enabled, through grace, to accept Christ as our substitute on the cross, we now rejoice to accept Him before God instead of ourselves. God's eye rests on Him, and ours rests on Him too, and thus in communion with the heart of God we find our true and unshaken rest.

Another blessed consequence at once follows. Ceasing from self-occupation (for, having trodden that weary path to our bitter sorrow and found out its vanity) we rejoice to be occupied alone with Christ. Since it is what He is that determines what I am before God, I delight to trace out His perfections and moral glories - to meditate upon every ray of the glory of God that shines out from His glorified face (2 Cor. 4); and in this blessed employment I am gradually transformed, even while here in this world, by the Spirit's power, into His likeness (2 Cor. 3:18). Lost in admiration of the One whose face, unlike that of Moses, is unveiled. I grow like Him - grow daily, while waiting for His return, until finally I shall be like Him, for I shall see Him as He is.

It is therefore Christ as the measure of my standing, Christ as the object of my heart, and Christ as the One to whom I am to be conformed. What else can the soul need? Nay, I am abundantly satisfied, and I have perfect rest.

"Lord, 'tis enough - we ask no more;

Thy grace around us pours

Its rich and unexhausted store,

And all this grace is ours."

Power

(2.) We have also POWER. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Each one who is in Christ is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and He it is who is the source of power for walk, conflict, service, and worship. Were it not for this blessed provision, we might be tempted to exclaim, Granted that we are in Christ Jesus, but how shall we be able to meet the insidious movements of the flesh which still remains in us? The answer is found in verse 13: "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Power is thus bestowed equal to all emergencies, and to enable us to enjoy the privileges of the place into which we have been brought, as well as to refuse everything which would seek to rob us of our blessings.

It must not be forgotten (neither could a child of God desire it should,) that this power does not act independently of our own spiritual condition. The Holy Spirit dwells within, so that our bodies are His temples. If, therefore, we are careless, unwatchful, indifferent, - if we seek our pleasure in the world rather than in Christ, - if, in a word, we in any way, whether by word, look, or act of the flesh, grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption, let us not for one moment suppose that He will condescend to use us as vessels of His power. No! that were impossible. Take Samson as an instructive example of this important point. As long as he maintained his separation - his Nazariteship, his enemies were powerless before him. They were trodden, so to speak, beneath his feet; but the moment, seduced by the arts of Delilah, he betrayed the secret of his strength, he became as weak as other men, and fell at once into the hands of his merciless enemies. The action of the Holy Spirit in power, in and through the believer can only be maintained while walking in communion with God. Neglect self-judgment, and a walk that is according to the light in which we are set, even as God is in the light, and, though the Holy Spirit will not depart from us, we shall in vain expect the demonstration of His mighty power. But, on the other hand, if the eye be single, and a single eye sees nothing but Christ, - if He is the object of our lives, the Holy Spirit, then ungrieved, will sustain us in every position in which we are placed, and bring us victoriously out of every conflict through which we may pass. If the flesh seeks to reassert its dominion, He will enable us to refuse it, to treat it as a foe already judged by God's judgment; if the world would charm us by its siren voices, He will remind us of its true character in the light of the cross of Christ, and its charms will disappear; if Satan assail us, He will embolden us to resist the devil, and he will flee from us.

Bear in mind, however, that we must not expect consciousness of power. It is on this point that so many stumble. They want to feel the power, and failing to do so, they conclude that they are in the wrong condition of soul for its exercise. No mistake could be greater. On the other hand, the Lord, as in the case of Paul, as given in 2 Corinthians 12, has to break down His servants, send them thorns in the flesh, bring death in upon them in every shape and form (see, 2 Cor. 4), in order to reduce them to the sense of their own utter impotence, that they may learn the lesson that His strength is made perfect in weakness. Hence, it is that when we are weak we are strong, because realized weakness leads to and is the condition of dependence, and it is only as we are dependent that we are strong with the strength of Him on whom we rest.

Nor shall we (and we desire to press this point,) be always conscious of the power even though we are dependent. Thus Paul writes to the Corinthians, "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Cor. 2:3). Yet it is evident from the epistle, as well as from the historical

account of his sojourn in Corinth (Acts 18), that he was at this time, in a very special manner, the channel of extraordinary power in his ministry of the Word. So now it will often be the same with the Lord's servants. How often have they been permitted to know, after some season of felt weakness and incompetency in preaching the Word, that this was the very time when the Lord used them most largely in the blessing of souls! The same principle applies to every department of the Christian life, illustrations of which might easily be collected all down the line of Scripture-history. Take Gideon. "Oh, my Lard," he says, "wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." Was this a disqualification for the mission to which he was called? Mark the Lord's response: "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man" (Judges 6:15, 16). Gideon was in truth nothing, but the Lord was everything, and He can work where this nothingness is felt. In like manner, if the Lord is to show forth His power in and through us, there must be the refusal of every form of self-dependence, - of everything even which naturally would help us in our work or conflict, that our dependence may be wholly and solely upon the divine power of the Holy Spirit.

It is also a mistake to suppose that we can be endowed, so to speak, with spiritual power. God never gives a 'fund of strength to any of His servants on which they can draw from time to time until the whole is used. The power is always in Himself, and not in them, and therefore only supplied moment by moment, according to the need, to those who are walking with and in dependence on Him. The one, therefore, who may be today a mighty man of valor, may be tomorrow weak and timid. Such was the case with Elijah. In 1 Kings 18, confronted by a whole host of the worshipers of Baal, together with their priests, who were emboldened, too, by the knowledge that they were under royal protection and favor, Elijah, single-handed and alone, lifted up out of and beyond himself, challenges them to the conflict, and casting himself upon God for the vindication of the glory of His Name, he is borne onward by divine power, and, daring Satan in his own stronghold, he gains a splendid victory. But what do we find in the next chapter? This same Elijah flees before the threat of wicked Jezebel! Ah, yes, he had forgotten, for the moment, the source of his strength, and, as a consequence, the valiant man of yesterday is today weaker than a babe. The maintenance of constant dependence is thus a necessary condition of continued spiritual power. If this is forgotten, Satan will often succeed in worsting the Lord's servants.

There are, then, as all true souls will at once admit, conditions for the exercise of the power which God has provided for His people in His indwelling Spirit. This acknowledged, it can be pressed that the power is all-sufficient in every circumstance and in every need. Thus in this chapter alone (Romans 8) we read of those who walk after the Spirit - who are led of the Spirit; who through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body; those whom the Spirit helps in their infirmities, and in whom He makes intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered. And in many other Scriptures it is shown that He enables us to overcome alike, as pointed out before, the flesh, the world, and the devil (see Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 6:17, 18; 1 John 2:14-27, etc.), - that through Him we can understand and communicate the Word (1 Cor. 2), - that it is in His power we enjoy access to God the Father (Eph. 2:18), - that, in a word, whether for walk, conflict, testimony (Acts 4), or worship (Eph. 5:18, 19; Phil. 3:3), our only and all-sufficient power is the Holy Ghost.

Now, beloved reader, admitting this as doctrine, is there no danger of forgetting it in practice? There are many of the Lord's people who have learned in a measure their weakness, but who know almost nothing of the source of power as provided in the Holy Spirit; there are others who

believe in the provision, but who have scarcely any skill in drawing upon it for use; and there are others, again, who act, even in the Christian life, as if everything depended upon themselves. Let us, then, look the question in the face, and ask ourselves if these things which have been set forth are true, and if they are true, let us not rest until we know practically something of being channels for the manifestation of divine power even in this world. And if it is our desire to bring glory in this way to the Lord's Name, we shall soon discover that God will condescend to use us just in proportion as we are walking in dependence upon Himself, and in obedience to His Word.

God's Way of Rest, Power, and Consecration: Part 4

(3.) We now come to the third thing spoken of, namely CONSECRATION. That there is a wide-spread desire for fuller consecration to the Lord, the religious history of the last few years abundantly shows. And who can doubt that, spite of the large admixture of error with truth in the various "holiness" movements that have been witnessed, thousands of souls have found partially what they sought, and thereby entered upon largely increased spiritual blessing? It should indeed be always remembered that God meets the soul, not according to its intelligence, but according to its felt need. Wherever, therefore, saints have congregated, with yearning hearts, to wait on the Lord, they have found an ample response to their cries; and many have, from that moment, entered upon a life of peace and liberty with God. They may still use terms that are not exactly scriptural, and may mistake the exact relationship in which the Lord stands to them; they may still be ignorant of the full grace of God in redemption, and of the blessed hope of the Lord's return; but the Lord has now a place in their hearts which He never had before, and He thus becomes both the Object before their souls, as well as the Center to which they gravitate, and the consequence is unspeakable blessing. All this we gladly admit - and admit it to the full. The only thing we contend for is the importance, in order to even fuller blessing, of understanding God's own thoughts concerning the consecration of His people.

This, then, is the question now to be considered: What is consecration? The prevalent idea is that it consists in the giving up of ourselves wholly to the service of God in an act of self-surrender. Sometimes, indeed, it is said that this may be accomplished by an act of the will, that by a fixed and constant resolution we may offer ourselves - head, heart, hand, and soul - to the Lord for His disposal; and meetings are often held at which those who are assembled are exhorted, there and then, to dedicate themselves in this way to the Lord.

It is quite possible that when a soul is consciously in the presence of God (and this may often be the case at such meetings), some hindrance, some besetting sin, or some evil habit or association may be brought into the light, and there and then confessed and judged; and there will undoubtedly be in such a case larger blessing. But this is not consecration; and the question remains, whether this kind of setting one's self apart, or self-surrender, to which some are exhorted, is found in the Scriptures?

The first thing to be remarked is, that all such exhortations suppose power on our part - that we are looked upon as competent to attain the end proposed, whereas one of the things we have to learn, as we have seen in Romans 7, is that the good we desire to do, we do not, - that, in a word, we are utterly helpless to achieve, in and by ourselves, anything for God.

It will, however, certainly be asked if we are not called upon to yield ourselves up to God, and to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable service.

Most certainly; but neither of these Scriptures favors the above thought of consecration. In order to see this, let us examine a little into their significance. The first is found in Romans 6. Now the truth

of this chapter is our death with Christ, and that, as dead with Christ, we are justified from sin (vv. 1-7). The apostle then proceeds: "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:8-14). Not only, therefore, are we viewed as dead with Christ, and justified from sin, but also we are to reckon ourselves alive to God (inasmuch as Christ has died unto sin once, and in that He liveth, He liveth unto God,) in Christ Jesus our Lord. Freed, therefore, from sin, the body is no longer to be under its dominion; and we are consequently told not to yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but to yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead - that is, as those who are dead with Christ, but who have a new life in Him as risen out of death.

In what power, then, is this to be accomplished? In the power of the will? Nay, we are to reckon ourselves dead, etc.; and hence it is through the Holy Ghost, in the power of the new life we have in a risen Christ. And it should be noticed that the apostle expressly says, that, in using the figure of a servant, whether in respect of sin or of righteousness, he is speaking after the manner of men because of the infirmity of our flesh. In fact, the question here concerns our bodies - or our members. Now through having part in the death of Christ, we are no longer the servants of sin - we are freed from it. What, then, shall be done with our members? The answer is found in the exhortation considered. Let them now become instruments of righteousness unto God; for if, on the one hand, we are to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, we are, on the other, to count ourselves as alive unto God through Christ Jesus; and the truth of this chapter flows from this verse 11.

The exhortation in Rom. 12:1 links itself with the doctrine of chapter 6, though the appeal is based upon the truth developed up to the close of chapter 8. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren," says the apostle, "by the mercies of God." The mercies are those unfolded in redemption, and which have been detailed in this epistle. Reminding us thus of what God is for us in Christ, and what He has done, the apostle, on this ground, beseeches us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, our reasonable service. Again, the exhortation, as in chapter 6, concerns our bodies - bodies, it must be remembered, which have been emancipated from bondage to sin, and which, according to the teaching of chapter 8, are now indwelt by the Holy Ghost. This will explain the apostle's meaning. Not now, as with the priests of old, are we to bring a dead sacrifice and lay it on God's altar, but in the power of the Holy Spirit we are to offer up a living sacrifice - a perpetual sacrifice therefore, - one that is ever to be presented to God as long as we are here upon the earth. But how is this, we ask again, to be accomplished? Is it by an act of will? Nay, this is impossible. It is by the application of death - it is, in fact, the truth of Rom. 8:10 - "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin:" it is Christ controlling our bodies instead of ourselves, as we hope to explain more fully afterward; and this is both a sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and our reasonable service - the recognition of what is due to God on the ground of redemption. Our

bodies, in other words, belong to Him who has redeemed us; but the acceptance of this truth will involve their presentation to God moment by moment, as a living sacrifice; so that He may use them now for His own glory in testimony to His beloved Son.

The consideration of these Scriptures will prepare us to enter upon the consideration of what consecration really is. For this purpose we propose to turn to two passages - one in the Old Testament, and the other in Rom. 8. We take first, that wherein is recorded the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the office of the priesthood (Ex. 29). Without going into detail, we may point out the meaning of the rites that accomplished this service. They were, first of all, washed with water (v. 4), - a figure of the new birth - of being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5), - that is, of the application of the Word to the soul through the Holy Ghost. Next, they are brought under the efficacy of the sin offering; their sins having been, in type, transferred to the bullock through the laying of their hands upon the bullock's head. Judgment thereon is visited on the bullock; the blood having been put on the horns of the altar, etc., and the flesh of the bullock, etc., is burnt with fire without the camp (vv. 10-14). Their sins are thus taken away. Then they are brought before God in all the acceptance of the burnt-offering (vv. 15-18).

All this was to qualify them for consecration; and in what follows, we have the consecration itself. First, the blood was put upon the tip of their right ears, on their right thumbs, and on their right great toes; the rest of the blood was to be sprinkled on the altar round about. That is, God, in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, claims, according to the value of His precious blood, the complete devotion of His servants and priests, who, because they had been brought under the value of that precious blood, must hence forward hearken, act, and walk only for God. Bought with a price, they must glorify Him with their bodies which are His. Then, with the blood, the anointing oil was to be sprinkled upon them and upon their garments, significant of the power in which their service was to be accomplished - not in fleshly energy or by the effort of their will, but solely in and through the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

It is in the ceremony that follows we have the actual truth of consecration. All our readers will know that these sacrifices are types of Christ; and in the light of this knowledge, let them read what was done with the ram of consecration. Different parts of it, together with oiled bread, and a wafer of unleavened bread, were put in the hands of Aaron and his sons, and waved for a wave-offering before the Lord. Their hands were filled with Christ - Christ in the devotedness of His life, as shown by the unleavened bread (the meat-offering); and Christ in His devotedness unto death, as testified in the burnt-offering. The meaning, indeed, of "to consecrate" is to "fill the hand" (see marg. to v. 9); and thus Aaron and his sons were consecrated by having, in figure, their hands filled with Christ: and with Him, as the only acceptable offering they could present before Jehovah. We learn, moreover, that the food of these consecrated ones was to be the affections (the breast) of Christ, and the strength (the shoulder) of Christ; for only in this way could their consecration be maintained and manifested.

Passing now to Romans 8, we shall find that consecration there exactly corresponds, though with a deeper meaning, with the truth of Exodus 29. "Ye are not in the flesh," says the apostle, "but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (vv. 9, 10). In verse 9, we have the full Christian position - characterized by the

possession and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The word is very emphatic. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ," - that is, the Spirit in whose power Christ Himself walked and wrought down here, - "he is not of Him," he is not yet marked out as belonging to Christ. Whatever he may be, a man cannot be said to be a Christian, in the true sense of the word, if he has not the Holy Ghost. Here, therefore; we arrive at the same point (only with a larger significance) as that where the priests were anointed with oil, previous and preparatory to their actual consecration. Hence we read in the next verse, "If Christ be in you" - which also is a characteristic of Christianity (See Col. 1:27). In other words, the believer is not only indwelt by the Spirit of God, but Christ also is in him. The Lord Jesus, speaking of the time when the Holy Ghost should have come, says, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, ye in Me, and I in you." In verse 1 (Rom. 8) we are said to be in Christ Jesus, and now in verse 10 Christ is said to be in us, according to these words of our blessed Lord, to be understood only when the Holy Spirit had come; and the truth of Christ in us is the source of our consecration, or it may be stated in another way - that our consecration flows from the fact that Christ is in us. We have explained that through deliverance we enter upon rest and power, and now we shall see that the third blessing is consecration.

We call attention, in the first place, to the language of the apostle. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." This (properly understood) is consecration, and it is this which we hope, with divine help, to be able to explain. Before our conversion, as all know, we governed our own bodies. They served us according to our own wills, whether in regard to duty, desires, or pleasure. The will in each one of us was the directing force, and this is what the apostle means when he says that formerly we were servants of sin (Rom. 6:16, 17). Our own wills (acted on and enslaved, it is true, by Satan through the flesh) were the supreme authority. Not that we were freemen, for "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34), and alas! we did nothing but sin; for sin is just independence of God - "lawlessness," as the Spirit of God terms it (1 John 3:4; see Gk.), - that is, having no law apart from self and the desires of self.

This is what we were; but now we read, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin," which means, if we may venture to paraphrase it, Knowing that if the will comes into activity, the consequence' is sin; now that Christ is in us, we hold the body as dead, that it may no longer be used by us according to OUR will, but that Christ may take it up as a vessel for the expression of HIS will. We hold the body as dead, because of the certainty of sin if controlled by ourselves; and thus it is also added, "The Spirit is life because of righteousness." Holding the body as dead, since Christ is in us, we now desire that He, and not sin, should be the Master of it, and count the activity of the Spirit, who dwells within, as the only life which a Christian should know, if we would be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (See Phil. 1:11). That is, practical righteousness can only be produced in our lives when the body is held as a vessel for Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost.

We may now state distinctly a few points which will enable the reader to understand in a simple way the truth of consecration. We say, then, at once, that consecration lies in Christ having full control over the bodies of His people, so that they may be organs for the expression of nothing but Himself. Two scriptures will make our meaning clear. - "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). The same apostle writes,

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. 4:10). In both of these passages we have the same thing - that Christ only is to be manifested through the bodies of His people. The difference is, that in the first, self is altogether displaced - it is "not I, but Christ liveth in me;" whereas in the second, the means are given by which the manifestation of "the life of Jesus" is secured. This, then, is consecration - Christ instead of self, Christ reigning supreme within, and using us as the vehicle for the display of Himself amid the darkness of this world.

It may now be helpful if we inquire how this consecration - the desire of every true-hearted believer - is reached. We have pointed out the fact that we gladly accepted, through the grace of God, Christ as our substitute on the cross; that when we are led into the truth of deliverance, we as gladly accept Him instead of ourselves before God; and now we must proceed a step further, and accept Him instead of self as our life in this world. Like the apostle, we must say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." This will lead to the refusal of self in every shape and form, because we have learned that self is only evil. Christ then will become the motive, object, and end of all we say and do. He Himself, though ever the perfect One, blessed be His Name, has shown us the pathway to this end. He never spake His own words, and never wrought for Himself; He did not speak for or act from Himself, - that is, He did not originate His own words or actions (John 5:19; 14:10). Both alike were from the Father; or, as He Himself said, "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." On the same principle, He within us should, in the power of His Spirit, produce our words and actions, that both alike might be a testimony to Him and to His glory.

We have hindrances, - He had none. He was a perfect vessel, and could thus say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." We have the flesh still within us, and the flesh ever lusteth against the Spirit, and seeks to hinder His blessed power in the soul. We thus read in one of the Scriptures cited, "Always bearing about in the body the dying [or rather, the putting to death] of Jesus;" and in Romans 8, "If we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body," etc. That is, there needs to be the constant application of death to all that we are, if there is to be the unhindered expression, in any measure, of Christ; and the power for this lies in our possession of the Holy Ghost. For example, suppose, under temptation, I am on the verge of giving way to temper, or of falling into sin of any kind, looking away from myself to Christ, and remembering that I through grace have been associated with Him in His death, I am enabled through the Spirit to refuse the flesh, to reckon myself dead to sin; and in this way Christ retains His sway, and He lives in me, and speaks through me, instead of myself. Hence, too, the exhortation not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. 4:30); for if by any allowance of the flesh He is grieved, I not only obscure the expression of Christ through me, but I also lose the power, by grieving the Spirit into silence, to mortify the deeds of the body.

Even though therefore I start with the acceptance of Christ for my life here instead of myself, consecration can only be maintained by the constant, daily, hourly, habit of self-judgment in the presence of God. That which maketh everything manifest is light; and in the light as God is in the light, if I am consciously there, I instantly detect everything which is not according to it; and then, if I judge myself, confessing my failure, my communion is restored, my consecration is maintained (See 1 John 1). So far, then, from the common thought that consecration is reached by one resolute act of self-surrender, we see that it commences rather with the acceptance of Christ instead of ourselves, - with giving Him His true place of pre-eminence within us, and that it is

maintained by the unceasing refusal of self in the power of the Holy Ghost. And such is the consecration to which God, in His infinite mercy, leads the delivered soul.

It should, however, be added that our consecration in this world will never be complete. The Lord Jesus Himself is the only perfectly consecrated One; and He is the model to which we are to be conformed. Our consecration now is in proportion to our conformity to Him - no more or less. It is therefore a misconception of Scripture to speak of our being entirely consecrated, and a greater mistake still, as before noticed, to speak of this as attained in a moment by a single act of surrender. The Lord, in His prayer to the Father, on the even of His crucifixion, said, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19). He was ever the true Nazarite, entirely separated unto God; but now He was about to sanctify Himself, to set Himself apart, to God in a new way, even as the glorified Man, and as such He would become the standard of our sanctification, - that is, of our practical sanctification. He therefore says, "That they also might be sanctified through the truth" - through the truth of what He is as sanctified, set apart in glory. This sanctification, consequently, will be for us progressive - progressive in proportion to the power of "the truth" on our souls.

How this is accomplished is explained to us by the apostle Paul. "We all with open [unveiled] face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). With Christ in glory before our souls, (and He is fully unveiled - revealed to us,) beholding all the glory of God displayed in His face, all the moral perfections, all the blessed attributes, the sum of the spiritual excellency of God, concentrated and told out in that glorified One, - occupied thus with Him as the object of our contemplation and delight, we are, through the power of the Holy Ghost, gradually (for it is "from glory to glory") transformed into the likeness of the One on Whom we gaze. But, we repeat, we never here fully attain to His likeness; for it is only when we see Him as He is that we shall be like Him (1 John 3:2). Just in proportion to our likeness to Him will be the manifestation of His life through our bodies. Hence there can be no rest here in attainment, as also no attainment of perfect holiness. There may be the claim of holiness through faith, but it cannot be asserted too strongly that the holiness of which the Scripture speaks is entire conformity to a glorified Christ. This is scriptural holiness, and we may attain, by God's grace, more of this daily; but it will be ours fully only when we see our blessed Lord face to face. At the same time, those who have learned the truth of redemption, and have entered upon the joy of deliverance, will have but one desire, namely, that Christ, and Christ alone, should have His rightful place of supremacy, and therefore complete sway, over their hearts and lives.

In conclusion, we may point out briefly the characteristics of the consecrated saint. First and foremost, he has no will. Like the apostle, he says, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." Crucified with Christ, the will connected as it is with the old man, is gone before God, and we consequently treat it as already judged, and refuse its activities. The will of Christ is our only law, and we are His for His sole and absolute use. Then, also, the consecrated believer seeks only the exaltation of Christ. Take again the apostle Paul when in prison, and with possible martyrdom before him, we find that it was his earnest expectation and hope that in nothing he should be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ should be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or death. Self disappeared from his view, and the glory of Christ filled his soul. Together with this, we learn that Christ was the be-all and end-all, the motive and object of the apostle's life - a sure mark

of consecration. "To me," he says, "to live is Christ." And while to die would be gain, he has no choice, for the reason given - that Christ was everything to him, and He only knew how the apostle could best serve Him. Lastly, his hope was, to be with Christ. When Christ is the object of our affections, if He fills our hearts, we cannot but look forward to be with Him. Where your treasure is your heart will be also, and the heart ever craves to be with its treasure. If death, then, is before the consecrated believer, he will say with Paul, "To depart and be with Christ is far better;" and if death is not before him, he will be living in the power of the blessed hope of His return, that he may be with his Lord forever and ever. For this is the hope which He Himself sets before the soul; so that if He says, "Behold, I come quickly," the heart of the consecrated one will, in the language of John, respond, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

"My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up." Psalm 5:3.

Then He'll lead the way before you,

Mountains laying low;

Making desert places blossom,

Sweetening Marah's flow.

Would you know this life of triumph,

Victory all the way?

Then put God in the beginning

Of each coming day.

Goliath's Armor

In describing Goliath's armor, the Scripture tells us that he had "greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders." This would seem to be to protect his back. He had also "one bearing a shield" to go before him. (1 Sam. 17:6, 7.) The Christian, on the other hand, has no greaves for his legs, for he is to be "praying always"; he has no armor for his back, for he is to always face the enemy, and never run away. He varies his own shield of faith, for faith held by another is useless for him (Eph. 6:11-18).

Satan, our great adversary, needs the greaves, for he does not pray; he needs armor for his back, for when the Christian resists him he flees (Jas. 4:7). He has no shield of faith of his own, and a shield by another does not save him from the stone out of David's sling.

The Great Possession: Christ Is Mine

"The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance:... yea, I have a goodly heritage" (Psa. 16:5,6).

A gentleman took an acquaintance to the top of his house to show him the extent of his possessions.

Waving his hand about, he said, "There, that is my estate." Then pointing to a great distance on one side, he continued, "Do you see that house?

That also belongs to me." Then said his friend, "Do you see that little village out yonder?" "Yes."

"Well, there lives a poor woman in that village who can say more than all this." "Ay! what can she say?" "Why, she can say, 'Christ is mine.' "

The gentleman looked confounded, and said no more!

Greatness and Meekness

"The man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of... the people. Exod. 11:3.

"Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth."
Numb. 12:3.

Nothing is more sad than to witness a pushing, bustling, forward, self-confident spirit and style in those who profess to be followers of Him who was meek and lowly in heart. It is utterly impossible for anyone to indulge in this spirit if ever he has really measured himself in the presence of God. To be much alone with God is the sovereign remedy for pride and self-complacency. May the Lord keep us truly humble in all our ways, simply leaning on Himself, and very, very little in our own eyes.

"O keep us, love divine, near Thee,

That we our nothingness may know,

And ever to Thy glory be

Walking in faith while here below."

The Hand of God Upon His Own

How little there is among the dear people of God, the bowing in heart, to that word in 1 Pet. 5:6 and 7: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."

In how many ways does God, in the exercise of His government among His own, put His hand upon us in sickness, in infirmities, or it may be by bringing us into tight places; but how slow are our hearts to lose sight of second causes, and to own Him in all that betides us. And wherefore this slowness? Is it because we cannot trust Him? It is not the hand of a judge smiting me that brings me down, for note the sweet connection: if I own that mighty hand of God upon me, I own also the effect of it is not to drive me from Him, but rather to draw me closer to Him, so close that with the consciousness of His hand upon me I can cast all my care upon Him and rest in the everlasting arms of the One who assures me. "He careth for you." What a sweet lesson to learn that the hand that brings me low, at one and the same moment, draws me near!

Hearken to the remnant cry again: "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

The following heart-stirring words are ascribed to the French Huguenots in the days of their bitter persecution: "If perish we must under Thy justice, we shall perish adoring Thee. Thy wrath, would it extinguish us? Then we shall flee to Thy heart. Is extermination Thy design for us? We shall make that new cause to fear Thee.-In spite of-life, in spite of death, we shall bless the stroke Thy hand applies. They are the blows of a tempest, but they bring us into port."

Surely but a verification of the concluding verses of Romans 8: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

He Oft Refreshed Me

Have you ever noticed the service of a brother named Onesiphorus? I believe it has a word for us in these days when many are isolated and often are unable to meet with the Lord's people for fellowship.

The Apostle said of him in 2 Tim. 1:16-18, "He oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:... he sought me out very diligently, and found me... In... many things he ministered unto me."

What a lovely list of things are mentioned here, and how suggestive surely to any whose heart is filled with the love of Christ! "He oft refreshed me" - like a morning breeze, full of freshness and vitality, this dear man had often refreshed the heart of the great Apostle. Although Paul may at times have been cast down, here was one who had ministered to him, who had encouraged his heart, who had cheered his spirit, and sympathized with the Lord's prisoner in his bonds. Are there not some whom we could refresh, some drooping spirits whom we could water, some whom we might be able to cheer and encourage? And then having done it once, do it often!

Of Onesiphorus it is also said, "He sought me out very diligently, and found me." And there are some lonely ones who will only be found in this way. They will need seeking out and finding, and such service is noticed by Him who could seek out the poor outcast woman of Sychar's well. They are known to the Lord, and never forgotten by Him; yet He would have us search them out and by so doing remind them of that link which binds us together and to Christ in glory.

Both in Rome and Ephesus, Onesiphorus ministered to the Apostle; in what way we do not know, but it was known to the Lord and was precious to Him because done to one of His own, as He says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Oh, that we too may be ready thus to serve Him as we serve those who are His own!

He Satisfieth

"The LORD shall guide thee continually and satisfy thy soul" (Isa. 58:11).

He satisfieth, when life's sky is clouded;

When cherished hopes have found an early grave;

When streams have dried and joys, long ours, have perished;

He satisfieth; thus we may be brave.

A Higher Power

The world recognizes that there are circumstances which arise from a higher power than any known to man. It is common practice to expressly exempt from human obligation (unless otherwise specified) any loss or failure to perform certain duties which arise from an "act of God." It is a legal term and is used by avowed infidel and atheist and Christian alike to cover "such an extraordinary interruption of the usual course of events that no experience, foresight, or care which might reasonably have been expected could have foreseen or guarded against it, as lightning, tempests, etc." (- Webster's International Dictionary). It is an admission, however inadvertent, that man is but a creature after all, and that there is a Supreme Being who is above him, and One who does not give account of His ways.

The ingenuity of men has been called upon to guard against such acts as would produce great exigencies. That progress has been made in this direction is admitted; for instance, men can now track down a hurricane in its early stages, and with some accuracy predict its movements in advance so as to warn men at sea and on land to make all preparations for a wind of a certain expected velocity at a stated hour. They cannot stop the hurricane, but much loss of life and property has been averted by advance warnings and such preparations as men can make. By anticipating where floods may come, and building flood control dams upstream, many floods have been prevented, although the best forethought of men is often shortsighted indeed, and proves to be inadequate. The power of wind, water, and fire is dreaded, and justifiably so, for each has proved time and again how puny man really is. They are forces that often defy every effort of man to conquer them. Even the tiny, beautiful snowflake, when accompanied by God's hosts of them, have brought all men's great works to a complete standstill, and silenced all his noises.

Men compare themselves with themselves and are not wise, but when God "bringeth the wind out of His treasures" (Psalm 135:7), and sends the "treasures of the snow" and "treasures of the hail" (Job 38:22) upon the earth, and "prepareth rain for the earth" (Psalm 147:8), "whether for correction; or for His land, or for mercy" (Job 37:13), man appears in his relative insignificance. "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Psalm 39:5.

There is another "act of God" which emphasizes man's finitude and narrow limits; that is, an earthquake. We know we are going to have more earthquakes, but seismologists cannot foretell when or where they will occur. Some areas of the world have them frequently, but no spot of the earth's surface can be said to be free from the possibility of a quake; and even in the areas where they are most common, the ablest seismologist cannot predict when they will occur, nor where the epicenter of the shake will be. Some time ago we read the statement of one seismologist who said that the nearest approach they had to being able to predict when the next earthquake will take place would be to say that the longer it has been since the last one, the closer it is to the next one.

When the earthquake shook southern California on July 21, 1952, one of the leading universities which had installed the latest and most expensive equipment for measuring such quakes had just shut down their instruments for some adjusting. If they had known that the worst earthquake in

California in 46 years would come, they surely would' not have chosen that time to have the equipment out of operation.

Seismologists rate earthquake intensity by a mathematical scale with 10 as a peak. The disastrous quake of San Francisco on April 18, 1906, was rated as of 8.25 intensity; the one in southern California on July 21, 1952, was rated as 7.5, and was said by some to have been much more energetic in continuing motion. In the mercy of God, the epicenter of this quake was out in or near the Mojave Desert in largely uninhabited territory; if it had been in downtown Los Angeles - the center of more than 4,000,000 population - in all probability it would have been one of the worst disasters in history for loss of life and property. God speaks and warns, but at present He is showing mercy even in judgment. As it was, a small town of 3,000 population, Tehachapi, was nearest to the epicenter, and 11 were killed there, and every structure in town was either damaged or ruined. A lesser quake 35 days later which centered near the city of Bakersfield killed 2 and injured 32, while causing property damage of \$30,000,000.

All man's bravado leaves in a second of time when God shakes the earth. When all is well and easy, some may deny that there is a God, but let God shake the earth under them and their dormant consciences suddenly become active and they give way to fear and trembling, and many cry out to God for mercy. The effect is often quite transitory and when the shock is passed people go on in forgetfulness of God as before. What a solemn verse is found in Psalm 9: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." v. 17.

The July, 1952 earthquake in California brought into sharp contrast just a little of the power of God with man's greatest ability to unleash power. The United States Government used the Nevada desert as a proving ground for atomic weapons. Some of these explosions of man's greatest achievement broke a few windows in the city of Las Vegas less than 100 miles away, but when God shook the earth and all men's works upon it, approximately 100,000 square miles were affected. Who can measure the power that could shake such a large area? It is beyond human calculation. When the law was given, His "voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Heb. 12:26. This is a quotation from Hag. 2:6 where it is prophesied that God will shake all things before bringing in His order, but the Spirit of God in quoting it in Hebrews says that it is a promise - a promise of judgment to prepare the way for God's Christ.

Earthquakes are often mentioned in Scripture. The first one is in 1 Kings 19. In that instance Elijah was being taught a lesson. He was thinking much of himself and of great demonstrations to prove who the Lord was. The Lord allowed him to experience a strong wind that rent the rocks, then an earthquake, and then a fire; but when all these were passed, there was a still small voice. In the presence and quietness of the still small voice the Lord spoke to him. This chapter has been greatly misused, and we are told that a preacher used it for his text after the San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906, saying, "The LORD was not in the earthquake" (v. 11). Such an interpretation of the scripture is tampering with the Word of God, for God is in every earthquake, as in many, many other things, to reach men's consciences. The point in the verse is that God had to teach Elijah that these manifestations of power were not everything, but rather God speaking in power to his soul, though in a still small voice.

There was a great earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. The people fled in that day (see Amos 1:1 and Zech. 14:5). Josephus the Jewish historian states that this happened when the king went into the temple to burn incense upon the altar of incense, which only the sons of Aaron should have done. Whether this was so or not we cannot say, but we do know that at that time he was stricken with leprosy and remained a leper until the day of his death.

Another earthquake rent the rocks when the Lord gave up His Spirit on the cross (Matt. 27:51, 54), testifying to a great transaction having taken place; and still another great earthquake gave testimony to the power that raised Him from the dead (Matt. 28:2).

Special places have been shaken by God as marking His approval or disapproval of certain acts. In the early days of the Church, when the disciples prayed, "the place was shaken where they were assembled together" (Acts 4:31), thus assuring them of God's power being exercised on their behalf in the proclamation of the gospel, and their witnessing to the resurrection of Christ. Then in Acts 16 the prison where Paul and Silas were bound was shaken. This produced a great shaking in the soul of the jailer and ultimately led to his conversion through the preaching of the gospel by Paul. It also secured the release of Paul and Silas.

Earthquakes will mark the closing days of man's wickedness. When God gets ready to speak to this world that crucified His Son, He will shake many things, the earth among them. "Great earthquakes shall be in divers places" (Luke 21:11), not only in California or Japan. And as terrifying as great earthquakes are, men will actually prefer them in a coming day. They will call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them "from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Rev. 6:16. How different is the account we heard of a Christian who calmly sat on his porch during a rather severe earthquake and remarked that he was glad he had a God who could shake the earth.

Christian readers, our God and Father is the One who can shake the earth, and who will shortly shake all things. May we rest quietly and confidently in His loving and wise hands, knowing that all things work His will and serve His might.

"Through waves, through clouds and storms,

God gently clears the way;

We wait His time, so shall the night

Soon end in blissful day.

"He everywhere hath sway,

And all things serve His might;

His every act pure blessing is,

His path unsullied light.

"When He makes bare His arm,

Who shall His work withstand?

When He His people's cause defends,

Who then shall stay His hand?

"We leave it to Himself

To choose and to command;

With wonder filled we soon shall see

How wise, how strong His hand!

"We comprehend Him not,

Yet earth and heaven tell

God sits as sovereign on the throne

And ruleth all things well."

A Meditation on John 4

I have just been reading again that lovely fourth chapter of John. What a little heaven it is to sit in spirit there and be in company with Him that is the eternal life, in full grace dispensing Himself to one of the degraded captives of pollution and death!

The satisfying water springs from that grace in the Son of God which reaches and quiets the conscience; and it was such that Jesus dispensed to her. Till our need as sinners is met and answered, we must be thirsting again, though we get what we may, because the soul is not at rest with God. But Jesus came to repair the breach in the conscience - to give rest before God, and in God - and thus to impart the satisfying water of life through the Holy Spirit.

And when this is done in a great divine sense, the end is reached - God is glorified, the sinner made happy, and the entrance into the places of glory becomes a necessary result.

The end is beautifully shown in this same exquisite and marvelous chapter; for the woman goes away with a spirit in deep refreshment because of conscious acceptance and life, and the Son of God Himself is so satisfied in the fruit of His own way, that He has had that which sets Him above the thirst He had been feeling, and the food He had wanted. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." It was as manna to Him. What a thought! the Son of God comes down to our degraded earth to find His manna, His strange mysterious food and satisfaction of heart - bread which He could never have known in heaven - a joy that He could never have tasted amid the glories of His unfallen creatures. But here on earth, among sinners, He finds in the dispensing of the Father's grace, the deepest and fullest answer of all the longings of His divine love.

When a sinner is happy in Him, His end is reached and so is ours; and all that remains is to spend eternity in the glory that becomes such an end as this - His joy in us, and ours in Him.

"O Lord, Thy love's unbounded!

So full, so vast, so free;

Our thoughts are all confounded

Whene'er we think of Thee.

For us Thou cam'st from heaven,

For us to bleed and die,

That purchased and forgiven,

We might ascend on high."

A Few Thoughts on John's Gospel

The doctrine of the Gospel of John does not go beyond the seventh chapter. In chapter 6:33 we have incarnation; in verse 53, death (we eat His flesh and drink His blood); and in verse 62 we have ascension - "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" Then in chapter 7 we have the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the whole thing is completed.

In chapter 8 a fresh thought comes in. We find Him as the light of the world, detecting every man's conscience. In chapter 9 He gives eyes that men may see. He is light in chapter 8, but if anyone wants to see, he must have eyes to do so; so in chapter 9 we read (v. 6), "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle"; the clay (incarnation) and the "spittle" (something more, and from Himself), and "He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay." That which he gets from Christ Himself gives him sight; and all are in antagonism to the man in a moment. Who does not know that when your eyes are opened to see Jesus, the world is against you? Pharisees, Jews, parents are against this poor man; but he has got his eyes opened.

Chapter 10 gives the doctrine of chapter 9 - the 9th being an illustration, the 10th the doctrine. Then at the close of the 10th chapter, He completes the circle of His mission in Israel, and comes back "to the place where John at first baptized," beyond Jordan.

Now in chapters 11 and twelve we have God putting His seal on Christ in His three Sonships. He is the Son of God chapter 11; in chapter 12, the Son of David, when He enters Jerusalem; and then the Son of man. But as soon as He speaks of Himself as the Son of man, the corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die.

Chapters 13 to 17 - a series of chapters which give us the new service and teaching of the Lord as beyond the cross. In 13 His new service for His own is taught. Exodus 21 gives us in figure a picture of this service. The Hebrew servant would not go out free; he loved his master, his wife, his children; he would not go out free. His master shall bring him unto the judges, and shall also bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

You will find what a remarkable place the ears have in the scriptures which speak of the service of Christ. In Psalm 40:6, 7, "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; Mine ears halt Thou opened [or digged]:... Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God." The Son says, "I delight to do Thy will." What is the place of a servant? To have no will - the ears always opened to receive commands. In Isa. 50:4, 5, the ears are again mentioned - "He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned [learner, or instructed]." "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." Heb. 5:8. Here, notice, it is never said that He learned to be obedient. To a child you say, You must learn to be obedient; but of Christ it is said, He "learned obedience," because it was a new thing with One who ruled all; and besides, there was not the will to be disobedient in Him. "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able

to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect," etc.

In Exodus 21 the servant's ears were bored through with an awl, and he became a servant forever. So Christ: He loves His Master, His Church, His people - all. His time of service here on earth was over. But there is one thing about the Lord's service above all others - He never gives it up. He is the servant now, and will be the servant in the coming day (Luke 12:37).

He took the form of a servant. Could you take the form? No; because you are one. How blessed if the heart can enter in the smallest degree into what it cost Him to do this. In the gospels He labors and toils for poor souls, and when He has done it all, He begins again when gone on high. He came to have a place with His people here, but received it not; then He will prepare them for having a place with Him there; He cannot remain as man in a defiled earth, but He will have His people there, and He will fit them for the same.

Jonathan: One Thing Lacking

My attention was called, at a reading meeting some time ago, to the sad circumstances of the death of Jonathan on Mount Gilboa. Israel fled from before the enemy, and fell. Saul was slain, and his three sons were slain with him. It was the total overthrow of the kingdom of Saul. What a sad picture - the body of Saul and the bodies of his three sons fastened to the walls of Bethshan! Was not this a sad, sad end for any man to come to? But for such a man as Jonathan to come to such a shameful end! How was this? why was this? and what is the lesson that God would have us learn for these last days, in this inspired history?

The turning point in Jonathan's history is in 1 Samuel 18, and this also illustrates the turning point in the history of every soul born from above.

True, we find him before this a mighty man of the house of Saul. "Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba." "And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear!" (1 Sam. 13:3.) And again we find him a valiant man at the pass of Michmash. Ten centuries after these events, another could say, "I was alive without the law once." "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more,... an Hebrew of the Hebrews."

Now the turning point in the life of Jonathan was, in type, very much like the turning point in the life of Paul on his way to Damascus.

The subject opens. What a study! Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah. On the 'other side of the valley stood the adversary of the house of Saul - the defier of the armies of Israel. And there was no deliverer in the house of Saul. God sent a savior-king that day - that despised shepherd - a stripling. Ah, that despised one is God's anointed king of Israel. The mighty foe was slain that day by the youngest son of Jesse. "And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite." "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." (chap. 18:1.)

Ah, Jonathan had looked across that valley of Elah, and beheld that terrible adversary, Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits, and was greatly afraid. Not one day merely, or two but for forty days, he thus presented himself, and with him all the armies of Philistia. How gracious of God to send to the camp that savior David, the unknown king! There he stood, having finished the work God gave him to do. Complete was that victory; the champion was dead, and the Philistines fled. Look at David now. Is not that a figure of that greater victory of David's greater Son?

As Jonathan looked across the valley of Elah, so a soul is sometimes brought to look across the valley of death. And oh, how terrible the dismay if the great adversary is there, and all the sins of a past life there - all standing in dread array, like the hosts of the Philistines! May I ask you to look across the narrow deep valley, and tell me, has the Savior Jesus been revealed to your soul as the savior David stood revealed to Jonathan? Surely the one is only a picture of the other. But there

was reality and certainty to Jonathan, and this forever won his heart to David. This matter is so momentous - the valley that separates us from eternity so narrow - another, no, perhaps, not another breath, and then, after death, is it to you the judgment? If so, surely you have greater cause for dismay than Israel had in that day. You may have been as mighty a prince in your day as Jonathan; Saul's trumpet may have often sounded your praise; but has God revealed Jesus to your soul - the sent One of God - the despised and rejected sent One of God? Do you see Him? Then tell me, what are those wounds in His hands and His side? Sweetly do they speak to the heart, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Look at the mighty Conqueror, the sent One of God. "Behold the Lamb of God!" Oh, how wonderful the effect of simple faith in Jesus, as the One who has finished the work of redemption! Forty days had this adversary defied Israel; but for forty centuries had Satan defied man and dishonored God. Who but the holy Substitute could meet the adversary and maintain the glory of God? Yes, as David smote Goliath in the valley of Elah, so has Jesus met the whole power of Satan in the valley of death. My soul, it is well to meditate on this. Every sin that the accuser could bring against me has been borne by Jesus.

There were two things produced in Jonathan by this first revelation, so to speak, of David: he loved him as his own soul, and he stripped himself. Surely this was very simple and natural. How did he look in the face of that shepherd-youth who, taking his own life in his hand, with his sling and his stone had wrought such a great deliverance! And can you look at Jesus, who gave His precious life, who bore the wrath due to your sins, who shows you His hands and His side, who sweetly says, "Peace be unto you!" - when you know this, can you not love Him because He thus first loved you?

Thus, you see, faith must produce love. How beautifully simple is all this! But the stripping - why did Jonathan strip himself? Well, that other Hebrew of the Hebrews tells us why he did; and I think the one just explains why the other did it. I take these two because each of them was the finest Hebrew of his day. He was an able Jew - that Jonathan of our type, and Saul of Tarsus was one of the finest Pharisees that ever stood up in his own righteousness. Turn to Phil. 3, and read the honest account he gives of himself. He says, "Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." This was what this Hebrew of the Hebrews could say; and oh, how many a poor Pharisee in our time sighs to say it! But now let us put Jonathan's question to Paul. Why did Paul strip himself? How clear and simple his answer: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is... of God by faith." Phil. 3:7-9.

Very beautiful and very becoming, surely, this stripping is! The despised Jesus, who died on the cross for his sins, now appearing to this Hebrew of the Hebrews, this Pharisee of the Pharisees, in glory above the brightness of the sun: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." What a change those words produced! In the after-years, this Paul could write of the glorious One that had been delivered for our offenses, and raised from the dead for our justification, to be our subsisting righteousness - yes, that God had raised Him from among the dead, the holy righteous One, our perfect and everlasting righteousness before God and the whole universe. (Rom. 4:25; 5:18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9, 10.) And oh, the peace of God that fills the soul that thus knows Him, and the power of His resurrection!

Now we must see that all which had exalted Saul the Hebrew of the Hebrews was a discount against Christ; and hence, oh how gladly he strips himself that Christ may be all! Is your heart thus knit to Jesus? and are you thus stripped?

As Paul stripped off all, so "Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." What a sense of the worthiness of David the savior-king! As a military prince, this giving up of the sword is very significant. What a surrender! It is written of the enthroned four and twenty elders that they "cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power."

I take these, then, to be two very blessed marks of a Christian as illustrated in our Jonathan. Such a sense of the value of redemption through the blood of Jesus that the heart is knit to Him in love; and such a sense of what He is as our righteousness or justification, risen from the dead, as at once to strip us of the old robe of self-righteousness - yes, every rag, and sword, and girdle - all, all that is of self, its righteousness, its effort, fighting, and walk - all given up to Jesus the righteousness of God, Christ in resurrection.

And sure I am, dear reader, if Christ has not thus been revealed to you, as David stood revealed to Jonathan, nothing could induce you to give up your old robe, garment, sword, and girdle. If you cannot feel quite sure that your old robe is fit for the presence of God, the devil bids you hope that you may yet fight a better fight, and walk a better walk; it may be mass-making, law-keeping, rites and ceremonies - anything, if Satan can only keep you out of Jonathan's stripping room, where you are nothing and Christ is all.

We will now look a little further at this instructive history (1 Sam. 19). Where Christ is truly known, there is not a mere momentary excitement, but abiding love to Jesus, and increasing faith in His finished work - such faith as must confess Him before men, at whatever cost. Surely we see this in Paul, and in all the members of the early Church; and so I read in our chapter, "But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David." "Delighted much!" We should notice at this point of the history a striking parallel. At this time the kingdom of Israel was outwardly governed by the house of Saul. But God had rejected him and his house, and Samuel had anointed David; and faith knew him as the anointed and coming king. In like manner, faith now knows, from the record of God's Word, that the glory of this world, with its kingdoms and its god, is all judged and about to be swept away at the coming of the King of Righteousness and Prince of Peace.

Well, so it was, I say, in Israel at this time. The hatred that is now manifested to Christ and His true followers was in a like manner shown by Saul to David and his true little band of men. Do not forget this, will you? for you will find the world's hatred to Christ a true test of your own heart. Thus was Jonathan tested. "Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David." And what does the loving Jonathan do? He told David. Is not this beautiful? Oh that you and I may go and do likewise! Have you not at times been greatly surprised to find hatred to Jesus where you least expected it? You may have been invited to meet a few friends, nearly all professors. (Saul was a professor, by the way.) Very soon you find that any subject or person may be introduced for conversation except your much-loved Jesus, in whom you greatly delight. And as to the thought that He is the glorious coming King, you must not name such a thing. Oh, rise up from among these hypocrites! Go first and tell Jesus, and then speak for Jesus as Jonathan spoke

for David; or, remember, if you do not, you, silently at least, deny your Lord, by even sitting with them who practically welcome Barabbas and say, Away with the returning Lord!

"Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee; for also what he did was very advantageous to thee. For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore, then, wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?"

Now was not this a good confession? We find Paul in the same track: "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." And Jesus says, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." Mark 8:38.

And as Jonathan spoke good of David, oh, cannot we speak good of Jesus? Has He not wrought a great salvation? Apart from Jesus, is there anything truly great or good? Has any other one glorified God about sin, as He has on the cross? Does any other thing or person give eternal life but the risen Jesus? Does any other thing give peace, even to a guilty conscience, but the blood of Jesus? I am not aware of anything in the history of the world, of all nations, that enables man to stand on the brink of the grave, that valley of Elah, and look steadfastly into eternity, and say, We are always confident. "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

And far more, tell me, has not Jesus brought life and incorruptibility to light? Yes, through the self-existing One, by whom all created things began to exist; yet has He not through death taken a new place for man, beyond sin and death? And as the beginning of that new creation, is He not what we in resurrection shall forever be, "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality"? And is He so soon to be manifested who is indeed "God manifest"? - ineffable center of universal worship, whose smile shall fill a universe with joy! Oh, in these few remaining days of His rejection here below, shall we be ashamed of Jesus? As our Jonathan confessed David in the doomed house of Saul, so, and more, may we confess Jesus before this doomed world!

Jonathan: One Thing Lacking

Come, let us now pursue our Jonathan a little further in 1 Sam. 20. Saul still seeks the life of David. "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." But persecution marks out the true followers of Jesus: "Ye are they that have continued with Me in My temptations." This was very tenderly expressed, but it showed how the heart of Jesus valued the faithful fellowship of His disciples, however dull, when the outward house sought His life, and took counsel to put Him to death. Surely this was beautifully foreshadowed in our chapter. Precious to David was the sympathy of devoted Jonathan. How it sweetened the bitter cup! Those words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" tell out fully how the heart of Jesus beats for all the members here below. And do they not also show how dear to Him is sympathy with the hated and persecuted ones? Oh, what a strange thing man's hatred of Jesus was, and still is!

Have you not noticed, from that day to this, man's hatred is in proportion to the Christian's faithfulness to Christ? Is it not so? Who are really hated by the great outward house of our day but the despised few who desire to really tread in His blessed footsteps? Are any others slandered and hated as these? But from the day of Paul to this moment, the worst lie against Christ is this, that if we give to Him the honor of complete and everlasting salvation, without works of our own, that this doctrine will lead to disobedience, and carelessness of walk. How fully this lie is rebuked in our Jonathan - "Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee." Precious obedience, heart obedience, fruit of faith! I might point everywhere in the New Testament and find the same fruit. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" is the first impulse of the newborn Paul.

Is this the language of your heart to your precious Lord? - "Whatsoever Thy soul desireth, I will even do it for Thee." This goes very far beyond the law, good and holy and just as it was. It is the heaven-implanted desire to do the will of the Lord, even whatsoever He desireth me to do. And there was this readiness in Jonathan to serve David in the house of his father, and to show David the disposition of his father, be it kindness or hatred. I think we may say he was truly David's man in the house of Saul.

Judging from outward appearance, David was the rejected outcast; and yet how beautifully faith knew him as the chosen of Jehovah! "And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul." And when the new moon was come, and the king sat in his seat, David's place was empty; yet how fully did Jonathan confess David, though his confession brought down upon him the severe anger of his father Saul! "And he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse and rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die." Still Jonathan speaks good for David: "Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?" "If they have hated Me, they will hate you also."

"And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him." Well did he now know the determined hatred of his father to David. How much his heart felt as the arrow of warning was shot we may gather from this: "As soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city."

The sorrows of God's anointed David were but shadows of the deeper sorrows of God's only begotten Son, whether we look at the manifold sufferings by which He was perfected as the Captain of our salvation, or at the suffering of death, by which He is now glorified at the right hand of God. No doubt, the pressure on the heart of David was used in giving utterance to those then future sorrows of our Jesus.

But at this point of Jonathan's history - and it is a solemn point - we must remember that David was now an outcast from the house of Saul, and that the Lord Jesus is at this moment an outcast from this world; that as Saul hated David, so, and more as, has this world hated, rejected, cast out - yes, murdered the anointed Christ of God; and that He is still the hated and rejected Jesus.

But there was another side of the picture. God had rejected the house of Saul, though He long bore with it - yes, during all the time of David's rejection. And He had chosen and anointed David. And the Lord was with David, even as He was not with Saul. Surely Samuel knew this, and David knew this, though faith was sorely tried. And Jonathan knew this, as we shall see in his next and last interview with David.

But I must now tell you of the one thing lacking in our Jonathan. It is very painful to do so; shall I tell you why? Ah, there are so many Jonathans in our day! Is it not sad - to know Jesus, and to love Jesus, to confess Him, to delight much in Jesus, to desire to serve Him in this evil world, and yet to stop short of one - the crowning thing lacking!

What can this one thing be? My reader may say, through the grace of God, "All that you have said of this typical Jonathan as yet, is true of me." You can, then, remember the time when God brought your sins before you, and the adversary was permitted to harass your soul, as Goliath defied the armies of Israel at the valley of Elah, and you found no deliverance, no peace, until the Holy Spirit revealed Jesus to your soul, the sent One of God, and told you how He had finished the great work of redemption, and that through His precious blood your sins were forever gone, as the Philistines fled from the valley of Elah. And did this win your heart to Jesus, as Jonathan was knit to David? You may have had many a crushing of human pride since then. But can you say, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee"? and have you been stripped of all self-righteousness? are you fairly shut up to Jesus? is He all and you nothing? is He precious to your soul? Can you say, "I delight much in-Him"? for sure I am He is much delighted in, even as we learn the emptiness of all else, and the worthlessness of all that is of man. And have you confessed Jesus in your own society - in, it may be, your own house? Have you held on, speaking well of Jesus in the face of all hatred and opposition? As Jonathan was David's witness, David's man, have you been the witness of Jesus? Has it been your delight to hold communion with and serve Jesus, as Jonathan delighted to tell David and serve him? If so, is it not painful that there should be all this and yet come short of the one thing lacking?

Did you notice the last few words as to our Jonathan? (chp. 20:42.) And David "arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city." And where did David depart to? In chapter 22 we find him in the cave of Adullam. "And when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them; and there were with him about four hundred men." But there was one that was not with him, and that one was even our Jonathan. But perhaps you ask, "Is it possible that Jonathan knew of the coming reign of David, and was not with him?" Well let us read Jonathan's last interview with David, and we shall see there can be no mistake about that.

"And Jonathan, Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth. And they two made a covenant before the LORD.

And David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house" - and that house the house of the rejected Saul. Yet, it is quite clear he well knew the coming reign of his beloved David; and as well did he know the rejection of Saul's house; and yet he failed to go outside and take his place, the

place of faith, with God's chosen and coming king.

Do you know, my reader, the end of the present age? Do you know that "when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh"? - that "judgment must begin at the house of God"? - that as the apostate house of Saul was cut off, so shall apostate Christendom be spewed out of His mouth? Now do you not see much around you bearing this character of soul? What a day of blowing of trumpets! Let the Hebrews hear what we are doing! Never was there such a day of man's doing and trumpeting. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." This is our Lord's own description of the last state of the great outward doomed house. (Rev. 3:15-20.) Great in the world, indeed, was Saul when compared with the outcast David, but how wretched and miserable his end!

But do you know, my reader, that the earth-rejected Jesus is even now at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and that He will quickly come, and with an assembling shout call up His saints to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4); and that afterward He will come in judgment on them who have not obeyed the gospel (2 Thess. 1); and that then the glorious reign of the now-rejected Jesus will surely take place? Do you say, Yes I know all these things will surely come to pass?

And do you know that God has by His Spirit gathered a few of the Lord's redeemed ones to the now-despised Jesus, as David's four hundred were gathered to him in the cave of Adullam? True, they were a sorry company, those four hundred, but they were gathered to such a David. Ah, had Jonathan been one of them, would his body have been fastened to the walls of Bethshan?

But it is high time to put the question to you: Where are you? Are you building wood, hay, and stubble in the great house of Saul - the outward, showy Christendom - that which professes to be the Church of God, but which has indeed become the church of the world? Or have you taken your place outside the camp with the rejected but coming Jesus? Ah, I think I hear you say, Oh, those separated Christians, they are such dreadful people! So our Jonathan might have said of David's four hundred. But what of Jesus? Is He not worthy that you should forsake everything and identify yourself alone with Him? You will find a few others, through mercy, in the same blessed place; though indeed the religious world tries hard to make them a sect, and as they were in the days of Paul, a sect everywhere spoken against. I do not mince the matter. There is the great outward house, like the house of Saul; and there is separation from it, and identification with Jesus in His rejection, like the four hundred with David; and if you are a Christian, you are certainly in one place or the other. Perhaps you say, I get my bread in this great worldly system. Well, that is, I grant a very serious matter. But so did Jonathan, and you see the end of it in his case - walls of Bethshan.

"But," says another, "do you not see the influence I have, by staying where I am? what a congregation! what opportunities to speak for Jesus!

Do you think I should have the same, or anything like the same opportunities if I took my place outside to the name of Jesus? And think how much my own relations would be against it! And to leave all the splendor and comfort of all that is admired in the world, where one can truly speak for Jesus." Ah, my friend, Jonathan could have said all this; but why did he lose his reward for his service and love to David? and why did he come to the shameful walls of Bethshan? Was it not because he acted on the very same principle that so many act upon now? He clung to the

outward, which God had rejected, and failed to take his place with the poor and despised followers of God's anointed one. You know, my reader, that God is not with the bazaars and worldliness and tolerated evil of the professing church. If you delight much in Jesus, if you desire to do whatsoever He desireth you, then surely His own voice will be heard in these precious scriptures concerning Himself. Oh, is it not sad to be spending your time in and for that which is to be destroyed at the coming of the Lord? Occasional visits and communion, and then back to the outward house of Saul - Ah, this will not do! You may have Jonathan's four marks of true conversion to Christ and yet lose your reward.

1. Like Jonathan, you may have been filled with love to Jesus, beholding Him the Lamb of God that has put away your sins (1 Sam. 18:1); 2. Stripped of self for Jesus (v. 4); 3. Made full confession of Jesus, delighting much in Him (chap. 19:1-5); 4. You may have desired to do whatsoever Jesus desireth (chap. 20:4): but, as Rebecca left all for her coming Isaac, are you willing to leave all and take your place of devoted identification with Jesus?

Later Than Ever

A little boy was playing dreamily with his toys at the foot of the grandfather clock. When it began to chime the hour, the mechanism jammed. He counted in amazement as it struck eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen times. Excited, he threw down his toy and ran through the house calling, "Mother! Daddy! Come quickly. It's later than it's ever been before!"

Bible believers would do well to listen to the sinister sounds of the age, drop their "toys" and show some concern and vision for the present situation. It IS later than it has ever been before.

Life and Liberty: Loose Him and Let Him Go

"Loose Him, and Let Him Go"

There are many divinely quickened souls who need to know the power of those commanding words, "Loose him, and let him go." John 11:44. They have been quickened out of a state of death by the life-giving voice of the Son of God, but they "come forth," "bound hand and foot with graveclothes," and their faces "bound about with a napkin." That is to say, they have not as yet been able to shake off the trammels of their former condition, or to go on their way in the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free. That they have received divine life is manifest from the very struggles, fluctuations, and conflicts of which they complain.

Those who are "dead" know nothing of such things. As long as Lazarus lay in the silent tomb in the cold grasp of death, he never felt his graveclothes to be any hindrance to movement, or his napkin to be any hindrance to vision. All was dark, cold, and lifeless; and the graveclothes were the suited trappings of such a condition. A man whose hands and feet were fast bound in the fetters of death, could not possibly feel any inconvenience from graveclothes; and one whose eyes were fast sealed by the stern hand of death, could not feel any inconvenience from a napkin.

Thus it is with the unconverted, the unregenerate, the unawakened. They are "dead" - morally, spiritually "dead." Their feet are fast bound in the fetters of death, but they know it not. Their hands are confined by the handcuffs of death, but they feel it not. Their eyes are covered by the dark napkin of death, but they perceive it not. They are dead. The robes of death are around them; the graveclothes are upon them and suit their condition.

But then in some way or another, the persons for whom I write this paper have been acted upon by the mighty, quickening voice of the Son of God - "the resurrection, and the life." A verse of Scripture, a sermon, a lecture, a tract, a hymn, a prayer, some passing event, has proved to them a life-giving voice. It has sounded upon their ears, it has fallen upon their hearts, it has penetrated to the very depths of their being. They are aroused, they know not how. They wake up, they know not why. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3:8. The life is there in all its reality. The new birth has taken place. The new nature has been communicated. Those who are standing by, who know what life is, see the movements, the struggles, the heavings and workings of life, but as yet the grave clothes and napkin are there. I believe there are many in this condition - many quickened - many born - who know not the privileges which attach to their birth, or the source and object of the life which has been communicated to them. In a word, they need that the voice which has already said, "Lazarus, come forth," should also say, "Loose him, and let him go." They have been quickened; they need to be emancipated.

Let us take an example or two from the Word of God. The prodigal was quickened before he was emancipated. "I will arise and go to my father," was the utterance of the new life - the aspiration of the new nature. When he spoke thus, he was full of doubt and uncertainty as to the mode in which

the father would receive him. He was full of legality - full of the thought of servitude instead of the thought of sonship. The new life was there, but as yet it was connected with numerous doubts and fears within, and the rags of his former condition were upon him. He had been acted upon by a life-giving voice, and he only needed to be emancipated. The new nature having been imparted, moved toward the source from which it had sprung; but as yet its movement was cramped, as it were, by the graveclothes, and its vision impeded by the napkin.

Now who would think of maintaining the monstrous idea that the prodigal ought to have continued in his rags? to have persisted in his doubts, fears, and uncertainty? Who would assert that for the rest of his days Lazarus ought to have worn his graveclothes and napkin in order to prove that he was a living man? It will be said that the father's embrace dispelled the prodigal's fears, for how could he fear in the arms of paternal love? But was it not the father also who commanded the rags to be displaced by "the best robe"?

And then as to Lazarus, it may be urged that the voice that had quickened and raised him, commanded him to be loosed and let go. Exactly so; and is it not just the same in reference to anyone who has obtained new life by believing in the name of the Son of God? Truly so. He should no longer wear the rags of the "far country" or the trappings of the grave. His hands and feet should be unbound so that he may serve the Lord Christ, and run in the way of His commandments. His face too should be uncovered - the napkin should be removed - so that he may gaze upon the One whose voice has quickened him.

But let us take another example. In the 7th chapter of Romans we have a striking case of a quickened soul not yet emancipated. Here we see the earnest struggles of the new life - the fervent breathings of the new nature. Here we find one who can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man"; and yet he has to say, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Now the believer is not "sold" but "bought" - "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ" - ransomed from the power of the grave - delivered "from going down to the pit." Again, we find this quickened soul confessing, "What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." This is a condition of perpetual defeat, whereas the believer can say, "We are more than conquerors," and "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." (See Rom. 8:37; -2 Cor. 2:14.) Last, we hear this quickened soul exclaiming, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But the believer, instead of being a "wretched man," seeking for deliverance, is really a happy man, rejoicing in being fully and eternally delivered.

In short, the 7th chapter of Romans which has been so sadly misunderstood, is a simple picture of a soul divinely quickened but not yet divinely emancipated - a soul not yet able to say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Rom. 8:2. It is one who has been acted upon by the authoritative word, "Lazarus, come forth," but of whom it has yet to be said, "Loose him, and let him go." In other words, there is life but not liberty. There is sufficient light to see the wretched condition of "the old man," but not sufficient to see the position of the new - there is the just perception of the spirituality of the law without the knowledge of deliverance from its condemning power. Should any rest satisfied with such a condition? Is this the believer's proper standing? Assuredly not. As well might we maintain that Lazarus ought to have been quite satisfied to go on all his days "bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face... bound about with a napkin." This would never do. The Lord does not do His work by halves, either

as to soul or body. The life and the liberty are connected as coming from the same source. The life which the believer has is not old Adam-life improved, but new Adam-life imparted; and the liberty in which the believer walks is not liberty for the old Adam to fulfill his horrible lusts, but liberty for the new man to walk with God.

Oh! how ardently I long that those precious souls for whom I write may fully enter into what I have written. I write for quickened souls who are not yet emancipated - who have life but not liberty - who have "come forth," but are not yet loosed and let go. There are many such. There are many in the condition of the prodigal when he arose from the far country, but had not yet reached the father's arms - many in the 7th of Romans. I earnestly long for their full emancipation. I would affectionately remind them that the whole work is done - the sacrifice completed - the ransom paid. They have not to read another syllable in order to get settled peace. Christ has made peace. God is well pleased. The Holy Spirit bears witness. The Word of God is plain. Where then is there the foundation for a doubt? The reader may exclaim, "Alas! it is in myself." Yes; but my dear friend, you have nothing to do in a matter which has already been done for you. The righteousness of God is "to him that worketh not." If you had aught to do in order to get righteousness, then Rom. 4:5 would not be true. Christ has done all for your present, personal, and perfect salvation. May many hear and understand those thrilling accents. "Loose him, and let him go."

Life's Experiences: His Appointments

"He performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with Him." Job 23:14.

Believing that life's experiences are HIS appointment can make a tremendous change in one's life. Interruptions, even when unreasonable, will be met with patience. Irritations will not upset us. Ill-treatment and misrepresentation will not worry us. Duties will be gladly accepted. "Overwork" will not be resented. The reason? God is seen to be over all. Nothing comes to us but by His permission.

I can afford to let Him choose, and lay my care to rest;

For well I know my loving Lord will give to me the best.

The Lord's Presence

It is in the day of trial and difficulty that the soul experiences something of the deep and untold blessedness of being able to count on God. It is not in gliding along the surface of a tranquil lake, that the reality of the Master's presence is felt, but actually when the tempest roars and the waves roll over the ship.

The Lord does not hold out to us the prospect of exemption from trial and tribulation - quite the opposite. He tells us we shall have to meet both the one and the other; but He promises to be with us in them, and this is infinitely better. God's presence in the trial is much better than exemption from the trial. The sympathy of His heart with us is sweeter far than the power of His hand for us. The Master's presence with His faithful servants while passing through the furnace was better far than the display of His power to keep them out of it (Dan. 3).

Marks of a Christian

A Christian ought to be a comforter, with kind words on his lips and sympathy in his heart; he should carry sunshine wherever he goes and diffuse happiness around him.

If you see Jesus and abide in the light of His countenance habitually, your faces, your characters, your lives will grow resplendent, even without your knowing it. If the tender mercy of God has visited us, and done so much more for us than I can tell or than you can hear, let us ourselves exhibit tender mercy in our dealings with our fellow men.

He lives most and lives best who is the means of imparting spiritual life to others.

Martha and Mary

Luke 10:38-42

The little scene which closes this chapter is peculiar to Luke, serving his general purpose of instructing us in great principles of truth. The two sisters here introduced were differently minded; and, being brought to the trial of the mind of Christ, we get the judgment of God on matter of much value to us.

The house which we now enter was Martha's. The Spirit of God tells us this, as being characteristic of Martha; and into her house, with all readiness of heart, she receives the Lord, and prepares for Him the very best provision it had. His labors and fatigue called for this. Martha well knew that His ways abroad were the ways of the good Samaritan, who would go on foot that others might ride; and she loved Him too well not to observe and provide for His weariness.

But Mary had no house for Him. She was, in spirit, a stranger like Himself; but she takes her place at His feet, and hears His word. She knows, as well as Martha, that He was wearied; but she knows also that there was a fullness in Him that could afford to be more wearied still. Her ear and her heart, therefore, still use Him, instead of her hand or her foot ministering to Him.

And in these things lay the difference between the sisters. Martha's eye saw His weariness, and would give to Him; Mary's faith apprehended His fullness underneath His weariness, and would draw from Him.

This brings out the mind of the Son of God. The Lord accepts the care of Martha as long as it is simple care and diligence about His present need; but the moment she brings her mind into competition with Mary's she learns His judgment, and is taught to know that Mary by her faith, was refreshing Him with a far sweeter feast than all her care and the provision of her house could possibly have supplied.

Mary's faith gave Jesus a sense of His own divine glory. It told Him, that though He was the wearied One, He could still feed and refresh her. She was at His feet, hearing His word. There was no temple there, or light of the sun; but the Son of God was there, and He was everything to her.

This was the honor He prized, and blessedly indeed was she in His secret. When He was thirsty and tired at Jacob's well, He forgot it all in giving out other waters, which no pitcher could have held, or well beside His own supplied; and here Mary brings her soul to the same well, knowing that in spite of all His weariness it was as full as ever for her use.

And oh, dear brethren, what principles are here disclosed to us! Our God is asserting for Himself the place of supreme power and supreme goodness, and He will have us debtors to Him. Our sense of His fullness is more precious to Him than all the service we can render Him. Entitled, as He is, to more than all creation could give Him, yet above all things does He desire that we should use His love, and draw from His treasures.

The honor which our confidence puts upon Him is His highest honor; for it is the divine glory to be still giving, still blessing, still pouring forth from unexhausted fullness. Under the law He had to receive from us, but in the gospel He is giving to us; and the words of the Lord Jesus are these "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). And this place He will fill forever; for "without 'all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better" (Heb. 7:7).

Praise shall, it is true, arise to Him from everything that hath breath; but forth from Himself and from the seat of His glory shall go the constant flow of blessing, the light to cheer, the waters to refresh, and the leaves of the tree to heal; and our God shall taste His own joy, and display His own glory, in being a Giver forever.

Matthew 11:27

Christ had the perfect consciousness of His solitariness in connection with divine glory. In substance He says, "No one knows Me but the Father." "I know who I am." A certain solitude belongs to Him, and most blessed that it is so. There is only one Messiah, only one Son, and He knew it. He never forgets who He is, or ever acts short of what He is, as the only begotten of the Father. Again He says, "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Who could reveal the Father save the Son? Part of the glory of Christ is seen in the use He would make of this power, and the blessedness of His knowledge which gives Him the exclusive power and right to reveal the Father. He would teach whom He would, to know Him; that is His prerogative.

"All things are delivered unto Me of My Father." What was Christ's thought in connection with this universal power? I have got the secret of the Father, I have power to reveal Him, I will look out for some to whom the Father can be revealed. That is the thought of Christ's heart, and does not this tell out a whole volume of His character? What a contrast to ourselves; if we had all things in our power, what should we do with them all? Should we not want some fragment for self? With Christ, it is only, "My Father"; all is in connection with Him.

My Conversion: His Personal Story

Good instructions, as to the contents of the Bible, were mine at school. At seventeen I was under a John the Baptist ministry; but I never knew the gospel till, at nineteen, I went abroad, full of the animal pleasures of a military life. I and my comrade spent a long and tiring day on the field of Waterloo in June, 1824.

Arriving late at Lens, I soon went to my bedroom. It struck me, "I will say my prayers" (it was a habit of childhood, neglected in youth). I knelt down by my bedside, but found I had forgotten what to say. I looked up, as if trying to remember, when suddenly there came on my soul a something I had never known before. It was as if someone, infinite and Almighty, knowing everything, full of the deepest, tenderest interest in myself, though utterly and entirely abhorring everything in and connected with me, was making known to me that He pitied and loved myself. My eye saw no one; my ear heard no one; but I knew assuredly that the One whom I knew not, and never had met, had met me for the first time, and made me know we were together.

There was a light no sense or faculty of my own human nature ever knew; there was a presence of what seemed infinite in greatness, something altogether apart and supreme, and yet at the same time making itself known to me in a way that I as a man could thoroughly feel, and taste, and enjoy. The light made all light, Himself withal, but it did not destroy, for it was love itself; and I was loved individually by Him. The exquisite tenderness and fullness of that love appropriated me myself for Him, in whom it all was; while the light, from which it was inseparable in Him, discovered to me the contrast I had been to all that was light and love.

I wept for awhile on my knees, said nothing, and got into bed. The next morning's first thought was, "Get a Bible." I got one, and it was henceforward my handbook. My clergyman companion noticed this, and also the entire change of life and thought. We journeyed on together to Geneva where there was an active persecution of the faithful going on; he went to Italy, and I found my own company - stayed with those who were suffering for Christ.

I could quite now, after fifty years trial, adapt to myself those few lines as descriptive of that night's experience:

"Christ, the Father's rest eternal,
Jesus, once looked down on me,
Called me by my name external,
And revealed Himself to me.
With His whisper, light, life-giving
Glowed in me, the dark and dead,
Made me live, Himself receiving,

Who once died for me, and bled."

My Father Will Meet 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." John 14:2.

The scenery was monotonous and the train was stuffy, but the little fellow sat quietly, even though he was all alone. Finally, a motherly old lady leaned forward and asked, "Aren't you tired of the long ride?" The little lad looked up and replied brightly, "Yes, but I don't mind it because my father is going to meet me when I get to the end of it."

My Spikenard: House Was Filled With the Odor

If there be one thing more than another that one desires for oneself first of all, and for all the beloved children of God, it is that constancy of affection toward the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, our precious Savior, that is implied in the word "devotedness".

In accomplishing the mighty work of redemption that has glorified God and saved our souls, the blessed Lord has acquired a quite peculiar claim over His ransomed people; and we may say in truth that He has endured the untold sufferings of Calvary, not merely that we might be delivered from going down to the pit, but that He Himself might become the commanding and supreme Object of our renewed affections. This blessed and happy response will be rendered assuredly without hindrance in the eternal day that awaits us beyond this valley of the shadow of death; indeed in the Apocalypse, when the door of heaven is opened (chap. 4), and the whole scene is expanded before the gaze of the beloved disciple, it is to present the fact that in spite of the outside place afforded Him in the closing epoch of Christendom (Rev. 3:20), the Lamb is the supreme Object of heavenly worship and delight.

But that which is specially grateful to His heart today, is that in the time of His "kingdom and patience" He should be to us the governing motive of our lives; and when our souls have learned somewhat of His worthiness and His glory, if our eyes but rest upon that face whence there shines the light of the knowledge of the glory of God (2 Cor. 4), it is not difficult to count all things but loss. "The glory of that light" fills the vision of our souls, the eyes of our hearts, as it did that of Paul the Apostle. May God disclose this fact more clearly to each one of us.

The voice of the King's beloved in the "Song of Songs" expresses this attachment to His Person, and joy in His presence when, as brought into His chamber (S. of Sol. 1:4), and beholding Him at His table, her spikenard breathes forth her thanks and worship in grateful perfume (v. 12). She may have much to discover of her own dullness and unworthiness, but His faithful love triumph's in the end, and He becomes the chiefest among ten thousand (chap. 5:10) while she learns the wondrous secret, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me." Chap. 7:10. The love that "Many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown it," has overcome every obstacle.

John 12 contains the well-known scene in the house of Bethany where that heavenly Stranger, soon to part out of this world and go to the Father, reclines at table in the circle dearly loved of His heart. It was six days before the Passover, when the blood of that Lamb whom God had provided (Gen. 22:8; John 1:29) - that "precious blood" - should be shed, and the grave that had opened for Lazarus should close upon the Son of God. With what joy had those two devoted sisters received again their brother from the dead, and what feelings of thankfulness and gratitude would animate the reunited household as their Lord and Master, who had borne and dissipated their sorrow, came into their midst to share their joy! It is not now the King at His own table, but the King in lowly guise, a stranger in the creation of His own hands, come down to be the Man of Sorrows and to take a place in perfect grace at the table of those who had been in sorrow, that He might win the confidence of their hearts.

How blessedly fruitful, in at least one case, had been His stoop, the sequel proved; for there in the presence of the joy of Lazarus, the service of Martha, the interest of the disciples, and the covetousness of Judas, one heart is moved in its deepest depths. To Mary, the thought that overpowered all else within her was that the One she had learned to love and reverence was going to death. Of what value was even the tenderest tie of earth, or its most precious objects, if He, the Lord of all, the Resurrection and the Life, should find but a tomb. For her the hopes of earth closed forever in the death of Jesus, and she dedicates to Him, to those blessed feet, her very costly spikenard; for all lost its worth in the estimation of the heart that knew that Christ was to be numbered with the dead. To see how very far distant from her apprehension of the moment was the discernment of the others, one has only to read the selfish objection of Judas (into which alas! the eleven fell also - compare Matt. 26:8), and the divine approbation and vindication of the Lord Himself. "Against the day of My burying hath she kept this," is the proof that if all should misinterpret the deed, Jesus understood it. No wonder that the whole house was filled with the spikenard's odor, for Mary had chosen "that good part," the self-effacement that could be willing that all she held as of value here below might descend with Him to the tomb.

Such is the beautiful fruit in its season that the love of Jesus produces in this barren world from hearts like our own. So is manifested that "first love" of the saint, which would go even to death (John 13:37) for the sake of his Lord and Master. Yet how we need to be sustained by His power in such a path of devotedness, else we lose our first love as did Ephesus (Rev. 2:4); or like Peter learn by sad and bitter experience that except we are energized by a force more powerful than natural affection, our love will quickly cool, and we shall deeply dishonor Christ. But, thank God, He keeps the feet of His saints (1 Sam. 2:9; Pro. 2:8), and is able to keep us from falling (Jude 24). By His intercession on high, and the washing of our feet by the way, our gracious High Priest is able to sustain our renewed affections for His Person, and maintain the freshness and bloom of "first love."

In none of His saints is this power more manifested than in Paul the Apostle when from his Roman dungeon he writes to his beloved Philippians, being now "such a one as Paul the aged." Well-nigh thirty years had come and gone since the "glory of that light" revealed a Savior to his soul, years of unremitting toil and suffering, and "beside those things that are without... the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:23-28). Yet now, arrived at the end of his course, he is separated from those individuals and assemblies so dearly loved; and the devoted servant learns about this season that all Asia had turned away from him, and even among those who had been a joy and refreshment to him, some were ashamed of his chain as "the prisoner of the Lord" (2 Tim. 1:15, 16; Eph. 4:1). Yet in his letter to the Philippians we find no vain repinings, no regrets. He has counted the cost, and in chapter 3 the aged man says, while recalling what he had done so long before (v. 7.) "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." He goes over the list of what he took pride in - not bad things, but things that the flesh could glory in, made more attractive by this, that though they belonged to an economy that had passed away, they came from God Himself, Paul knew their value, he had felt their power, yet so had he learned Christ that there is no flinching now in his soul. "Yea, doubtless," he says, "and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things." v. 8. I seem to see him there, his box of spikenard (as it were) in his hands, devoting to that glorified Lord all that he held precious. All had descended with Him to the grave, and the desire of his soul now is that he may "if

any way... arrive at the resurrection from among the dead" (v. 11; J.N.D. Trans.), a place with Christ in a deathless scene of glory. And if that prisoner could find in the offering sent through Epaphroditus "an odor of a sweet smell," we may say that for the heart of Christ that prison cell was "filled with the odor of the ointment."

May the Lord teach us what this devotedness is that dedicates all to Him as an intelligent service (Rom. 12:1).

Name of Jesus

Name of Jesus, highest name!

Name that earth and heaven adore.

From the heart of God it came,

Leads me to God's heart once more.

Name of Jesus! living tide!

Days of drought for me are past.

How much more than satisfied

Are the thirsty lips at last.

Only Jesus! fairest name!

Life and rest and peace and bliss!

Jesus, evermore the same,

He is mine, and I am His.

The Nearness of Our Hope

I have been considering the parable of the ten virgins lately and have been much impressed with the four principle events: 1) The going forth to meet the bridegroom; 2) The slumber of the virgins; 3) The midnight cry; 4) The coming of the bridegroom. (See Matt. 25:1-10.)

It is clear that the first three of these have taken place. The early saints, in the energy of first love, started out to meet Christ who had promised to return. Time wore on, the bridegroom tarried, the watchers grew weary of watching, they relinquished the hope of His coming, and then slumbered and slept.

It is an indisputable fact that for centuries the Church slept on oblivious of the fact that He, whose word can never pass away, had promised to return for His people. Suddenly the cry sounded, "Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him," and the virgins arose and trimmed their lamps, and once more set out to meet the coming One.

But it may be asked, How do you know the cry has been made? Well, suppose we consider for a moment the state of the Church at the commencement of the past century. Do we find that the saints were watching and waiting for the return of the Bridegroom? Was any voice heard announcing the speedy coming of the long absent One? No, the truth was still buried in the forgetfulness of past centuries; the virgins were still sleeping as they had slept for ages.

I come back to the present moment, and I find as the contrast to this, that in many countries where the gospel is preached, the servants of the Lord are proclaiming the second coming of the Lord; while from the press there pours forth a continuous stream of books, pamphlets and tracts which announce the same blessed fact.

Are we wrong then in saying that the midnight cry has sounded? No, beloved, the fact is undeniable that the Spirit of God has recovered to the Church the long forgotten truth that Christ is coming again, and thousands of the redeemed have arisen and trimmed their lamps and gone forth to meet Him.

Where are we then? In the interval between the third and fourth events, that is, between the midnight cry and the coming of the bridegroom. There is therefore positively nothing else to take place before He comes. Now the Lord's words in verses 5 and 6 showed that the probability of the interval between the second and third events was a prolonged one, and we know as a fact that it did extend over many centuries. Not so, however, the period between the third and fourth events; it is manifestly a very brief one, very little is required to fill it up, and that little is shown to be done hastily and quickly, things hasten toward their fulfillment; and it seems to me the Lord intended to convey this thought. Notice, "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went

in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut."

Immediately the cry is made, the virgins arise and trim their lamps; those who lack the oil go to procure it; but before they can return, the bridegroom comes, and the possessors go in with him to the marriage, and the door is shut. Surely this is expressive of the brevity of the interval between the cry and the coming. It follows then that we are on the very eve of His advent. Blessed thought to our weary hearts; the waiting time is nearly ended, the day of glory is about to dawn.

But if the bride has slumbered and forgotten the promise of her Lord, the bridegroom has not done so. Never once during the period of nineteen centuries of His vigil has He forgotten that the bride whom He won at the cross is still in the wilderness, and must be fetched by Himself ere she can be His companion in glory.

And what must it be to Him to know that the moment is so near, when He shall present her to Himself all glorious, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; when He shall gaze on her beauty, the reflection of His own, and find an eternal recompense for the sorrows endured in the days of His flesh.

And what is this thought to you, dear saint of God? Are you listening for His shout? Are you longing for His coming because He is the treasure of your heart? Is your finger on the latch ready to open to Him immediately when He knocks? In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, He will come, and the weariness of the wilderness will be exchanged for the rest and glory of His presence.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The Need of Instructing Children: Parents, Awaken

We cannot but feel deeply for our children growing up in the atmosphere which at present surrounds us, and which will become yet darker and darker. We long to see more earnestness on the part of Christians in seeking to store the minds of the young with the precious and soul-saving knowledge of the Word of God.

The child Josiah and the child Timothy (see 2 Chron. 34; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15-17) should incite us to greater diligence in the instruction of the young, whether in the bosom of the family, in the Sunday School, or in any way we can teach them. It will not do for us to fold our arms and say, "When God's time comes, our children will be converted, and till then our efforts are useless." This is a fatal mistake - God "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11). He blesses our prayerful efforts in the instruction of our children.

And further, who can estimate the blessing of being early led in the right way, of having the character formed amid holy influences, and the mind stored with what is true and pure and lovely? On the other hand, who will undertake to set forth the evil consequences of allowing our children to grow up in ignorance of divine things? Who can portray the evils of a polluted imagination, of a mind stored with vanity, folly, and falsehood, of a heart familiarized from infancy with scenes of moral degradation? We do not hesitate to say that Christians incur very heavy and awful responsibility in allowing the enemy to preoccupy the minds of their children at the very period when they are most plastic and susceptible.*

True, there must be the quickening power of the Holy Spirit. It is as true of the children of Christians as of any other, that they "must be born again." We all understand this. But does this fact touch the question of our responsibility in reference to our children? Is it to cripple our energies or hinder our earnest efforts? Assuredly not. We are called upon by every argument, divine and human, to shield our precious little ones from every evil influence, and to train them in that which is holy and good. And not only should we so act in respect to our own children, but also in respect to the thousands around us who are like sheep having no shepherd, and who may each say, alas! with too much truth, "No man cared for my soul."

May there be a real awakening to a sense of our high and holy responsibilities to the souls around, and a shaking off of that terrible deadness and coldness over which we all have to mourn.

Not One Stroke Too Little

Someone once told a story something like this: A beautiful gold vase had been placed on a shelf in a goldsmith's workshop. It was just fresh from the hands of the engraver, and very chaste and lovely it looked. In the same room there was a nugget of gold which was being beaten into shape. It was complaining of all it had borne and still had to go through. "Oh," it said to the vase, "how

I wish. I were like you! When will these dreadful

blows be over?"

"You wish to be like me?" asked the vase. "Then hush! for were it not for the fire and the beating, though you would still be gold, there would be no shape and very little beauty to be seen in you. The master knows best. He loves us too much to give us one stroke too little."

"One stroke too little." There is the bright side, though we do not as a rule think so. We far oftener take comfort in thinking that our Lord and Master loves us too well to give us "one stroke too many." But there is as much comfort to be found in knowing that "the LORD will perfect that which concerneth me" (Psalm 138:8; Phil. 1:6), as there is in believing that "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." Psalm 103:14. We need to take them both together and, whatever the trial, to hear Him say, "He doth not afflict willingly" (Lam. 3:33); and though (like the gold in the story) we feel the fire and the chastening, yet let us rejoice in the knowledge that "nevertheless [in spite of all], afterward IT (that very chastening which we feel so keenly), produces what was lacking; for it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Heb. 12:11.

Obedience Without Reasoning

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." 2 Cor. 11:2, 3.

What does that mean? Ah, brethren, it means to obey without reasoning. Way back in the garden of Eden, that the Apostle refers to here, when Eve was tempted, the serpent got her to reasoning instead of obeying. She looked at that tree, and it looked pleasant to the eye. That was perfectly true. It was good for food, and that was perfectly true. It was a tree to be desired to make one wise; that had its truth in it too. But what did the serpent hide from Eve? That the act would be disobedience, and the fruit would be death. In other words, Eve began to reason instead of obeying.

Remember always, beloved Christian, that the Word of God is given to us for the obedience of faith. That is said twice in the epistle to the Romans - in the first chapter, and in the last chapter. It is given to us for the obedience of faith.

Of Him Are Ye in Christ Jesus

When the Lord Jesus Christ was a man upon earth, He was surely a test for man - for those among whom He walked down here in that wonderful path of light and love and blessing, every step of which told out what God was for man, and only brought with it as an answer, the hatred that was in the heart of fallen man for God. But He who was the Son of God and Man of sorrows, went on unswervingly in that path, not only because there were poor lost sinners to be saved, but because, first of all, there was the outraged glory of the God from whom and for whom He came, to be vindicated. Everything in which the first man who sinned and came short of the glory had failed; every responsibility taken up by him, only to show how hopeless and helpless was his state, and how absolute the impossibility for him to meet the requirements of a holy God, must be made good, or that God would have been dishonored without remedy in the world of His own creation, and by the creature of His own hands.

More than that, the man that had sinned must himself disappear from the scene, to make way for the second Man, who would forever be the center of a new creation, which neither sin nor death could stain or darken. But in order to be this, He must first pass through this scene where all is blighted by the failure of the first man - pass through it for the glory of God - and He could not be here without being a test to those among whom He was. Hence we find that in whatever company He found Himself, He made Himself the test. In men, in their ignorant speculation as to who He was, could only surmise that He must be either John the Baptist risen from the dead, or Elias, or Jeremias, or one of the prophets, He turns to His own with the searching question, "But whom say ye that I am?" To the poor sinner at Sychar's well, it is Himself revealed to her. To the outcast whose eyes He had opened, He is the Son of God. At the grave of Lazarus it is what He is in His own blessed Person as "the resurrection and the life." It is always in Himself. If it is a question of eternal life, He must be the object of faith. If He is lifted up from the earth, He will draw all men unto Him. And then the path on earth comes to its close, but even in its closing scene there must come out what He was for God; and the two simple words, "I thirst," are the fitting close to a life-of devotedness that could not be ended till the word of His God was vindicated to the very letter. And in the death that came to Him when all was finished and when He, whose life none could take away, yielded up His spirit to God, the life and history that belonged to us as associated with the man of sin and death is closed, closed forever by the God who has written finis to a volume, every page of which was dark indeed, save those illuminated by the blessed path of Him who was the corn of wheat that would not abide alone.

Then there opens out to us another volume, beginning with the resurrection life of the Man who had been obedient unto death for the glory of God.

And, blessed be His name, that volume can never come to an end. Its title page may be found in the wonderful message given to one in whom and for whom, He had broken the power of Satan, and who had a heart devoted to Him who had done it: "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." And where do we see

Him next? The Son of man is in the glory of God, and everything there for us, and filling everything there for God. He is the Man, the one Man, now before God. God looks upon the face of His anointed. And every blessing we have is in Him. Is not He our life, our peace, our righteousness? Was He not raised for our justification? Is it not by Him we are reconciled? Are we not accepted (taken into favor, if you will) in the Beloved? Is not His -love ours? Is not His glory to be ours (John 17:22, 23), to be known and enjoyed in bodies of glory like His own? Where can we stop (not speaking of course of His own intrinsic glory as "God over all, blessed forever") when we begin at -that glorified Man; the accomplisher of the purposes, the delight of the heart of -God? And yet He ever stands supreme - "Object supreme of all, by all adored." If we are His brethren, He is the firstborn among us. And just as we are able, through grace, to see Him where He is, and measure all by Him, we can well afford to lose sight of these poor worthless selves, gone forever before God in His death, -buried in His grave, and to give up our poor _thoughts of what we are before God, because Christ is everything.

Again I ask, Have we anything apart from "the Person of Christ"? If we had, or could have, would it not tend to make something less of Him, and to detract from the glory due to Him who finished for God and for us, that glorious work given Him to do? And surely in this day of man's doctrines, and creeds, and theology, the test and the remedy for all is the Person of Christ in glory - the one blessed reality that is a necessity for our peace, our deliverance, our joy, our hope, our strength, in a path of difficulty, distress, and perplexity down here. It was "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," that enabled Paul to overcome all that was against him in the wilderness path, and to bear about in the body "the dying of the Lord Jesus." It is the light of that same knowledge of that same blessed Person that will carry us through all, and keep us humble indeed, while it enables us to test every theory and doctrine by Himself, the only true test now as He ever was, and to refuse all that will not bear that test. Yes, beloved brethren, bring all to that test, doctrine and walk, and we may have to refuse a great deal as to both; but we shall "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Can anything be more blessed than that, till we are with Him and like Him forever? And does the exaltation of His glorious Person detract from His glorious work? Surely, the very contrary, for He is where He is because of what He has done - done for the glory of God and for our blessing. It is to His "precious blood" (as the Holy Spirit has written) that we owe all we are or have in Him. And is not all summed up in those words at the head of this paper, "Of Him [God] are ye in Christ Jesus"? Can anything be better calculated than these words of our God for us, words which tell of the place we have before Him in His own beloved Son, to draw our hearts out in adoring praise and true devotedness, to the Christ to whom we owe it all?

One Thing the Lord Did and Never Did

One day as a dear servant of the Lord was walking beside the sea in Nova Scotia, he saw a Christian sitting on the beach reading his Bible and smoking a pipe. Going over to the Christian, he said, "I see you are doing one thing the Lord ever did, and one thing the Lord never did." Needless to say this servant of the Lord was referring to the fact that the Lord Jesus as a man down here lived by every word of God; it was His delight; and by it He kept Himself from the paths of the destroyer; but never did He use tobacco.

The Christian who had been addressed quickly seized the import of the remark; after weighing it, he took the pipe from his mouth and threw it into the sea. He did not want to do that which the Lord did not do.

Our Capacity Is Being Formed Now

How solemn is the thought that the present time is that in which our capacity is formed for our place and enjoyment in the glory of God! No doubt that all is foreknown and prepared of the Father; but still, just as the soul has learned Jesus here, so will you be able to enjoy the glory.

You will find this illustrated in Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, in John 11. Just as each one learned the Lord in this scene where death reigned, so each one had a place in the lovely typical and yet real scene of chapter 12, where the glory is portrayed. Just as we constantly find that the character of a person's conversation gives a tone to his walk, so his walk will determine his place in the glory! The present then is the time of preparation for that scene in capacity and growth; the enjoyment of it will be by-and-by; yet, as we have said, all will be as ordained of the counsels of God.

The Lord by moral cleansing is preparing us for the glory. This action detects what is in your heart, by the entrance of His Word giving light there. Now that may be done without your having a bad conscience, for you may never have thought that the thing detected was unfit for the light. Many things and associations that are not according to the light may never have been thought of as not suited to it, and hence the conscience is not defiled. They are shown to you in this mystical washing, that you may cast them off. If you do so, the conscience is undefiled, and it is not then the removal of a stain, nor the restoring the soul when defiled, but our moral education by the Lord in the suitability needed for the new place.

But supposing you were to go on with them after they have thus been detected, you would need to be restored. The Lord's thought is that you should go on with nothing between Him and you, and by the action of the Word He is discovering to you what would come between, that you may be the better able to enter into the enjoyment of the Father's love in communion with Himself as well now as by-and-by.

Under the law, at the brazen laver the hands and feet were washed. The laver stood between the altar and the holiest. Both hands and feet had to be washed because the Lord was taking cognizance and forbidding the actions and walk of the old man there under the law; here it is to a man who has the divine nature, but who has also a principle within him which loves sin, and whereby he becomes defiled. Then the Lord deals with the conscience; and "we have an advocate with the Father" (1 John 2). How important it is then to bow immediately to the washing of water by the Word; there is then instant restoration. Keep a thing that the Word has detected still on the conscience, and it corrodes there. One's felt state will show him surely that communion is lost, while all the time you have not got to your real state. The longer it is there the more difficult to have the sense of restoration. Remember too that the moment you are made conscious of failure, it was the Lord who did it.

Out of Weakness We're Made Strong

The Lord's plan to deliver His people is sometimes to draw out wickedness against them in all its force. This is very alarming in itself, but it is God's way of delivering because the effect is to break down the flesh, to show that we have no strength at all. And this is our victory, for then the question is between God and Satan, and not between us and Satan.

In Egypt, the Lord delivered the Israelites by bringing all Pharaoh's host against them. They saw that they had no strength themselves, and they cried unto the Lord; and they were comforted with the promise, "The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." (Exod. 14:10-14.)

In the time of Jehoshaphat, the children of Israel were like two little flocks of kids, while the Syrians filled the country. But the Lord promised,

"Therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD." (1 Kings 20:27, 28.)

The Jews had a country on earth, and he that killed them would remove them from earth; but the saints are strangers on earth, having their country in heaven. Therefore, they need not the same kind of deliverance the Jews did, and should not look for it.

The prince of the power of the air, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places are the enemies of the saint, trying to hinder heavenly mindedness, and keep him from communion with the Father and the Son.

If the weakest saint is only leaning on Jesus, he is stronger than all the powers of Satan, because Jesus is stronger.

May He who works in His people to will and to do of His good pleasure, work out His own truth each day in our souls, delivering us from that great work of Satan - a form of godliness without power.

Overheard

A servant of the Lord, speaking to a young brother in Christ, said, "There is one piece of advice which, if followed, will keep you from lots of trouble all through life - NEVER JOIN ANYTHING."

Pergamos

The church in Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-17) settled down into the world, the scene of Satan's authority. This implies no outward or scandalous wickedness. Satan is quite content to see Christians becoming worldly. So long as they are untrue to Christ by admitting the world into their hearts, his object is gained quite as effectually as if he had betrayed them into the grossest sin. When the world, whether the religious world or any other, takes the place to which Christ is entitled, the ardent love for His Person and the bright hope of His return disappear, and coldness, deadness, toleration of evil, indifference to His claims, are sure to come in. Open evil may follow, but the mischief is done whether this is the case or not.

"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies." Psalm 119:59.

"I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts." Psalm 119:63.

Perpetual Complainers

"He that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Prov. 11:25).

"For... with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. 7:2).

It will generally be found that those persons who are perpetually complaining of want of love in others are utterly failing in love themselves; and, on the other hand, those who are really walking in love will tell you that they receive a thousand times more than they deserve. Let us remember that the best way to get water out of a dry pump is to pour a little water in. You may work at the handle until you are tired, and then go away fretful and impatient, complaining of that horrible pump; whereas, if you would just pour a little water in, you would get in return a gushing stream to satisfy your utmost desire.

Praise When in Affliction

Following the death of his little girl, Esther, an African gave this testimony: "Everything God does is good. We liked having Esther with us, but she belongs to God. She was. His to do with as He pleased. It is hard for us to have her gone, but we thank God for taking her. She cried here, but now God has wiped away her tears. She was sick here, but she will never be sick there. There are troubles, trials, hard things here, but she will never experience them because she is with God. God's will is sometimes hard; but it is always sweet to me." Such praise must be especially sweet to God.

We read in the Word of God, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. 5:20.

The Preserving Power of the Word

The Word of God should not only be a check on our thoughts, but the source of them, which is a far deeper thing. We see it in Christ, the only perfect One. He only could say, "By the word of Thy lips I have kept Me from the paths of the destroyer." "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee."

There is a preserving power in the Word to keep the feet from sliding, which those only know who receive the truth in the love of it. Merely having the Word hid in the memory and mind will not do. There is no preserving power in that. There must be the action of the truth on the heart and conscience, separating from all defilement, otherwise its preserving power cannot be experienced.

Whenever there is a surrender of what the flesh holds dear and cleaves to, for Christ's sake, there is blessing; and the soul that dares to mortify the flesh and resist its claims is ever rewarded by a clearer revelation of the Lord Himself. As it were, the displacing of the lower makes room for the development of the higher and purer affection.

The reason why there is often so much darkness and uncertainty as to God's will among us, is that the flesh gets leave to work, and the result is dimness of spiritual vision. It costs us too dear when we cannot say, "No" to the clamorous demands of our fleshly natures. Never till we see it in the light of the judgment seat of Christ shall we know how much we have suffered in soul, and how much we have lost eternal reward, by our weakness and cowardice in resisting the flesh and its claims. People complain of weak faith; they would speak far more truly if they complained of their weak obedience. "Light is sown for the righteous." "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." See in Christ our heavenly Pattern, the path of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The perfectly dependent, perfectly obedient One.

Prime the Pump

As to love among Christians, if we go looking for it, we shall be thoroughly disappointed; but if we are enabled to cultivate and manifest it, we shall be sure to get a great deal more than we expect or deserve. It will generally be found that those persons who are perpetually complaining of want of love in others are utterly failing in love themselves; and, on the other hand, those who are really walking in love will tell you that they receive a thousand times more than they deserve.

Let us remember that the best way to get water out of a dry pump is to pour a little water in. You may work at the handle and get no water, and then go away in fretfulness and impatience, complaining of that horrible pump. But, if you would just pour in a little water, you would get in return a gushing stream to satisfy your inmost desire.

Prophetic Terms: Day of the Lord

The word "day" is often used in Scripture to denote a certain period of time. In a previous article we considered the "day of the Lord" and noticed that it refers to the time when the Lord Jesus will come back to the earth and set everything right, and reign. The world is very sick and, and there is no indication of any betterment at hand. Strife, greed, famine, and troubles of every nature beset the whole world. The very foundations seem to be tottering. This is "man's day" (see 1 Cor. 1:3; margin) and he has made a great mess of everything. The coming of the Lord to call His own away may take place at any moment. What a happy moment will that be for all who are saved, and how terrible for those unsaved who will be left behind. Then the things which are troubling the world will become suddenly worse, only to end when the Lord Jesus returns to subdue His enemies and set up His righteous government in the earth - the "day of the Lord."

The "day of the Lord" will be a great and dreadful day for this Christ-rejecting earth. (See Joel 2:1-11; Mal. 4:1-5; Zeph. 1:14-16.) (It should read in 2 Thess. 2:2, "the day of the Lord" instead of "the day of Christ.") The whole period of His Millennial reign is included in the term, "the day of the Lord." It will even include the "little season," when man has a last test, after the Millennium. Christ must reign until He puts down all enemies and brings everything into subjection, as we noticed in 1 Cor. 15:25, 26.

Day of Christ

There is also the expression, "the day of Christ," which is previous to "the day of the Lord." It is found in Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16 and takes one in thought to the heavenly rather than the earthly scene. The Apostle Paul looked forward to the "day of Christ." He had joy in the Philippian saints as he saw what grace had already wrought in them, and then looked forward to the time when they would be with Christ, and all would be completed in them.

"Always, in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.... Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:4, 6.

After that, he writes about his desire for them that they would abound in knowledge and intelligence so as to approve the things that are excellent to the end that they might walk without a wrong step until that glorious day - the "day of Christ." Snell should be our desire also. Sad to say we do fail and take wrong steps, but if we were walking close to the Lord, it would not be so. God has made provision for us if we fail -

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

But the Word of God does not suppose that we must fail. Just think of all the provision that we have in Order to walk pleasing to Him; we have been saved and brought to God in perfect peace; we have the Word of God as a perfect guide-book; we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us for power; and We have the Lord Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest to succor us when we are

weak. Alas, how little we avail ourselves of the resources we have in Christ to walk pleasing to Him! Not that we should ever expect perfection in the flesh. Such ideas are wrong and only tend to exalt self - to confidence in the flesh. We should have no confidence in the flesh, but can we not say that when we do fail, it was our fault and our own lack of watchfulness. That blessed day - the day of Christ - is soon coming. Then all shall be perfect and the work begun in us shall be complete, but let us seek to walk pleasing to Him in view of that day.

The Apostle had labored in the gospel and suffered for it at Philippi (see Acts 16) and these dear saints had been the fruit of his labors. After they were saved they had taken an active interest in the gospel; they had shown their fellowship in it from the first day they were saved. They were willing to share in its trials and conflicts. Then he writes to encourage them to walk blamelessly before the unsaved and to show them the way of salvation:

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain." Phil. 2:14-16.

Paul looked forward to the time when he and all the saints would be with Christ - when he would see the fruit of his labors. The beloved Apostle put this forward as a motive for their going on in faithful testimony. That will be the time when the results and fruit of all our labors will be manifest. We can then look forward with joyful anticipation to the "day of Christ." Our work for the Lord cannot be correctly appraised now, but in that coming day of glory it will be seen in His light. Surely the "day of Christ" presents a different thought than the "day of the Lord" which speaks of subjugation of all on earth to His righteous rule.

Day of God

The "day of God" looks forward to the ushering in of the eternal state.

"Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Pet. 3:12, 13.

The "day of God" will follow the "day of the Lord." The Lord will first bring all into subjection and destroy all enemies. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death (1 Cor. 15:25, 26). Then in that eternal state, God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) as God will dwell with men. God has been pleased in past dispensations to reveal Himself according to the need of the time, but then all dispensational names and revelations will have passed. All dispensations will then be over and "God will dwell with men."

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Rev. 21:3.

"Nations" will have disappeared, for it is "men" with whom He will dwell. The word "dwell" speaks of a fixed and permanently settled condition. It is also said that righteousness will dwell in that scene of bliss. Every trace of sin will have been removed from God's creation and never enter it again. All that Christ ruled as man in the "day of the Lord" will be given up to God, that God may be

all in all - the day of God, the eternal day.

"Lord we can see, by faith in Thee,

A prospect bright, unfailling;

Where God shall shine in light divine,

In glory never fading."

Prophetic Terms: Great White Throne

There will be a resurrection preceding the judgment of the great white throne. It will be the resurrection to judgment spoken of in John 5:29. The resurrection to life, also spoken of in the same verse, will have taken place 1000 years earlier. There will be two resurrections; all raised in the first resurrection are raised for heavenly blessing and all raised in that last resurrection are raised for judgment.

The first resurrection is "from among the dead," for all who died unsaved will be left in their graves when the saved are raised. But at length the time will arrive when those who died in unbelief - died unrepentant - shall be raised. It will then be the resurrection "of the dead" not from "among" the dead, for there will be no unraised dead left when the final resurrection takes place. Then every single human being that died, refusing the testimony that God had given him, will be raised to stand trial.

Before the Millennium begins, the "first resurrection" will be completed and it will be said, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. 20:5). But after the Millennium has run its course, and the time has come for the dissolution of the present earth (making way for the "new heavens and new earth"), then the rest of the dead shall be raised to stand trial before the great white throne.

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the heaven and the earth fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God [the throne]; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:11-15.

What a solemn scene is unveiled before us in these verses! A great white throne - that dazzling whiteness of light from the holiness of Him who sits on the throne. On earth men hate the light because their deeds are evil, but there they will be exposed by the exceeding brilliance of His holiness. Nothing can then be hid. It will also be a great throne by reason of the greatness of the Judge - the Lord Jesus Himself - and by reason of the magnitude of the judgment - not one of the many, many millions who died in their sins escaping.

And then the books are to be opened. Sins long forgotten, sins considered only trivial, and secret sins will all be brought out as evidence when the records will be opened. Every sin is to be called to remembrance, and the dead are to be judged "according to their works." Yes, "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing" (Eccles. 12:14). Men may treat sin as a light matter, but God does not. Well may the psalmist say,

"Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." Psalm 143:2.

The only way that any can escape the judgment of God is to be under the shelter of the blood of Christ. John 5:24 shows that by hearing the words of the Lord Jesus and believing God who raised Him from the dead we shall not come into judgment. For every true Christian the judgment is passed; it was borne by his blessed Substitute on the cross. Not one sin remains to be charged to the believer in Christ; not one sin will be overlooked or forgotten when the unsaved stand before the great white throne.

Then the book of life is to be opened to prove that their names were not written therein. God will take care to show His righteousness in passing sentence. Although He has to give account to no one, He will show by the books both the positive (their actual sins) and the negative (their names not being found in the book of life), evidences that they deserve the judgment that is to be passed.

The sea will give up its dead. Think of all that have perished in the seas; not one will be missed. O the folly of men that imagines that death is the last of them. How much wiser it is to believe God and accept His way of escape from coming wrath. God has faithfully warned that "after death the judgment," and He has provided a Savior for all who will have Him.

Then death and hell - hades - will deliver up the dead in them. Death, the place of the body, and hades, the confines of the soul, will deliver up their whole contents that all may be judged according to their works - their entire population emptied out to be cast into "the lake of fire." As there will then be no further use for death and hades, they are said to be cast into the lake of fire. Death, the last enemy, is said to be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26).

The lake of fire is called the "second death." This does not mean the annihilation of the wicked. Scripture bears out the fact that the punishment of the wicked is eternal, just as the blessing of the saved is eternal. In the same chapter (Rev. 20) the devil, the beast (head of the revived Roman Empire) and the false prophet (the antichrist) are to be "tormented day and night forever and ever" in the lake of fire. The beast and the false prophet will have already been there for 1000 years. Many deceivers have written to soothe the fears of men saying that God will annihilate the wicked completely. This most certainly is not true and is only the result of rebellious men's wish that it might be so.

In Ephesians the unsaved are spoken of as "dead in trespasses and sins." They are viewed as morally dead toward God - their souls separated morally from Him. Now it is evident that such moral death does not mean annihilation. No, it is man morally away from God and living in sin.

Then there is the case of one who dies physically. Life has gone from his body and he is said to be dead - it is the body without the spirit. But that does not mean that the man has ceased to exist, or has been annihilated, or is unconscious. Luke 16 shows that even though an unconverted man dies, his soul still lives in hades. That man had conscious existence in the unseen world and was capable of remembering and having remorse even in that state. His body had been buried, but even while awaiting the last resurrection and the judgment of the wicked dead, he was tormented in hades.

Death for the Christian certainly is not ceasing to exist. The thief that got saved on the cross was to be with Christ in paradise, and Paul desired to depart and be with Christ which is far better (Phil. 1:23). Certainly ceasing to exist was not far better than serving the Lord here below, but Paul looked forward to being with Christ when he had left this world and his body had been committed to the grave. So then we see that death in each of these instances does not mean annihilation and neither does it when speaking of the second death - the lake of fire.

Moral death is the separation of the soul of man morally from God.

Physical death is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body.

The second death is the separation of the whole man - body, soul, and spirit - from God for all eternity. An eternity of woe.

Reader, if not yet saved, stop and consider your destiny - the lake of fire - if you die unsaved. Do not be warned and flee from the wrath to come. And if you die unsaved, the very gospel verses that you have read and perhaps know by heart will rise up to taunt you in that awful, eternal separation from God, the source of all light, in "outer darkness."

Fire is often used to describe God's judgment, and so it is here. It is His holiness punishing sin as it must. But remember that He in love gave His only Son to die in order to save guilty sinners. But how shall any escape if they refuse or neglect so great salvation? Escape for such is impossible, for God must punish sin.

Prophetic Terms: Judgment of Living Nations

"Jesus of Nazareth... who went about doing good... whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day.... And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick [living] and dead." Acts 10:38-42.

The very One whom men slew is the One who is to be their Judge. Death is no avenue of escape from meeting Him as the Judge, for He will judge the dead. There is one way, and only one, of escaping judgment at His hands; that is by accepting Him as Savior now. I must either know Him as the blessed One who took my place and died in my stead on Calvary's cross and who bore my sins in His own body, or some day stand before the bar of justice and hear my doom from His lips. He will be either the sinner's Savior and Substitute, or his Judge.

Reader, do you know Him as your Savior? Happy are you if you do, for then you will never come into judgment. But if you are a stranger to Him in His grace, His judgment must inevitably overtake you some day. He will judge both the living and the dead, but not at the same time.

We who know Him as our Savior await that blessed moment when He will come and take us all Home to be with Himself in the Father's house. And, as we noticed in the last issue, we shall then have all our works brought into review before Him. Then all that has been done just to please self will be loss, and everything done for Him will be rewarded and be gain. This will take place after we are safely in heaven.

As soon as all the Christians are taken from the earth to be with Christ, the world will begin to feel God's judgment which will be poured out on it with increasing fury. During those days of world-wide trouble, wickedness will rise to unprecedented heights, and then shall appear the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven to personally execute vengeance on them that know not God (2 Thess. 1:7-9). When He comes out of heaven, the saints who will have been taken there will come out with Him as the "armies which were in heaven." Then the two leaders in man's consummate wickedness will be taken alive and cast into the lake of fire, and great multitudes will be slain by the sword of Him who is "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Rev. 19:11-21).

After the Lord Jesus, as the Son of man, has cleared away many who will have risen up in rebellion, He will establish His throne of judgment on the earth to judge the living nations. This judgment session is described in Matt. 25:31-46.

"When the Son of man shall come [or, shall have come] in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations."

It is after He has already come as the lightning striking swift judgment on His enemies, that He will establish the "throne of His glory." Then all of the living nations on earth are to be judged before His tribunal. It is definitely an earthly scene, for there will be no nations in heaven; and it is not the time of the judgment of the wicked dead, for when they are raised to be judged, nations will have disappeared. Here the ones who will appear before His throne are the Gentile nations alive on the

earth at that time. (As for the Jews when He comes, He will deal with them separately.)

The method of discrimination and of judgment at the "throne of His glory" will be unique. It will be exactly suited to the situation and requirements. Both the sheep (saved ones) and the goats (lost ones) will be present at this trial. In this it will differ from the judgment seat of Christ in heaven where the believers are to have their works gone over, for only saved ones will be manifested there. And at the judgment the wicked dead, only the unsaved will appear (Rev. 20:11-15). But here, both classes are to stand to be separated the one from the other - the sheep placed on His right hand and the goats on His left.

The evidence on which those of the nations are to be judged is different also. They will be judged according to the way they treated "His brethren" - the Jewish messengers - who will have gone throughout the world after the Christians left it, preaching the "gospel of the kingdom." While most of the Jews will apostatize, and accept antichrist, there will be a faithful remnant who will believe in the coming of the true Messiah; these will go out everywhere telling the good news that He is coming. Their message will be much the same as that preached by John the Baptist before Christ came the first time. At His first coming, Christ was rejected and the coming kingdom was postponed, while Christians were gathered out of the world for heaven. But when the Christians are taken to heaven, then the "gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 24:14) will be resumed by faithful Jews. These Jewish messengers, called by Christ "My brethren," will suffer much persecution and many will be martyred. Among the Gentiles, faith in God and the coming King will be evidenced by the manner in which the message and the messengers are treated. It will still be true that "without faith it is impossible to please God."

It may be needful to remind some that this preaching of the "gospel of the kingdom" is not a second chance for those who now refuse the "gospel of the grace of God." For those who in these lands refuse Christ as Savior now, God will send a "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie," for the purpose that they who refuse grace "might be damned" (2 Thess. 2:10-12). But there are millions on earth who have not heard the "gospel of the grace of God." By far the greater part of mankind on earth are outside of any profession of Christianity. For these, the Jewish messengers will carry the good news of the coming kingdom of Christ. These few faithful Jews will do in probably not more than seven years what Christendom had failed to do in almost two thousand years; they will preach this gospel in "all the world." The Gentiles who believe the message will show their interest in its messengers and at the "throne of His glory" will hear "the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34.

Here the Son of man is called the "King," and in addressing those on His right hand He calls them "blessed of My Father." They will not know God in the relationship of their Father, as believers in this age do, but be blessed by His Father. Another mark of difference from that which belongs to Christians is that the kingdom (earthly) was prepared for them "from the foundation of the world." The believers now were chosen in Christ "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

It is beautiful to see how the "King" will credit the "sheep" with having done for Himself personally whatever they did for even "the least" of His messengers; He will so identify Himself with these Jewish "brethren."

It was a similar lesson that Saul of Tarsus learned on the road to Damascus when he heard the Lord say to him, "Why persecutest thou Me?" That persecutor of Christians had to learn that when he molested them he was persecuting "Jesus" (Acts 9:1-5). And contrariwise those who had despised the messengers of the "King" will be shown to have refused the "King" Himself.

Another point to be noticed is that the "goats" on His left hand - those who refused the messengers bearing the "gospel of the kingdom" - will be sent away into "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (v. 41). The lake of fire was not prepared for men but for the devil and his angels; and yet, how sad that rebellious men who will not have God's grace are to share it with them.

Prophetic Terms: Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9

The prophecy of the "seventy weeks" is a most remarkable one, the proper understanding of which will enable the child of God to have a better grasp of His purposes concerning the earth and His earthly people Israel. While the present time in which God is gathering out of the earth a people for heaven is not mentioned in the prophecy, yet there is a break into which it fits.

It will be well to notice the state of Daniel's soul and his deep exercises prior to the receiving of this wonderful prophecy. God chose the vessels to whom He would communicate His mind, and He also prepared them beforehand to be suitable instruments for the reception and communication of His truth. A careless or indifferent person was incapable of knowing the mind of God. He carefully prepared those He would use. Neither is a careless or worldly-minded Christian now in a state to understand the things that are revealed to us by God, for they are revealed unto us "by His Spirit." If a child of God is going on in a way that the Spirit of God is grieved with his walk, then the Spirit is not free to show him the "things that are freely given to us of God." May we then, as we approach this prophecy, be before God to judge what is not of Him and seek from Him a "wise and understanding heart."

Daniel had been born in a day when the "two tribes" were in a sad state. The kings and the people had alike departed from the Lord, and He in His righteous government gave them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who destroyed the temple and carried many captives to his land. Daniel was one of these captives when he was a very young man. But in spite of all the failure and the terrible darkness of the day, Daniel sought to honor God, and God honored him. The principle is ever true, "them that honor Me I will honor." Daniel was a man who had a true and honest purpose to please God, and he did not plead any expediency for doing otherwise. Times had changed but he knew that God had not.

Although many direct prophecies were given to Daniel, he did not fail to read the Scriptures for himself. He used the same means that are open to us—he read the Word of God. From the book of Jeremiah (ch. 29:10) he understood that the desolations of Jerusalem, which were then present, would last only seventy years from their beginning. He believed God and therefore he understood that the time was at hand for his people to return to Jerusalem. We have the same opportunity - "through faith we understand." It was not by outward observation that Daniel perceived the time was nearing for their return. There may have been nothing on the horizon then to indicate it, but Daniel believed what God said. So we today should understand that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." We should be able to understand that by believing what God has said in His Word and not by observations, although we do see the storm clouds gathering which will break after the Lord has come for us. Our faith should be in God and His Word rather than in the darkening skies. So in this second verse of the ninth chapter we see Daniel not as the prophet but as the devout student of prophecy given through others.

The immediate result of his reading and understanding the time that had been reached was to put Daniel on his face before God in the most earnest prayer and supplication. The fasting, sackcloth,

and ashes bespoke the inward state of his soul - that moral state which truly feels the condition of God's people and identifies itself fully with it in any day of ruin.

Although Daniel was not much more than a boy when he was carried away captive, and although he had sought to live for God in that strange land, yet he confesses the sins of the people as his own. He does not say "they have sinned," but "we have sinned." He looked round about and saw the deplorable state they were in and saw it in God's righteous dealings with them. As one of "Wisdom's children" he justified God in all His dealings with them and confessed their sin. He, feeling his own part in the failure and confessing it, was in a position to intercede with God on behalf of the people. He pleaded with God for them on the ground of His mercies. Such a spirit of pleading for the people of God is one that is according to His heart and mind. We see the same spirit in Moses, Samuel, David, and other true servants of God. While God may have to chastise His children according to His government, yet His heart is toward them, and we are never in the current of God's thoughts if it is otherwise with us. Nor can we ever properly separate ourselves from the failure of the Church of God on earth. That which was blest beyond anything else on earth (the Church) has surely failed most grievously. Everything is now in ruins and each one of us who are saved is a part of that failure. If we had a deeper sense of the failure and our part in it, there would be more intercession for the saints of God and also a deeper entering into His thoughts about them.

Daniel was a man given to prayer. It was not something that he did in days of special stress and trial. In the sixth chapter when storms were gathering around his head, "He went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." v. 10.

The man of God is sure to be a man of prayer.

Sometimes Daniel did not receive his answer at once; in the tenth chapter he was kept waiting "three full weeks" for the answer. But in the chapter we are considering the answer is immediate:

"And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplications before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding." Chap. 9:20-22.

So we may sometimes receive answers to our prayers at once or we may be kept waiting for a long time. A delay is not a reason for concluding that our prayer was not heard. God in His wisdom may withhold an answer to deepen our exercise of soul, or it may be for any one of a number of reasons; but we can rest assured that when God withholds or waits to answer our requests it is done in His perfect wisdom of what is best and is withheld according to His true love which wants to do the very best for His own.

Daniel's exercises of soul were concerning his people Israel and their getting back into their own land from Babylon at that time, but God was about to give him a deeper revelation than that which related to their soon-coming return to Jerusalem. God was going to unfold the whole future of Israel to Daniel right down to the time when Israel would be blessed under their Messiah in a day

that is yet future. What a signal favor to be thus let into God's secrets and plans! And has not God opened up the future to us? Surely He has! And while all the prophetic unfoldings of His Word do not relate to us (the Church) they should interest us as being part of what God is going to do, and we should desire to know what He has been pleased to reveal to us. It is surely a mark of distinct favor to be told all in advance.

Now we should bear in mind when considering the "seventy weeks" that Daniel's people are in question. Much confusion has resulted from failure to remember this fact. To try to bring either Gentiles or Christians into the picture would only spoil what is clear and understandable. This is distinctly stated in the 24th verse where the prophesy proper begins:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city." Nothing is vague or uncertain here; the special objects of this prophecy to Daniel are Daniel's people (Israel) and Daniel's holy city (Jerusalem). Christians are not called Daniel's people, nor do Christians have a holy city on earth. Nevertheless, we as Christians should be interested in God's earthly people and in the revelation He has been pleased to make to us. This prophecy is for "our learning" and will most certainly be profitable as we enter into God's thoughts.

Prophetic Terms: the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9

Daniel learned from the book of Jeremiah that the captivity of the Jews in Babylon was to last only seventy years. Those years had about rolled away and as Daniel stood on the threshold of their return to their own land, he was led to confess their sin, for which they were sent into captivity, and to pray for their return and blessing. He claimed no merit in themselves but counted on God's mercy. God responded with a wonderful unfolding of a period of time concerning those same people - Daniel's people. This new disclosure covered not merely seventy years, as was their captivity in Babylon, but "seventy weeks." This is evidently a different length of time, but let us inquire what is meant by the word "weeks." In ordinary language a week is a period of time composed of seven days, but that certainly cannot be the meaning in this passage. Nothing like the things predicted in the prophecy came to pass within seventy actual weeks nor in many times that number of weeks.

In seeking the correct understanding of this prophecy we must first be clear about what the seventy weeks mean. We are told by Hebrew scholars that the word in the original is not literally "weeks" but merely "seventy sevens." It is a word that described something divided into seven parts. They are really weeks of years; that is, they are seventy periods of seven years. This was quite understandable to Daniel or to any Jew, as they were accustomed to think in terms of "sevens" when dealing with years. We, on the other hand, think of tens and speak of decades, but the Jews thought in terms of sevens. They were to let their land rest every seventh year (Exod. 23:11).

Now, on this basis we can proceed, knowing that "seventy sevens" or 490 years were determined on the Jewish people, in the counsels and purposes of God, to bring certain things to pass. What then is the conclusion of these 490 years to bring in? Let us read in the 24th verse.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."

Clearly then it has to do, in its final fulfillment, with the cleansing of the Jews from their sins and iniquity and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness - something neither they nor the world has yet seen. We who are saved know that our sins are forgiven in virtue of the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross, and we know that He is our righteousness; but no one would say that this prophecy is fulfilled yet. It further says that it will "seal up the vision and prophecy" concerning the Jews. Certainly much that has been spoken by God concerning this is yet unfulfilled. And the last statement, "to anoint the Most Holy," would be understood by any Jew to mean the "holy of holies" in the temple. All of these things remain unaccomplished and can only be expected when the Lord Jesus, as the true Messiah, comes to reign, bringing in the Millennium. Thus we see that all this blessing was to be ushered in at the end of 490 years, and it has not yet come. Let us keep this in mind and then we shall go on to see just how much has already taken place, what remains to be done, and what is causing the delay in final fulfillment.

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." v. 25.

In this verse we have the starting point of the "seventy weeks," or 490 years - "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." It always makes things easier in studying prophecy when we know with certainty the starting point. In this case it is a certain governmental decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. In the first chapter of the book of Ezra there was a decree issued by Cyrus, king of Persia, to build the temple at Jerusalem, but nothing was said about the city itself. No doubt God ordered it that Cyrus should give the order to rebuild the temple; in fact, God had prophesied about Cyrus, even by name, more than 100 years before he was born (see Isa. 44:28; 45:1-4). But his decree is not the starting point of our prophecy.

In the seventh chapter of Ezra "Artaxerxes king of Persia" (known in history as Artaxerxes Longimanus) issued another decree, but it also concerned the temple at Jerusalem. It had to do with the carrying of the silver and gold and the vessels to Jerusalem for the house of God. So then neither is this the starting point of our prophecy.

Now let us go to the book of Nehemiah where we will find our starting point for the "seventy weeks." In chapter 2 the date is given as "the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king." This is the same king that issued the decree of Ezra 7, but in Ezra it was in the seventh year of his reign, and in Nehemiah in the twentieth year. In that year Nehemiah made a request of the king that he would send him into Judah and to the city of his father's sepulchers - Jerusalem - in order that he might build it. After that, Nehemiah asked for letters so that he could procure the needed materials for the palace and the wall of the city, etc. Then he said that the "king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me." This is very definitely the time referred to in Daniel 9. It is an official governmental order for the building of the city and wall, which according to scholars is in the year 445 B.C. Now bear in mind that Daniel received this vision in the "third year of Cyrus king of Persia," about 538 B.C. or 93 years before it came to pass. Attention is called to this fact because of the attempt of infidels to prove that Daniel wrote history and not prophecy. They certainly would like to think so because the very marked accuracy of their fulfillment stamps them with the finger of God and condemns themselves. Daniel certainly was a prophet; the Lord Himself called him that (Matt. 24:15).

From this starting point in 445 B.C. the "seventy weeks" are divided into three parts:

7 weeks or 49 years

62 weeks or 434 years

1 week or 7 years

70 weeks or 490 years

The first 49 years are separated from the others probably because of the special trials suffered by the Jewish remnant during those years in building the wall and the city. For information about the "troublous times" encountered in building the wall, read the book of Nehemiah which is the latest historical record in the Old Testament. God made special note of the hardships of the ones who labored in those days by making a special section of the prophecy for that time - "seven weeks."

From the end of those first "seven weeks," or forty-nine years, there were to be "threescore and two weeks," or 434 years more, "unto the Messiah the Prince." Here is a definite prophecy of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but the prophecy does not state the exact point in His pathway that is referred to. Some able scholars have thought that the 69 weeks go right up to the day when the Lord Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the ass. At that time He was formally presented to Israel as their Messiah, and then rejected, and within a few days He was crucified. Some students of chronology have even calculated that from that day mentioned in Nehemiah 2, when the decree to build Jerusalem was given, unto the day the Lord Jesus rode into Jerusalem as their Messiah was 483 years to the very day. That may be true. One thing is sure, God's Word will always be fulfilled to the very letter.

O if Jerusalem had only recognized their Messiah when He was presented to them! But they did not know the time of their visitation (Luke 19:44). On that day when He was presented to them, there lacked only seven years of the 490 for Him to bring in final blessing, but alas, they said, "Away with Him, crucify Him."

Prophetic Terms: the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9

The Scriptures had foretold the coming of the Messiah and given many details concerning it. And when He came, He came at the specified time, in the designated place, and in the manner announced; the Word of God must be fulfilled. But they also foretold His rejection and described the hatred and enmity of men, which would go on until He was cast out. One of the prophecies concerning His rejection is brought before us in Daniel 9:

"And after [the] threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself" or, "and shall have nothing."

Their Messiah was to be cut off and have nothing of the glory and kingdom that belonged to Him. How accurately this was fulfilled! "He was cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa. 53:8).

When the Lord Jesus was here, His disciples were expecting that He would set up His kingdom and reign. They knew the prophecies concerning the Messiah reigning in His glory on earth, but they completely overlooked those that just as definitely spoke of His rejection and being "cut off" without receiving the glory. Even after the Lord died and rose, they were looking for the glory of the kingdom. On the road to Emmaus with the two disciples, He said to them,

"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?" Luke 24:25, 26.

They were willing to believe part of what the prophets had spoken; that is, they were willing to believe in a Messiah coming to reign in glory. The Lord upbraids them for not believing all that had been spoken about Him and then went on to explain that His rejection must come before His glory. The Lord Jesus fulfilled every requirement of prophecy concerning His birth and life, and yet the eyes of the Jews were closed so that they did not discern Him or His glory. They did not know the time of their visitation (Luke 19:44). And lastly they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him." And when Pilate protested to them because of His innocence, they said, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27:25). O what a fateful choice was made that day! There they stood with their Messiah before them on the very threshold of their blessing, but they "cast

Him out of the vineyard, and slew Him." With 69 out of 70 weeks (483 out of 490 years) already fulfilled, they crucified the "Lord of glory" and so postponed the blessing.

The last week (the 70th) which will immediately precede and usher in the glorious reign of the Messiah was separated from the other 69 weeks in the prophecy. That there is a break between the 69th and 70th weeks is plainly evident, but there is no indication in Daniel 9 as to how long the break would be. Israel's rejection of Christ brought an indefinite parenthesis into the ways of God with them.

It is not uncommon in the Old Testament prophecies regarding Israel to deal with the then-near distant events, after which they skip over to the time of the end and foretell the circumstances and happenings incident to the coming of Christ to execute judgment and reign. Christ is the object of prophecy and all prophecy leads to Him. This should be kept in mind by all who would inquire into prophecy. God did not give it to amuse us or to exercise our intellects but to lead us into His purposes concerning His Son. Unless this is seen, the study of prophecy will be cold and unfruitful. Now let us see what is said as to the interval between the 69th and 70th weeks.

"And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." v. 26.

Jerusalem and the temple were to be destroyed in the time after their "Messiah and Prince" was cut off. It does not say just how soon after He was cut off that this would take place, but we know from history that it was about forty years later. The Lord Himself foretold that the murderers were to be destroyed and their city burned up (see Matt. 21:41 and 22:7). The Jews had sought to curry favor of the Roman government for they feared that the Romans would "take away both their place and nation." When their Messiah was on trial before Pilate, they said, "We have no king but Caesar." Nevertheless their city was to be destroyed, and they themselves to be scattered all over the earth, which was but one of the dire consequences of their rejection of Christ and of their saying "His blood be on us, and on our children." This destruction and the continued desolations were foretold in Luke 21:20-24.

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.... For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Another point to be noticed in this prophecy, which further emphasizes the accuracy of Scripture, is the designation of who would destroy the city of Jerusalem. It was not the Persians or the Grecians who followed them as a world power but another people designated here as "the people of the prince that shall come." This we know was the Romans - the very people whose favor they sought and who did take away both their place and nation. It does not say that "the prince that shall come" shall destroy the city but his people, leaving it for still a later date for the appearance of the prince himself. Now this prince plainly could not mean "the Messiah the Prince," for He was cut off. But some great personage is to come on the scene, at a later date, who is here called the prince. Now if the people who are called his people were clearly the Romans, then this great prince is to be a Roman, but we are not yet down to verse 27 to consider him. In verse 26 the destruction of the city is prophesied:

"And the end thereof shall be with an overflow, and unto the end, war" (J.N.D. Trans.).

But here in Luke 21 the continuous form of trouble for Jerusalem is indicated. And has it not been so? Many Jews have been scattered far and wide, and yet they remain a distinct people. The Moslem Mosque is on the very site of the temple. This then is what fills the gap in the prophecy as far as the Jews are concerned. Of course we know that God has used this interval by the operation of the Holy Spirit to gather out of the earth a people for heaven. It is now, while the Jews are cast off, that the Church is being built. We are living in the day of God's grace to this world. We are living in the day of Gentile privilege and preference. The Jews are judicially blinded because of their rejection of their Messiah; however, a remnant of them believe and become a part of the Church of God, with their portion in heaven and not on the earth.

It would be well for all of us to consider that this parenthesis in the ways of God with the earth has run on for almost 2000 years. This gap will soon run out, and God's ways of grace will change to acts of judgment for this Christ-rejecting earth, for the Gentiles have not continued in God's goodness either. We should be conscious that we are now down at the very end of the interval. In fact it may have closed before this paper goes to press - the Lord may have come.

Reader, are you saved? Have you accepted Christ as your personal Savior? Have you ever been before God about your sins and seen the Lord Jesus dying on the cross for those very sins? If not, remember that your time is running out. God has lingered all these centuries showing His grace to and forbearance with the world, but He has told us that the day of judgment is soon coming.

We have seen the awful calamities that have befallen the Jews for their rejection of Christ. Do you think that the Gentiles and the empty lifeless profession of Christianity will escape? No, no, no! The only way of escape from the coming wrath is through the blood of Christ. Are you under that shelter? Nothing else will matter.

Prophetic Terms: the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9

Verse 26 of Daniel 9 introduces "the prince that shall come." He is to be the head of a revived Roman Empire. That the Roman Empire is to be revived does not hang on this prophecy alone. Revelation 13 and 17 both speak about this great power of a future day; 17:8 describes it as one that "was" and then ceased to exist - "is not" - and later "shall be present" (J.N.D. Trans.). It was the Roman Empire that destroyed Jerusalem in the days of Titus, about A.D. 70. Later it was broken up, and for centuries it ceased to exist as a unit. But in a day that is near at hand it will come up out of the turmoil of the nations in a new form. It will have ten confederated governments under a central head - described here as the "prince that shall come."

In Daniel 2 the course of Gentile world powers is described in the vision of the image of a man. The legs of iron represented the Roman Empire of the past, and then, looking on to the end of Gentile dominion over the Jews, the last state of the Roman Empire is depicted in the "ten toes" of the feet. Here again we have ten parts of this future power. There was nothing between the legs and feet, indicating that there would be no universal power between the days of Rome in the past and the Roman Empire of the future. Several have tried to achieve world power but never accomplished it.

Then in Daniel 7 the Roman Empire of the past is described as a "dreadful and terrible" beast; such we know Rome was. Then it pictures the future of the same power in these words: "and it had ten horns." Everywhere the testimony of Scripture is uniform as to the form of the future Roman Empire. There is also another "little horn" in Daniel 7 which describes this same "prince that shall come." The little horn comes up and dominates the whole beast. In fact in Revelation 13 this great prince is called "the beast" himself.

This Roman "prince" will make a league with the Jews for a period of seven years. Before this takes place we, Christians, are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. He may come at any moment. After the Church is taken to heaven the ways of God with His earthly people will again begin to unfold. The interrupted "seventy weeks" will be resumed; the last "week" or seven years must be fulfilled. During these seven years the Roman Empire will assume protection of the Jews and give them Palestine as a home land, but still under their Gentile domination. The Arabs (who at present are vigorously protesting the admittance of more Jews to Palestine) will continue to be the enemies of the Jewish occupation of that land. They will probably perfect what they now seek - a federated Arab state - which is described in Isaiah as the "king of the north"; that is, north of Palestine. Daniel 8 and 11 also go on to develop the picture of this "king of the north" of the future, and Psalm 83 gives the list of his confederate peoples.

For fear of the Arab world the Jews, who will have gone back to Palestine in unbelief seeking a home land rather than their Messiah, will readily turn to the Roman Empire for protection and accept a contract with this "beast" for seven years. He will permit them to re-establish their Jewish ritual and rebuild their temple. This will stir the Arabs to great resentment, but the overwhelming strength of the Roman Empire will apparently guarantee safety to the Jews. Now the 27th verse should read,

"And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."

Some have misinterpreted this "covenant" to mean the "new covenant" which the Messiah will make with Israel, but that plainly could not be the case for He will not make one for seven years nor will He break it. This is "a covenant" entered into by the Jews and their false Messiah - the antichrist - on the one hand, and the head of the Roman Empire on the other. It is also made with "the many" or the mass of the Jews. There will be a faithful remnant who will refuse this proffered aid and suffer for it, but the many will readily accept it.

This contract is also foretold in Isa. 28:14, 15:

"Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge [the 'king of the north' or the 'Assyrian'] shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves."

Then the prophet Isaiah goes on to tell that their agreement shall not stand and that the overflowing scourge will tread them down. God will see to it that judgment will overtake them; but He also gives a word of encouragement to the faithful few by telling them of Christ the "sure foundation" for them who trust in Him (v. 16).

After one half of the week - 3 1/2 years - has run its course, this "prince" will break his contract with the Jews to the extent that he will cause all their ritual and sacrifices to cease. As wicked as the Jewish leaders and most of the Jewish people will be, this "prince" will be worse. He will hate even the mention of God and seek to obliterate all acknowledgment of Him in any way. He will substitute total idolatry for their reestablished religious services. The antichrist, the Jewish leader, will be his guilty coadjutor and tool.

That this "prince" will stop the Jews' religious services and institute his own schemes is foretold in Dan. 7:25:

"And he shall... think to change times and laws [Jewish ritual]; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

Here we get the specified time of enforced idolatry as "time" - one year; "times" - two years; "the dividing of time" - one half year; or three and one half years. This corresponds exactly to breaking his league with them and establishing idolatry in the "midst of the week"; that is, after the first 3 1/2 years, and with 3 1/2 years to go.

The Lord Jesus also foretold this terrible and gross idolatry in Matthew 12. The unclean spirit of idolatry had gone out of the Jews after their return from Babylon. They have not been idol worshipers since, but in that day the unclean spirit of idolatry will go back into them, with seven other wicked spirits, and their last state shall be worse than the first. And for this "protection of abominations" (J.N.D. Trans.) there is going to be a desolator. The "king of the north," whom they fear, will surely be a scourge in God's hand because of their return to idolatry. Their contract with the Roman prince shall not save them from the devastation which "shall be poured upon the desolate" - the Jews.

The Lord Jesus referred to this idolatry in Matthew 24 as the "abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel" in the 12th chapter. An idol will be placed in the temple according to Matthew 24 and will be the sign for the godly Jews to flee Jerusalem in great haste. The terrible times called "the great tribulation" will follow the institution of idolatry. It will last 3 1/2 years and be called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). Of course it will be a time of trouble for the whole world also, but there will be special vengeance on the Jews for their return to idolatry and for their acceptance of a false Jew, called the "antichrist." The 3 1/2 years are also spoken of as 1260 days in Daniel 12, and in Revelation 13 as 42 months.

Dear fellow-Christian, we stand upon the very threshold of the coming of the Lord and of those awful events which will follow on this earth. We are not looking for the formation of the Roman Empire but rather for the Lord; that is, we should be. Some Christians have put events foremost and have lost in their souls by it. The Lord would have us watching for Himself and not waiting for some event that may not be seen before we leave this world. Things will happen very rapidly after we are gone. We see the coming events casting their shadows now, but we are not waiting for events. Let us keep in mind our Lord's own words:

"Surely I come quickly."

And may our response be,

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Proverbs 30:24-28

"There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; the conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces."

Now even though you be "little," you can be, through grace, "exceeding wise"; and for this, the first thing is to be like the ants, preparing in the summer; that is, storing up in the favored time for the coming winter - applying your heart to wisdom, so that when the demand for it comes it assuredly will come, you may be able to answer the enemy in the gate. You know the mind of the Lord, having learned it from His Word before you were required to act on it.

The next exceeding wise thing is having your house in the rocks - having a position, a home, where no thief approaches - where you are secure and unassailable.

Third, with "no king"; without any apparent or recognized rules - visible power - you keep in company with your own people, the Lord's host - led and governed by the Holy Spirit.

Last, you take hold of heaven with your hands; your feet are not there yet, but you can speak of your hope and present enjoyment being in kings' palaces; "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."

May the Lord lead us in our littleness to be "exceeding wise."

Repaid With Compounded Interest

While Fenneburg was living with Gessner, a poor traveler, having spent his money sooner than he expected, one day came to the door asking to borrow three dollars to help him on his journey. As he asked in the name of Jesus, with importunity, Fenneburg loaned him three dollars - all he had, even to his last penny.

Some time after, being in great straits, the circumstance of the three dollars was brought to his mind while he was on his knees; and with childlike simplicity and faith he said, "Lord, some time ago I loaned Thee three dollars, and Thou hast not given them back to me, though Thou seest how urgently I need them. I pray Thee return them to me without delay."

The same day, Gessner brought him a letter containing money; and as he gave it to him he said, "See, here is the money you advanced." The letter was found to contain two hundred dollars, sent him by some rich man at the solicitation of the poor traveler. Fenneburg, overcome with surprise, exclaimed, "O Lord, there is no saying a simple word to Thee without being put to shame!"

Scripture Quotation

"When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house: and . . . he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."
Dan. 6:10.

Scripture Quotation

"THESE THINGS I HAVE SPOKEN UNTO YOU, THAT IN ME YE MIGHT HAVE PEACE. IN THE WORLD YE SHALL HAVE TRIBULATION BUT BE OF GOOD CHEER; I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD." John 16:33.

The Secret

There is nothing that gives the soul such marvelous power over enemies as an obedient, holy walk. Every step we take in real obedience to Christ is, so far, a victory gained over the flesh and the devil; and every fresh victory ministers fresh power for the conflict that follows; thus we grow. And on the other hand, every battle lost only serves to weaken us while it gives power to our enemies to attack us again. Thus we see that the man whose heart is truly devoted to the Lord will have power to teach - power to worship. He will increase in substance, for Christ causes those that love Him "to inherit substance" (Pro. 8:21). He will enjoy more of God's favor and of the light of His countenance, for "them that honor Me I will honor"; and finally, he will have enlarged power over all enemies.

Settled Peace

A dead and risen Christ is the groundwork of salvation. "He who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again 'for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). To see Jesus by the eye of faith nailed to the cross, and seated on the throne, must give solid peace to the conscience, and perfect liberty to the heart. We can look into the tomb and see it empty; we can look up to the throne and see it occupied and go on our way rejoicing. The Lord Jesus settled everything on the cross on behalf of His people; and the proof of this settlement is that He is now at the right hand of God. A risen Christ is the eternal proof of an accomplished redemption; and if redemption is an accomplished fact, the believer's peace is a settled reality. We did not make peace, and never could make it; indeed, any effort on our part could only tend more fully to manifest us as peace-breakers. But Christ, having made peace by the blood of His cross, has taken His seat on high, triumphant over every enemy. By Him God preaches peace. The word of the gospel conveys this peace; and the soul that believes the gospel has peace - settled peace before God; for Christ is His peace. (See Acts 10:36; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14; Col. 1:20.) In this way God has not only satisfied His own claims, but in so doing He has found a divinely righteous way through which His boundless affection may flow down to the guiltiest of Adam's guilty progeny.

The Spirit, Not of Fear, but of Power

2 Tim. 1:3-8

Such exhortations are never given unless there are circumstances to require it. They are intended to meet some tendency in the flesh, that we may guard against it. It is well to remember how the Lord deals with us, just as we are; how in all His ways He takes into account the circumstances we are in, and does not, like philosophy, take us into other circumstances.

With regard to our cares and trials, Christ does not take us out of them - "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world." While He leaves us in the world, He leaves us liable to all that is incident to man, but, in the new nature, teaches us to lean on God. The thought with us often is that (because we are Christians) we are to get away from trials, or else, if in them, we are not to feel them. This is not God's thought concerning us.

The theoretical Christian may be placid and calm; he has fine books and nice sayings; but when he has something from God to ruffle his placidity, you will find he is a Christian more conscious of the difficulties there are in the world, and of the difficulty of getting over such. The nearer a man walks with God through grace, the more tender he becomes as to the faults of others; the longer he lives as a saint, the more conscious of the faithfulness and tenderness of God, and of what it has been applied to in himself.

See the life of the Lord Jesus; take Gethsemane, what do we find? Never a cloud over His soul - uniform placidity. You never see Him off His center. He is always Himself. But take the Psalms, and do we find nothing within to break that placidity? The Psalms bring out what was passing within. In the gospels He is presented to man as the testimony of the powers of God with Him in those very things that would have vexed man. He talked with God about them; and so we find Him in perfect peace, saying with calmness, "Whom seek ye?" - "I am He." How peaceful! How commanding! (for peace in the midst of difficulties does command). When by Himself, in an agony, He sweat as it were great drops of blood; it was not a placidity because He had not heart feeling within. He felt the trial in spirit; but God was always with Him in the circumstances and, therefore, He was uniformly calm before men.

We are not to expect never to be exercised, or troubled, or cast down, as though we were without feeling. "They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." Psalm 69:21. He thoroughly felt it all. The iron entered His soul. "Reproach," He says, "hath broken My heart." But there is this difference between Christ, in suffering and affliction, and ourselves - with Him there was never an instant elapsed between the trial and communion with God. This is not the case with us. We have first to find out that we are weak, and cannot help ourselves; then we turn and look to God.

Where was Paul when he said, "All men forsook me"? His confidence in God was not shaken; but, looking around him by the time he got to the end of his ministry, his heart was broken because of the unfaithfulness. He saw the flood of evil coming in (chaps. 3 and 4) and the danger of Timothy's

being left alone, looking at the evil, and feeling his own weakness; and so (lest Timothy should get into a spirit of fear) he says, "Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee... for God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." If we have the spirit of fear, this is not of God, for God has given us the spirit of power. He has met the whole power of the enemy in the weakness of men, in Christ, and Christ is now set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

"Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." What! a partaker of afflictions? Yes. Of deliverance from the sense of them? No - a partaker of afflictions that may be felt as a man, but "according to the power of God."

This is not in not feeling the pressure of sorrow and weakness. Paul had a "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12), and did he not feel it, think you? Yes,.

he felt it daily, and as "the messenger of Satan to buffet" him withal. And what did he say? "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities [in those things in which I am sensibly weak], that the power of Christ may rest upon me." The power of God coming in on our side does not lessen the feeling to us, but we cast all our "care upon Him, for He careth for" us. Not that at the very moment we refer it to God we shall get an answer. Daniel had to wait three full weeks for an answer from God; but from the first day that he set his heart to understand and to chasten himself before his God, his words were heard (Dan. 10). With us the first thing often is to think about the thing and begin to work in our own minds before we go to God. There was none of this in Christ. "At that time, Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father," etc. (Matt. 11). We weary ourselves in the greatness of our way.

"Be careful for nothing" (Phil. 4:6). That is easily said. But what? not be careful. about the state of the Church, or about the pressure of a family? etc. "Be careful for nothing." Whatever produces a care in us, produces God's care for us; therefore, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." So, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" - not your hearts keep the peace of God, but the peace that God Himself is in, His peace, the unmoved stability of all God's thoughts, keep your hearts.

Further, when not careful, the mind set free, and the peace of God keeping the heart, God sets the soul thinking on happy things. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,... just,... pure,... lovely,... 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." God is there the companion of the soul, not merely "the peace of God," but "the God of peace."

When the soul is cast upon God, the Lord is with the soul in the trial, and the mind is kept perfectly calm.

The Storm and the Pilot

If God sends the storm, He will also steer the vessel.

They Went, They Found

We have been enjoying some precious things from the 22nd chapter of Luke in our reading meetings here. I was struck with that word, "They went, and found as He had said unto them." They sought His guidance, and were not disappointed.

Thou Shalt Find It After Many Days

A short time ago I was traveling in a bus when a young person sat down beside me. She made several remarks, and I thought seemed anxious to get into conversation. I wondered if the Lord might have a message for her through me, so I looked up to Him for guidance.

She told me that she had been visiting a friend who was in a hospital, and then remarked, "I don't suppose you remember me, but I shall never forget you." I looked surprised, so she explained that she had attended some children's meetings which we had held when she was quite a child.

She went on to tell me that one evening at the close of the meeting I had asked her when she was going to accept the Lord Jesus as her Savior. "Those words stuck to me," she said, "and I never see you without thinking of them."

I then asked her if she had done this, and was pleased to find out that she had been saved for twelve years, and so we were able to rejoice together. The incident she referred to had passed from my memory, but no doubt the Lord used those words as a link in the chain of blessing to her soul.

How often we find that the Lord uses the personal word to bring souls into blessing. We notice this especially with the children, and oh! what wisdom we need to speak the right word at the right time.

In these days when so many around us are turning away from the gospel message, may we be more earnest than ever in seeking to win the dear children for the Lord.

"Have you not a word for Jesus?"

Will the world His praise proclaim?

Who shall speak if ye be silent? Ye who know and love His name.

You, whom He hath called and chosen, His own witnesses to be;

Will you tell your gracious Master, `Lord we cannot speak for Thee'?"

Three Exhortations

Phil. 4:4-6

"Rejoice in the Lord always." Who was a fit person to say that? The man who had been in the third heaven? No. The man a prisoner at Rome. That was rejoicing always, as we have in the Psalms, "I will bless the LORD at all times." When I get the Lord as the Object of my heart, there is more of heaven in the prison than out of it. It is not the green pasture and waters of quietness that made him glad. "The LORD is my shepherd," not the green pastures, though green pastures are very nice. And even if I wander from them, it is "He restoreth my soul." And if death is in the way, I am not afraid, for "Thou art with me." And though there are dreadful enemies, there is a table spread in their presence. Now he says, "My cup runneth over." He carries him through all the difficulties and trials of his own feebleness. Ah! he says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

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

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

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

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

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

What shall I do then? Go to God. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God:" Then in the midst of all the care you can give thanks,

and we see the exceeding grace of God in this. It is not that you are to wait till you find out if what you want is the will of God. No. "Let your requests be made known." Have you a burden on your heart? Now go with your request to God. He does not say that you will get it. Paul, when he prayed, had for an answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee." But peace will keep your heart and mind, not you will keep this peace. Is He ever troubled by the little things that trouble us? Do they shake His throne? He thinks of us we know, but He is not troubled; and the peace that is in God's heart is to keep ours. I go and carry it all to Him, and I find Him all quiet about it. It is all settled. He knows quite well what He is going to do. I have laid the burden on the throne that never shakes, with the perfect certainty that God takes an interest in me, and the peace He is in keeps my heart; and I can thank Him even before the trouble has passed. I can say, Thank God, He takes an interest in me. It is a pleasant thing that I can have this peace, and thus go and make my request - perhaps a very foolish one - and instead of brooding over trials, can be with God about them.

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

The Throne of Grace

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4:16.

We may come boldly to the throne. Still it is a throne (not a mediator), but all grace. If I go to the throne, instead of the throne coming to me, so to speak, it is all grace; I get help. I never can go to the throne of grace without finding mercy. He may send chastening, but it is a throne of grace and all mercy - "grace to help in time of need." If you have a will, He will break it; if a need, He will help you. Do you feel that you can always go boldly, even when you have failed? humbled, of course, and at all times humble, but humbled when you have failed.

Thy Testimonies Are Very Sure

Psalm 93:5

Over 1,900 years ago, our Lord Jesus Christ (surveying with the all-seeing eye of omniscient God just what the conditions would be on earth prior to His own coming in a cloud as Son of man, with power and great glory) defined most clearly the state of things in these few words:

"... upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity [that is, having no way out, no solution]; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Luke 21:25, 26.

In all things our Lord Jesus is to have the preeminence; already the prophets of this "present evil world" are paying unwitting tribute to Him. Some years ago, one of its own prophets wrote a book entitled, "The Outline of History," a book that ignored what God has had to say in His Word as to man's origin and destiny, a book that exalted the creature and forgot the Creator. This same man, H. G. Wells (after surveying the swiftly moving course of events in later years), reversed himself in statements that startled even his own admirers. We quote him:

"This world is at the end of its tether.

"The end of everything we call life is close at hand and cannot be evaded....

"People are discovering a frightful queerness has come into life. Even unobservant people are betraying, by fits and starts, a certain wonder, a shrinking, fugitive sense that something is happening so that life will never quite be the same....

"... Writers are convinced there is no way out, around or through the impasse. It's the end....

"Hitherto, events have been held together by a certain logical consistency as the heavenly bodies, as we know them, have been held together by the pull of the golden cord of gravitation.

"Now it is as if the cord has vanished and everything is driving anyhow to anywhere at a steadily increasing velocity.

"The limits of the orderly, secular development of life... has been reached and passed into hitherto incredible chaos...."

Let us hear once more the voice of Scripture: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star [the hope of the Lord's coming for His own as a realized thing in the soul] arise in your hearts." 2 Pet. 1:19.

The Tillage of the Poor

The Lord abhors the trafficking in unfelt truth. In heaven there may be ignorance, or want of knowledge, but no such thing as the possession of unfelt truth. The angels are heavenly creatures, but they confess their ignorance by their desire to know (1 Pet. 1:12). Ignorant of certain truths they are, but not uninterested about them.

A little knowledge with personal exercise of spirit over it is better than much knowledge without it. As the proverb says, "Much food is in the tillage of the poor," for the poor make the most of their little. They use the spade, the hoe, and the mattock; they weed, and they dress, and they turn up their little garden of herbs. And their diligence gets much food out of it. And we are to be these "poor" ones, ever to use divine Scripture as they carry out their tillage, and make the most of our little. It may be but milk we feed on, but if we use our diligence to put aside malice and hypocrisies and envies, and the like, we shall be really feeding and growing (1 Pet. 2). And because of this, much more savor of Christ do we often find in those who have less knowledge, for theirs is this "tillage of the poor" (Pro. 13:23).

To Young Christians

My dear friends, Recently we read of an experiment conducted in West Germany. A firm that was making a study of human behavior recruited about 200 persons to test whether they could live one year without watching television. The researchers were astounded when within six months' time the "boob tube" had vanquished them all! The more surprising because these individuals had been selected because of their respective independent attitudes and personalities. They had entered into the program confident that they were superior to any enslaving habit; nevertheless an overpowering force drew them back to the "screen."

Have you or we, dear Christian friends, ever experienced something of this nature as we have trifled with that which we had felt we could easily dominate, but to our dismay discovered that we were not masters of the situation? Self-confidently we had exposed ourselves to temptation that resulted in heartbreaking loss of communion with our Savior and compromise of good testimony before men.

How often it has occurred that well-meaning Christians have introduced television into their homes with firm declarations that they will control it: just particular programs at certain hours, and never on the Lord's day; but their good intentions were soon vaporized in the warm glow of the "tube," as were the vain aspirations of the 200! This illustrates how very weak the flesh is; the believer must be careful as to what he "looks upon" if he is to grow in things worth while, to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." It is a well-known fact that whatever enters into our minds through the "eye-gate" has far more effect upon us than that which is received through the other senses.

It has become commonplace for some Christians to have this fantastic instrument in their homes. But, my dear friends, as Christians, as "Christ's ones," ought we not to be very careful as to what we introduce into our little "sanctuary," our home? Have we left our first love? Have we fallen into such a low state that we willingly expose ourselves to the strong and ever present temptation to let that which is "of the world" afford entertainment for us and our children? Is not Pro. 23:31 instructive? "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red." Wine is the stimulant of nature. Ought we not to avoid looking upon that which spoils our taste for what is infinitely better?

Where then should we be looking? "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:2. The Apostle Paul said, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." He had seen Christ in heavenly glory! Have we by faith caught the heavenly vision? Do "we see Jesus... crowned with glory and honor"? Are we seeking "those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God"? Is our mind set "on things above, not on things on the earth"? Do we know that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear," then we also shall "appear with Him in glory"? In a word, are we obedient to the "heavenly vision" in a thorough-going devotedness to Christ, or are we enslaved by man's television?

"Be Thou the object bright and fair
To fill and satisfy the heart;
My hope to meet Thee in the air,
And nevermore from Thee to part;
That I may undistracted be
To follow, serve, and wait for Thee."

The Two Natures

While the birth of Isaac filled Sarah's mouth with laughter, it introduced an entirely new element into Abraham's house. The son of the free woman very speedily brought about the development of the true character of the son of the bondswoman. Indeed, Isaac proved, in principle, to be to the household of Abraham what the implantation of the new nature is in the soul of a sinner. It was not Ishmael changed, but it was Isaac born. The son of the bondswoman could never be anything else but that. He might become a great nation, he might dwell in the wilderness and become an archer, he might become the father of twelve princes, but he was the son of the bondswoman all the while. On the contrary, no matter how weak and despised Isaac might be, he was the son of the free woman. His position and character, his standing and prospects, were all from the Lord. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3:6....

The moment a sinner believes in his heart and confesses with his mouth, the Lord Jesus, he becomes the possessor of a new life, and that life is Christ. He is born of God, is a child of God, is a son of the free woman. (See Rom. 10:9; Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:1, 2; Gal. 3:26; 4:31.)

Nor does the introduction of this new nature alter in the slightest degree the true, essential character of the old. This latter continues what it was, and is made in no respect better; yea, rather, there is the full display of its evil character in opposition to the new element. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." There they are in all their distinctness and the one is only thrown into relief by the other.

I believe this doctrine of the two natures in the believer is not generally understood; and yet, so long as there is ignorance of it, the mind must be utterly at sea in reference to the true standing and privileges of the child of God. Some there are who think that regeneration is a certain change which the old nature undergoes and, moreover, that this change is general in its operation until, at length, the whole man becomes transformed. That this idea is unsound, can be proved by various quotations from the New Testament. For example, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." How can that which is thus spoken of ever undergo any improvement? The Apostle goes on to say. "It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." If it cannot be subject to the law of God, how can it be improved? How can it undergo any change? Again, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Do what you will with flesh, and it is flesh all the while. As Solomon says, "Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him." Pro. 27:22. There is no use in seeking to make foolishness wise; you must introduce heavenly wisdom into the heart that has been heretofore only governed by folly. Again, "Ye have put off the old man" (Col. 3:9). He does not say, Ye have improved, or are seeking to improve "the old man," but, Ye have put it off. This gives a totally different idea. There is a very great difference between seeking to mend an old garment, and casting it aside altogether and putting on a new one. This is the idea of the last quoted passage. It is a putting off the old, and a putting on of the new. Nothing can be more distinct or simple....

The birth of Isaac did not improve Ishmael, but only brought out his real opposition to the child of the promise. He might have gone on very quietly and orderly till Isaac made his appearance; but then he showed what he was by persecuting and mocking at the child of resurrection. What then was the remedy? - to make Ishmael better? By no means; but, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." Gen. 21:10. "That which is crooked cannot be made straight" (Eccles. 1:15); therefore you have only to get rid of the crooked thing altogether, and occupy yourself with that which is divinely straight. It is labor lost to seek to make a crooked thing straight. Hence all efforts after the improvement of nature are utterly futile so far as God is concerned. It may be all very well for men to cultivate and improve that which is of use to themselves; but God has given His children something infinitely better to do, even to cultivate that which is His own creation, the fruits of which, while they in no wise serve to exalt nature, are entirely to His praise and glory.

The Waster

Luke 14 and 15 are in one sense very happy chapters to dwell upon, seeing how the Lord visited our world, and how we are to visit His world; how nothing in our world pleased Him, and everything in His own. It should be so with us. If we are right-minded we cannot find a home here. Man's apostate condition has built his world, and it is a painful thing to build a house and not be happy in it; yet it should be so with us. You have built a house here, and Christ has built a house in the heavens. Do you cultivate the mind of a stranger in this world and of a citizen in the heavens? (Compare 1 Pet. 2:12; Phil. 3:20 - for "conversation" in the latter, read "citizenship").

After this wonderful moral scenery, we enter on chapter 16 - a continuation of the same scene. This chapter is one of the most serious in Luke's gospel. The Lord begins by the parable of the unjust steward, and before we go further let me call your attention to the word "wasted," in the case of the prodigal. It was just what he had done, and it is the business of this parable to show that the elder brother may do just what the younger did. He may be a very respectable waster; there are hundreds of thousands of such in the world, and high in the credit of the world they stand. But, weighed in God's balances, they are just as much wasters as was the dissolute prodigal. If we do not carry ourselves as stewards of God we are wasters. If I am using myself and what I have as if it were my own, in the divine reckoning I am a waster. This lays the ax deep at the root of every tree. The elder brother thought he was not a waster; but let me ask you, If you are living for this world and using what you have as if it were your own, are you not an unfaithful steward, and if so, are you not a waster? Here is a steward. We are not told how he spent his money, but it is enough to know that he was not faithful to his master. Then we see how the Lord goes on to draw out the reasoning of a man like that. He lived for this world, laid plans about his history in this world, and not in the next. The moral is beautifully laid to you and me. As that man laid out his plans for this world, so do you lay out your plans for Christ's future world. If you live to yourself, do you not deny your stewardship to Jesus? Then the Pharisees who heard Him derided Him. To be sure they must! It was a heavenly principle, and they were covetous. Covetousness is living for this world, and we are so far covetous, as we are laying our plans for this world. Now when you find corruptions in yourself, what do you do? Do not let corruptions lead you to give up Christ, but to put on your armor. The Pharisees derided Him, and what did the Lord say to them? "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men." This is just what we were saying. The elder brother may be highly esteemed among men, but "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

We are now introduced (v. 19) to the parable of the rich man. Tell me, has this passage been rather repulsive to you than attractive? There seems something rather repulsive in it, but let us look at it. Observe the difference between the rich man and the prodigal. The prodigal "came to himself" before it was too late, the rich man after the door was shut. The prodigal was dissolute and abandoned, and when he came to himself he thought of his sin. The rich man came to himself in the place of judgment, and did not think of his sins, but of his misery. The prodigal came to himself in the midst of his misery here, the rich man in the midst of his torment there.

That is all the difference. The prodigal said, I will go back; what a sinner and a rebel son I have been! There was nothing of that gracious stirring in the spirit of the rich man when he lifted up his eyes in flames. The prodigal had not to finish the first sentence; his father answered him on the spot, and put on him a ring and the best robe, and killed the fatted calf; but the rich man cried again and again. It was too late! Here is the end of the respectable waster. Why do I call him a waster? Will you tell me he called himself a steward of God, while he was living sumptuously every day with a saint of God lying at his gate? I am bold to say you and I are just the same if we are living to ourselves. This man died a respectable waster, full of honor and gratification. He had no misery to call him to himself.

We Shall Be Changed

"For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:52).

Leprosy had attacked Tane, a poor Maori in New Zealand. A Christian took pity on him, gave him a place to live, and taught him about Jesus. One day his Christian friend read to him about the Lord's coming. The next day found Tane with a beaming face and fresh joy. Tane at once said, "You tell me more. Me no sad about dying any more; this much better; me see now He coo-ee (the call given in the bush to find or attract attention), then we all gone together."

"Oh, joy! oh, delight! should we go without dying;

No sickness, no sadness, no dread, and no crying;

Caught up through the clouds with our Lord into glory,

When Jesus receives `His own."

H.L.T.

Behold, What Manner of Love

"Behold, What Manner of Love"

Beautiful indeed it is to hear these words from one who had known that love so long and so well!

The Apostle had just said, "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him," born of God! What a thought! It is this that causes the Apostle to exclaim, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [children] of God." It gives us a character and relationship of which the world knows nothing. He who was the Son of God, the only begotten, and in whom, as man, the character and relationship was displayed before the eyes of men, was not known. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not, He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." John 1:10, 11. "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not."

We have Christ's relationship with the Father, and we have His place as unknown here on earth. We suffer with Him here; we shall be glorified with Him there. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. 8:16, 17. While here it is suffering with Christ in a scene where sin has sway, and where everything has been alienated from God - man at enmity with God, and under the dominion of sin, while the creation groans and waits for deliverance - but being children of God, we wait for the children's place, our predestinated place in glory, and then we shall have the children's portion when the inheritance is given to the Firstborn, and the creature, delivered from its groaning, shall be brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

As His co-heirs we shall then possess the inheritance with Him, and reign with Him, having also been glorified with Him. We can well afford then to be unknown here in a world that knew Him not. It will not always be so. But we need confidence in God, and patience to wait till the Lord comes. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Heb. 10:35-37. Blessed it is to look forward to His coming, but we must with patience wait for it; and while we wait we must be content to be as unknown in the world.

Now while we wait for Him and to be in the condition in which He is in glory, we have a present and known relationship with the Father. "Beloved, now are we the sons [children] of God." We do not wait for this. We are born of God now, and are children and heirs of God now. It is a present relationship which we know by the Word of God, and have the consciousness of, by His Spirit in us. And what a relationship! How vastly more blessed than anything known to this poor world with all its boasted wealth and intelligence! It is a great thing in this world to be the child of a king, and greater still to be heir apparent to the throne; but what is this compared to being children of God,

heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, soon to reign as kings with the King of kings and Lord of lords? Yet this, dear reader, is the dignity and glory of the humblest and poorest believer in Christ. How this ought to lift the heart above all the empty glory of this world where Christ was a weary, homeless stranger, not having where to lay His head!

Nor is this all. In the relationship we have with the Father through Christ, we are the objects of His love - love immeasurable, boundless, eternal. He spared not His Son, but gave Him up for us all. And who can measure what was involved in that giving? Let the cross answer. Let its horror of darkness and unfathomable sorrows of that hour when the Son of God was forsaken, utter their voice and declare what it cost to redeem us and make us children of God. Oh, it was a wonderful price! But the price has been paid and we are redeemed and now have the same place in the Father's love as Christ Himself. The day of glory will manifest this even to the world, according to John 17:22, 23. "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." This is an ocean of love into which we are introduced - an eternal fullness into which we drink even now.

And what will it be when the fullness is known in glory? "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." What a prospect! Now children of God; then not only children, but fashioned into the likeness of the glorified First-born! This "we know," though it is not yet a matter of public manifestation. But we shall see Him as He is. It is a wonderful thought. It is not the glory in which He will be displayed as the coming Messiah. We shall see Him, and shall be with Him in His Messianic glory, as it is said, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Col. 3:4. His glory as Messiah and as Son of man will be publicly displayed before the world, and all shall see it; but this is not what is meant when it is said, "We shall see Him as He is." We shall see Him as He is now in the glory of His Father's presence. This is the expressed desire of the blessed Lord Himself: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." John 17:24. Here is One loved before the foundation of the world, Object of the Father's unchanging, ineffable delight, who moreover, having glorified God as Man here on earth, has been glorified of God as Man on high, with the glory He had with the Father before the world was. He is now in the highest glory, supreme in the affections of the Father, the light and joy and glory of courts above; and this is the One we shall see as He is. Oh, what a sight will that be! How it will thrill our souls! What rapturous praise our overflowing hearts will utter when we behold that once crucified but now glorified Savior.

But how could these mortal eyes behold Him as He is? It could not be. The glory is of too dazzling brightness. But we shall be like Him; we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trump (1 Cor. 15), and mortality will be swallowed up of life (2 Cor. 5). Predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. 8), "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" (Phil. 3:20, 21). This body, humbled by sin, will be changed into a body of glory, after the likeness of Christ's body of glory. "We shall be like Him," and this not merely in body, but in spirit as well, so that we shall in every way be united to the glorious and holy sphere where He dwells. Blessed, glorious prospect!

And now, reader, what is the present effect of this upon those who have this hope in Him? What is its effect upon you and me? "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Have you believed on Him unto life everlasting? Have you, as a poor lost sinner, turned to Him in your helplessness, and found Him a Savior? And are you now waiting for His return from heaven (1 Thess. 1:10)? Do you expect to be like Him when you see Him as He is? And will this be worth while? Is it something worth looking for and waiting for? Do you now in faith look up and see that blessed One in all the brightness of the Father's glory? And do you say, I am going to be with Him, and like Him, in that glory, and then I shall be eternally satisfied in His presence? Well, if it will be worth while to be like Him when He comes and takes us to Himself, it is worth while to be like Him now - like Him in purity of heart, like Him in spirit and ways, giving forth the sweet fragrance of His life all along the path here.

The Lord grant to the reader and to the writer to have Himself as an all-satisfying Object so that the heart may be formed according to what He is, and thus we shall continue to purify ourselves as He is pure - having this measure and character of purity before us - till He comes and completes it in glory.

"Lord, we shall see Thee as Thou art,

In yonder mansions fair;

We shall behold Thee face to face,

Thy glorious image bear.

"With what delight, what wondering love,

Each thrilling heart shall swell,

When we, as sharers of Thy joy,

Are called in heav'n to dwell.

"Oh, hasten, hasten on that hour,

And call us to Thy seat;

Lord, Thou without us ne'er will count

Thy joy and work complete."

Where Art Thou?

Gen. 3:9

God made man upright, and put him in the garden where was everything that was pleasant and good. Everything was to be subject to man, and he was to have dominion over all. And God brought the cattle and fowls to Adam, and he named them. Man was the head, center, and ruler over all, put in the place of perfect earthly blessing. But all this could only be held and enjoyed in dependence on God. Alas! how soon all was let go. The work of the enemy, the wretched distrust of God in man's heart, in spite of all the blessings that surrounded him, the working of lust and pride, followed so quickly by that dreadful act of disobedience, had a direct consequence. Man became a coward, and could not stand before the conscience he had acquired; he fled from God, his kind gracious benefactor.

But God is love, and it was love that put man there in that garden of delight at the first; and He is the unchanged and unchanging One: "The same yesterday, and today, and forever." The man, changed and terrified, fled from God; God in the energy of divine love pursued, seeking the lost. But "God is light," and everything must be brought to the surface - no keeping back, and why should there be the holding back? for He knows all, and with Him is the remedy.

"If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." 1 John 3:20.

Adam's heart condemned him, but God saw further into the depth of the ruin than Adam and, blessed be His name, He saw the remedy too - the source of all the evil judged and crushed under the heel of the "woman's seed."

"Where art thou?" Man must come out from his hiding place; as the fig leaves could not satisfy the conscience, so now the tree cannot hide man from God. And how many trees there are that men are hiding behind today. Men are hiding, and in restless activity are seeking to stifle the conscience which condemns and says, "not fit for God." It is God that asks, "Where art thou?" And He furnishes the answer, both for the sinner and the believer. The former is in his sins - that awful, lifeless condition, "in the flesh" (Rom. 8:8), and thus unable to do anything to please God. In the far country where the famine is, without Christ, without hope, without God, in the world, unclean, an enemy - the sword of judgment hangs over his head.

But believer, "Where art thou?" And God's Word again furnishes the reply; and what mind, however great, could have given birth to such a thought - it would have been blasphemy to have expressed it - but God has spoken, and shall we not hear? The believer is not in the first man where all is ruin, but in the second Man where there is naught but blessing in Christ Jesus, where there is no condemnation. He, blessed be His name, bore it all on that tree, and now it can never touch the one in Christ. "Accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6), not merely in Christ, though that is true - but "in the beloved," the One so dear to the heart of God. His place now is in the Father's house, seated at His table, having on the best robe, which is surely none other than Christ.

"Now we see in Christ's acceptance
But the measure of our own;
Him who lay beneath our sentence,
Seated high upon the throne.

"Quickened, raised, and in Him seated,
We a full deliverance know;
Every foe has been defeated,
Every enemy laid low.

"Soon, O Lord, in brightest glory,
All its vastness we'll explore;
Soon we'll cast our crowns before Thee,
While we worship and adore."

Where Do You Look?

Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went; and when he came into the land, all he got of it was a grave into which he put the dearest object of his heart. Do you say, Is that all I am to have? There is something besides; God turned the gaze of Abraham to heaven. He showed him a city, the heavenly one; and he saw the day of Christ, and rejoiced. God shows us not a city, but a heavenly Christ, "all things that the Father hath"; that is, Christ. If you seek the things above, you will be supremely satisfied. God was not ashamed to be called their God. He would be ashamed to be called the God of some people. Oh, if you are like one who tries to hold these heavenly truths in one hand, and this world in the other, you will never know what fellowship with the Father and the Son is, the infinite blessedness of the Father's delight in the Son. A Christian who does this is always miserable because, being a Christian, he is spoiled for this world, and yet is not in the enjoyment of what belongs to the other. We need to have our hearts' affections engaged with the living Man at God's right hand.

Witnessing for Christ

I remember one time coming away from a Christian home when this thought struck me - the name of the Lord Jesus Christ was not once mentioned! It brought to mind the words of a beloved aged brother who said, "There is no such thing as a purely social visit."

To make and return visits is a kindness, sometimes needful, and ought to be an encouragement; but it is sad if Christ is left out of the conversation. An evening or a day spent in relaxation or visiting without one word about Christ, and not one thought of God in the heart, is an awful blank and waste of time.

Although when visiting one another we do not seek to "preach," yet we should always meet to encourage one another; and a serious word "fitly spoken" might shine "like apples of gold in pictures of silver." And even though what we say, or our Christian conduct, may at times produce a laugh, nevertheless the Lord's approval and the testimony of a good conscience is sufficient.

If unavoidably the company we are in is such that we cannot introduce a serious thought or word about our Savior, let us be happy that it cannot prevent our quietly communing with Him above. Circumstances may surround us and limit our actions, but they cannot roof us in and prevent our looking up!

On how many homes and at how many tables, it may be, is "Ichabod" to be written: "Christ is not here; His glory is departed." At whatever table our Savior sat while on earth, the company was sure to be fed with some heavenly dishes of sacred truth. So should it be our constant endeavor never to leave anyone the worse for our having been there - but the better. Why should we not be as earnest about our Savior and precious souls as the carnal Christian and the unbeliever are about their pursuits?

Recently in talking to a gentleman newly converted to Christ, he told me what had been the means to lead him to the Lord. In the normal course of his business he came in frequent contact with a young Christian girl. He said, "It wasn't so much what she said that attracted my wife and me to her, but that in her attitude and actions we could see that she had something that was real and alive. What drew us was Christ seen in her."

This is a testimony we well might envy. Let us ask ourselves, Do those with whom we meet, work, visit and converse see something different - something of Christ in us?

Witnessing for the truth is not trench warfare. Those who stand for Christ must stand out in the open! Is it not sad that so many of us are like the stream that dries up in summer and freezes up in winter? I wonder what we would talk about with those whom we meet if we knew that this might be the very last conversation with them. Would it be politics, our work, sports, etc.? No, I don't believe so. We would discuss vital issues - the coming of Christ - eternal matters. Our Lord is coming one of these moments. Our next conversation may well be our last. We are to shine as lights in a dark place, and what He is to our hearts is really the essence of what we should say, and would surely

be seen in our walk and ways.

Everywhere and all the time, at home or visiting, and in every company, we should do all to the glory of God. He gives us all that we enjoy below, and will soon make us to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb where the conversation will savor entirely of Him and enrapture our hearts for evermore.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Zechariah 14:1-5

Chapter 14 gives the details, to speak generally, of the result for the nations of the coming of Jehovah as the Messiah (see vv. 9-16); but, when more closely examined, it is seen to fall into two parts, the first of which closes with "Uzziah king of Judah" in the 5th verse. From that point the prophet returns and describes the coming of Jehovah with His saints, and in so doing "takes up the subject of the relationship of Jehovah with the whole earth," showing that His coming for the succor and blessing of His ancient people is but the occasion for the perennial flowing forth of "living waters" to the ends of the earth.

The chapter opens abruptly with the solemn proclamation, "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee." v. 1. The "day of the LORD" has a fixed significance in the prophets, and is ever connected with judgment; as, for example, in Isaiah, "The day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up." (Chap. 2:12; compare Joel 2 Pet. 3:10.) And the context shows that it has this meaning here, that it is the day when Jehovah will appear for judgment upon His enemies, and for the deliverance of those who have waited for Him. (Isa. 25.) The "spoil" spoken of is probably the spoil taken from the nations (see v. 14), which the prophet says shall be divided in the midst of Jerusalem. In one sentence therefore, before he gives the details, the full result is placed before the reader - the full result of the assembling of the nations against Jerusalem. They will come to despoil it, but they shall be spoiled; and the people who were on the very eve of destruction shall divide the spoil of their enemies.

But before the end is reached, there will be terrible experiences. "For," says Jehovah, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." v. 2. In chapter 12 mention is also made of the siege of Jerusalem, but there in reference rather to the effect upon the peoples who besiege her. Here we have the revelation that at first, before Jehovah appears, the enemy will triumph and capture the city. Jehovah permits this for the punishment of the apostates of Judah under the influence of the antichrist. Isaiah thus speaks, "Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it." (Isa. 28:14-18; see also chaps. 8 and 10.) The scripture makes it also plain that Jehovah will suffer Jerusalem to be taken before He intervenes. Micah may allude to the same thing when he says, "This man shall be the peace, when the

Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men." Chap. 5:5.

It is in this way that God will teach Judah and Jerusalem that it is an evil and bitter thing to have rejected Christ, to have forsaken the living God; for now in their extremity, if they should call, there will be none to answer. Allying themselves with the enemy of Jehovah, and identifying themselves with his idolatries, they must now pass through these days of vengeance. "And," according to the word of the Lord, "the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity." No city in the world has undergone such frightful sieges. Jeremiah has signalized the sorrows of its capture by Nebuchadnezzar in his Lamentations; and a description of the horrors of the siege by the Romans has been preserved in the pages of Josephus; and, as we gather from this scripture, the sorrows of this chosen city are not yet ended. Does the reader inquire for the reason? The answer is found in the lament of our blessed Lord Himself: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matt. 23:37. And since that day Jerusalem has added to all her sins in crucifying her Lord; and she will aggravate her guilt yet more by receiving him who will deny both the Father and the Son.

A remnant will not be cut off from the city; and the next verse tells us of Jehovah's mighty intervention: "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle." Whether the Lord appears immediately, or whether indeed this event is subsequent upon the capture of the city, is not evident. The fact is stated, and care must be exercised not to go beyond the fact, that the Lord goes forth against His enemies and the enemies of His people. It is possible that allusions to the same event may be made by Isaiah, when he says, "A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompense to His enemies." And again, "For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many." (Chap. 66:6,15,16; compare Joel 3:9-17, and Rev. 16:13, 14.) In such a manner Jehovah will render recompense to His enemies; for He will gird His sword upon His thigh, and His arrows will be sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under Him; and then the nations of the world will have to learn what Pharaoh learned at the Red Sea - the irresistible might of Him against whom they have dared to set themselves in battle array. "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters." Exod. 15:9, 10.

In the next verse we have one of the most remarkable predictions to be found in the prophetic scriptures. "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." v. 4. It was from the mount of Olives, as the reader will remember, that our Lord ascended up to heaven (Acts,1:12); and, after a cloud had received Him out of the sight of the disciples, and while they were still wistfully gazing after their departed Lord, two angels said to them, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?"

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." Acts 1:11. No words could be more precise or state more definitely that Jesus Himself should return to the earth, and that in a visible manner; and now we learn from Zechariah that He shall return to the very spot whence He ascended, and that the very same feet that once trod Olivet, in company with His disciples, shall once again stand in the same place. No ingenuity whatever can explain away the simple words, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives," and in this way, as another has pointed out, "Jehovah identifies Himself, so to speak, with the meek and lowly Jesus formerly on the earth, in order that the identity of the Savior and Jehovah should be clearly acknowledged."

But when Jehovah thus comes, in the Person of the Messiah, He comes with power and great glory; the earth will acknowledge the presence of her rightful Lord, and thus the mountain on which He will stand cleaves in the midst. As we read indeed in the Psalm, "The earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because He was wroth." 18:7. So will it be again on that eventful day. The effect will be that a great valley will be formed by half of the mountain removing toward the north, and half toward the south, running east and west, its western end being immediately opposite to the eastern side of the city of Jerusalem, and its eastern end terminating, it would seem, at Azal. Isaiah cries, "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make Thy name known to Thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Thy presence! When Thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, Thou earnest down, the mountains flowed down at Thy presence." Chap. 64:1-3. So will it also be in this day of which Zechariah speaks, and the wonders flowing from the presence of Jehovah will strike terror into the hearts of the beholders, for they will flee as they fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah.

The prophet does not pursue this aspect of his subject. Jehovah has come, and His feet stand upon the mount of Olives, and He has thus renewed His relationship with Judah, or at least the remnant, of whom the disciples (who saw their Lord ascend, and who received the promise of seeing Him return) were the representatives. He now recommences (the second part of the chapter beginning at this point) with the coming of the Lord. He says, as if addressing Jehovah, "And the LORD My God shall come, and all the saints with Thee" (v. 5). The introduction of the saints as accompanying, or forming the cortege of Jehovah, is an additional feature; and the instructed reader will see in this a remarkable confirmation of what he has learned of the Lord's coming from the New Testament. Here, as it is His return to Israel, it is His public manifestation - when every eye shall see Him, and when, therefore, as Zechariah states, the saints shall come with Him. If, however, the glorified saints return with Christ, they must have been caught up to be with Him previously; and this is what the New Testament scriptures teach. Thus, in 1 Thessalonians 4, we learn that when the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, both the sleeping and the living saints will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so will be ever with the Lord. Here there is no question of any being caught up; the Lord comes to His own on the earth for their succor and temporal salvation. This shows the difference between the hope of the Church and the hope of Israel. Believers now wait daily to be caught up to meet Christ, and hence, afterward, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Col. 3:4. Whereas

the believing remnant, in the day of which the prophet speaks, will await the coming of the Messiah in glory, as described in this chapter.

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