

CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 29

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A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 29, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

116 Chapters

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Christian Truth Volume 29

Affliction

"Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. 4:16, 17.

"Affliction" worketh "glory"; "our light affliction" worketh an "exceeding... weight of glory." Every word is a marked and beautiful antithesis. Strange to say, the Apostle describes the glory by an old earthly metaphor, by the very metaphor he used to apply to his affliction; he calls it a weight. We speak of a weight of care, a weight of sorrow, a weight of anxiety; but a weight of glory! Surely that is a startling symbol.

"Far more exceeding" the heavenly glory, Sufferings here with it cannot compare. Glory eternal the guerdon of anguish, Radiant crowns for the thorns, over there.

Are the Dead Communicating?

Spiritism [falsely called, spiritualism), it would appear, is becoming popular. Scientists who formerly were most skeptical have after a searching investigation established two facts: first, that phenomena of an objective and tangible character do really take place; and second, that these are governed by certain intelligences. The whole question is, What is the nature of these intelligences? Are they human?

A writer proceeded to show that these intelligences are not what they pretend to be. That the phenomena take place is admitted; that communications are made is not denied, but that these come from the departed is absolutely false.

We have no doubt that Satanic agencies are at work in the spiritism of today, as they unquestionably will be in the coming period of antichrist's presence (see 2 Thess. 2).

There can be no question that all that is real in spiritism is an energy of Satan. It will presently sweep apostate Christendom before it like thistledown before the wind. Meanwhile the true Christian is safe only as he cleaves close to Christ, and yields implicit obedience to the Word of God.

The Basket of First Fruits

"And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place His name there.

"And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD sware unto our fathers for to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD thy God.

"And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: and when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression: and the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: and He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey.

"And now, behold I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which Thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God: and thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you." Deut. 26:1-11.

That this scripture applies to Israel's possession of the land at any time is plain. The last words of the first verse imply as much: "And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; that thou shalt take," etc. Exod. 23:19, Leviticus 23, and Numb. 18:13 fully confirm this. It was a standing ordinance in the land. The spirit of the offering is also clear - a full profession before God that they possessed the things which He had promised to their fathers. Their father had been a Syrian ready to perish, a slave in Egypt, and redemption had brought them out thence and into the good land of which they were now. in full enjoyment. Therefore were they come up to own the Giver in offering to Him the first fruits. They worshiped and rejoiced in every good thing Jehovah had given them, and this in grace, with the Levite and the stranger.

How all this bears on the way in which the believer now makes the offering, is evident. All his worship is but the answer, the reflex, and bringing back to God of the fruit - the first fruits if true faith and godliness be there - of what God has revealed Himself to be to him, and of that heavenly joy into which He has introduced him. Such is properly what the Lord calls "that which is your own"; for on earth we are pilgrims, in the desert it is not "ours." The characteristic of piety will be

found to be, in Scripture, and everywhere and ever, that the first effect of blessing is turning back to God and owning it there, not the personal enjoyment of it which without this turns us from God. The love that gave it is more present than even the gift. See Eliezer at the well (Gen. 24), the cleansed Samaritan leper (Luke 17), and a multitude of other examples. He who gives is more and more before us than the gift itself. This is the elevating character of divine enjoyment. Then surely we do enjoy it, freely and blessedly; and the stream of grace flows out to the Levite and the stranger - to those whose hearts are in need, and who have not an inheritance in the land we enjoy. It is then the return of the heart to God in the enjoyment of the heavenly blessings which are the fruit of redemption. The Christian too can enjoy or so worship when he has the consciousness that heavenly things are his. It is the profession, the open avowal of this; if he has not this consciousness, neither can he bring his basket of first fruits.

"A Syrian ready to perish" was a thing past. The worship was grounded on possession of the blessing and on a known inheritance - type of sitting "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." It is not thankfulness for promises, however surely this has its place, but thankfulness that they are accomplished - in Christ, yea and amen. Redemption is owned as an accomplished thing that has put us in possession, though for the redemption of the body we have yet to wait.

Indeed, this is the general character of Deuteronomy. It is not drawing near to God in the sanctuary by means of sacrifice, but the people - not the priest merely for them - are themselves in possession, and hence the sentiments toward God Himself, and toward the desolate of men, in the enjoyment of the blessing; for free grace becomes him who has received all through grace. Compare Deuteronomy 16 where even the various degrees of this are traced in the three principle feasts of Jehovah. Hence also the responsibility of the people as to the continuance of the enjoyment of the blessing; for it is in the path of obedience that such enjoyment is known. Deuteronomy is a book of the deepest practical instruction in this respect.

Be Still

There is always great danger of our being mere imitators of other people's faith! of copying their example without their spiritual power; of adopting their peculiar line of things without their personal communion. All this must be carefully guarded against. We specially warn the young Christian reader against it.

Let us be simple, and humble, and real. We may be very small, our sphere very narrow, our path very retired; but it does not matter in the least, provided we are precisely what grace has made us, and occupying the sphere in which our blessed Master has set us, and treading the path which He has opened before us. It is by no means absolutely necessary that we should be great, or prominent, or showy, or noisy in the world; but it is absolutely necessary that we should be real and humble, obedient and dependent. Thus our God can use us without fear of our vaunting ourselves; and then too, we are safe, peaceful, and happy.

There is nothing more delightful to the true Christian, the genuine servant of Christ, than to find himself in that quiet, humble, shady path where self is lost sight of, and the precious light of God's countenance enjoyed - where the thoughts of men are of small account, and the sweet approval of Christ is everything to the soul.

Bethel - the House of God: Lessons From the Life of Jacob

The ways of God toward man, however they may vary in form in succeeding dispensations, remain the same in principle. As vividly presented in the Old Testament history, they lay hold of our hearts, and command our attention; whereas the doctrines which embody them are often but little apprehended and, alas! are readily set aside as having but little application to our daily life and walk. Besides this, there is the danger of the mind being in exercise with doctrines rather than the heart and conscience. We need to preserve the character of the "little child" who learns at first not by doctrine, but by observation of persons and facts to which his attention is drawn. Hence the importance of the Old Testament, by which we discover how truth is coordinated, and in what manner it should affect the heart.

Jacob affords an instance of the heart's workings. He was not a "profane" man like Esau. In his own way he wanted to be right, and he coveted earnestly the promised blessing; but instead of waiting God's time, he tried to obtain it for himself, with the result that he had to leave his home and flee to Padan-aram. On his journey God sent him a wonderful dream, speaking to him from the top of the ladder upon which the angels of God were ascending and descending, affording unmistakable evidence that God would continually minister to his needs. In the morning on awakening he called the place "Beth-el," the house of God. He was made conscious of God's presence, but this was more than he could bear, and he promptly left what to him was a "dreadful" place because it was "the gate of heaven," and continued his journey alone (Gen. 28). In his subsequent history, it is noteworthy how he avoided Bethel. Desirous though he was of obtaining blessing as an heir of promise, he was unprepared to meet God and have to do with Him in a close personal way. But God's grace pursued him. Twenty years after he had seen the vision, while still in Padan-aram, God appeared to him, saying, "I am the God of Beth-el,... arise, get thee out from this land."

He set forth on his journey to the well-remembered scene of God's gracious intervention on his behalf, where he had sworn conditionally that the Lord should be his God, and that he would render unto Him a tenth of his substance. On his way southward he got tokens that God was caring for him - especially so at Peniel where he had the most signal proof and assurance that God was with him and for him. He had only to continue his journey in the same direction to reach Bethel, but instead of so doing, he deliberately turned aside and went to Shechem. (Gen. 33.) He was still afraid of God. Unwilling to await God's time and accept His way of bringing His purposes to pass, he had sought to become possessed of the blessing before the time, and had thus lost the sweetest part of it; namely, its reception direct from God's hand as the portion bestowed by Him in His rich and free grace. Quiet subjection to God, and waiting on Him in confidence, he had not known. Hence, Bethel was still for him that "dreadful" place.

Trouble met him at Shechem. Once again God appeared to him, saying, "Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there" (Gen. 35:1). But notice now what came out. Jacob felt that the inner life and condition of his household was unsuitable for the "house of God," and he said, "Put away the

strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el." vv. 2, 3. No wonder he had so studiously avoided the "house of God." But he could not prevent God having His way with him in grace so as to bring his conscience into the light.

Who would have thought that "strange gods" would be found in Jacob's household? But so it was; and we too have to learn that our hearts are not to be trusted. Unless we are walking with God, our hearts and consciences being brought into the light and judged there, we may find ourselves going on with all kinds of evil things, while at the same time there may be a great deal of outward earnestness, a show of piety, and a seeking after blessing.

We must not trust ourselves. Our only safety is to have everything tested by the light of God's Word, and to walk in nearness to the Lord, in humility and dependence upon Him, that we may learn His mind, know more of communion with Himself, and thus, as kept by Him, escape both the perils and the seductive influences of the scene around us.

Beware of the World

"O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee." John 17:25. If we could get to the secret of the sorrows that trouble our hearts, it is dabbling with things that are not of the Father but of the world. Christ brings us out of these things, and the mind recognizes it distinctly; but if we don't, in our walk down here, see that we are not to be of the world practically, no wonder if our souls get low and feeble, and cannot rise up to the delight of the Father in the Son, because there is not girdedness of loins.

He has spread His own portion before us, and it is not of the world.

We can look without a question of the measure of the love that passes finding out, and the worthiness of the One who is the center of all the counsels of God, but we must beware of the world. If ever so little of the world be admitted, it changes not Him, but our power of enjoying Him and walking in the freshness of it.

The Book

How are we to know that the Book which we call the Bible is the Word of God? We reply, It carries its own credentials with it. It bears its own evidence upon every page, in every paragraph, in every line. True, it is only by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the divine Author of the Book, that the evidence can be weighed and the credentials appreciated. But we do not need man's voice to accredit God's Book.

Both to Know and Live

"A copy of this law in a book... shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them." Deut. 17:18, 19.

The truth of God is not a thing merely to know, but to live.

A Cheerful Giver

There is not a single act of service which we render to our Lord that will not be set down in His book; and not only the substance of the act, but the style of it also, for God appreciates style as well as we do. He loves a cheerful giver, and a cheerful worker, because that is precisely what He is Himself.

A Chosen People: Special Treasure Rejected

"The LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself" (Deut. 14:2).

"Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:19,20).

How sad! The Lord chose them to be His special treasure, but they rejected Him. Israel did not want to be different. God gave them what they wanted. Instead of the peace they had enjoyed, they found battles they had to fight and die in. May we learn from their example, and desire only God's will for us because we delight in Him.

Christ I Love Thee: Psalm 63:8

"My soul followeth hard after Thee" (Ps. 63:8).

May we have hearts that seek and desire nothing above the Lord; hearts which do not make a show before the world of their feelings, or of their consecration to God, but which say to Christ in the silence of His own presence, and in accents which His ear alone can hear, I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me.

Christ on the Cross

Everything in the beginning of this psalm is letting down, and at the end there is everything lifting up. It is full of suffering and joy, but the former chiefly. The Person standing before us here is distinctly the Lord Jesus. There is a difference between this psalm and what we have in Isaiah 53 and in the gospels. In Isaiah we have the blessed Lord as a Lamb set before us, but it is taken up with the special object of showing the different feelings of the persons who had to do with Him; some were cleaving to Him, others turning away from Him.

In the gospels we have the historical fact of His sufferings, and in each there is something distinctive connected with the narrative. In Matthew the Lord is connected with Israel as the seed of Abraham; and there is the quotation from this psalm, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" when He was on the cross. In Mark the Lord Jesus is set forth as the servant, and the same words are quoted. Luke takes Him up as the Son of man, and this is not quoted. There is peculiar repose in John, and there we have the Lord Jesus more in His divine character. Finding the quotation from this psalm in Matthew and in Mark, and not in the other gospels, seems to give a clue to the character of Christ's sufferings as the heir of promise, and as the faithful servant in the hour of suffering.

In the psalm it is the sufferings themselves that are shown; you see there the inward feelings, the deep tide of woe that rolled in on His soul. The heading of the psalm has a meaning - "The hind of the morning" (see margin). The hinds go forth in their timidity in the morning - the harbingers of light, but disappearing as soon as day breaks. If anywhere in the Old Testament light breaks out, we have it in this psalm.

In the gospels we have everything that was done to insult our blessed Lord; but that was not the bitterest part of His sufferings; and all that He suffered from men would only leave the question of sin untouched as regards God and one's own conscience. Sin has been committed before the infinite God; whoever has been guilty of it is obnoxious to His wrath. Wherever there has been sin there must be judgment. If I look into Scripture I find the character of God is perfect holiness. If he who is perfectly holy has to do with the sinner, what must be the consequence? Into however small a compass I bring my sin, it has been done against an infinite God.

Where do we see what sin is? Is it in the ungodly high priest who blasphemed the Son of God? Was it in the Gentile monarch who sanctioned the crucifixion? No; it was when God's judgment was poured on Him for man's sin. He stood as the sin bearer, and it is there only we get the true measure of sin. When there "made... sin for us," He had not one single ray of light from God to strengthen Him. He represented sin before God, and the sustainment He had - always had - from God now ceased to flow. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

The word "Eloi," in the quotation is expressive of nearness - "My God." It is not Hebrew, but Syrian. This expression coming forth to Him who was always so near has deep force in it; and the moment in which He could be forsaken of God was this, when He was taking our sins upon Him.

He was always in the full sunshine of God's favor, for He was holy. Christ could have been no victim if He had not been holy and separate from sinners. Nothing shows the perfect purity and holiness of the Lord like this psalm. A Jewish rabbi has called it a psalm of repining. True indeed, there was a deep agony of soul when He said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?" But almost immediately afterward He vindicates God; "But Thou art holy."... He links Himself with Israel - "I am a worm"; that is, "I am in the place of a sin offering. I am a worm and no man - unworthy of the slightest notice or regard. Thou oughtest to turn away from Me. Thy holiness requires it." You must have some measure with regard to sin. What is your measure? From the buddings of it in the garden of Eden to the last heading of it up in the man of sin there is no divine measure of sin but on the cross. If we think of sin anywhere else but here, we get a human measure according to the circumstances....

The first Adam was no person to do with God. How could he? What was he to settle with God about sin? He could not, but Christ could; and He has settled it, and there is no fear now of God saying to a poor sinner who believes. "No; you must go and taste the sufferings which He bore on the cross." It was God's Lamb who suffered there, and it was to carry out the idea of mercy in the divine mind that He came: "Lo, I come... to do Thy will, O God."

When we look at this force of the first verse, what sort of sanction does it cast upon sin in a disciple? Do you talk of a little sin? the sin in your members little? See what Christ suffered for it. Nothing will make the disciple, the servant, so anxious to be free from sin as seeing what the judgment of it was now upon the cross. There is no such thing as little sin to the child of God who has this measure. Everything in yourselves, in your family circles, everything around you, ought to be brought into judgment, the sentence of death passed upon it. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John 12:24.

The Comforter

Every one who believes in Christ and rests on His work, shares the blessings of the Comforter now given and abiding. A person is not a Christian unless he is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not known as an object (though He distributes to every one severally as He will), but He is in us - living spiritual power in us. Christ does not dwell so in us. Christ was with the disciples three years, and then went away from them; but the Holy Spirit never goes away, and is promised to be in them "a well of water."

The effect of the Holy Spirit's power is to bring Christ back to us - not in Person as an object, but Christ becoming by the power of the Holy Spirit life in me. "To me to live is Christ," etc. Christ Himself is He whom the Holy Spirit shows to me. There is a blessed living Object in Christ which I do not find in the Holy Spirit. They could not say of Him, "We have handled Him," as of Christ.

Conscience Needful Now

It is one of the greatest comforts to me that I shall not need my conscience in heaven. If I let it go to sleep for a moment now, there are temptations and snares; there, there is no evil, and the more my heart goes out, the more good it is. Here I dare not let it, but I must watch and pray; I shall not need that in heaven. The full blessedness of it is the Lord's being there, of course; and next, the salute being perfect. What does the heart desire that cares for the Lord's people? That they should be just what Christ's heart would have them. That will be there; He will see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Then there is after that this comfort, that my heart can go out - here it cannot - to God and the Lamb, and to the saints in measure too; but then, roam as it will, there is nothing to roam over but a paradise where evil never comes, and it can never go wrong.

The Day That Ended World War 2: August 14, 1945

Our warfare continues unremittingly. There is no discharge. The devil and his well organized hosts have not capitulated, and the only warfare that God has ever owned as the warfare of Christians ("holy brethren" with a "heavenly calling") not only has not ceased, but is increasing in intensity as the devil's time grows shorter. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Eph. 6:10-13.

We quote from a letter recently to hand from a servant of the Lord. "The devil is busy turning blinded hearts and minds farther and yet farther away. Satan is still the deceiver and knows his business well. It seems that there are increasing numbers of demons at work everywhere." The "great house" (2 Tim. 2:20) of Christendom is becoming full of them; will it not degenerate into "Babylon the great,... the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird"? Rev. 18:2.

Awake! beloved brethren in Christ, awake! "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. 5:14. O think of what He has wrought for His own glory and for us, and of what we are privileged to be in this world for Him! Spared from divine judgment like the sons of Korah - purchased with the blood of His own Son - a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ - a royal priesthood to show forth the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light - carried upon His heart in continual remembrance in high priestly intercession (as the twelve stones were carried in the breastplate of the high priest in Israel) - taken into favor in the Beloved (like Mephibosheth taken into the bosom of David's royal circle for Jonathan's sake - called to walk in a path of rejection in this world, and to the obtaining of our Lord Jesus Christ's glory (just as those who shared David's years of rejection in the wilderness later shared in all the glory of his kingdom) - co-heirs of all that the Father has given to His Son (even as Rebecca shared in all that Abraham had given to Isaac), for "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand" (John 3:35) - brought thus into the most intimate relationships of love, the circle of the eternal love of the Father and the Son - loved as the Son is loved - even now partakers of that divine nature which is Love - left here for only a "little while" to represent Him before all men, "harmless and simple, irreproachable children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; among whom ye appear as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." Phil. 2:15, 16; J.N.D. Trans.

"Justified" by the blood of Christ, "sanctified [set apart to God) through the truth" and the all-availing intercession of Him who has set Himself apart for us, "glory with Christ above" our eternal portion soon to be entered upon - earth and heaven, the universe, under His feet (and ours), eternal and ineffable love our destined portion! What manner of men ought we "to be in all

holy conversation and godliness" (2 Pet. 3:11).

"Glory before thee,

Pilgrim, press on!

Share now the sorrow,

Share soon the crown.

"Tell forth the Savior's fame,

Honor His holy name,

Bear now His cross and shame,

Pilgrim, press on!"

Dead in Sins

Dead in sins (Eph. 2:1) - these words leave no room for the popular delusion that man has only to cultivate his own nature, attend to his inner life, and he will need no regeneration, no atoning blood. To cultivate his inner life, according to Scripture, would be to cultivate corruption and to augment its evil fruit, just as to cultivate an evil tree would only be to make it more prolific of evil. Cultivate, educate man as he is, and he is only made a greater power for evil in this present corrupt age to which he belongs. What says God of such, but that every thought and imagination of his heart is evil continually. The imagination even, which man may have apart from a work of grace, to be religious - see what it was in Cain, and in the Pharisee. The Pharisee had religion without God. The poor publican had no religion, as men count it, but laying hold of God - His mercy - he went home to his house justified.

Dear Children: Words From God Our Father

"Dear Children"

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." Eph. 5:1, 2.

What a wonderful place the Lord sets us in here, and sets us in the consciousness of it too. To think that such a word should come out of His mouth to us, calling us "dear children"! We are familiar with the thought of being sons of God, "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"; but when we think of the nearness and intimacy of this, and His revealing Himself to us, it is wonderful.

It is not what He has done to deliver us from condemnation; but when the sin is all gone, to be remembered no more. He sets us in this relationship of "dear children," and in the consciousness of it. If He says to me, Dear child! what a thought I have of Him, and of the wonderful condition I am in; the expression draws out the consciousness of the love in the place. He may have done all kinds of things for me, but the very word conveys to me where I am. If we come to think of it and measure it, we have to think of Christ. He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." He dwells in us to be the power and enjoyment of it, and attracts down from the Father's heart what He feels for Him and for us, and that is shed abroad in our hearts.

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

We get the doctrinal part of the epistle before, and now He says, You are My dear children; it is not a mere doctrine. but the address of God to us. When He says "dear," what says it? It is His heart, what He feels about us, poor creatures as we are; but He says it because He feels it. He is expressing Himself and reaching us, and that is what is so thoroughly blessed. A child is to be obedient and dutiful; but it is wonderful that God should say this, and He reckons on our hearts walking in it. This is the outgoing of God's good pleasure and delight, poor unworthy creature as I am; it is not a question of worthiness; that is in Christ. The sin has been so put away in God's sight that His heart can go out. Christ's love took Him to that baptism - "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished"! Till then His love could not go out freely, but then it could flow out in unmingled freeness - perfect love in the drinking of that terrible cup. Now the love is free to act. Grace reigns because righteousness is accomplished. His whole love can

go out through grace.

I get, through the work of Christ, God free to satisfy His love, all the purposes and delights of His own nature. The love is free to flow out in all its fullness. You never get a word about the prodigal when he comes to the father (a great deal about him when he is coming); but you hear about the father, and his joy in having him. The poor prodigal was happy enough, but it is not meet to make him happy; he had the best robe, but it is "meet" to "make merry, and be glad"; for "this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." He tells it to us that we should know it. It was meet that he should make merry, and have all glad around him because this poor sinner had come back. There is no hindrance to the full satisfaction of his soul, his own joy to have this one in.

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

Having the divine nature (sin put away) we are in the light as God is in the light, brought into the presence of God, and capable of enjoying it. It is not of human wisdom or knowledge, but of a pure heart; we learn more and more every day if we are walking with God, but it is not intellect. All the intellect in the world never knew what it is to be loved, never found out God; it found wills and lusts, but never found God. We learn Him by our wants. The one who learns what strength is, and knows the comfort of it, is a poor feeble person who cannot get along a rough road, and a strong one lends his arm. What a comfort strength is to him!

God has met the real need of a soul in every possible way. "When we were yet without strength,... Christ died for the ungodly." The perfection of His love came out, in that when we had no strength to get out of our state, He says, I must come down to you. It takes me up to enjoy it in God Himself. He comes down to the sinner where he is, and the sinner learns there is love enough to reach from the holy throne of God to him, and to take his poor heart up to the throne of God. Not wisdom or intellect, but God revealing Himself; and as He thus acts in love, I get the very spring of it, and the root from the beginning to the end as I know Him. The light comes into my conscience and makes everything manifest, and the love comes too. We have to learn more of the treacherousness of our hearts, of the wiles of Satan, and of the world; but I am in positive relationship with God, sin is outside (by faith, I mean), and there we have to keep it. We are in the heavenly places as to doctrine; then we get the practical power. He sends us out from Himself to the world that men may know what He is....

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Eph. 4:32.

As brought to God I have learned what God is as to His ways of grace. Did God come and clamor against you in justice? He sent His Son to give Himself for you, and has forgiven you. You go and do so to others. You are a dear child; go and manifest what God is; He has forgiven you. There is a man who has wronged me; I go and forgive him as God forgave me, if I am near enough to God to do it, to show out that what we have been learning is the joy of our souls.

"Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us." There we see the preciousness of Him who brought it so close to us. Have you not understood what Christ's love to you as a poor creature was? Have you not learned for yourself that He gave Himself - no light thing. Then you go and give yourself. He did not give a great deal for us (everything in one sense); He gave Himself. The law requires the measure of your love to yourself to be that of your love to your neighbor. In a world like this I want something more than that. I have to do with people who wrong and insult and harass and outrage me. Christ did more than love us as He loved Himself - He gave Himself entirely. The perfection of love is measured in self-sacrifice. We may fail in it, but there is no other measure. "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Was not God manifested in Christ?

Is not Christ your model? He, the blessed Son of God walking through this world, manifested God with a divine superiority over evil. It is put away between me and God, and I am to be above it between me and man - the power of good in the midst of evil. If you see unrighteousness, and your spirit boils over, that will not do; you may "be... angry and sin not" - righteous indignation at evil. Christ was the expression of unavenging righteousness - doing well, and suffering, taking it patiently.

One word on this verse - Eph. 5:2. I give myself for others, but to God. If I give myself to others, I may not go right, for they may not go right; but the lower and worse the person I give myself up for, the higher it is. The principle of Christ was - He gave Himself to God, but for the vilest. It was a sacrifice of love - love that had its motive in itself for God, its object in God - and that kept it steady in the path.

Further in the chapter (v. 14) you get light brought in - the full light into the conscience, and the full love into the heart - and then you will go right. There our souls should be - walking in the light, our consciences alive, and our hearts in the undisturbed consciousness of that word of God, "Dear children," the feeling of affection going out from His heart - so that when I go to Him, there is not only the love that sought the sinner, but the love now in the relationship that finds delight in expressing itself. Wherever the world or selfishness gets in (evil too, I need not say), that is not after God, but after the world and after the devil. That is like a man asleep. He does not hear or speak; he may dream, and the word to him is, "Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." If my heart goes with the things of the world, Christ is not shining into it. There may be glimmerings, but I cannot say "Abba" and go to Him with the sense that He will say, Now My child, go and follow Me.

The Enemy Will Come Back

No matter how many times the enemy has been defeated through faithfulness to the Word, he will come back and seek to attack us again. The enemy would like to rob us of our joy in our position in the heavenlies.

Epaphras or the Service of Prayer

Col. 4:12

There is a very striking difference between the inspired records of the people of God, and all human biographies. The former may truly be said to be much in little; while many of the latter may as truly be said to be little in much. The history of one of the Old Testament saints - a history stretching over a period of 365 years - is summed up in two short clauses. "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Gen. 5:24. How brief! But yet how full! How comprehensive! How many volumes would man have filled with the records of such a life! And yet, what more could He have said? To walk with God, comprehends all that could possibly be said of anyone. A man may travel around the globe; he may preach the gospel in every clime; he may suffer in the cause of Christ; he may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick; he may read, write, print, and publish; in short, he may do all that ever man could or did do; and yet it may be all summed up in that brief clause, He "walked with God." And right well it will be for him if he can be so summed up. One may do nearly all that has been enumerated, and yet never walk with God one hour; yea, one may not even know the meaning of a walk with God. The thought of this is deeply solemnizing and practical. It should lead us to the earnest cultivation of the hidden life, without which the most showy services will prove to be but mere flash and smoke.

There is something peculiarly touching in the mode in which the name of Epaphras is introduced to our notice in the New Testament. The allusions to him are very brief, but very pithy. He seems to have been the very stamp of man which is so much needed at the present moment. His labors, so far as the inspired penman has recorded them, do not seem to have been very showy or attractive. They were not calculated to meet the human eye or elicit human praise. But, oh! they were the most precious labors - peerless - priceless labors. They were the labors of the closet, labors within the closed door, labors in the sanctuary, labors without which all beside must prove barren and worthless. He is not placed before us by the sacred biographer as a powerful preacher, a laborious writer, a great traveler, which he may have been, and which are all truly valuable in their place. The Holy Spirit, however, has not told us that Epaphras was any of the three; but then, my reader, He has placed this singularly interesting character before us in a manner calculated to stir the depths of our moral and spiritual being. He has presented him to us as a man of prayer - earnest, fervent, agonizing prayer - prayer not for himself, but for others. Let us hearken to the inspired testimony.

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently {agonizing} for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis." Col. 4:12, 13. Such was Epaphras! Would there were hundreds like him in this our day! We are thankful for preachers, thankful for writers, thankful for travelers in the cause of Christ; but we need men of prayer, men of the closet, men like Epaphras. We are happy to see men on their feet preaching Christ; happy to see them able to ply the pen of a ready writer in the noble

cause; happy to see them making their way in the true evangelistic spirit into "the regions beyond"; happy to see them in the true pastoral spirit going again and again to visit their brethren in every city. God forbid we should undervalue or speak disparagingly of such honorable services; yea, we prize them more highly than words can convey. But then at the back of all, we need a spirit of prayer - fervent, agonizing, persevering prayer. Without this, nothing can prosper. A prayerless man is a sapless man. A prayerless preacher is a profitless preacher. A prayerless writer will send forth barren pages. A prayerless evangelist will do but little good. A prayerless pastor will have but little food for the flock. We need men of prayer - men like Epaphras - men whose closet walls witness their agonizing labors. These are unquestionably the men for the present moment.

There are immense advantages attending the labors of the closet - advantages quite peculiar - advantages for those who engage in them, and advantages for those who are the subject of them. They are quiet, unobtrusive labors. They are carried on in retirement in the hallowed, soul-subduing solitude of the divine presence, outside the range of mortal vision. How little would the Colossians have known of the loving, earnest labors of Epaphras, had the Holy Ghost not mentioned them! It is possible that some of them might have deemed him deficient in zealous care on their behalf. It is probable that there were persons then, as there are now, who would measure a man's care or sympathy by his visits or letters. This would be a false standard. They should see him on his knees, to know the amount of his care and sympathy. A love of travel might take me from London to Edinburgh to visit the brethren. A love of scribbling might lead me to write letters by every mail. Naught save a love for souls, a love for Christ, could ever lead me to agonize as Epaphras did on behalf of the people of God, that they "may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

Again, the precious labors of the closet demand no special gift, no peculiar talents, no preeminent mental endowments. Every Christian can engage in them. A man may not have the ability to preach, teach, write, or travel; but every man can pray. One sometimes hears of a gift of prayer. It is not a pleasant expression. It falls gratingly on the ear. It often means a mere fluent utterance of certain known truths which the memory retains and the lips give forth. This is poor work. This was not the way with Epaphras. This is not what we want and long for just now. We want a real spirit of prayer. We want a spirit that enters into the present need of the Church, and hears that need in persevering, fervent, believing intercession before the throne of grace. This spirit may be exercised at all times and under all circumstances. Morning, noon, eventide, or midnight will answer for the closet laborer. The heart can spring upward to the throne in prayer and supplication at any time. Our Father's ear is ever open; His presence chamber is ever accessible. Come when or with what we may, He is always ready to hear, ready to answer. He is the Hearer, the Answerer, and the Lover of importunate prayer. He Himself has said, "ask," "seek," "knock," "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" - "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" - "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." These words are of universal application. They are intended for all God's children. The feeblest child of God can pray, can watch, can get an answer, and return thanks.

Furthermore, nothing is so calculated to give one a deep interest in people as the habit of praying constantly for them. Epaphras would be intensely interested in the Christians at Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. His interest made him pray, and his prayers made him interested. The more we are interested for anyone, the more we shall pray for him; and the more we pray, the

more interested we become. Whenever we are drawn out in prayer for people, we are sure to rejoice in their growth and prosperity. So also in reference to the unconverted. When we are led to wait upon God about them, their conversion is looked for with the deepest anxiety, and hailed, when it comes, with unfeigned thankfulness. The thought of this should stir us up to imitate Epaphras, on whom the Holy Ghost has bestowed the honorable epithet of "a servant of Christ," in connection with his fervent prayers for the people of God.

Finally, the highest inducement that can be presented to cultivate the spirit of Epaphras, is the fact of its being so directly in unison with the spirit of Christ. This is the most elevated motive. Christ is engaged on behalf of His people. He desires that they should "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God"; and those who are led forth in prayer, in reference to this object, are privileged to enjoy high communion with the great Intercessor. How marvelous that poor feeble creatures down here should be permitted to pray about that which engages the thoughts and interests of the Lord of glory! What a powerful link there was between the heart of Epaphras and the heart of Christ when the former was laboring for his brethren at Colosse!

Christian reader, let us ponder the example of Epaphras. Let us initiate it. Let us fix our eyes on some Colosse or other, and labor fervently in prayer for the Christians therein. The present is a deeply solemn moment. A correspondent in Scotland makes the following most impressive statement: "Matters are coming to a crisis, and men are taking sides and it is all well. We are no longer left in doubt as to who will serve the Lord, and who will not. May the Lord break up His own way into the hearts of many, and prepare His people for suffering and doing His holy will." These are true sayings, and they tend to make us feel our urgent need of men like Epaphras - men who are willing to labor on their knees for the cause of Christ, or to wear, if it should be so, the noble bonds of the gospel. Such was Epaphras. We see him as a man of prayer (Col. 4:12), and as a companion in bonds with the devoted Apostle of the Gentiles (Philem. 1:23)

May the Lord stir up among us a spirit of earnest prayer and intercession. May He raise up many of those who shall be cast in the same spiritual mold as Epaphras. These are the men for the crisis.

P.S. It may interest the reader to learn, that hundreds of praying souls have agreed to wait on our God day and night to send a wave of blessing over the whole Church upon earth. Assuredly, He will hear and answer. Let there be united, believing, importunate, persevering prayer. (Matt. 18:19; 21:22; Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8.)

Faith

Faith never makes light of danger, for it knows what we are. On the other hand, faith never faints at danger, for it knows what God is.

Faith in Hebrews and Romans

In Hebrews, faith is looked upon as an active principle of endurance and conduct; it is reliance on God's Word through grace for practice. In Romans it is the principle on which we are justified in virtue of Christ's work, the ground of peace. In the former it is the active, working faith of the saint; in the latter, the non-working faith of the sinner.

The Father's House

John 14:1-3

Very little is said in Scripture about the Father's house save what we find in John 14. One is never weary of those verses because they tell of the personal love of the Lord Jesus to His Church; but locality is not defined, nor the thought of heaven introduced as meaning any particular locality. Jesus lifts up His eyes to heaven.

Whenever my faith goes up there, what does it find realized? The thought of the One there who was once in all my circumstances of sorrow down here - the thought of home up there with Him. Oh, what a warm happy feeling the heart experiences at that thought - not the circumstances of that home, but the being there with Him. A man's heart is in his home, not because of its circumstances, but because the object of his affection is there. The same with regard to heaven. I find uncommonly little of detail as to circumstances there, but I find unfading reality in one or two simple verses; for instance this, "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." What a volume in that! Christ wanting us to enter into the joy of His heart at the thought of the Father's home saying in substance, "I want to share with you this thought of My joy; I want you to rejoice with Me because in a little while I shall be with My Father; and not only that, but you also shall soon be there with Me." If we could see all the glory of heaven, it would be poor in comparison with the thought of seeing the Son sitting on the throne of His Father, and ourselves seated together with Him in those heavenly places. What perfect rest of heart there is in that expression, "Made us sit together in heavenly places," thus bringing us into the blessed taste of the glory He has!

The character of our rest, and our power to walk as risen men, is laid down in Colossians 3. When God's eye looks upon you, what does He see? - that you are one who has a place up there. And when His eye rests on Christ, it rests as not expecting to find a blot. How impossible, as the eye of God turns on us, that He should find anything but imperfection! But He turns round to see us hid in Christ, and to meet in those who are hid in Christ, Christ's perfection.

Fifteen Years Without a Break

Introduced to a young lady who had attended Sunday School for fifteen years without a break of any kind, I inquired as to when she found Christ as her Savior, to which she replied,

"Only last year."

Teachers, toil on, your "labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

Forgiven and Forgotten

It is a common saying among men, "I can forgive, but I cannot forget." The tide of human affection may rise at times to such a height as to cover the tablet on which memory has engraved the record of my misdeeds; but when the tide retires, the record is there. Not so the love of God. That mighty flood tide not only covers the tablet, but obliterates the inscription forever, so that no trace of it remains - "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Heb. 8:12. Precious words! God can not only forgive but forget.

God's eye of infinite holiness cannot discern a single stain of guilt upon the conscience that has been once purged by the precious blood of Christ. All the sins and iniquities of the believer are plunged in the waters of eternal oblivion. God has pledged Himself never to remember them. He can say, I have "not beheld iniquity in Jacob." Man cannot undertake to forget. He cannot prevent memory from throwing up at times upon its surface the record of the past, but God can. The atoning work of the Savior has forever canceled the believer's guilt so that it can never again rise against him.

The believer's peace is founded on the blood of Christ and the imperishable Word of God.

Gentleness

"The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." 2 Tim. 2:24, 25. There should be nothing in the preacher to prejudice the sinner's judgment, or harden his heart against the offer of God's grace. If the servant be proud and hasty, how shall they know that the Master is meek and patient?

Give Ye Them to Eat

Mark 6

The Savior's voice was hushed. Jesus had ceased teaching the "many things," and the rays of the setting sun were falling athwart the faces of that awed and softened multitude. A strange thrill subdued those eager, restless hearts. Time had sped by unnoticed, and nature's needs were all unfelt when the still silence was broken by words strangely in contrast with the sweet scene where divine love was making poor, weary hearts feel its potent sway. "This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: send them away," the disciples urge, "that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat."

Little they thought that One they thus addressed, whose lowly grace made such intrusion possible, was He who long before in His own divine fullness had said, "I will satisfy her poor with bread" (Psalm 132:15). "Give ye them to eat," was His gracious rejoinder.

Uncongenial servants as they were, He could associate them with Himself in the service of His love. True enough, they were little up to the privilege conferred on them. Small heart had they for the weary, hungry multitude around them. Less knowledge had they of His heart who gave them this command. Completely taken aback, they look at the hungry crowd; they scan the desert; they think of themselves, and the difficulties appear insurmountable. His glory they see not, and their faith falls entirely short of the task imposed upon them. The old evil heart of unbelief that long before had questioned, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" (Psalm 78:19), was still there; and to the "Give ye them to eat," they oppose, "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?"

It is very wonderful to see the Lord thus communicating to His disciples His own power, all unwilling and unworthy as they were to share it. It is more touching still to watch the grace that, rising above their ignorance and unbelief, presses them into a service they were so slow to enter upon. But "the poor" must be fed, and they should feed them.

"How many loaves have ye? go and see," He says. Quickly returning, they reply, "Five, and two fishes," adding, as we learn elsewhere, "but what are they among so many?" The helplessness of unbelief could go no further, nor does the Lord parley longer with it; so without reply "He commanded" them to make the multitude sit down, on the green grass be it noted, in "ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties." Then blessing the loaves and fishes, He breaks them and gives them to the disciples to distribute.

One can imagine the feeling of wonder and doubt when the disciples began their distribution of those, but just now despised, "five loaves and two fishes." What must the eager, impulsive Peter have felt as in silent awe he took from the Savior's hands that small portion of bread that was to feed those waiting companies of a hundred hungry mouths fifty times told, "besides women and children." How doubt must have given place to amazement, and awe to adoration, as He broke and gave a piece to this one and that one, here to the strong man, now to a timid woman, then to a

lighthearted child, till every mouth was satisfied, and yet the store was undiminished; and more remained after all had eaten than there had been at the beginning!

What an acquaintance with Himself, and what an education for a future ministry was the Lord here giving to His disciples! True the impression then was not deep; and not long after, when again called upon to feed a multitude, they were as unequal to the occasion as before. But when the Holy Spirit had "endued {them} with power from on high," with what force and encouragement did these scenes recur to their memories as they went forth to minister for Him who "the same yesterday, and today, and forever," assured them that not only was "all power" given unto Him in heaven and in earth, but that He would be with them "always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:18, 20.)

And surely they are left on record for our encouragement and instruction too. As servants we have to draw upon the resources of that same Jesus now at the right hand of God, "head over all things to the church, which is His body," who having led captivity captive, "gave gifts unto men" for the blessing of souls and the edifying of the body.

Nearness to Christ, in His present place of exaltation, alone can make these lessons good in our souls, so as to enable us practically to meet the need of sinners and feed the Church of God; while it is as those who have tasted mercy for themselves, we alone shall "faint not" under the ministry committed to us. Above all we must look away from ourselves entirely to Him who still says, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." All grace and power are in Him, and the greater the need and the more difficult the circumstances, only so much the more is the opportunity His to meet the needs of His own in spite of everything. As servants simply subject to Him, we require to be in living and abiding association with that heart ever "moved with compassion" toward the needy, and that hand whose power and resource knows no limit.

It is not enlarged and deep acquaintance with truth, all valuable as this is in its place, that will do. Knowledge, of itself, "puffeth up," but "love edifieth." It alone never fails. Our apparent resources may be small, our knowledge of the Scriptures relatively slight, not even equal to "five loaves and two fishes," but ever so small a portion of them, with the love that simply seeks to edify, and the faith that counts alone on Christ, will meet any and every need that comes in our way, while acting under the guidance of Him whose command still is, "Give ye them to eat."

Oh! to be more alive to the marvelous grace of such a command, to the wondrous privilege of serving His people, and of magnifying His blessed name by drawing manifestly on His strength in such a way that it shall be seen that He, and He alone, is the spring and power of our ministry.

The scene we have been considering, simply makes Him manifest. Christ Himself fills the vision of the soul while contemplating it. The desert place; the absence of resource; the slowness and hardness of heart of the disciples, as it were form the background that throws Him into relief. It "manifested forth His glory," and so should all our service while waiting for Himself.

Gleaning

People often talk of the heavenly calling as if it were a piece of knowledge or a theory. Was it such to Enoch when he walked with God, or with Moses when he endured as seeing Him who is invisible? Don't let our minds take it up as a piece of knowledge instead of realizing a living Christ in heaven. It is that living Man in the throne of God who has distinctly called me by name, and not only that, but He bears my name before God as one for whom He has done a great deal, and for whom He means to do a great deal more. Why does my soul go up and find its anchorage up there? Why? Oh, that living Man who has stolen my heart is up there - He who as Son of God thought it worth while to come off the throne to go to the cross as my substitute, to take the cup of wrath due to me. And God has put His amen upon this love which is stronger than death.

And is it not a reasonable thing for me to say that if the Son of God loved me and gave His life for me, I must love Him in the place where He is? How blessed, as God's eye rests on Him and then comes down to look on me, to have the certainty that, weak and foolish though I be, I shall never find Him against me; that I am so one with that risen Head, that God can say, What is true of the Head is true of the members! How unutterably blessed to be able to say that that One crowned with glory and honor on the throne of God, is the One round whom my heart's affections should center more and more! And that this risen Son of man up there is occupied with a suffering people down here in all the circumstances they may have to pass through.

The Glories of Christ As the Son of Man: All Things Put Under His Feet

Psalm 8; Heb. 2:5-9

In our consideration of the title of the Son of man, we necessarily referred to this subject, but we propose now to carry it farther and to call attention to the actual establishment of the supremacy of Christ as the Son of man in the coming age. The Scriptures deal largely with it, and open out before the believer the blessed prospect of the coming and universal glory of Christ in the world to come; and at the same time we are never allowed to forget that His exaltation is the need and consequence of His humiliation and death upon the cross. For example, we read in Philippians 2, "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a [or 'the'] name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:8-11).

One other remark is necessary for the understanding of the subject. It must not for one moment be supposed that all the things which are put under the feet of the Son of man are of the same extent in all the scriptures in which they are mentioned. Thus in Psalm 8, whatever might have been in the mind of the Spirit, they do not appear to go wider than dominion over the whole earth. Thus we read, "Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under His feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." But when we come to the epistle to the Ephesians it is evident that the circle is enlarged to include things in heaven as well as things upon earth. It accordingly runs, "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things" (better, "head up" all things) "in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1:10; see also verses 20-23). Then also, if we refer again to Philippians 2, we find that things under the earth are also to be subjected to Christ. Of the limits of His sway there will be no end, as they will be coextensive with the whole universe, for nothing is excepted, as Paul teaches, save Him, God the Father who put all things under Him (1 Cor. 15:27).

This will help us in some measure to apprehend the meaning of the words, "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. 4:10). For when all things in the universe are put under His feet, He will surely flood them all with the light and blessedness of His own glory. Hence the language of the hymn —

"Of the vast universe of bliss,

The Center Thou and Sun;

The eternal theme of praise is this,

To heaven's beloved One:

Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,

That every knee to Thee should bow.”

Before proceeding farther, it will be profitable to consider the source of this gift of all things to Christ. There are several scriptures, in different connections, which reveal this, but we take, first of all, the one at the end of John 3. The Baptist’s testimony closes, without doubt, with verse 4. The Evangelist then, as guided by the Spirit of God, says, “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand” (vs. 35). The Lord Himself, in Matthew’s Gospel, speaks in the same way — “All things are delivered unto Me of My Father” (Matt. 11:27; see also Luke 10:22); but it was John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who was commissioned to reveal directly the Father’s delight in the Son as the fount and source of the gift. This divine complacency in the Son is strikingly illustrated in another scripture, as also the delight of the Son in the Father. Answering the Jews who, in their wicked state, were seeking to kill Him, “because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God,” the Lord said, “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth” (John 5:18-20). It is true that it is of Christ as the Son that these things are said; but surely it is of the Son as become man, if not presented here in the character of the Son of man. In the very next chapter, however, He the Son speaks of Himself as the Son of man, because there His rejection and death are distinctly in view. But the scripture has only been cited to point out more clearly that it was because of the Father’s complacency in His beloved Son that He has decreed that all things should be put under His feet.

It should also be borne in mind, if we would enter into the thoughts of God, that there are two grounds of the bestowal upon Christ of this universal supremacy. In the first place, it was God’s answer to man’s rejection. Yes, it was through the sufferings of the cross that Christ reached His throne. It is on this account that in Revelation 5, where the Lord takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, He is seen as “a Lamb as it had been slain.” The aspect presented, however, in John’s Gospel is, that the gift proceeding from the Father’s heart according to His eternal counsels for the glory of His beloved Son, the Son of man must be lifted up before He could take up His inheritance. What a subject for meditation! And how plain it is that, since all God’s thoughts circle around His beloved Son, we cannot be in fellowship with the Father’s heart unless the Son be the absorbing Object of our affections.

We may now proceed to consider the various steps the Lord takes before He assumes His inheritance. These are pointed out very clearly in Hebrews 2, where Psalm 8 is cited, interpreted, and applied. We are here, therefore, under divine guidance; and we cannot, therefore, be mistaken. If we give the whole passage, the reader will all the more readily comprehend its import. It is as follows: “For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest Him? Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst Him with glory and honor, and didst set Him over the works of Thy hands: Thou halt put all things in subjection under His feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we see not yet all things put under Him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor;

that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (or, everything).

The point of the Apostle then is, after having stated that the world to come is not put in subjection to angels, to show that, according to Psalm 8, it is put under man. Having given the psalm at large, in order to place the matter beyond question, he exclaims, “But now we see not yet all things put under Him.” This was patent even to the most superficial observer. How then was the psalm to be fulfilled? This he goes on to demonstrate: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.” Jesus then is the Man, the Son of man (which Adam was not), under whom all things are to be put.

This having been made evident, the steps are given by which Christ as the Son of Man attains His supremacy. The first of these is His incarnation. This is expressed in the striking language, which needs to be weighed to discover its force and beauty, “Made a little lower than the angels.” This could only apply to the form which our blessed Lord was pleased to take when He came into this world, to the body, in fact, which God had prepared for Him; for, as we read, angels were His attendants and ministers in the days of His flesh (Matt. 4:11; Luke 22:43). There are several scriptures which show the depth to which He descended, in His blessed grace, even in this respect, Isaiah, for example, says that His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men, the effect in this case, it may be, of His passing through this sin-stricken world, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, inasmuch as He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. Even so, it illustrates the statement, and Paul tells us that, in our blessed Lord’s stoop from the highest height to the lowest depth, He took upon Him the form of a bondsman (Phil. 2). Surely then He was made a little lower than the angels, and our hearts might well pause to admire and adore, as we think of this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.

The next step is manifestly His death: “Made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.” There were two reasons for the suffering of death in the Lord’s pathway to His exaltation and supremacy in the world to come. In Hebrews 1 we read that He was appointed “heir of all things”; and hence it was a divine necessity that He should take up all the liabilities that lay upon His inheritance before He could possess it. This, in fact, is implied in the clause in verse 9 — “that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man {thing}” — not only for every man, but also for everything that went to make up His inheritance. Paul touches upon this in Colossians where he says, “And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col. 1:20). And in this passage is also found the owner, the first and foremost, ground for the suffering of death — having made peace by the blood of His cross, through glorifying God concerning the sin which had come into the world. On this foundation God can righteously come in and bring everything into suitability to Himself, into ordered beauty before Him, so that He can rest in perfect complacency and delight in the whole scene, the universe of bliss, which has been subject to Christ, and which He will irradiate with the effulgence of His glory.

A word or two may be given upon the remarkable connection of this scripture. After saying, “that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man,” the Apostle proceeds, “For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” The significant point is the

introduction of the “many sons” whom God is bringing unto glory, in connection with the “all things,” thus opening out the whole scope of the purposes of God, whether in regard to the “all things,” or to the “many sons” who are under the leadership of the Captain of their salvation. It is, we cannot doubt, to teach that it was requisite for the glory of God in the accomplishment of His purposes (“it became Him”) that the Lord Jesus should pass through the suffering of death. It was in this way that an immutable basis was laid for the establishment of the universe of bliss, wherein all the glory of God will be displayed, and where Christ will be the Center and Sun of all. The reader will also observe the association and identification of Christ with the “many sons” as another reason of His being made perfect through sufferings, for both “He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

The Glories of Christ As the Son of Man: All Things Put Under His Feet

The next step, or rather stage, on His way to His inheritance is that He is “crowned with glory and honor.” We have this expression in (indeed it is cited from) Psalm 8, but not the words “for the suffering of death.” The time had not come for the revelation (though indeed it is found in a later psalm, and it is implied in Psalm 2) that for the fulfillment of all that is promised there, the death of Christ was necessary, and that the whole system of things of which the psalm speaks, even on its earthly side, could only be established on the basis of resurrection (see Eph. 1:19-23; Phil. 3:20-21). All this has now come out in the fullest light; and while waiting for its actual accomplishment, we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor at the right hand of God. Rejected, disallowed of men, but chosen of God and precious, He will sit there until His enemies are made His footstool; and then will be seen —

“Outstretched His wide dominion,
O'er river, sea, and shore,
Far as the eagle's pinion,
Or dove's light wing can soar.”

And what Christian is there who does not delight in the present exaltation of Christ, as well as in His forthcoming universal sway over all things in heaven and on earth? Surely it is the joy of all such to contemplate the crucified One as crowned with glory and honor — God's delighted response to man's rejection of His beloved Son. Wherever there is fervent love to Christ, the joy of the Apostle Peter will be understood in proclaiming again and again to the Jews, that “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (see Acts 2:36; 3:13; 4:10; 5:30, 31).

For the assumption of His universal kingdom, Christ waits at the right hand of God. But in the meantime, in virtue of all things having been delivered into His hands, He exercises His power in blessing in several ways, some of which may be indicated. In the very first place in which our Lord refers to the subject, He gives a remarkable intimation of the use of His power in grace. Rejected by the cities where most of His mighty works had been done, the whole scope of the Father's purpose opens out before His holy soul, and, in the midst of the deepening darkness which was settling down upon the chosen nation, He praises the Father because He had hid these things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes. With an overflowing heart, if we

may venture thus to speak, He added, "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

Thereupon He unfolds the fact that all things were delivered unto Him of His Father; and He further says, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" — words which, on the one hand, guard and declare forever the impenetrability of the mystery of divine Persons in their mutual relationships, and which make known, on the other hand, that the Father is revealed only in and through the Son. It is on this divine fact wherein the whole truth of Christianity consists (for the revelation is made on the foundation of the cross, the exaltation of Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit), that the Lord cries in this blessed invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Before His omniscient vision rose up all the burdened souls of every age down to the end of time, and this invitation was but the expression of the yearning of His heart to give them rest. To everyone who responded to it, He would give the promised rest by the revelation of the Father — "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26). Thus the rest and blessedness of heaven may be received by those who are still upon the earth.

Akin to this, there is another activity in the same connection, of all things being given into His hands. We thus read, "Father,... glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee; as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him" (John 17:1-2). Without going into any detail concerning this remarkable utterance, two things may yet be remarked. The first is that Jesus desired to be glorified only that He might glorify the Father. This was His absorbing object, whether down here on earth or at the right hand of God. He had glorified the Father while on the earth (vs. 4), and He would still do so when He Himself was glorified.

Morally, therefore (if we may thus speak), His life above is but the continuation of His life on earth. We may not pause to make the application; the question, however, may be put, whether this should not be also true of the saints of God. If so, what solemn searching of heart should be produced! Then, moreover, it will be seen that the Son will glorify the Father, exercising the authority which has been given Him over all flesh for this very purpose, by giving eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him. And He will do this by bringing them one by one into the enjoyment, through association with Himself, of the life which He enjoys in that region which is outside of and beyond death. And the form of this enjoyment is given in the following verse; it will be in the knowledge of the Father and the Son, in that holy circle where the Father's affections and the Son's affections are known and enjoyed because, as in association with Christ in His own relationship and His own place (John 20:17), we shall be as sons before the Father's face.

There is also the ministry of the Spirit connected with all things being delivered into the hand of Christ. It is thus we understand the following scripture: "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:13-15).

If the 8th Psalm refers, as we have seen it does, to the earthly side of the world to come, this scripture as plainly points to things in heaven, even though things on earth are not excluded. And

what are the things implied in the expression, “All things that the Father hath are Mine”? They cannot be less than the “All things which are connected with the eternal counsels of the Father for the glory of His beloved Son.” In Ephesians, a scripture already cited, we see the full and public issue of all God’s ways in government, where we read that God has “made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of [for the administration of) “the fullness of times He might gather together in one [head up] all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth” (Eph. 1:9-10).

Lower down also in the same chapter, the Apostle prays that the Ephesian believers might know “what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places [see how the Holy Spirit delights to glorify Christ] far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:19-23).

We are given this marvelous passage in full, in which expressions are piled up one upon another to call our attention to the greatness of Christ in His unspeakable exaltation and supremacy, as a specimen of the ministry of the Spirit in unfolding the things of Christ, whether as relating to the present or the future. But we must not forget that this ministry is now carried on in our souls when room and liberty are given to the activity of an ungrieved Spirit. The revelation of His glory and of His supremacy is indeed found in the Scriptures, but it is much to be observed that until this is made good in us by the Holy Spirit, we are not in the light of the glory, whether in this age or the age to come. Nothing is clearer than that the Lord promised His disciples a continuous ministry of the Spirit in taking of His things, the things of the Father which are also His, and showing them unto them. We may therefore look for the same unceasing activity; and it is not too much to say that nothing would more delight the heart of Christ than that we should be finding our pleasure in apprehending His things, and in expatiating with joy upon His present and coming glories. If we are found thus engaged, it is very certain that we shall be delivered from this present evil world, and that, like Saul of Tarsus, we shall not be able to see for the glory of the light which has dawned upon our souls. Not that the dangers of this scene will be absent, only if our hearts are occupied with Christ and His glory we shall have no taste even for the brightest things which the god of this world can offer. Surely then it will be our constant prayer that our souls may be flooded with the light of the glory of Christ.

The Glories of Christ As the Son of Man: End and Object of the Kingdom

It will contribute to our comprehension of this final part of our subject if we first point out the significant place which the above message occupies in the chapter. The Apostle's theme is the resurrection of the body, which some in Corinth had denied. Before developing and indeed demonstrating its certainty, he recalls to the minds of the Christian believers the gospel which he had preached among them, the gospel by which they were saved if they kept in memory what he had preached unto them, unless they had believed in vain. This gospel which the Apostle had received, for he had only delivered what had been committed to him, consisted of three parts: first, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; second, that He was buried; and last, that He arose again the third day according to the Scriptures. If therefore this gospel was true, the resurrection was also true; or, as Paul goes on to affirm, to deny the resurrection was to deny that Christ had risen, to assert that the apostolic preaching was in vain, and that their own faith was vain. It was on this account that the Apostle gave so carefully the evidence on which the truth of the resurrection rested (1 Cor. 15:5-8).

But there is another thing. The Apostle being about to point out the consequences, the far-reaching results of the resurrection of Christ, in connection with the kingdom, will have us to apprehend that the world to come is to be established on the principle of resurrection, that everything in it will take character from Him who is risen out of death, as the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead. It is thus that in verses 3 and 4, after the clause, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," we are told that He was buried. Man was vicariously judged in the cross of Christ, for He died for all; and in the grave of Christ man was representatively buried, inasmuch as the end of all flesh had come before God judicially in the death of Christ; and, raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, Christ was now of another order, being in the condition of the second Man out of heaven (vs. 47). It is absolutely necessary to comprehend that the first order of man, Adam's order, has been terminated forever for God in the cross, and that Christ is the Man of His counsels as risen from the dead, as well as that everything now proceeds on the basis of resurrection, if we would enter into God's purposes and thoughts, whether in regard to the kingdom in display or to the saints of this period.

Coming now to our special scripture, it may be seen that it is a parenthesis. Having pointed out the sorrowful consequences of denying the resurrection, the Apostle asserts the fact that Christ is risen, and goes on to unfold the whole of its significance, embracing, as it does, eternity itself. It is with this that we are now concerned.

First and foremost then Christ risen is the first fruits of them that slept, "for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die" (see Rom. 5:12), "even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Here then is the parting of the ways. Death is the portion of all whose descent is from the first man, Adam; and life is the portion of all whose lineage can be traced back to the second Man, the risen Christ. The resurrection of Christ, therefore — for

the subject here is that of resurrection — secures the resurrection of His people, even as the first fruits are the pledge and guarantee of the harvest. Blessed truth! And how full of consolation to all who mourn over the loss of dear ones who have died in the Lord! Is Christ risen? Then they will also arise at the appointed time; and they will come forth from their tombs with the bodies of their humiliation transformed into the likeness of His glorified body. Well therefore might we cry out triumphantly, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:55-57).

In the next place we have the order of the resurrection. “But every man in his own order [or rank]: Christ the first fruits: afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power” (1 Cor. 15:23-24). The remarkable structure of this scripture must not be unnoticed. Between the resurrection of Christ and that of His people lies the whole present interval until the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, as we read in 1 Thessalonians 4; and again, between those who are raised at the coming of Christ and “the end,” of which verse 24 speaks, we have to interpose the period between the return of Christ for His people and His appearing, and also the thousand years which will constitute the duration of His kingdom. There are thus three great events marked — the resurrection of Christ, the resurrection of those that are His, and the delivering up of the kingdom at the end.

In the last chapter we dealt with the character of the rule of Christ in His kingdom. With this agrees the statement here that He must reign till He has put all things under his feet. The word “must” in this connection is much to be observed. It is the same word as in the statement, “Ye must be born again”; and in both cases it means no less than a divine necessity. And wherefore this in regard to the rule of Christ? Surely the reason must be looked for in the fact of His rejection on earth. The very scene that witnessed the contumely, scorn, and hate which men poured on His head, saw Him with the mocking crown of thorns, “The crowned King of all patient sufferers,” and put to death as a malefactor, must be the theater of the display of His glory, and of His universal acceptance. Nothing less would satisfy the heart of God for His beloved Son in this world. Then it is added to give completeness to His triumph, “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Every foe had been subdued; death, here personified as an enemy, only remained; and now, all its victims being rescued from its grasp, it is forever set aside.

If we turn for a moment to the book of Revelation, we shall find this significant event recorded. In chapter 20, after the judgment of the great white throne before which all the dead, unconverted while in this world, both small and great, are summoned, and where all receive their sentence according to their works, we read that death and hades were cast into the lake of fire (vs. 14). Thereupon in the next chapter, wherein the new heaven and the new earth appear on the passing away of the first heaven and the first earth, and the holy city, new Jerusalem, comes down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her husband, a proclamation is made: “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.” Now mark the infinite tenderness and pathos of what follows: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH.” The Lamb of God has now taken away the sin of the world, and hence its bitter

fruit of death is gone forever. He who was made sin upon the cross has forever abolished death, so that its dark shadow will never more be seen in that world where God will be all in all. What a blessed prospect for those whose hearts are bursting with the sorrows of bereavement! And what an antidote to the fear of death it is to know that its power is already broken, and that it will soon be altogether abrogated! Through the resurrection of Christ the bonds of death have been loosened, life and incorruptibility have already been brought to light through the gospel, and soon we shall be in that scene where old things will have actually passed away, and where all things will have become new. For He that descended into the lower parts of the earth has ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.

Such is the issue of the reign of Christ. When He comes again into the world, men everywhere, save the throng of the Gentiles who are brought through the great tribulation, and a remnant of His ancient people, will be in enmity against Him; but He will come forth out of heaven with irresistible grace and power, and, as we have already seen, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee" (Psa. 22:27). Universal subjection to Christ will thus characterize the coming age; every knee on earth, as well as in heaven, will bow before Him, whether really or only professedly, and every tongue will confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. In the language of the psalmist, "His name shall endure forever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed" (Psa. 72:17).

We may now consider the end and object of the kingdom. As regards Christ Himself, it is, as before pointed out, that He might be supremely exalted in the place of His rejection that where He was reviled, contemned, and crucified, He might be acclaimed by all as Lord and King. But our scripture brings before us another object, and it is to this we desire to call the reader's attention. First then let it be noticed that an exception is carefully made. It says, "For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him." It might seem strange that it should be necessary to make such a remarkable statement. The reason will soon appear, though it may now be stated that it is connected with the ineffable grace of Christ in becoming man, and in remaining man forever.

The Glories of Christ As the Son of Man: End and Object of the Kingdom

1 Corinthians 15:28

There are then three steps in the ultimate object of the kingdom. In the first place it is in order to deliver it up to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. We learn from Psalm 2 that He will receive the authority of the kingdom from God: "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession"; and He Himself says, speaking of the same subject, "Even as I received of My Father." His authority will therefore be wielded on God's behalf; and thus, when His mission is completed, He delivers up the kingdom which had been committed to His hands. When returning to the Father from the earth, having come to do His will, He said in His blessed perfection, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do"; and we know that He will be able to use the same language at the close of the kingdom. Being what He is, all His works must be perfect like Himself. Nor must we lose sight of His own joy in having again glorified the Father on earth, and in finishing the work which had been given Him to perform, nor

indeed forget the joy of the Father's heart in receiving from the hands of His beloved Son what He had committed to Him. John 5 gives us a most blessed inlet into the complacent relationships existing between the Father and the Son (vss. 19-20); and it is therefore allowable to meditate upon the mutual delight of the Father and the Son in the delivering up of the kingdom.

The second step is seen in verse 28: "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him." This brings us at once face to face with the great mystery of redemption, and with the glory of the purpose of God for man as set forth in His beloved Son. What we mean by the mystery of redemption is the incarnation, that it should please God thus to approach man, to become God manifest in flesh. Two scriptures will unfold this to us: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself"; "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same" (2 Cor. 5:19; Heb. 2:14). It was thus in a man — the Man Christ Jesus — that God drew near to man, and at the same time set forth all that God is. But this is not all.

Having as man glorified God in all that God is by enduring all that the glory of God required on account of what man was and is, He Himself has been glorified as Man at the right hand of God. Having become Man for the work of redemption, He remains Man forever; and thus when every enemy has been subjugated, when all things have been put under His feet, having delivered up the kingdom to God the Father, He remains forever identified with His redeemed, the Leader of a chosen race, pre-eminent among all for whom He died, yet taking the place of subjection to Him who put all things under Him. It was so while in this world. As He Himself said, "I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak" (John 12:19,50).

So in eternity itself, He, a divine Person, having become Man — a Man of flesh and blood, but now the risen and glorified Man — will ever be Man, and as such, subject to Him whose will He came to do. What grace! we cannot but exclaim. For we are made companions of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end; and we shall thus remain His companions, as the result of His blessed grace, through all the countless ages of eternity. But it will be the delight of all to acknowledge His pre-eminence, to behold Him anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows; for it is then that He will reap the fruit of all His toil and be forever satisfied.

This brings us to the glory of God's purpose for man. It is as Man that Christ, as we have seen, has been glorified; and Christ glorified as Man is the pattern and expression of what God's purpose is for all the redeemed. One scripture precisely states this: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). As a well-known hymn has put it —

"And is it so? I shall be like Thy Son.

Is this the grace which He for me has won?

Father of glory, thought beyond all thought,

In glory to His own blest likeness brought.

"Nor I alone, Thy loved ones all, complete

In glory round Thee there with joy shall meet,
All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord,
Object supreme of all, by all adored.”

This glorious goal is made sure by the immutable purpose of God who chose us in Christ for this before the foundation of the world. But are we to rest satisfied in that we shall be conformed to the image of God's Son? No, though we shall surely be filled with divine joy at this marvelous consummation of the purpose and grace of God, we shall use diligence just in proportion as we enter into God's thoughts, to grow daily in the likeness of Christ. It will be our delight to behold the unveiled face of our glorified Lord, and thereby to be changed into the same image, from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18). We may see in the language of Paul what should be the present effect in our souls of the revelation to us of God's purposes. He says (we give another translation): "I follow after, if that I may get possession of that for which also I have been taken possession of by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12). That is, since Christ had taken possession of him that he might be conformed to His image, he himself, in full communion with this end, the end of the purpose of God, would diligently and steadfastly follow on to this goal. So should it be with every believer; we all alike should seek grace to keep our eye upon Christ, the glorified Man, because He is, in that condition, the expression of God's purpose, the Model, so to speak, to whom we are to be conformed. And let it be remembered that the greater our diligence in the contemplation of the Model set before us, the larger our growth in moral conformity to Christ.

The third and last step remains to be considered. It is the ultimate object and end of the delivering up the kingdom, and the consequence of the Son Himself being subject to Him that put all things under Him; it is that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL. We may not attempt to explain these wondrous words, though we may offer a few observations with a view of eliciting the adoration of our hearts in meditating upon this blissful prospect. The end of redemption then is that God may be all in all. If the expression in John 3, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand," is timeless, if, that is to say, it refers to the past eternity, setting forth the Father's delight in the Son, and teaching that it was His purpose before the foundation of the world, to deliver all things into the hand of the Son, we have a wondrous unfolding of divine thoughts. From all eternity, in that case, it was in the heart of the Father that the Son should be supremely exalted in this scene; and Hebrews 1 teaches that the Son is appointed Heir of all things. For the affectuation of His purpose the incarnation, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ at the right hand of God were, as we have already seen, necessary; and now we learn that there was another object in it all, that God might be all in all. If the Father was bent upon glorifying the Son, the Son was equally bent upon glorifying the Father (compare John 13:31-32; 17:1, 2).

As to the expression itself, a similar one is found in Colossians 3, but used there of Christ. After speaking of the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him, the Apostle proceeds, "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but CHRIST IS ALL, AND IN ALL" (Col. 3:10-11). This, we apprehend, is not so difficult, as the expression is used in contrast with the distinctions which obtain among men. It will mean, therefore, that in this region or circle (that of the new man) all that is of the flesh has disappeared, and only Christ and what is of Christ remains, so that Christ is everything (for that is the force of the expression) as well as in all. It is Christ objectively and Christ

subjectively, and there is nothing besides. How blessed!

So after the mediatorial kingdom has been delivered up to God the Father, the Son Himself becomes subject, for He takes His place as the glorified Man in the midst of the redeemed, the Firstborn among many brethren, and God is all in all. He is EVERYTHING and in all — as we read in Ephesians, though in a different sense, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. All that God is, His glory, will be in full display, and He is love; and this will form the element in which all the redeemed will live and move and have their being forever. God is love, and dwelling in love, they will dwell in God, and God will dwell in them. Thus God will be in all, as well as be everything. And the foundation of all this lies in that stupendous and finished work of Christ on Calvary. Hence it is that Peter says, “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:13).

It has yet to be remarked that when the name God is used, as in this case, absolutely, it includes necessarily all that He is in the unity of the Godhead, all that He is as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is and must be God in all that He is as revealed in and through the three divine Persons. This has to be borne in mind in weighing the words which have been before us. One other observation may be made. In the eternal scene unfolded in Revelation 21:1-8, it will be noticed that there is no mention of Christ, only of God, whereas in the heavenly Jerusalem it is God and the Lamb. This is in harmony with what has been considered in Corinthians. Christ having become identified with the redeemed as the Firstborn among many brethren, God is ALL IN ALL; and He therefore, in the blessed and beatific display of what He is, pervades the whole scene.

On such a subject, how powerless are human words! But inasmuch as the revelation has been made to us, there is surely blessing to be found in meditating upon it in the presence of God. And may the blessed Spirit of God who alone can preserve us from error, guide us into the truth of the revelation made, and form us according to it, that God may be glorified in us, and we in Him!

“Thou art coming, mighty Savior!

King of kings, Thy written name!

Thou art coming, royal Savior!

Coming for Thy promised reign.

Oh, the joy when sin's confusion

Ends beneath Thy righteous sway!

Oh, the peace when all delusion

At Thy presence dies away!

“Thou art coming, crowned Savior!

Not ‘the second time’ for sin;

Thou art coming, throned Savior!

Bringing all the glory in.

All Thy Father's house, its glory,
Hangs by sure behest on Thee;
Oh, the sweetness of the story!
Savior, come, we wait for Thee!"

The Glories of Christ As the Son of Man: Possession of His Inheritance

All things, as we have seen, are put, in the purpose of God, under the feet of Christ; but, as the Apostle expressly says, we do not yet see all things put under the “Son of man,” but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor. This then is the present position. Christ is the Son of man of whom Psalm 8 speaks, and indeed, as Hebrews 1 says, He is the Heir of all things; and this very term “heir” shows that He has not yet succeeded to His inheritance. But the title is His by the will of God (Phil. 2); He has taken up all the liabilities that lay upon His vast domain, for He has tasted death for everything; and now, crowned with glory and honor at the right hand of God, He waits for the appointed moment when He shall come forth and take possession of all that the Father has delivered into His hands. There are then three stages to be considered: the present moment, the period during which Christ is exalted on high; His coming forth in power to subdue His enemies; and His rule until all things are subdued under Him. Let us then consider these in the order named.

In regard to the first, we have already pointed out several of the exercises of power on the part of Christ in virtue of all things having been delivered into His hands, and these we need not recall. But we may with profit consider the cause of the delay in His assumption of His dominion. It is most strikingly stated by the Lord Himself in the synagogue at Nazareth. When He stood up to read there on that sabbath day, there was delivered to Him the book of the prophet Esaias. “And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:16-19). Turning back to the prophet Isaiah, whence this quotation is made, we find that the next sentence is, “And the day of vengeance of our God.” This day has not yet arrived, and hence between the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God the entire interval of the day of grace has to be interposed. If, therefore, Christ waits at the right hand of God before taking possession of His inheritance, it is in order that the gospel may go forth on every hand, so that those who are to be heirs of God and coheirs with Himself might be called in, and that the bride may be conducted across the desert to the true Isaac, who, having presented her to Himself a glorious Church, only and without blemish, will display her in the same glory with Himself, when He comes forth to take possession of His inheritance.

The cause of the delay, therefore is nothing less than the heart of God as expressed in the gospel of His grace. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”; and the proclamation will be sounded forth in every quarter of the world, until Christ arises from His seat at the right hand of God. “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” How much, therefore, hangs upon the present moment. And how it magnifies the grace of God that He should delay to put His beloved

Son into the possession of His kingdom, because He lingers over the world that cast out and crucified Him! Well indeed might we exclaim with the Apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

Before entering upon our consideration of the second stage — Christ coming forth to claim His possessions — it will be necessary to connect this event with the interval between the close of the day of grace and the appearing of Christ. As we have seen, when Christ arises from His seat at the right hand of God, the day of grace is closed forever. It is then that He comes for His people, for all who have been gathered in from the earliest ages up till that moment, or, if we confine our attention to 1 Thessalonians 4, for all His own from the day of Pentecost. To give the Apostle's own words — "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Adding to this the instructions given in 1 Corinthians 15, we have two things: first, that before the public manifestation of the Lord in glory, He will interpose with power in the domain of death, and raise His sleeping saints; and second, that He will change the bodies of the living saints. These are the words of the Apostle in this chapter: "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51-52). And let it be distinctly observed that the power which the Lord puts forth in raising the sleeping, and in changing the living, saints is said to be in virtue of having all things put under Him (Phil. 3:20-21). It is, so to speak, the first wave of His power which, flowing forth from the throne of God on which He sits, will flow on until it has submerged every hostile power, and brought everything into subjection to His glorious sway.

The result of this exercise of His power is that the saints are ever with the Lord, for it is consequent upon this that they are introduced into the Father's house, that where He is they may be also (John 14:3, 4). Two other things take place before His appearing in glory; the judgment seat of Christ, and thereupon the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19).

All is now ready for His coming forth, but we may refer to another preparatory scene in heaven which will help in the apprehension of what follows. In Revelation 5 we hear, after being permitted to see the sealed book in the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne, a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" There was no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth who could take up the challenge; and then we are told that the "Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" had "prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Announced under such commanding titles, John "beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts [living creatures), and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." He is a Lamb as it had been slain to show that it was through His death upon the cross that He had won His victorious title to possess all things. It is true that the scene here only embraces the earth; and yet at the close of the chapter every creature which is in heaven, as well as on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, unite in loud acclaim, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth

upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." This scene is most important, since it establishes beyond question that it is through His sacrificial death the Lord obtains His universal dominion. It is this indeed that the redeemed, the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, and every creature in the wide universe of God, own in their several ascriptions of praise and adoration, as recorded in this chapter.

We may now all the more intelligently proceed to dwell upon Christ's coming to claim His rights and to take possession of His inheritance. It will add to our interest in this marvelous event if we remember that through His grace we shall be His companion in the glorious display of that day; for it is then that He comes to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that have believed. The Lord Himself has described the manner of His appearing in most solemn and striking language: "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." And again, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:27-30).

The suddenness of the appearing is much dwelt upon by both Paul and Peter. Both use the expression, "as a thief in the night," to describe it, and thus also its unexpected character. As the former says, "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh." The light of the glory of the Lord will then burst without a moment's warning upon the moral darkness of this world, when He comes to take account of everything according to God's righteousness in government, and when He shall send forth His angels to gather out of His kingdom all things which offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. This is therefore called the day of the Lord, because at that time He will administer the authority of God in righteousness, whether in dealing with evil or in justifying and establishing His earthly people, "for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth" (Psalm 96:13).

There is yet to be considered the sway of Christ in the world to come, during the thousand years, under which all things are subdued or put under His feet. At the outset He will be occupied with the powers of evil. We need not go into details, as it will be sufficient to remind the reader that He will first of all destroy the antichrist with the brightness of His coming; He will also destroy all the nations that will be gathered against Jerusalem; He will establish His throne in Zion; He will gather His people Israel from the four corners of the earth, for "He that scattered Israel will gather him," and He will settle them in blessing under His beneficent and righteous rule. Then it will be through Israel that He will subdue the nations on earth. Thus Jeremiah speaks, addressing Israel in the name of Jehovah, "Thou art My battle-ax and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms" (Jer. 51:20).

We need not, however, pursue the subject in detail, for the fact lies everywhere, even on the surface of the prophetic scriptures, that when once the kingdom of Christ is established in the age to come, all men must submit to His rule, and that, even though enmity may still possess their hearts, they will proffer their subjection. We accordingly read several times in the Psalms that there are many who, afraid at the display of His power, will yield to Him feigned obedience. As He

Himself, speaking in the Spirit says, "As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto Me" (Psalm 18:44). And again, "Say unto God, How terrible art Thou in Thy works! through the greatness of Thy power shall Thine enemies submit themselves unto Thee. All the earth shall worship Thee, and shall sing unto Thee; they shall sing to Thy name" (Psa. 66:3-4).

But it is in the 72nd Psalm that we see the effect upon earth of the establishment of the supremacy of Christ, consequent upon the subduing of His enemies, when there is neither adversary or evil occurrent. In this beautiful picture of the reign of the Prince of Peace we behold every element of human happiness and earthly blessing. Take the following verses for example: "In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him. For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in His sight. And He shall live, and to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for Him continually; and daily shall He be praised.... His name shall endure forever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed" (Psa. 72:7-17).

The Glories of Christ As the Son of Man: Possession of His Inheritance

Well indeed might Christ be termed by the prophet Haggai the Desire of all nations (Hag. 2:7), for surely in this inspired description of the state of things under His rule in the world to come, we behold the answer to the longings of men's hearts in every age. Poets have stepped in to voice the inarticulate sorrows of men, but they have only dreamed dreams; prophets have feigned out of their own imaginations a coming era of universal bliss; and politicians have labored in the first to redress grievances, to break the yoke of the oppressor, and to pass laws which should secure liberty and freedom for the people. But all these dreams, imaginations, and labors have been falsified in the issue, and have thus come to naught. And why? Let the answer be written large: IT IS BECAUSE THEY HAVE ALL IGNORED SIN, AND BECAUSE THEY HAVE SHUT OUT CHRIST. It is through the reign of another Man, even the exalted Christ, and through His reign alone, that the happiness of man will be secured. O that men would acknowledge this even now, and in view of the coming of Christ listen to the exhortation of the psalmist, "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psa. 2:10-12).

We have not forgotten that thus far only the earthly side of the kingdom of Christ has been considered. We turn now, therefore, to another scripture which brings before us all the elements of that day, good now to faith, but which will be in the coming age, in actual display. The Apostle is contrasting the age of law with the world to come — Sinai, as representing the quintessence of law, and Mount Zion where David established the ark of God, are significant of royal grace. After setting forth the terrors of Sinai, which affected even Moses so greatly that he said, "I exceedingly

fear and quake," he proceeds, "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly, and to the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:22-24).

If the reader has comprehended the slight alterations made in the text, he will the more readily perceive the division of the several clauses, each of which is then introduced by the conjunction "and," as in the original. And if our attention is directed for a moment to two of the things named, the character of the scene here introduced will be placed beyond question. These two are "mount Sion" and "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Now it is evident that these do not exist at present in the sense here intended, excepting in the purposes of God. They are spoken of in the Scriptures, both in the Old and New Testaments; but they are not to be found as yet on earth, and therefore it is clear that the Apostle speaks of what is true to faith. Hence it is that he can say to believers, "Ye are come unto mount Sion," for faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. In the coming age, the world to come, spoken of in chapter 2, these things will be seen as in actual display when, as we read in Psalm 48, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King," and in the Revelation, "He... showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" Rev. 21:10-11).

Having made plain that the actuality of these things is in the world to come, wherein all things, whether in heaven or upon earth, are put in subjection to the Son of man, a brief reference may be made to the several particulars here brought together. The first is mount Sion, and the next "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem"; these have already been spoken of. Then we have, "and to an innumerable company [myriads] of angels ... the general assembly" (or "the universal gathering," that is, of the heavenly hosts). These are the myriads of angels spoken of in Revelation 5, all of whom will be attendants upon the Son of man in His kingdom, the executors of His commands, or the ministers of His pleasure (see John 1:51). The Lord speaks of Himself also as "the Son of man... when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38).

Next we have (as it should read), "And to the church of the firstborn, which are written [enregistered] in heaven." These are saints of the present period, whose names are recorded in the book of life, those who will form the bride of Christ, all of whom are counted as firstborn ones in virtue of their association with Him who is the Firstborn from the dead, and who, on this account, will share in His inheritance, and are, therefore, called His coheirs. Then follows, "and to God the Judge of all." Allusion to this character of God (for it must be remembered that it is the world to come which is in question) is frequently found in the Psalms, as for example, "He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth" (Psa. 96:13). But He will do so by "that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Then we have, "and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Another class or family of the redeemed here comes into view, one, it may be judged, which includes all saints of every age prior to the coming of Christ into this world. As we may gather from Hebrews 11, they were all heirs "of the righteousness which is by faith" (see vss. 4-7), and on them had dawned the light and glory of the world to come (see vss. 8-16). But all the

blessing in which they stood before God was in virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ which were yet to be accomplished. Now that redemption has been effected, Christ having obtained eternal redemption, they can be spoken of as “the spirits of just men made perfect”; and hence, when Christ comes to claim His people, they will share in the first resurrection. We thus read in Matthew’s Gospel “That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 8:11), a time which refers to the period of our subject; namely, the time of the public display of Christ’s glory in the kingdom.

The next thing is, “And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.” There is a profound reason for the introduction of this office of Christ in this place. Two things in connection with this subject have been previously taught in this epistle. In chapter 8 it is said that Christ “who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man... hath... obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (vss. 1, 2, 6); and furthermore, it is said that the new covenant is made with the house of Israel, although it is ever to be remembered, as 1 Corinthians 11 and 2 Corinthians 3 evidently show, that all believers are brought into the enjoyment of the blessings which the new covenant secures. Now Christ is both High Priest and Mediator. As the Great High Priest He appears before God on our behalf; as Mediator He is the One through whom God has approached man. In other words, God comes out through the Mediator, and man (the believer) goes in through the Priest. And there is to be added to this, that the terms of the new covenant explain God’s attitude toward man. For Israel it secures, as may be seen in this chapter, the law written in the heart, and forgiveness of sins; and for all believers now, righteousness and the Spirit, according to the Apostle’s teaching in 2 Corinthians 3.

We may now point out the reason of the introduction of the new covenant in this place. It will form the ground of God’s relationship to Israel in the coming age, ratified as it has been in the blood of Christ, and it reveals at the same time the attitude of God towards all, the terms of His relationship toward all, who are under the rule of Christ in the kingdom. In brief, it will form the basis of His righteous government in grace.

Last of all, and indeed as the foundation of all the blessedness which has been unfolded to our view, we have, “and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” The reference is undoubtedly, we judge, to the sprinkling of the blood upon and before the mercy seat on the day of atonement, inasmuch as it was the blood upon the mercy seat, making propitiation as it did, which constituted the efficacious ground of God’s relationships with His people. In like manner the blood sprinkled upon the lintel and doorposts of the dwellings of Israel in Egypt secured them from judgment, formed the righteous basis of their redemption out of Egypt, of their passage through the Red Sea, and of their entrance into Canaan. The precious blood of Christ, it cannot be repeated too often or too strenuously, is the foundation of all blessing, for therein God’s righteousness has been declared and His heart revealed. And these two things pursued to their consequences make up the gospel of the grace of God. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Apostle adds, “that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” This called down from God vengeance upon Cain, whereas the former, the blood of Christ, has secured the blessedness of believers now, the heading up of all things in Christ in the world to come, and the new heaven and the new earth, after the first heaven and the first earth shall forever have passed away.

To seize the significance of this glorious scene it is necessary to remember that Christ is the Head and Center of it all. Every redeemed family is brought into it, all the heavenly hosts are there, together with all principalities and powers; and the joy of all alike will be found in their willing subjection to Christ as Head of all. Thus it is a scene on which God will rest in His love, in entire complacency, for then all distance will have been removed, and everything will have been brought back into ordered suitability to Himself. It is then that the song of praise will be uttered by every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." At this blissful prospect the four living creatures said, "Amen." And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped. And surely our hearts also will be bowed before God with adoration as we contemplate this glorious period when in the very scene of His sorrows and rejection Christ will be universally exalted and glorified.

The Glories of Christ As the Son of Man: the Son of Man Glorified and Glorifying God

The second thing brought before us is that on the cross God also was glorified in the Son of man: “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.” “Satan having here all the sorrowful rights that he had acquired through our sin, Christ — perfect as a man, alone, apart from all men, in obedience, and having as man but one object, that is, the glory of God, thus divinely perfect, sacrificing Himself for this purpose — fully glorified God. God was glorified in Him. His justice, His majesty, His truth, His love — all was verified on the cross as they are in Himself, and revealed only there; and that with regard to sin.” And this witness is true, for God had claims upon man, and of necessity all that He is was against man because of sin. And, blessed be His name, He that knew no sin was made sin for us, and there in the place of sin He met the full and complete judgment of God against it; and He glorified God in all that He is in doing it, so that God, set free in righteousness, can make those for whom Christ died the righteousness of God in Christ. Such is the effect of the Son of man having glorified God on the cross, and such is God’s triumph — the triumph of His grace over Satan and man’s sin. In eternity alone will the extent of His victory be displayed.

There is yet another thing: if God be glorified in Him, in the Son of man on the cross, the Lord proceeds to say, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him. The language is most precise, and the word “straightway” will, we judge, give the key for its interpretation. The first clause cannot mean less than that God, in response to His being glorified in the death of Christ, would glorify Him in Godhead glory, for, as we read in one of Paul’s epistles, the glory of God is displayed in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4). And if in another aspect, the reference must be to the same thing when the Lord says, in speaking to the Father in chapter 17 of this gospel, “I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” This much then may be affirmed in connection with this transcendent subject, that the glory on which Christ has entered as man at God’s right hand, is the expression of God’s estimate of that glorious work which was wrought out in the death of His beloved Son; and second, that by that work Christ established a claim upon the Father’s heart, a claim which it was the delight of God to acknowledge in the face of the whole universe. The exaltation of the Lord Jesus is thus the measure of God’s appreciation of His having glorified Him on Calvary. And, if we are in fellowship with the heart of God, we shall also delight in the glory of the Son of man; and the more we meditate upon it, the more will Christ be formed in us, inasmuch as it is through the contemplation of the glory which shines out unhinderedly, without a veil, from His blessed face, that we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit.

It has been mentioned that the word “straightway” gives the key of this scripture. Its use, indeed, in this place is most striking. It calls our attention, we cannot doubt, to the fact that other glories would come in due time — the time already spoken of — in which Christ as Son of man will be

Head of all men and all things, whether in heaven or on earth, and also to the circumstance that while all this was assured in the counsels of God, yet that God would not wait for this manifested glory in its own place and time, but would at once — immediately, as the word means — glorify the Son of man. This was, in fact, both His answer to man's rejection of Christ, and also the announcement of His perfect satisfaction with what had been accomplished upon the cross. It is thus the complete revelation of the heart of God toward His beloved Son; for the Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. And it is the peculiar privilege of the Christian to know Christ in His glory before He is manifested to the eyes of all, and thus to be associated with Him while He is hidden. It is to this the Apostle Paul refers when he writes to the Colossians, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our [own] life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." John also writes of the same precious truth, saying, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear [is not yet in outward manifestation) what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear [be manifested), we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." To understand this is essential for entering into the proper character of the Christian life, as well as for the possession of the secret of all growth and blessing.

We said at the commencement of this meditation that the rest of the chapter — as well as chapter 14:1-3 — hang upon the verse we have considered. It might then be profitable to indicate the connection for the guidance of the reader. In the first place, after having told His disciples that God would glorify Him immediately, that there might be no manner of possibility of misunderstanding, He plainly tells them that He was about to depart from them. "Little children," He says, "yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." Then what do we next find? It is this: in the prospect of His absence there is a company — the company of His own (not merely of the twelve, for we read that, after the actual departure of Christ, there were a hundred and twenty waiting for "the promise of the Father," but comprising all His followers) — who should be knit together in love, by that love which is the bond of perfectness. As He says to them, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." That is, His own love, and His own love as expressed in death for them, was to be the standard of their love one toward another. As the writer of this gospel says in his first epistle, "Hereby perceive we the love [what love is] of God, because He laid down His love for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." 1 John 3:16. No lower standard than this could be accepted, because it is the measure of the love of Christ.

If this be so, it will readily be apprehended that it is not only the absence of Christ which is here supposed, but also the presence of the Holy Spirit. For love in activity among this new company could only spring from the divine nature, from their having been quickened together with Christ, and this expressed in divine power. But it would take us too far to explain the teaching of this now; it will suffice to call attention to this new company bound together by the indissoluble tie, and clad with the beautiful robe of the divine nature, which is love. Remark also that the manifestation of this love to every member of the company, and to all alike, would become their proper testimony in the world. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." It is not, therefore, the holding of certain truths, not the possession of light, but loving one another, which is the testimony that we are the disciples of Christ. Let us not shrink from facing this divine

fact; and, as we face it, let us ask ourselves whether this testimony has not utterly failed. The broken state of the Church, the divisions of Christendom, and sectarian rivalries and jealousies alike proclaim our disgrace.

And there is another question we might ask. It is, whether in the circle of our own fellowship loving one another is the prominent characteristic. Surely if we are faithful in the answer we render, it will bring us into deeper humiliation before God. If this be the effect, it can only lead to blessing, as it must produce self-judgment and restoration. Then the hindrances to the manifestation of love being removed, there will be soon seen, at least in the little circle of believers in which we live and move, the normal testimony of the Church in the midst of the world.

The next thing is the intrusion of Peter with the inquiry, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" Peter really loved the Lord, but in the consciousness of this he was under the delusion (alas! how many of us have often made the same mistake!) that he could, in the energy and strength of his own affection follow the Lord even through death itself. "Lord," he replied, when told that he could not follow Him then, "why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." Wilt thou do this? was the Lord's response; and then He drew back the curtain and revealed that on that very night, before the cock crew, His poor disciple should deny Him thrice.

Such is man, and even man at his best, when trusting to himself. And this is the significance of this scene in this connection. It is the Lord writing the sentence of death upon all that man is in the person of Peter, to the end that man in all that he is may forever pass away from the eyes of God's people, as completely as he has passed away from the eye of God judicially in the cross of Christ.

Before adding a few words upon the beginning of chapter 14, let us recall the circumstances of the disciples. The Lord, as already seen, has made known to them His approaching departure, and now He reveals to them that Peter — Peter who had been so prominent among them, and who had been one of three who were permitted to witness His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, as also the sorrows of Gethsemane — was about to fall into the depths of shame through thrice denying his Lord. It was a terrible position, inasmuch as, as far as this world was concerned, they were losing everything. Yes, death was thus written upon all their human hopes; but, blessed be God, it is just when by grace we are enabled to accept death upon everything here that He can open out to our vision the glories of the world beyond. This truth is here strikingly illustrated. It was precisely when the disciples had, through the communications made to them, come to the end of everything, that the Lord said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." And then He proceeded to unfold to them the Father's house, that He was going to prepare a place for them in it, and that He would come again to receive them unto Himself, that where He was they might be also. What unspeakable consolation for their sorrowful hearts!

But it is not our purpose to comment at this time upon the revelation thus made to the hearts of the disciples, or the antidote it contains for troubled souls for all time. We only desire now to emphasize its principle, that -the brightness of this world must be dimmed, in whatever way it may be brought about, that the end of man and man's hopes must be accepted, that there must be the absolute closing up of all human hopes if we would gaze with unclouded vision upon, and dwell in spirit amid, the blessedness of the Father's house, where all the redeemed will be finally gathered, every one of whom will be conformed to the image of God's Son, and where He will forever be in their midst, in His blessed pre-eminence, as the First-born among many brethren.

Does the reader inquire how it is possible to dwell now in that glorious circle? The answer is: only in one way. It is only when in the power of the Holy Spirit we admit Christ into our hearts, and yield to Him full and undisputed sway, that in responsive affection we shall be constrained to follow Him to the other side of death, where He is; and then we shall live of His life, and feast ourselves upon His own delights.

The Glories of Christ As the Son of Man: the Son of Man Glorified and Glorifying God

John 13:31-32

When the Greeks desired to see Jesus, He said to Andrew and Philip, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." The glory of which He thus speaks is rather the result of His work on the cross than the cross itself. It looks onward, we apprehend, as pointed out in the last chapter, to the day of His glory in this world, when as Son of man He will be the Head of the nations (Psa. 18:43), and when all things will be subdued under His feet. But when He says in the scripture now to be considered, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself and shall straightway glorify Him," it is the cross and the work done there, together with His consequent exaltation, which are in view. This fact shows both the fullness of Scripture and also the need for its careful consideration. The same words in different connections may mean entirely different things, and hence the necessity for the study of the context under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

It will be profitable, therefore, before examining these profound words, to point out the circumstances under which they were uttered. The Lord had been teaching His disciples through His own blessed example, and placing them thereby under the obligation to wash one another's feet: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (John 13:14-15). Thereupon He proceeded to draw back the veil which concealed the traitor in the midst of His own. And with what infinite sorrow and compassion for this poor slave of Satan He did it! We read that after He had recalled to them the scripture, "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me," He was troubled in spirit and testified and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me." It was not simply one of you, but it was one of you. Ah! it was that which troubled the Lord in spirit, that one of the twelve, one of His chosen companions, one of those who had heard His blessed words of grace and seen the miracles of His power, one of the objects of His fostering care — that such a one should have yielded to the incitements of Satan to betray Him. Then, in answer to the question of the disciple who was lying on Jesus' breast, Jesus said, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon." Then we have the solemn statement that after the sop Satan entered into Judas. Morally, it was all over with him from this moment. Hitherto Satan had led this poor man, governed him through his lust for money, and thereby hardened his heart against all the gracious influences of the Lord's presence, of His words and works; but at this juncture, as if his day of grace were past, Satan entered and took full possession of the man, leading him captive for the accomplishment of his will. All this is surely implied in the words of Jesus, which were not understood by the other disciples, "That thou doest, do quickly." What a threefold revelation is thus made: first, that nothing was hidden, nor could be hidden, from the eyes of the Lord; second, that man's heart is capable of all iniquity; and last, that Satan spares no

artifices in his ceaseless activities for the destruction of souls.

The traitor thus exposed went immediately out; and it was night. It was night actually, but assuredly we may attach a deeper meaning to these significant words. "As long as I am in the world," Jesus had said, "I am the light of the world." Judas, captivated by the devil, went out from the rays of that blessed light; and, hence, of necessity, when the door closed behind him, it was night — the night of death — the awful darkness of which enwrapped his soul forever; for he had entered that land of which Job speaks — "a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness," because, it may be added, there lies upon it the judgment of God.

No one may venture to penetrate, or could penetrate, into the sorrows of the Lord's own heart through this scene, but one cannot fail to perceive that it was a relief to His spirit when Judas had gone out; for the evangelist would seem to call attention to this by saying, "Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." It was indeed the treachery of Judas which brought up before His soul what lay before Him in His conflict with Satan's power on the cross. Satan had tested Him at the outset; but, foiled and defeated, he had departed from Him "for a season." That season was now ended, and his seduction of Judas was but the commencement of his final onslaught, the issue of which, blessed be God, could only be his complete overthrow. For it was through death that Jesus destroyed ("annulled") him that had the power of death, and delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Another thing may be noted. The Lord's heart was restrained by the presence of Judas, and thus it was only after the traitor had gone out that He made the ineffably blessed communications contained in verses 31 and 32. And do we — we who are gathered out to His precious name — do we not know from sad experience what it is to limit the out-flowings of the Lord's heart by the presence of sin? Alas! how often do our feeble meetings testify to this! The Lord may be in the midst of His people as fully as He was with His own on this occasion, but how can He display Himself to our hearts unless we are in moral suitability to His presence, unless we have put our shoes from off our feet because the place whereon we stand is holy ground? May the Lord Himself fasten this instruction upon our hearts in the power of the Holy Spirit!

We may now pass to the consideration of the communications made. We cannot doubt that the passage from verse 31 to chapter 14:3 hangs together; but we will, in the first place, confine ourselves to what we have in verses 31 and 32. It may be at once perceived that there are mainly three things: the Son of man glorified on the cross; God glorified in Him, the Son of man; and last, the Son of man glorified by God in Himself. These we may, however feeble our apprehensions, proceed to meditate upon in the order given.

It may be observed at once that the true character of what was before the Lord may be gathered by the form of His words. As we read it in our translation it is, "Now is the Son of man glorified." What the Lord really says is, "Now has the Son of man been glorified." The incident of Judas had brought before Him the cross and its awful character; and, as having already passed through in spirit all that it involved for Him, He could say, "Now has the Son of man been glorified." The issue of the cross was thus foreseen and stated in the full assurance of victory over the whole of Satan's power. It might be going too far to regard it as a triumphant outburst, and yet it partakes of this character in that He looks right through all the darkness of the cross and onward to the glory in

which He would be glorified at the right hand of God.

What then is to be understood by the expression, "Now is the Son of man glorified?" It will be seen at once that the reference is not to His actual glory on which He entered after His resurrection, but that it is rather to the display of His moral glory in His death on the cross. All His blessed perfections came out in a new way and under new circumstances. In all His sojourn in this world, in every step of His pathway, He was ever the perfect One, ever devoted in His entire obedience to the Father's glory, so that He could testify that He always did the things which pleased Him. He was thus always the object of the Father's complacent delight, as indeed it is said, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." It was not, therefore, that He was more perfect — this could not be — on the cross than in His life. But the truth is that, searched and tested as He had never been before, by the holy fire of judgment through which He passed when forsaken of God, there was a greater manifestation of His moral beauties and excellencies. All these came out so richly and so fully that He became enshrined, as it were, in their brightness and halo. The light is ever light, but when the rays of the sun are seen playing upon a dark thundercloud, their brightness and beauty are intensified. So with our blessed Lord — all that made up the perfection of His life toward God and toward man was enhanced and magnified by the thick darkness of the cross. All that He is was there expressed and glorified.

Let a few words of another be given, that the heart of the reader may comprehend by the power of the Holy Spirit this character of the cross, and be more deeply affected by its contemplation. "Now, in Jesus on the cross, the Son of man has been glorified in a much more admirable way than He will be even by the positive glory that belongs to Him under that title. He will, we know, be clothed with that glory; but, on the cross, the Son of man bore all that was necessary for the perfect display of the glory of God. The whole weight of that glory was brought to bear upon Him to put Him to the proof, that it might be seen whether He could sustain it, verify and exalt it; and that by setting it forth in the place where, but for this, sin concealed that glory and, so to speak, gave it impiously the lie. Was the Son of man able to enter into such a place, to undertake such a task and maintain His place without failure unto the end? This Jesus did. The majesty of God was to be vindicated against the insolent rebellion of His creature; His truth, which had threatened Him with death, maintained; His justice established against sin (who could withstand it?); and, at the same time, His love fully demonstrated." And who, we may inquire, was sufficient for this glorious work, to accomplish all these ends, except the Son of man? There was no other in all God's universe, no creature in heaven, however exalted, who could have stepped in and endured all that the glory of God required on account of what man was, and of what he had done. If this be so, as all Scripture testifies, we can apprehend a little of the meaning of the Lord's words, "Now is the Son of man glorified."

All this may well invite us to a more constant meditation upon this aspect of the death of Christ — we mean the aspect which brings so vividly before us, not only what He effected on the cross for God, though this be the foundation of all eternal blessing, of the vast universe of bliss, nor even what He secured for His people, though without this we never could have been in association with Him before God, but also that which brings out in such a marvelous manner the glories of His Person. The more we are affected by these, the more our hearts will be conducted into fellowship with God concerning His beloved Son, and the better we shall understand the greatness of the work which He accomplished on the cross.

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

In the first of the passages considered it may be well to recall that the saints of this period are especially in view; in the second it is the Jew; and now, as we may see reason to conclude, in the third (John 12:32) all men of every nation and of every tongue are embraced. It is indisputable that Christ glorified, after He was lifted up, became, as is often said, the point of attraction for all; and the moment the Spirit of God came down to testify of His glory at the right hand of God, souls were drawn to Him on every hand by His mighty attracting power. Still, as that was and is, the promise contained in this scripture is world-wide and universal; and it refers in its fullest meaning, we cannot doubt, to the coming age in which Christ will have the dominion throughout the world, when the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, and all men, either really or with “feigned obedience,” will be drawn to His feet and own His blessed sway.

If now we attend a little to the connection of the passage, this conclusion will, we judge, be clearly substantiated. It may then be seen, first of all, that the whole of this scripture, from verse 23 to verse 36, springs from the incident of the Greeks who came up to worship at the feast, and who embraced the opportunity of expressing to Philip their desire to see Jesus. When Andrew and Philip mentioned this desire to Jesus, He answered, “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a [the] corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” The application of these Greeks to see Jesus became to Him the promise of the day of His glory, in which all kings will fall down before Him and all nations shall serve Him, when God will give to Him the nations for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as His possession.

Bearing this in mind, we shall be enabled to apprehend the meaning of His reply to Andrew and Philip. There are, at least, three important truths contained in it. The fundamental one is that He could have no link with man in the flesh — this is, in perhaps simpler language, that grateful as the desire of the Greeks might have been to His heart, He could not then accept their homage, representative as they were of the nations any more than He could yield to the design of the people in an earlier part of this Gospel, to take Him by force and make Him a king (John 6:15). Second, He teaches that the pathway to His glory in this world lay through death, resurrection, and exaltation to the right hand of God; and last, that it could only be on the platform of resurrection that He could have His people in association with Himself. This principle holds good, whether for believers now or in the world to come — the coming age.

So far, therefore, in the all-embracing significance of the Lord’s words all believers are included; for the first fruits of the death of the corn of wheat were seen on the day of the resurrection, when for the first time the Lord claimed His own as His brethren, and when He put them into full association with Himself — as sons with Him before the Father’s face. And every believer from that day to this, and every believer from now until the Lord comes again, will be the produce of the Corn of wheat as having died, and is, and will be, of the same kind and order as risen together with Him. All this is blessedly true; but, as we cannot doubt, the Lord, when He comes down to verses

31 and 32, opens out a still wider prospect.

Before, however, we come to this, attention may be called to what is involved in this world for those who enter upon association with the risen One. In one word, it is fellowship with His death, identification with His rejection and death, and consequently the hating of their life in this world. Loving our life in this world is wholly irreconcilable with and exclusive of life eternal. But then what blessed encouragement He ministers to us to take up our cross and follow Him: "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor."

Commending this to the meditation of the reader, we may arrest him for a moment to consider the marvelously solemn words which follow. We have spoken of the Lord's pathway to glory as lying through death; and now this pathway in all its sorrow, and as He only could fathom it, opens out before His soul. The effect is that He exclaims, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say?" It was the contemplation of the cross and its curse (Gal. 3:13) as the judgment of God, with all that this involved for His holy soul in the hiding of God's face, which wrung this troubled expression from His lips. And thus exceeding sorrowful as unto death, even as in Gethsemane, He cried, "Father, save Me from this hour." It was a part of His perfection, the perfection of Him who was ever in the bosom of the Father, delighting in Him and being delighted in, in their mutual and complacent love, to shrink from the horror of that great and unrelieved darkness of Calvary; and, as He had come to do the will of God, His blessed and perfect obedience and devotedness shone forth in all their luster in His adding, "But for this cause came I unto this hour." Then, lost as it were, if such language is permissible, in the absorbing desire of His soul to vindicate the Father's name at all cost to Himself, whatever might be entailed upon Him of unspeakable sorrow and agony, He said, "Father, glorify Thy name." Thus He offered Himself for the glory of God, and the conflict was ended!

The response was immediate — the delighted response of the Father to the perfect submission of His beloved Son. As He elsewhere said, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." (John 10:17-18).

The answer was that the Father had already glorified His name surely, in the raising of Lazarus, and that He would glorify it again; that is, as we understand, in the resurrection of Christ Himself (compare Psalm 21:4-6; Heb. 5:7-8). The victory was therefore won in the assurance of resurrection, and the full results of the cross, as a consequence, opened out before His soul. First, the world was already judged; all its tarnished and defiled glory came morally to an end in the cross, and with it the assurance that its prince would be cast out. Finally, the Father glorified, the world judged, and Satan cast out, the Lord adds, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

As we have seen, it was in the first place, "The Son of man must be lifted up"; then, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man"; and now it is, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth." And then we are explicitly told, "This He said, signifying what death He should die." Our attention is therefore called to the fact that He was cast out of this world, lifted up from the earth, and crucified on that shameful cross. But we behold in this God's triumph over man's sin, and the Lord's own victory

over death, the grave, and Satan's power. Man lifted Him up from the earth, as unworthy to live any more upon it; and there they, to add to the ignominy of His death, crucified Him between two thieves; but God stepped in and after His burial lifted Him up still higher, to the highest spot in the universe, to His own right hand, where He had given Him the name which is above every name, and decreed that every knee in all His dominions shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Such was God's response to the rejection of His beloved Son.

It only remains to consider once again the force of the expression, "Will draw all men unto Me." We have already said that while Christ is the point of attraction for all during this period, and that while every believer is a demonstration of it, we must look further for the entire fulfillment of this prediction. In Psalm 22, for example, we are told that as a consequence of the death and resurrection of Christ, all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and that all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him (vs. 27). So here, in our judgment, the Lord looks onward to the day of His glory in the coming age when all men will be drawn to His feet, and when all alike shall be constrained from the heart, or otherwise, to own Him in His exaltation as Lord and King. It is then that His salvation will go forth, and His arm will judge the peoples, the isles that wait upon Him, and on His arm they trust. It is our privilege, in anticipation of that day, to know Him now as the Sun of Righteousness, and to rejoice in the prospect of that time when His blessed beams will reach the remotest ends and corners of the earth.

God the Father

All through the life of Christ, He never addressed God as God. We never find Him do so in the gospels until the cross. It would not have been walking in the power of the relationship which was always unhindered. When on the cross, in the three hours of darkness then, it was expiation. He does not say, "Father" until, all being over, He commends His spirit to Him, but "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" All that was against us was there coming out against Him. The favor of God was hidden from Him. Righteousness was coming forth in the execution of judgment for sin. Never was there a moment of the Father's most perfect delight in Him; but if God was dealing according to His nature and being, it must be against sin, and therefore all was against Him, for He was made sin for us.

As soon as He has gone through it, He uses both terms, "Father" and "God." He comes out as having done the work and when He has wrought the atonement, He can bring us into the blessed fruit of it. Not only are we brought to the Father, but to God, and all that was against us before is for us now. The very same things He is in His nature, that were against the sinner, are for the saint. Christ risen out of death and having entered (sin being put away) into the unclouded joy of God His Father's countenance, when He had perfectly glorified Him, said to Mary, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." John 20:17.

All that is connected with these names of God and Father flows out to us. We are holy and without blame before Him in love. "I have manifested Thy name," He says to the Father; but now He could reveal God to them. This would have been condemnation except through the cross.

This is the effect of expiation on our position before God, besides bringing us into the place of children through adoption.

Thus then we see that there is such a process in the judgment of God as the hardening of the heart - that this is never executed till man has ripened himself in evil - and that the fruit of this may appear in such human folly and blindness as we should never have apprehended, or perhaps conceived.

Let this prepare us for things which not only may shortly come to pass, but which have already appeared. Men of learning and of taste, men of morals and religion, men of skill in the science of government, and whole nations famed for dignity and greatness, each in their generation may be turned to fables and to follies enough to shake the commonest understandings in ordinary times.

I do not say the "strong delusion" has gone forth; but there are symptoms and admonitions of its not being far off. What a voice this has for us, to keep near to the Lord in that assurance of His love, to love His truth, to walk immediately with Himself, and to promise ourselves that His tarrying is not long

Hardening the Heart

There are scriptures which contemplate a succession of eras, or times, all along the course of the earth's history from the time of the flood, I may say, to the days of antichrist, when there has been, or is to be, a judicial visitation under the hand of God upon the hearts, understandings, and consciences of men.

I might present the following instances (there are other instances of this judicial hardening, but they are of a private and not of a dispensational nature, and therefore I do not put them among these cases).

The old Gentile world |Rom. 1:28|

Pharaoh or Egypt |Exod. 9:12|

The kings of Canaan |Josh. 11:20|

Israel |Isaiah 6|

Christendom |2 Thessalonians 2|

These scriptures show us this judicial hardening of which I am speaking; and they further show us that the fruit, or character, of it may be very startling, such as we could not easily have believed or feared.

Under it, men of refinement and intelligence may adopt all kinds of religious vanity; rulers and statesmen may be blinded to the plainest maxims of government. Did not Pharaoh persist in a course which in the mouth of witness after witness was sure to be the ruin of his kingdom? Did not the nations of Canaan tremble at the report of the conquests of Israel, and of what God had done for Israel? And yet, in spite of all that, did they not madly resist Israel? (see Joshua). And will not whole communities of intelligent, refined, advanced people, by-and-by, bow to the claims of one who shows himself to be God, setting himself up above all that is worshiped?

There has been thus, and will be thus still, under this judicial hardening; worldly men violate the clearest and most sensible means of their own interests, and religious men depart from the simplest instructions of the truth. We are not to wonder at anything. The very idols which men have taken as spoils of war, they have afterward bowed down to as their gods (2 Chron. 25:14). For what folly, what incredible blindness of understanding, will not the infatuated heart of man betray. But this hardening is never sent forth to visit man until he has righteously exposed himself to judgment. All the cases show this. Pharaoh, for instance, had in deepest ingratitude forgotten Joseph. The Amorites of Canaan had filled up the measure of their sins. The old Gentiles had brought this reprobate mind on themselves (Rom. 1:28). Israel "had not," Jerusalem "would not." (See Matt. 13:12; 23:37.) And the strong delusion is to be sent by-and-by abroad upon Christendom, only because they "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

This hardening precedes destruction, but it comes after man has ripened his iniquity. God endures with all long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, as He fashions by His Spirit His own elect vessels of mercy ere He glorifies them. "Whom He will He hardeneth," is surely true; but He wills to show His wrath in this way of hardening of or prejudicial dementation, only in the case of those whom He has in much long-suffering endured. (Rom. 9:11-22.)

He Was Moved With Compassion

"And Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things." Mark 6:34.

In a world of misery and want, how blessed to know One whose heart feels it all - as it were, makes it His own - and whose emotions of pitying love are so expressed that we can know and see them: "He... was moved with compassion." That blessed face plainly told of the throbbing of divine mercy that worked within. The heart expressed itself ere the hand moved to relieve what the eye looked upon. Nor was it a transient feeling, a passing emotion. Human misery has found a home in the heart of Jesus; and He who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever," albeit now on the throne of God in glory, is still "moved with compassion" as He looks out upon and takes in all the misery and want that plead incessantly in accents of ever deepening intensity at the throne of mercy.

If the Shepherd of Israel was moved with compassion as He looked upon the children of Abraham, "as sheep not having a shepherd," how deep must be the emotion with which the Lord Jesus views the children of God again "scattered abroad"! What terrible havoc the "grievous wolves" have made in "the flock of God"! How the speakers of perverse things have led away disciples after themselves. What widespread division and offense have they wrought who "serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly"! Surely all this appeals with touching force to Him who "loved the church, and gave Himself for it."

But was it only that Jehovah's people were "as sheep not having a shepherd"? Had they not sinned themselves? Had their hearts been "right with Him"? Had they been "steadfast in His covenant"? Full well He knew it was far otherwise; the long sad history of that perverse and stiff-necked people was all before Him, "But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity." (Psalm 78:37, 38.)

And has the Church of the living God suffered only from false teachers and bad guides? Have the children of God a better history than the children of Israel? Have they been less perverse and stiff-necked? Have they altogether kept His Word? And have their hearts been right with Him who redeemed them with His own blood? How well He knows that higher privileges and better promises have but brought out deeper sin and relatively less response to His love. Surely every heart knows this. How sweet then in our day to turn to Him whose "compassion fail not," and who "having loved His own which were in the world,... loved them unto the end."

We do well to be at home with that deeply moved heart of pitying, forgiving love as it "began to teach them many things." True enough, He now speaks from heaven, but that heaven is open to us, and there is no distance to faith.

Failure and ignorance are around us on every hand. Only rightly can we feel the one and minister to the other, as we are really with Him who, above all evil, sees it all, only to find in it the occasion

for the ministry of love.

They who would in any little degree serve the sheep of Christ in these last and closing days, need much to ponder these words spoken to one of old: "Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother," while, above all, much should they be in spirit with that "faithful and merciful high priest" who, Himself unencompassed by infirmity, yet touched with the feeling of ours, is able to "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way."

"Most merciful High Priest,

Our Savior, Shepherd, Friend,

'Tis in Thy love alone we trust

Until the end."

Head Coverings

"Should sisters wear hats - head coverings - when we come together in a private home for a special meeting, perhaps informal in character?"

ANSWER: For the general principles of women's head covering we refer you to a pamphlet entitled, "Because of the Angels," which is for sale by the publishers. The Spirit of God has laid down certain rules in 1 Corinthians 11, and has also explained that the angels are spectators of things on earth. They should be able to witness in the Church on earth God's order of headship by seeing the man "uncovered" and the woman "covered" at the time of prayer; but alas! it is generally disregarded in Christendom, and so disorder and confusion are to be witnessed by the heavenly intelligences. The lack of adherence to the rules, however, is no reason why any of us should be guilty of the same thing. We have the Word of God to guide us.

In answer to your specific question regarding proper order in special meetings held in private homes, we would ask a few questions. Are the brothers and sisters, or even sisters only, invited to come together for the purpose of having certain questions concerning the Scriptures discussed? or perhaps to hear some brother give a talk on the Scriptures? If the answer is "yes" in either case, then is it not proper that such a meeting should begin and end with prayer? Can we think of not seeking the Lord's guidance and help at the beginning of such a meeting, or of not turning to Him in thankfulness at its close? Then in such instances the sisters are there in the place where prayer is wont to be made, and certainly should have a covering on their heads. The fact of its being a special or extra meeting, or of its being held in a private home, does not alter that. The heads of sisters should be covered, and the heads of brothers uncovered, in such meetings.

There may be cases where you may invite a few brothers and sisters to your home for dinner, and after the meal the conversation naturally turns to the Word of God, and perhaps a chapter is read; this is somewhat different than a called meeting and becomes more of a family discussion of the Scriptures; but even then, if prayer is made, each sister by all means should place a handkerchief or some other covering over her head at the time of prayer. There should not be a question about this, for she should so act in the privacy of her own home. It is a matter of godly order to be witnessed by heaven even though no other human being is there to see.

Whenever a sister is in the attitude of prayer, whether actually speaking to God herself, or where another is doing so, she should be covered, as the sign of submission to God's constituted authority. The same rule would apply for a man having his head uncovered. The only modification of the application of this important part of the Holy Scriptures would be when one is not in the attitude of prayer; for instance, one may pass out a tract on a street or in a public conveyance and at the same time silently ask the Lord to bless the printed word; or, one may at any time lift the heart to the Lord for His guidance and help without getting into an attitude of prayer. How quickly one may in spirit desire, "Lord, guide me," or "Lord, help me."

We desire for ourselves, and for all the dear saints of God, a greater simplicity about the Scriptures, that will accept things without reasoning, and also a deeper reverence for and trembling at the Word of God, and the spirit of subjection of heart and mind to its divine precepts.

Hear ... of Excellent Things: a Call From a Voice of Wisdom

In Proverbs 8 we get a world-wide cry. Wisdom lifts up her voice - "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things" etc. (vss. 4-11).

We would present to our reader four excellent things which this voice proclaims. They are found in the pages of the New Testament, and we trust that each reader will have ears to hear, so that these sayings will sink down into his heart and become a source of lasting profit.

The first is found in Hebrews 1 - the presentation of the Person of Christ. Verse 4 shows that He has obtained a more excellent name than angels. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, bath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He bath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee?"

This wonderful epistle presents in the most blessed way the Person of God's Son as the Apostle and High Priest of our profession Christ Jesus. First, we see Him as the Son Incarnate, the Messiah, walking here upon the earth, in whom God at the end of the days of law spoke to His favored people, the Hebrews. He is the appointed Heir of all things, and at the same time the One who called all into existence by His word. The brightness of the glory of God, and the exact expression of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power; yet He stooped to the awful woe of Calvary's cross to make purification for the sins of His people. And having accomplished this mighty work for the glory of God, He sat down - the glorified, crowned, triumphant Man - at the right hand of the Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, having obtained a more excellent name than they. It was all-important to establish the believing Jews in this blessed truth, they being accustomed to hold angels in reverence, knowing that the law was given by their disposition (Acts 7:53).

In the latter part of chapter 1, the Apostle cites many psalms which present the Person of Christ as the only begotten Son, the Son of the Father, the First-begotten who is the Object of the worship of angels, God whose throne shall be established forever, the Lord of all, whose years shall not fail, when the creation of His hand, wrecked through sin, shall perish, and as the Man exalted above angels at the right hand of God.

What object for the occupation of our hearts is to be compared with the Person of the blessed One who has obtained a more excellent name than the angels! Wisdom's voice speaks to each heart.

The second excellent thing for our consideration is found in figure in Heb. 11:4: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." This verse presents to us in type the wondrous redemption work wrought by the One of whom we have been speaking, for the glory of God and the eternal blessing of every one that believes. If God has revealed that Abel's sacrifice is more excellent than Cain's, how much more can such works be used of the perfect sacrifice of One greater than Abel, even Jesus, the holy Lamb fore-ordained of God!

Cain approached God with the fruit of the ground, produced as the result of his own toil. Abel presented of the firstlings of the flock and the fat. In what consisted the difference? Why did God have respect to Abel's offering and not to Cain's? The answer is simple; but alas, how few, comparatively, have learned its significance. Cain failed to recognize that his life was forfeited on account of his fallen condition as a sinner, and brought the fruit of his own work and toil to God; whereas Abel, by faith, recognized his true state before Him, and approached God upon the ground of a substitute, which was divinely approved - type of the death of the Lamb of God upon Calvary.

The principle is the same today. Tens of thousands approach God continually on the ground of their own works and religious doings - the way of Cain. A solemn woe is pronounced upon all such in the epistle of Jude, verse 11. Others learn that they are sinners, guilty and lost, and believing upon the precious name of Jesus approach God upon the ground of the spotless sacrifice and finished work of Christ. Abel obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts and; by it he being dead yet speaketh. Every one who trusts in the more excellent sacrifice of Christ, is accounted righteous by God also. He is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." Rom. 5:9. Are you trusting therein? Wisdom's voice appeals to you, saying, "O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools [or foolish], be ye of an understanding heart." Pro. 8:5.

The third excellent thing is presented to us in Heb. 8:6: "But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry." He who has obtained a more excellent name than angels and has offered the more excellent sacrifice, lives forever in the glory of God. As the great High Priest of His people, He is seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. There He ever lives to make intercession for His loved ones during their desert journey to the land of promise, ever sympathizing with a heart of perfect love, being touched with a feeling of their infirmities (Heb. 4:15). He Himself has known what it is to walk here below as the dependent Man, doing the will of God.

And not only so, but as Minister of the sanctuary (or holy places), and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man, He bears, so to speak, the names of His redeemed upon His shoulders and upon His heart in the presence of the unveiled glory of God. And there too, the veil having been rent at His death, His brethren can follow Him in spirit. By faith all who know for themselves the acceptance and fragrance of His Person before God, and the infinite value of His sacrifice upon the cross, can draw near to God according to His word as presented in Heb. 10:19-22, and pour out their soul in worship, adoration, and praise.

May each believer who reads these lines know what it is to enjoy the blessed privileges which result for him through Christ's ministry on high in the presence of God. It is the desire of His heart

that we should both walk in the pathway that He Himself has trodden here below, sustained by Him in the midst of our weakness, and also draw near with full assurance of faith as true worshipers, with a true heart, in the true tabernacle on high.

Fourth, we have another more excellent thing presented to us in 1 Cor. 12:31: "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." The detail of it is given in chapter 13. It is the way of charity, or love. Gifts are important in their place, and we are to covet the best earnestly; but the way of love is more excellent still. It is God's way. God is love. He would have His own essential nature exhibited in the practical ways of His people, in whose hearts He sheds His love by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5).

There is much talk about this love; but alas! on all hands we find that a mere human love usurps its place. Many cry out for more love, and complain of the lack of it in others, while sadly failing to exhibit it themselves. There is plenty of so-called love, which really means to be "Hail fellow well met," with everybody, and everybody's will at work in insubjection to God. But this is not the love of God. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3. And again, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments." 1 John 5:2. Moreover, we are not taught to go about the world looking for others to show love to us, but we are exhorted, "Beloved, let us love one another." 1 John 4:7. We are to show it. Walking with God (who is love), love will be active in us toward our brethren, and will find its response in all who are treading the same pathway.

Now in 1 Corinthians 13 we have a detailed exposition of the way of love. All would do well to ponder it prayerfully. Space will not permit us to go through it verse by verse, but we may learn from the first that though a man were the greatest of orators, if he is not characterized by love in his daily life, he is become as "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Or, if he were the chief of theologians or professors, or the most renowned on the list of those who live or work or heal by faith, and love be lacking, he is nothing. Or even if he were a philanthropist of world-wide fame, or the most heroic of martyrs, and he have not love, it profits him nothing, absolutely nothing.

Love is of God, and love never faileth. This is the more excellent way. Many a man, we fear, whom his fellows have exalted on account of his powers of oratory or of mind, his professed work of faith, his self-denial or liberality, or self-sacrifice for his creed, when weighed in the balances of God's sanctuary according to 1 Corinthians 13, will be found wanting. May our hearts be led to weigh these things before Him now. He is the searcher of hearts, reading the secret counsels and intents of every soul. All things are open and naked and manifest in the sight of Him with whom we have to do.

May each believing soul who reads these lines be found listening to the voice of wisdom with the heart occupied with Him who has obtained the more excellent name, the conscience at peace through His more excellent sacrifice, the soul enjoying the fruits of His more excellent ministry, and his life the exemplification of the more excellent way, that God may be glorified in all.

The Heart of a Stranger

"Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Exod. 23:9. When no longer in the place of strangership, but in their own land, they would still know the heart of a stranger, having been such themselves in Egypt. And how sweet it is to know about our Lord Jesus, that although He is no longer a stranger here, but gone to the Father (John 16:28), yet, having been such when He was down here, He never forgets it, but knows by experience the heart of a stranger still. But how poorly it would express His tender love for "His own" to say that He does "not oppress" those who are "strangers" as following Him who was once a stranger here Himself, and having won their hearts, has carried them up to heaven where He is. No, "He is able to succor them," and He loves to do it; and He does it as One who has Himself "suffered, being tempted."

The strangers in Israel were objects of Jehovah's especial care, and were not to be "oppressed," even by His own people. How touching the recollection that when "the Son of His love" was a stranger in this world, "He was oppressed and afflicted"; and though it is said, "The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed" (Psalm 103:6), yet in His case righteousness and judgment were executed against and not for Him. "Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd." Zech. 13:7. For "He hath made Him to be sin for us," and righteousness must be against Him on the cross before it could be exercised for us in Him and through Him.

And so the Lord Jesus is now no more a stranger, yet He is "the same," though ascended up far above all heavens. Nor does He forget in the glory of His present place the pressure on His spirit of what He met with and witnessed in this world that knew and owned Him not. And His heart of love has cherished interests down here in the "little flock" of His chosen and redeemed ones. But are there not some among them who may especially enjoy the sweetness of reflecting that the Lord knows their path and their heart, as having trod the same path Himself? It was the heart of a "stranger" that Israel knew, for such they had been in Pharaoh's land. "Seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Was it not just this that Jesus was in the world? - His own world, yet unknown in it (John 1:10). Brought to an "inn," the place of strangers and sojourners, to be born, but no room for Him ever there! Not even a wayfarer's accommodation in a world full without Him. Rich and increased with goods, and having "need of nothing," as they thought, yet really the land of the "mighty famine," and He alone able to meet the need and fill the hungry with good things; yet for Him, "no room"!

"O ever homeless Stranger,
Thus, dearest Friend to me,
An outcast in the manger,
That Thou might'st with us be!"

And if a certain scribe thought it would be a fine thing to follow One possessed of such extraordinary power and resources as He, the Lord would let him know that it was a stranger whom he essayed to follow, not to a hole or a nest, but to •,where He had no place "to lay His head." Such was the path of Jesus here; and hence He knows by experience and recollection "the heart of a stranger." Dear reader, does He know your heart and path in this way? If I am finding a nest and rest in this world where He never even sought one, making myself a home where He had not a place to lay His head, I cannot have the consciousness that He knows my heart in this sense.

But on the other hand - like Moses in the bosom of his family, in a land where he was for a while "content to dwell," yet confessing himself, in his son's name (Gershom, that is, stranger) to be a stranger there - you can look up to the Lord from the midst of whatever comforts His gracious hand has surrounded you with, and honestly say, "This is not my rest, Lord; A stranger confessed, Lord; I wait to be blessed at Thy coming again." If thus you can appeal to Him who knows all things, and tell Him you have not ceased to be a stranger in a strange land, but would, like Rebekah, gladly slide down from the camel's back at the first glimpse of Himself, then you can delight yourself in this, that He has been before you across this desert, Himself a "stranger" here, and hence knows not your circumstances only, but your heart in all its loneliness, "for He has felt the same." And He provides for us that, if subject to the leading and teaching of "another Comforter," we may even here know that which is the very joy of the Father's house itself, even communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. He, once a stranger, enters into all the exercises of our hearts as strangers where we are, and He would have us to enter in faith, by His Spirit, into all the tender love and sympathy of His heart where He is (John 16:13, 14).

His Day

His day - a day for remembrance for memory's fondest object, the cross of Christ, where He endured the fire of God's judgment against sin, and my sins, and where He accomplished what was contained in His words to Peter (John 18:11) - "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

"God could not pass the sinner by,
His sin demands that he must die;
But in the cross of Christ we see
How God can save, yet righteous be.
The sin alights on Jesus' head,
'Tis in His blood sin's debt is paid."

How wonderful to know that your debt and mine, sin's debt, was paid in His blood! The life that we had forfeited and could only give up through our death, and with judgment still to come, was offered to God for us by His own beloved Son who also bore the judgment for us and freed us from its everlasting destruction from the Lord. But at what a cost! Our redemption was not only accomplished by His death, but had its very source and spring in His own heart's sorrow, and in such anguish of soul as never endured by man before. Is that not what makes our redemption so precious to us?

Deep in unfathomable mines of anguish and sorrow - there is the groundwork of all your glory and mine. What transcends my apprehension (not only my thoughts) is that He laid down a spotless life (holy, undefiled), but with sin attached to it - my sin and yours! And He died under the full sense of it, in the fullest consciousness of the forsaking of God in the bearing of sin, and for sin. How deep the sorrow - thus we sing. Yes, how deep were those unfathomable mines of sorrow and anguish! "The travail of His soul" is the way the prophet speaks of it, and out of it were you and I brought into blessing.

Holy and Unholy

The Word of God is absolutely conclusive that for a Christian to marry an unbeliever is directly contrary to it.

We would not, however, dare to limit (as we have heard some do) 2 Cor. 6:14 to marriage. On the contrary, the passage strikes at every unequal yoke where Christian and unbeliever are joined together for any common cause.

There is no question as to the bitter persecution both from believers (alas) and unbelievers, a faithful adherence to such a course involves. Men will tolerate you as long as you treat all as equal, but to make distinctions between holy and unholy is offensive to them.

How to Get on Well

Whenever a person boasts, you will in general find that he particularly fails precisely where he boasts most. If you set up for great knowledge, this will be the point in which you may be expected to break down. If you set up for exceeding candor, the next thing we may well dread to hear is that you have played very false. The best thing is to see that we give ourselves credit for nothing. Let Christ be all our boast. The sense of our own littleness and of His perfect grace is the way, and the only way, to go on well.

How? the Expression of Unbelief

It is interesting to observe that there are points of similarity as well as of contrast between Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. Both meet Christ with a "How?" When "truth" fell upon the ear of the master in Israel, he said, "How can these things be?" When "grace" shone upon the woman of Sychar, she said, "How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" We are all full of bows. The truth of God in all its majesty and authority is put before us; we meet it with a "how." The grace of God in all its sweetness and tenderness is unfolded in our view; we reply with a "how." It may be a theological "how," or a rationalistic how; it matters not; the poor heart will reason instead of believing the truth and receiving the grace of God. The will is active, and hence, although the conscience may be ill at ease, and the heart dissatisfied with itself and all around, still the unbelieving "how?" breaks forth in one form or another. Nicodemus says, "How can a man be born when he is old?" The Samaritan says, in substance, "How canst Thou ask drink of me?"

Thus it is ever. When the Word of God declares to us the utter worthlessness of nature, the heart, instead of bowing to the holy record, sends up its unholy reasonings. When the same Word sets forth the boundless grace of God, and the free salvation which is in Christ Jesus, the heart, instead of receiving the grace and rejoicing in the salvation, begins to reason as to how it can be. The human heart is closed against God, against the truth of His Word, and against the love of His heart. The devil may speak, and the heart will give its ready credence. Man may speak, and the heart will greedily swallow what he says. Lies from the devil, and nonsense from man will all meet a ready reception from the human heart; but the moment God speaks, whether it be in the authoritative language of truth or in the winning accents of grace, all the return the heart can make is an unbelieving, skeptical, rationalistic, infidel, "How?" Anything and everything for the natural heart save the truth and grace of God.

However, in the case of the woman at Sychar, our blessed Lord was not to be put off with her "how?" He had answered the "how?" of the man of the Pharisees, and He would now answer the "how?" of the woman of Sychar. He had replied to Nicodemus by telling him of the powerful operations of the Spirit of God, and then of the love of God who sent His Son; He replies to the Samaritan by telling her, likewise, of "the gift of God." "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

Now the little word "gift" opens a vast range of most precious truth to the soul. The Lord does not say, "If thou knewest the law, thou wouldest have asked." Indeed, had she known it, she must have seen herself as lost under it, instead of being encouraged to ask for anything. No one ever got "living water" by the law. "This do, and thou shalt live," was the language of the law. The law gave nothing save to the man that could keep it. And where was he? Assuredly the woman of Sychar had not kept it. This was plain the Lord could talk to her of "gift," and surely requirement formed no integral or necessary part of gift. "The gift of God is eternal life," not through the law, but

"through Jesus Christ our Lord." The law never even proposed such a thing as eternal life in heaven. It spoke of long life in the land.

I Know Something Better

"You know," said a Christian lady to a girl whom she found one day ill in bed, "that Jesus died for us." "Yes," replied the feeble voice, "but I know something better than that; I know He died for me." A chord was struck in the visitor's heart which instantly vibrated to the touch of these telling words. They were friends in a moment and forever. The dear uniting name was precious to both. They were one in Christ Jesus. It was a moment of real joy

Iniquity of the Amorites Is Not yet Full

Gen. 15:16

May God give us to see and mark the course which this world is running, and enable us to avoid all its influences. When one knows what will be the end of a thing, one avoids that which would lead to it. The end of Christendom is awful. God makes us acquainted with it in order that we may avoid it. The more I see what is taking place, the more I discover that things are hastening on, that evil may have the upper hand and be judged, that God may judge it and purify the earth. The iniquity must be full before God strikes. We are in the last days in this respect.

Men believe there is great progress taking place, yet they feel great uneasiness in the expectation of what is going to happen. Christians must keep apart, living according to the principles of their divine calling.

Inside the Veil

If dwelling inside the veil, I say, Oh, the immeasurableness of the love of God in what He has done! How can I repay Him? I am preserved from ten thousand things which would have affected me if not there. I am in another place; as one said, "I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down." I am not trying to squeeze what I can out of this or that little circumstance for myself. I am saying, Why, God has given me everything He could give in giving me His Son. What return can I make Him? Cannot I give up this or that little thing for Him who gave His Son for me? It makes it seem as nothing. It is because we are not dwelling there that some little thing seems very great to give up; or perhaps some little disappointment comes; then we shrink from the cross, and we are not ready to rise and go forth to meet it because not living in heaven, not occupied with all the vastness of the blessing that is ours.

Is the Heart Full?

I don't know that if anyone wanted to be to the praise of God he could do it better than by being full of Christ. I meet some aged saints full of Christ, saying, "I've done with this world, but I have Christ. The only thing I have got to speak of is what this Christ of God is - He is ALL." I don't believe anything is better than that. If I look around me I see in saints - not want of intelligence, not lack of knowledge, not want of activity - that what they need is the affections full of Christ. There's plenty of oil in the machine that's full of Christ. If the heart is full of Christ, and full of joy in the Holy Spirit, then we have got our other portion, our real portion. The early Christians were so full of Christ that all their trials, all their difficulties, sank down into nothing. Why is it not so with us?

The Judgment Seat of Christ

Everything will come out there! There can be no disguise at all in the pure bright light before the throne of the discernment of Christ, where all the full intelligence of His mind will beam out on His people. It is not the question of being saved, but of how we, as saved ones, have been walking. It is strange, since it cost Christ so much to accomplish that sacrifice, that when He gets His people home He should say, in substance, "Now let us look at their walk" - no question as to their acceptance - "but let Me see whether they have walked according to My Father's thoughts, who would have His sons and daughters walking as those who are separated unto Him by the blood of His Son, as those bought with such a price. Did they walk worthy of it?"

Just Judgment on Man

The incorrigibility of man under all persuasions becomes the ground of the necessity and the vindication of the righteousness of God's judgment.

Isaiah says, "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more." And Jeremiah had to say of the generation in his day, "Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved"; and again, "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?" Are we then to wonder that the sword of the Chaldean entered the land?

The generation in the day of Christ was tested in every way. John mourned, the Son of man piped; but there was neither lamentation nor dancing (Matt. 11). In His own Person, the Lord assayed Israel in every way, according to their own prophets. He came as the Bethlehemite, according to Micah, but they sought his life (Matt. 2). He came as the light from the land of Zebulon and Naphtali, according to Isaiah; but He was challenged instead of followed (Matt. 4). He came as the King, meek and lowly (Zech. 9:9), but they received Him not (Matt. 21).

Then in the three parables which the Lord delivers at the close of these testings of Israel (see Matt. 21 and 22) - I mean those of the two sons, the husbandman of the vineyard, and the marriage of the king's son - He convicts His people under the law, under the ministry of John the Baptist, and under grace.

Are we not, therefore, prepared to see the Master rise up to shut to the door? The need of sovereign grace, as well as the vindication of judgment, is made to appear. "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma." Rom. 9:29. Man is past moral correction. He is incorrigible and incurable.

It has been said of him, Man is prone to evil, and this arises from the impotency of the will, which, when it turns to evil, is rather passive than active; through the grace of Christ alone it is free. Very just. Not only has man fallen from God and become a sinner, but he is the bondman of sin. Having been overcome of Satan, he has been brought into bondage to him (2 Pet. 2). He is "sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14).

And this state of incurableness and incorrigibility has had a constant illustration in the Book of God, from the beginning to the end. Man has shown himself to be in full bondage to sin so that he will go in the way of it in defiance of every argument and every influence which may be used with him.

It is solemn to look at this, but it has its profit for us to do so. We can have no difficulty tracing a line of these illustrations all through Scripture.

Cain went on with the desperate purpose of his heart, though the Lord came and pleaded with him to turn him from his purpose (Gen. 4).

Nimrod made Babel the center of his empire, though God's judgment had just before so awfully signalized that place (Gen. 10).

Pharaoh repented not to yield himself under God's hand, though that hand had given witness after witness of its supremacy, and had demonstrated that it was vain to kick against the pricks (Exod. 1 and 14).

Amalek fought with Israel, though the glory in the pillar and the water from the rock were before him, the witnesses of God's wondrous majesty and power (Exod. 17:8-16).

Israel murmured and rebelled again and again in the midst of divine marvels and mercies which spoke to them of love and almightiness (Numbers).

Nebuchadnezzar exalted himself after so many witnesses of God's power, and so many gracious, softened movements of his own heart (Dan. 4:30).

Judas betrayed the Lord after years of converse with Him (Matt. 26).

The high priest invented a lie in the face of a rent veil; the Roman soldiers consented to that lie in the face of a rent tomb (Matt. 28).

The Jews stoned Stephen, though his face was shining under their eye like the face of an angel (Acts 7).

These are among the samples or instances of the fact that man by nature is under bondage to sin, and that no moral influence is powerful enough to work his deliverance. The creature that has proved itself able to withstand such arguments and persuasives as these cases exhibit has proved itself to be beyond the reach of all moral influence. Hell itself would not cure him or deter him. Man is incorrigible and incurable. Again, we may say with Isaiah, "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more." Sovereign grace and power must come in. If God have not a seed it will all be Sodom.

The Apocalypse (Revelation), closing the Book of God, closes also this testimony against man. There, in the face of the most awful judgments executed again and again, man refuses to repent, going on the rather to ripen his iniquity like Pharaoh of old, upon whom plague after plague spent itself all in vain. And thus, we may say, this book of the Apocalypse (which is eminently a book of divine judgments - judgments not on Israel only, but on the whole world) is the vindication or justification, as well as the history of judgment. We read there of judgments; but we learn at the same time the necessity and demand for judgment. For the incorrigibility of man, the desperate hardness of the heart, is fully exposed again. It is Pharaoh refusing to repent, Amalek defying and insulting the glory, or man as well as Israel saying, Where is the "God of judgment"? Man is found to be the same from first to last. The Ethiopian has not changed his skin, nor the leopard his spots.

Are we then, I still ask, to wonder that the Lord's hand is still stretched out! that seals, trumpets, and vials have still to usher forth the judgments of God, and that the sword of Him who sits upon the white horse has still to do its work of death?

Judgment is God's strange work, but it is His needed work likewise. When we have looked at these cases and read the history of the trial of man's heart from the beginning to the end of it, we

may surely ask, Is there not a cause? And I am sure it is well for the soul to hold this fact - this truth about man and his incorrigibleness - in remembrance; for as I have been observing, it justifies the thought of divine judgment, and tells us of the necessity of sovereign grace and the interference of divine power.

Judgments are to introduce the kingdom. The earth is to be conducted into a scene of glory by the taking out of it all that offends and does iniquity. For as grace has been despised and the Lord who made the world has been disowned and cast out of the world, judgment must clear it ere it can be the scene of His glory and joy.

The Lame and the Feeble: Acting on Certain Exhortations

"Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." Heb. 12:12, 13.

What a grand opportunity is afforded today for the practical carrying out of this important little exhortation! On all sides may be seen hands hanging down, and knees feeble, and lame pilgrims dotting the road to heaven.

It is not as when in triumph Moses could review his six hundred thousand warriors, fresh over the sea, and discover that "there was not one feeble person among their tribes" (Psalm 105:37), but the rather as when he beheld them, amid desert, the sad witnesses to their disobedience and unbelief, dejected and complaining as those who had "despised the pleasant land." Their feebleness, indeed, marked them, and lameness was seen on all hands. It must have been a sorry spectacle to their leader, though he bore with God-given patience their many rebellions!

So today! How different is the aspect of the Church from the fair picture she presented in the opening chapters of the Acts. Then all was fresh and in the bloom and vigor of a living, acting, and God-honoring faith. The world was kept outside by the force of the inherent fire that burned within; and consequently they walked "in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost," and "were multiplied." There were giants in those days, giants in faith and devotedness and power, just because the heart was fresh and warm and true.

They could not boast of learning; no, their foremost teachers, Peter and John, were regarded by the chief priests as "unlearned and ignorant men"; and ignorant, no doubt they were of the wisdom of this world and the learning of the college. But the lack was wonderfully counterbalanced by their knowledge of a few eternal facts, made theirs as eyewitnesses of the life and death, resurrection and ascension, of the Lord Jesus, held in living power in their souls by prayer and uncompromising faithfulness. Their little was rightly used, and yielded a splendid result.

Thank God for such grace - a Gideon's barley loaf, or a stripling's sling and stone, if only God be there, is all-sufficient. To the winds with Saul's armor and all that appertains thereto, when the Lord's battles must be fought. God wants no power or wisdom but His own; and wise are they who, even in this late day, believe and act thereon.

This is power, and He who was with His people of old, is with His people still. The bloom may be gone, but Christ abides. Circumstances may have changed, but the Word and Spirit remain. Now the call is that we should lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees. God calls us to act in grace toward each other.

Look around at the "great multitude of impotent folk" who swell the ranks of the Church; look upon the battlefield and see the vast number of wounded and maimed, and ask yourself if this is a day for smiting with the fist, or of hustling one another out of the way.

No, we are to watch so courageously that our evident joy and blessing may make the weak feel that it is their own assured portion also; and thus strength and healing will be administered to them instead of discouragement. But in order to do this, there must be personal dealing with God. Our own souls must be feeding on that which raises them above the perplexities of the day - feeding on the Word of God itself rather than on human thoughts of it. And thus, instead of leading souls away from their source of blessing, they will be established and comforted. It is charity that would lead us to the consideration of the weak and lame. Such abound on all sides, and that increasingly.

May our hearts be drawn more to the lame, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and be enabled to show that the Church is something else than a field of battle and controversy, something else than a school for the acquisition of doctrine; that she has the truth as a matter of enjoyment, and that there is such a thing as "fellowship... with the Father, and with His Son" - the richest and most precious privilege on earth - in itself always a distinct testimony of triumph over the enemy.

Law and Priestly Grace

Numb. 17; 20

Putting these two chapters together, we see the grace of God in priestly government to bring His redeemed through the wilderness, and also the contrast between law and priestly grace.

This grace is drawn out by Israel's sin; but grace does not, of course, allow sin. Law could not bring the people into the land. Law must have kept the whole nation out except Joshua and Caleb, who followed the Lord fully. We have its actings in chapter 16, in the judgment that fell on Korah and his company. If when redeemed we are put under the law, we should be no better off than before. Still, God cannot allow sin. Neither could He give the people up; for had He not redeemed them? as Moses pleaded with Him in Numb. 14:13-16: "And Moses said unto the LORD [Jehovah], Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for Thou broughtest up this people in Thy might from among them;) and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land,... saying, Because the LORD [Jehovah] was not able to bring this people into the land which He swore unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness." He cannot give them up; He cannot allow sin, and therefore He brings in priestly grace to meet the difficulty. To take away their murmurings, He does not use the rod of Moses, but that of Aaron. The rod of Moses could only judge them for their sin and thus take away their murmurings by judgment. But Aaron's does it by priestly grace.

God makes it very manifest by whom He will act. Aaron's rod is chosen out of the twelve, and the remarkable sign of its blossoming and yielding fruit showed that priesthood was connected with life-giving power as well as with intercession. Both are needed to uphold them and to raise them when failing. "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit." This is the care and authority by which we are led through the wilderness. God will allow no other, and no other would do. The priesthood of Christ alone can carry us through. It is the rod of authority too; for "Christ is a son over His own house." But we see that unbelief cannot avail itself of this. "And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. Whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of the LORD [Jehovah] shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?" Chap. 17:12,13.

God had shown them that there was this grace, and they ought to have trusted in it, especially as they had seen the power in Aaron's remaining in among the congregation and staying the plague. They had ground for full assurance, but unbelief prevailed. They were insensible to the value of the priesthood, and their conscience was still under law. For they did not know God, though at the very moment He was acting for them in priestly grace.

The circumstances of chapter 20 put them to the test; the outward power too that had brought them out of Egypt was passing away from their minds. Miriam, the expression of it, had died. When apparent power decays, faith is put to the test. Afterward Moses passed away too. Unbelief does not get the refreshment that faith does. There is no water. They were in a terrible state of mind wishing they had shared the judgment that had fallen on their brethren, for there was no

confidence in Jehovah. Yet they called themselves the congregation of Jehovah. They had the pride, but not the comfort, of it. Moses and Aaron fell on their faces. There seemed no remedy. But Jehovah appeared. He was the only remedy. And He makes Aaron's rod the means of the application of that remedy. It had already been appointed before the occasion for its exercise occurred. There was real need, and God never denies this. He never says it is not real need; but He will have us go to Christ to meet the need. It was not to be Moses' rod, for then it must be judgment. Nor was the rock to be smitten again. That water could be had now without smiting the rock was the result of its having been smitten before by the rod of judgment.

So it is with us. Everything comes to us through Christ's having been on the cross; and we do not need the cross again but the priestly work. It was now, "Speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water." Speak the word only, and the water shall flow. All things are ours; we draw nigh now not for acceptance, but to have our need supplied. In verses 9 and 10 we see that Moses was vexed and spoke inadvisedly, He could not rise to the height of God's grace, and that was why he could not enter the land. He was in a better mind the first time Israel murmured. Then he said, "Your murmurings are not against us, but against Jehovah" (Exod. 16:8); now he says, "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" setting up Aaron and himself, and using Jehovah's authority to do it. He smites the rock too. There would really have been more glory to Moses if he had spoken instead of smiting, but he did not see this.

God called Aaron's rod "the rod." The other was set aside. They were never under that roof again. It is Christ for us, or nothing. Any other principle must have dealt with them as with Korah. It is only a word now, and every blessing flows. To smite the rock again would be the same as saying because we fail, Christ must die again. It is denying grace to say that anything is needed now except intercession. To "sanctify Him" would be to give Him credit for all that He is, as He has revealed Himself. To "sanctify Him in our hearts" is to attach to Him all that He is. But Moses did not do this. He did not count upon God's grace, which was all that was needed. But does God stop His grace because of this? Does He stop the out-flowing of the water to quench their thirst? No, He does not! If Moses failed to sanctify Him before the people, He will only the more sanctify Himself before them. He comes in Himself when the one who should act fails. Just as when the disciples, who ought to have been able to cast the evil spirit out of the child, failed in doing so, Jesus, coming down from the mount of transfiguration, said, "Bring him to Me." It was wrong that they could not cast him out, but His own personal interference was gained through it. He gives the people the water they need in spite of Moses' unbelief and their murmuring. He will act according to the rod of His appointing, if Moses does not.

Thus Christ never fails in carrying on that which as Priest He has undertaken. Israel should have walked under the power and comfort of that rod. They saw the blossoms and the fruit and should have counted on it. If there is anything we want and we doubt of getting it because we say we do not deserve it, that is putting ourselves under law. It is forgetting that there is "the rod"; and that it is, "speak the word only." God takes away the murmurings by grace. He deals with all our evil, as His children, in grace.

Look at Peter's case. Was it because he repented that Jesus prayed for him that his faith should not fail? we know it was not. And was it because Peter wept that the Lord turned and looked upon him? It was afterward that he wept. When we do wrong, priestly grace acts for us and obtains for

us grace to see and confess and put it away. Christ probes the heart of Peter but does not leave him in the evil. This is the privilege of His children. Grace sends the gospel to the world. Grace gives priesthood to the Church. It all originates in God. If I sin, it is not I who goes to the Priest, but He goes to God for me. It is not said, If a man repents, but if he sins, "we have an advocate with the Father." When through the action of priestly grace a sense of my sin is given me, I go to God for strength against it. It is He who obtains that for me which brings me back to God. All this is the fruit of His unsolicited grace. It was God who appointed the rod. He is "the God of all grace," in spite of all our evil; and when we see it we are confounded. Carrying us through the wilderness is as much grace as redemption and forgiveness. Even when Israel strove with God, He was "sanctified in them."

It is very sad to have "Meribah" (chiding, or strife) written on any part of our history - sad as to us - but He makes it an opportunity for His grace. They get just what they want, though Moses is shut out from Canaan. He would make them know the extent of His grace. Another time grace might act in a different way - in chastening, perhaps, if needed. But this taught them what the character and extent of the grace was. Just the same grace that spoke in Isa. 43:22, "Thou hast been weary of Me." I have not wearied thee, but "Thou hast wearied Me with thine iniquities." What language for God to use! Yet He goes on, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake." (vv. 24,25.) Nothing can make us more ashamed of our unbelief than this astonishing grace. And all because of Christ. Nothing makes us hate sin like this.

Length of Day

QUESTION: What was the length of the "day" in Genesis 1?

ANSWER: We understand the word "day" in the first chapter of Genesis to mean simply our ordinary 24 hours; we do not consider it scriptural to believe that each of these days may include a long period of time. But we must remember that, between the first verse of Genesis 1 and the commencement of the actual six days' work, millions of years may have intervened, leaving ample room, most surely, for all the facts of geology.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Then we are told, "the earth" - not the heaven - "was without form, and void."

We are not told how long this was after it was created, nor how it fell into this state; but most surely, God had not so created it. And then begins the record of the six days in which God prepared the earth for man to dwell upon.

It is not the object of the Bible to teach us geology or astronomy, but we may rest assured that there is not a single sentence in that divine volume which collides with the facts of geology or any other science.

We must, however, draw a very broad line of distinction between the facts of science, and the conclusions of scientific men. Facts are facts wherever you find them; but if you follow the conclusions of men, you may find yourselves plunged into the dark and dreadful abyss of universal skepticism.

Let Him

An old Scotch lady who was alone for the greater part of the day, was asked, "What do you do during the day?"

She answered, "Well, I get my hymn book and I sing a little hymn of praise to the Lord; then," she added, "I get my Bible and let the Lord speak to me. When I am tired reading, and I get done singing, I just sit still and let the Lord love me."

Do you ever sit still in the presence of your Savior and hear Him say, "I do love thee; I have loved thee; I shall love thee to the end."

Christian Life: Part 1, Philipians 2 & 3

The epistle to the Philipians gives us very little doctrine (doctrine being just alluded to in chapter 3), but it does give us in a remarkable manner the experience of Christian life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is full of blessing in that character - the life above seen down here in a man through the power of the Spirit of God. So much is this the case that the very word "sin" is not found in it.

When justification and righteousness are spoken of, it is not in contrast with sin, but in contrast with human and legal righteousness. The flesh was there. At the very time Paul wrote the epistle, he had got the thorn in the flesh to prevent its acting; but it shows us one rising above the flesh and all hindrances, that Christ might be magnified in him. Whether to live or die, he did not know; he would have liked to be gone, but in love to the Church he says, Better for you if I remain; and so, counting on Christ and knowing that it is better, he knows he will remain. He knows how to abound and how to suffer need; he is pressing toward the mark for the prize - it is the only thing he has to do.

The graciousness of a Christian is in chapter 2; the energy in chapter 3; the absence of care in chapter 4; but it is all by the power of the Spirit of God. It is well for us to lay it to heart; we are epistles of Christ known and read of all men - an epistle written not in stone but in the fleshy tables of the heart. We are set as Christians to be letters of recommendation of Christ before the world. Yet it gives us the fullest and most blessed confidence toward God if we take that ground; for if we are in the presence of the world for God, Christ is in the presence of God for us. His work has perfectly settled that question, and He is every moment appearing in the presence of God for us.

We are loved as He is loved; in every way in which we can look at it, all is a fixed, settled thing according to the counsels of God in grace; it is in a poor earthen vessel, but our relationship is settled. All that belonged to the old man is cleared away; and all that belongs to Christ, the new Man, is our positive portion. Not only are our debts paid, but we are to be conformed to the image of His Son; and He has obtained for us the glory which is His own. "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them" (John 17:22). He has given Himself on the cross to meet what we were, and He has obtained for us all that He has. This is the way Christ gives - not as the world. If the world gives, they have it not any longer; but Christ never gives in that way - never gives away, but brings us into all He has. If I light up one candle by another, I lose nothing of the first; and such is the way He gives. I speak of blessed principles. "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them." He became a man on purpose to bring us as men into the same glory as Himself. That relationship we are brought into already. "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God" (John 20:17). If I look at righteousness and holiness, I am as He is; if at the Son, I am before the Father as a son; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall bear the image of the heavenly.

The work that entitles us to that is absolutely and totally finished. The Spirit makes us first feel our need in order to our possessing it, but the work is finished.

In order to get our path clear, we must see where He has brought us. I cannot expect anyone to behave as my child if he is not my child; you must be in a place before you can have the conduct suited to that place, or be under the obligations which belong to it; and it is this last part I desire to look at a little. "You... hath He reconciled," not brought halfway -as to relationship, brought into Christ. Through the work of the cross, He put away our sins and, when He had done it, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. He finished the work which His Father gave Him to do; and in Hebrews the Spirit contrasts Christ's work with the work of the priests which was never finished, so that they never sat down.

We are perfect as pertaining to the conscience. A blunder often made is confounding perfection as to our state with perfection as to our conscience. When once we have understood the work of Christ, we are perfect as regards the conscience. If I look up to God, I can have no thought of His ever imputing sin to me again, or I could not have peace with God; and this is so true that it is said if this work was not perfectly done, Christ must suffer again. But He cannot drink that dreadful cup again, the very thought of which made Him sweat great drops of blood. If there is any sin still to be put away (I speak now of believers), Christ must suffer again, and this can never be. God has set Him at His right hand as having finished the work; "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me." He will deal with His enemies, no doubt, when He rises up in judgment; but as to believers, He is sitting down because He has no more to do. I am not speaking now of course of the daily grace He ministers to them. It is settled, and settled with this double aspect, that the purpose of God being to bring us into the same glory as His Son, the work of Christ not only cleared away our guilt, but obtained that glory for us.

We are not in the glory yet, but the work which is our title to it is finished, though we have not yet got the glory to which it is our title. We are anointed and sealed with the Spirit, and He is the earnest of our inheritance. We are already to the praise of the glory of His grace, but not yet to the praise of His glory, which will be when He comes the second time to bring us into the glory which His work obtained for us when He came the first time. And our life stands between the two - the cross and the glory.

We are here in this world, beloved friends, in the midst of temptations, snares, and difficulties, everything around us tending to draw us away; but the power of God is in us. We know that we are sons of God, though the world knows us not. "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. And every man that bath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3:2, 3. The practical effect of beholding the glory of God is to change us into the same image.

When Moses came down from the mountain, the people were afraid to look on his face because the law required that which they had not to give; but now I see the glory which excels, the glory in Christ, which is infinitely brighter. But the glory in the face of Jesus Christ is the witness that all my sins are put away.

In the face of Moses it required what man ought to have been as a child of Adam, but it came to man who was a sinner. It required righteousness, and pronounced a curse if it was not there. Now

I see the glory in the face of Him who bore my sins in His own body on the tree. The Christian sees the Man who died for his sins now in the glory as man, a witness that the work is done, and a testimony to the place to which He is bringing us; and meanwhile we have the testimony of the Holy Spirit that our souls may be perfectly clear as to this.

That is where the believer is set, resting in entire confidence upon the efficacy of the work of Christ and, upon the other hand, waiting for God's Son from heaven, converted for this. "Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord," standing here in perfect liberty, for where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.

And here we get the proper experience of a Christian as led by the Spirit of God. We see in chapter 3 a Christian as to his walk, Christ having laid hold of him for that, as in 2 Corinthians 3; "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing," etc. He has wrought us for that, not only cleared away our sins. Paul sees Christ in glory before him (he had really seen Him there), and that was what he was going to get. "This one thing I do... I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." What he was seeking was to win Christ. He had not yet obtained Him, or got into the glory, but it was the only thing he was doing in the world; his whole life was that.

In chapter 2, on the other hand, Christ is looked at not as up to glory, but as coming down to the cross; and here we get the graciousness of His character. By this we get our hearts and affections won, and are formed into the likeness of this graciousness. And thus we have the two great things that govern the Christian - the glory that is before him, and the grace that has been shown him.

One word as to verses 12 and 13, "not as in my presence only," etc. Often this "fear and trembling" is used to cast a doubt upon our relations with God, but it is not this we have to fear. We are in the midst of temptations, the power of Satan distracting and turning the heart from Christ; and the Apostle presses upon them that now that He is absent, they must take care. He had worked for them when he was with them; he had met the craft of the enemy in wisdom and apostolic power, but he was in prison when he wrote this. He says, in substance, "Therefore now you must fight for yourselves," but this is in contrast with his fighting for them; and they were to do it, for it was God that worked in them. The contrast is not between God and man working, but Paul and the Philippians. God it was who did work in them, were Paul there; and if they had lost Paul, God who wrought in them was still there.

But then what a solemn thing for us, beloved friends, if we have the sense of this, that we are left down here to make good our path to glory against Satan and all the difficulties of the way. It is enough to make us serious. A false step will throw me into the snares of Satan. I have to be serious; I have the promise of being kept, but I need to be serious.

I have spoken of the finished work, but there is another thing that exercises us; how far can we look at the flesh and say we have done with it? And that is where the practical difficulty comes, if you are in earnest and desiring to walk in fellowship with the Father and the Son. I ought never to walk after the flesh. The existence of the flesh does not give me a bad conscience, but if I allow it to act it does. Whenever I let even an evil thought in, communion is interrupted. The flesh is not gone as a matter of fact, nor is there nothing in us which Satan can tempt; but there is power in us not to let it act. The flesh is not changed. The word is as plain as ever it can be as to what the flesh

is. If left to itself, it becomes so bad that God had to destroy the world. Noah, saved out of the old world, gets drunk; the law is given, and the flesh is not subject to it; Christ comes to grace, and the flesh crucifies Him; the Holy Spirit is given, and the flesh lusts against Him; and we get the case of one who had been into the third heaven, and the flesh was ready to puff him up. The flesh could not be mended, but he gets a thorn in it. But that is not reason why I should ever let it act. It never ought.

Christian Life: Part 2, Philipians 2 & 3

Scripture does not speak of our being conformed to Christ here; it says we are to walk as He walked. But the place of conformity to Christ is the glory, and he "that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself"; that is to say, he is not pure; he has not attained it. The place where I shall be like Christ is the glory; He has obtained it for me; and then, my eye looking upon Him by faith, I am changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.

I find this the great truth which Scripture does give me - not only that Christ died for my sins, but that I died with Christ. In the epistle to the Romans, in the first part (chapters 1 through 5:11), you get all the sins dealt with - the great truth of Christ being substituted for us on the cross, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree - He is delivered for our offenses. And in the subsequent part (chapters 5:12 through 8) the question is taken up not of sins, but of sin - not the fruit, but the tree - and we are shown not to be in the flesh if the Spirit of Christ is in us.

I do not live by the life of Adam, but by the life of Christ; and that is where the total difference is for the Christian. But it is not only that I have a new life as quickened by Christ, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, nor that He has been crucified for me so that my guilt is removed; but I am crucified with Christ.

In Colossians we read, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" - dead therefore in this world. This is God's declaration of our state as Christians. In Romans, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." "In that He died, He died unto sin.... Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God [not in Adam, but) through (or in) Jesus Christ our Lord." This is faith's estimate of it, and this is where you find real deliverance and freedom from the bondage of sin. It is not "no condemnation" to them whose sins Christ bore, but "to them which are in Christ Jesus." God condemned sin in the flesh; He did not forgive it; He condemned it. If I get the law, it condemns me; but Christ? Does He condemn me? No; for He has taken the condemnation for me, and in Him God has condemned sin in the flesh; and I reckon myself dead because it was in death He did so. Christ's death is, as indeed all He has wrought, available for me; and therefore I reckon myself dead.

In 2 Corinthians we get the carrying out this in practice: "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." And then he speaks of the exercises which God sends for our good to test this realization in us and make it effectual. "Always delivered unto death," etc. We all fail for want of watchfulness, but that is what our life ought to be.

Suppose I have a man in my house who is always at mischief; I cannot turn him out, but if I lock him up he can do no harm; he is not changed, but I am free in the house. If I leave the door open, he is at mischief again; but we are to keep him locked up. That is what we are called to do - what God calls us to do. The world will not have this; it will mend and improve man, cultivate the old man, as if it could produce good fruit, because it does not see how bad it is. The world would dig

about the old tree and dung it. This has been tried. God cut it down and grafts us with Christ. This condemning and cutting down was in the cross of Christ; not, of course, that He had any sin, but as made sin for us; and I know not only that my sins are cleared away, but that I am crucified with Christ, and my life is hid with Him in God.

And this is available for power if I carry it about in my heart. Supposing we honestly held ourselves dead - can Satan tempt a dead man? But in order for this, it must not be putting one's armor on when the danger is there, but living with Christ, the heart full of Him.

Would a woman who had heard that her child was killed or hurt at the other end of town, be thinking of what she saw in the shop windows as she ran toward him? No; she would have just enough sense to find her way. If your hearts were fixed like that on Christ, nine-tenths of the temptations that come upon you would be gone; you would be thinking of something else, and outward things would only bring out sweetness as they did with Christ, for we are never tempted above that we are able.

Saints, if in earnest, have got to realize not only the putting away of their sins, but also the having died with Christ; and this delivers them from the power of sin.

I find in Philippians 3 a Christian with one object, knowing that Christ has laid hold of him for glory, and his heart running after Christ. I am to have no other object, though I may have lots of things to do. He is "in all" as the power of life, and He is "all" as the object of that life.

He is in all. "Christ liveth in me" (see Col. 3:11). This is again summed up in Gal. 2:20. "Not I, but Christ liveth in me"; and then the object, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." Then there is the sense of His perfect love: "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." The heart is fixed on Him, and follows hard after Him.

Then in chapter 2 there is another thing - the spirit and the character in which we walk down here; the place a Christian is called to (a wonderful thing, I grant) is to go out from God and be an epistle of Christ. I joy in God, have the blessedness of what He is, and go out in company with Him to show out His character in the world.

Ought I to walk as Christ walked? Every Christian will own that. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Suppose my soul has tasted this perfect love, and it is well we should recollect it (God's love shed abroad in our hearts), and is conscious down here that we are loved as Jesus was loved, what do I believe about God? What put it into His heart to send Christ down here? He knew how He would be treated. Did the world suggest it to Him? It would not have Him when He came. It was all in His own heart! Perfect love! His heart! the unsuggested origin of every blessing. What character did it take in Christ? Was it staying up in heaven and saying, You behave well and come up here? No! we all know that. But He who, in the form of God, in the actual same glory, thought it not robbery to be equal with God (mark the contrast with the first Adam), made Himself of no reputation; and what brought that about? Purest love; love coming to serve.

For Christ took the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man. He emptied Himself of all the glory - the very opposite of the first Adam. Divine love came to serve - a new thing for God - the only new thing. And this is what I learn! I know this love; I know that I am made the righteousness of God in Him, so that I stand before Him; and then I come out from Him toward the

world to bring out this blessed character. I have learned the love, and now I must come out and show it. "Be ye... followers of God, as dear children." You are children; that is all settled. Now you go and give yourselves as Christ did. The spirit of love is always lowliness, because it makes itself a servant.

And here I find what is entirely beyond law. Law tells me to love others as myself; grace tells me to give myself up entirely for my neighbor or for anybody. Did not God forgive you? You go and forgive your enemies. Is He kind to the unthankful and the evil? You go and be the same. It tests all the fibers of our hearts, all the pride and vanity and selfishness that are in us.

We like doing our own will. "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death"; He went so low down that He could go no lower - "unto death, even the death of the cross.", But then "God... hath highly exalted Him." He was the grand example of "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Blessed be His name! He will never give up His service; it is the very thing He shows us, and in which He would that our hearts should see the perfection of His grace. It is what He was doing in John 13. He had been their servant down here, but now they might think there was an end of His service. No, He says, as it were, I cannot stop with you, but I must have you with Me; "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." He does a slave's work, and that is what He does now. We pick up dirt as we go - there is no excuse for it. There is Christ up there, the Advocate with the Father. And, even in time of glory, "He shall gird Himself,... and will come forth and serve them"; He will be there to minister the blessing Himself. Our hearts want to learn the perfection of that love in which He came always down, always down, till He could come no lower.

Are we willing to walk in that path? No one would deny we ought, but are we disposed to do it? Would our heart be glad of the power of that grace which, holding the flesh as dead, can say, Here I am in the power of that love to walk as everybody's servant? We are to esteem others better than ourselves. If my heart is full of Christ, I judge myself of everything not like Christ; I judge the evil in myself because I see the blessedness in Christ. But what do I see in my brother? I see Christ in him. The effect of being full of Christ is to make me think little of self and much of my brother; there is no real difficulty about this, if full of Christ.

"Do all things without murmurings," etc. If you take every single part of this passage, you will find it a statement of what Christ was here. He was blameless and harmless, the Son of God, without rebuke in the midst of this evil world; He was the light of the world and He was the Word of God.

If I reckon the flesh dead, only the life of Christ comes out; if only that came out, we should be a very wonderfully blessed kind of people! To him that hath shall more be given. If I yield myself to God as one alive from the dead, I have fruit here unto holiness, as well as fullness of blessing hereafter. What I would ask you, beloved friends, is, do you propose to be Christians? Are you willing to yield yourselves to God as not having one bit of will of your own? There is power in Christ not to say "I am pure," but always having my eye on Him, to purify myself.

I am going to be like Christ in glory; then I must be as like Him now as ever I can be. Of course we shall all fail, but we are to have our hearts set on this.

Remember this, that the place you are in is that of an epistle of Christ. We are set for that, that the life of Christ should be manifested in us. Christ has settled the question with God; He appears in the presence of God for us, and we are in the presence of the world for Him. "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." If I know He is in me, I am to manifest the life of Christ in everything. If He has loved us with unutterable love which passes knowledge, I feel bound in heart to Him; my business is to glorify Him in everything I do. "Bought with a price"; that is settled; if bought, I am His. But, beloved friends, I press upon you that earnestness of heart which cleaves to Him, especially in these last days when we wait for the Son from heaven. Oh! if Christians were more thoroughly Christians, the world would understand what it was all about! There is a great deal of profession and talk, and the activity of the Spirit of God - thank God there is - but do you think if a heathen came here to learn what Christianity meant, he would find it out?

The Lord give you to have such a sense of the love of Christ that, as bought with a price, the only object of your souls may be to live by Christ and to live for Christ; and for those who do not know Him, that they may learn how He came down in love to seek us and, because righteousness could not pass over sin, died to put it away.

Living Christ

No Christian should be standing for himself; in every company and in every place we must make manifest another, even Christ. The saints are to be an epistle of Christ, read by all - to be the living expression of what was in the mind of Christ. "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. Take this word and apply it to yourself in its power. Are you leaving the savor of Christ behind you in every place, as perfume is left behind by those who carry it - so sweet as to be unmistakable wherever left? If you are doing this, it is because you are bearing about in your body the death of Jesus, so that His life is manifested in your life. We cannot begin to live with Jesus until we have died with Him.

Looking Unto Jesus

There is a most beautiful view of the Bay of Naples from the summit of Vesuvius, but some people who ascend the mountain do not enjoy the view. Why? Because it is a volcano, and there are strange rumbling noises, and quiverings of the earth; and from deep within the mountain's burning breast comes hot, sulfurous smoke, and people doubt their safety. They are too much occupied with thoughts of their own danger to enjoy the beautiful scenery; and I am sure you cannot enjoy the magnificent panorama of divine grace and glory which is spread out in the Word of God until you know that you are in a place of perfect and everlasting security.

The Lord's Supper and Baptism: Inquiry

I'm sending you a paper which recently came into my hands. The one who sent it believes that the Lord's supper and baptism were for the Jews only. This has bothered me somewhat. I want to be established in the truth.

ANSWER: Dear reader, the paper you sent us contains numerous inaccuracies and misstatements. Its erroneous teaching is a part of a system that has been built upon false premises. The foundation of sand upon which it stands is that there was a separate dispensation in the early Church - during the time mentioned in The Acts - which was for Jews only, and that to this period belong the miracles, gift of tongues, baptism, and the Lord's supper. We unhesitatingly say that this is without basis in fact. Certainly the sign gifts - tongues and miracles - ceased after a time, for they were only to introduce Christianity; after it was established they were altogether unnecessary. But the truth for the Church has never been affected; it stands today as perfectly as in the days of the apostles.

We would refer you to Leviticus 23 where God has given us a panoramic view of His ways from the death of Christ on to and through the Millennium. There you will find the Church's formation pictured on the day of Pentecost as the "two wave loaves" presented to the Lord. From that day in the third month there were no more feasts until the seventh month. Then the first one in the seventh month symbolizes the calling of the Jews back to their land by their Messiah when He returns to the earth (Isa. 27:13 and Matt. 24:31). There is no place during the Church period for another dispensation.

The Church of God was and is composed of believers from among both Jews and Gentiles, although the ratio has changed. The Acts gives accounts of the bringing in of the Gentiles, and of the work of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, and of one assembly that was predominantly Gentile - Antioch, Syria. If the saved Jews of that day clung to the old forms and ceremonies, it was because of their failure to apprehend their new estate; it was not because they were in a special dispensation. Such failure is still prevalent in Christendom.

Baptism never saved anyone's soul, and millions have been baptized and died in their sins. It is, however, the outward mark of Christianity, and many converted and baptized Jews and pagans have felt the sting of this very keenly, for their families have borne with them until that moment. Baptism for them has been the dividing point between them and their unsaved relatives.

The paper you sent confounds John's baptism, Christian baptism, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It would be charitable to attribute this hopeless confusion to ignorance. John's baptism was unto repentance; Christian baptism is unto the death of the Lord Jesus. Acts 19:1-5 is irrefutable testimony to their being different. Certain disciples at Ephesus had been baptized unto John's baptism, but when Paul instructed them, they were baptized with Christian baptism. (Contrary to your paper, a Jew's being baptized with John's baptism was not fulfilling the law in any wise - it was a confession that he was a sinner and had broken it.) The baptism of the Holy Ghost is again

another thing, and was what took place on the day of Pentecost in the upper room when the Holy Spirit came down and indwelt the believers (Acts 2). Prior to that moment they were individual believers; after it, they were all united together, and to the Head in heaven - the Church had been formed.

In conclusion we would add, we would have every right to refuse to recognize anyone as a Christian who refused the outward sign of Christianity.

As for the Lord's supper not being for us, we believe the very suggestion comes from the enemy of our adorable Lord and Savior. It is the most blessed privilege a saint of God can have on earth. What must be the state of one who claims to be sheltered by His precious blood who can slur or lightly esteem such a privilege?

On the "night in which He was betrayed" the Lord Jesus kept the last Passover feast with His disciples; the Passover had looked forward for centuries to His death. At the conclusion of that Passover feast, the Lord instituted the remembrance of Himself in death, which memorial was to look back to the same great central point - the cross. The truth of Christianity had not yet come in, and the Lord made mention of the coming kingdom, but later the Apostle Paul was given a special revelation for the Church, and he was told that it was to continue "till He come." Read 1 Cor. 11:23-26 and note how he says, "I have received of the Lord"; he did not get it from Peter, James, or John; they could not have given him what he received. Yes, it is to go on until that blessed moment when He calls His Church home to be with Himself. Happy thought for every true heart! (Note that 1 Corinthians was not written to converted Jews - it says, "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols." Chap. 12:2.)

We might note that the cup is spoken of as the blood of the new covenant, for surely that shed blood is the basis upon which will rest the new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah. In fact, every blessing for man must stand on it. While Christians are not under the new covenant, we come now in all the value of the same precious blood of Christ; and who have more right than we to remember His body given unto death for us, and His blood shed for us? Cold indeed must be the heart of one who can hide behind a theory, a doctrine, an interpretation, or anything else, to give up that which recalls to us His death. Shall not even the contemplation of it cause our hearts to rise up and say, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,... to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever"? Let us say with the poet:

We would also caution our correspondent to beware of all such literature. There are many religious nostrums abroad in the land, and their labels are deceptive. It is wise to "avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."

We haven't time or space to go on into all the gross errors contained in the paper you sent, but the statement that the righteousness that the Lord Jesus had as a Jew under the law is credited to us, is absolutely false. Not one thing He did in all His holy life under the law is credited to us. Remember that He "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). He Himself is our righteousness - not something He did. One other grievous mistake is that of quoting John 1:29 as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." This is not true, and Scripture does not say "sins," but "sin." It is the thing itself, not some acts. He "bear the sins of many," not of the world; but He will ultimately remove the thing -

root, branch, and fruit - from God's creation. Then instead of God being dishonored by sin, He will be manifestly and eternally glorified by its removal. At present we who are saved have the forgiveness of sins, for which we bless His holy name, and gladly remember Him in death, in His own appointed way. During the Millennium there will be a further display of His work in taking away the sin of the world, for sin will be restrained, and Satan bound. Then in the eternal state every trace of sin shall have been removed, for it will be a scene "wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13).

"Blest Lamb of God, Thy precious blood Shall never lose its power."

The Lord's Utterances on the Cross

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34. (The perfect Man as intercessor.)

"Woman, behold thy son! ... Behold thy mother!" John 19:26-27. (The perfect Man in human relationships.)

"Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Luke 23:43. (The perfect Man as shepherd.)

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34; Psa. 22:1. (Inwardly, "But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." Psa. 22:3.) (The perfect Man as sin bearer.)

"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." John 19:28. (The perfect Man as servant.)

"It is finished." John 19:30. (The perfect Man as author and finisher of faith.)

"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Luke 23:46. (The perfect Man in His divine relationship after atoning for sin.) J.L.E.

Love

It is on my heart to address a few words to my brethren in the Lord (especially those who are passing through great trial) on three aspects of love, love to the saints, presented to us in God's Word.

The first is that presented in 1 John 4:16. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." This precious truth is prefaced by that statement, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us," showing that it is God's love that is contemplated here. If we were living in a country where wild beasts prowled about night and day, one would desire, or would rejoice in having, a dwelling place where one would be quite secure from the attacks of all such animals. Now is it not a marvel that although we who are surrounded by enemies and whom the devil as a roaring lion seeks to devour, have such a dwelling place, yet so few of us dwell there?

There is quite a difference between visiting a friend's house now and then, and dwelling there. Every child of God has "known and believed the love that God hath to us"; but the point here is, does he dwell there? Do you, my brother? Have you retired from all cares, worries, and possible dangers, by making His love your abode? If not, why not?

Is there some dark cloud looming up on your horizon that brings a depression over your soul?

Do you not know that He who regards a sparrow's fall has said, "There shall not a hair of your head perish"? And further. Your horizon is not God's horizon. Your horizon is the point where your gaze meets the surface; He can see beyond that, for He gazes from a loftier altitude.

"Perfect love casts out fear." How can I fear if I am abiding in God's overshadowing, all-enveloping love? "There is no fear in love"; "He that feareth is not made perfect in love." He has not realized that God is love, and all His dealings with us proceed from a heart that retains no wrath; that yearns over us with an unceasing, unquenchable affection, and whose only object is our being brought more into fellowship with Him - our being brought to dwell in love.

There is another aspect of love - the love of Christ - which we have unfolded very sweetly in Solomon's Song. Do you wish to find rest for your weary heart? Do you wish for repose, peace, and refreshment? Oh then come and lie on the bed which he has made.

"King Solomon made himself a bed {margin of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem." S. of Sol. 3:9,10. The cedar wood showed durability, the pillars of silver typified redemption (He "loved the church, and gave Himself for it"); the bottom thereof of gold signified that all rests on the divine counsels; the cover of purple showed royalty which, as being partner of his throne, we share in; but the midst thereof was paved with something which cannot be typical - that immeasurable, unsearchable thing, love - "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

How sweet to find all our repose on the bosom of Jesus; when wearied with service, to retire apart into a desert place with Him (Mark 6:30, 31). The Lord would have us find our all in Himself; He would have us rest, satisfied, on the bed of His love, realizing that every need of the heart is met.

And the other aspect of His love to which I refer is one which, though enjoyed and realized now, reaches beyond this wilderness scene into that day of supreme bliss, the marriage supper of the Lamb. "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." S. of Sol. 2:4. The banqueting house, or house of wine, sets forth joy; and our supreme joy in being there is, to know that it is His love which brought us there. "His banner over me was love." It floats above my head, rejoicing over me as a trophy of that love. And it is His joy to have me feasting there in the full enjoyment of that position.

In the first chapter we read, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine." Better than all the joy of salvation is it, to know that He saved me because He loved me. And in that day of perfected bliss, when all the saints shall be gathered at the marriage supper of the Lamb, I suppose that we shall not be so much occupied with being there, as with the love that brought us there and now waves its banner over us. In Ephesians 2 we are very sweetly told that God's purpose in saving us is "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus."

The Gospel of Mark: How It Begins and How It Ends

Mark gives us the ministry of the Lord. His account is brief, and there are few events which are not recorded by Matthew and Luke. Nevertheless, what a gap there would be in our view of the Savior's life and work here below if we had not Mark! In none have we a more characteristic manner of presenting what is given us. In none have we such graphic, vivid life touches of our Master - not only what He said and did, but how He looked and felt. Besides, there is the evident design of drawing our attention to His gospel service; and all the incidents chosen, and the peculiar mode in which they are handled, will be found to bear upon this weighty and affecting theme: the Lord God as the Servant in lowly, faithful ministrations of the gospel here below.

How it Ends

"The Lord therefore, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God" (W. Kelly Trans.). The work was done; He sat down. With His great earthly work done, He was the great Servant who could say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." So He sat down at the right hand of God, the place of power. "And they went forth, and preached everywhere." Is the Lord then inactive? No, "the Lord working with them." So true is it from the first verse of Mark to the last. Jesus is the One that does all things well, working for men in His life or, rather, working for sinners; suffering for sins in death; even now working with His servants when He is gone up to heaven. He is the Servant of God throughout our Gospel. Even seated at God's right hand, He is the Servant - "the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

The Molding Process of Christ's Love

Paul had Christ in the power of the eternal life so ruling every desire and thought, that with a chain on his foot and hand, all he thinks of is that Christ should be magnified by it. It was Christ for whom he was suffering; he knew that he was borne on the heart of Christ; he felt His love; he had tasted it; he could say, "Did not He come and tell me that He would go with me to Rome? Did not He give me a word when all were in despair, to make the people in the ship know that my God was everything to me?"

Is there in us that singleness of eye, that earnest desire, to live Christ, saying, "Till He comes I want Him to be shining out from me"? Some say it more than others. The Lord will some day have to put many into the furnace to destroy what is of the world in them. How blessed if any were so walking that persons could say, "In looking at the walk of that individual I see more of Christ than I ever before knew." But if conscious of being under the eye of Christ, we know that He is taking notice of everything. Paul knew the eye of One to be upon him whose love would not let a single circumstance pass unnoticed. If I realize that, it becomes the molding process of His love on me.

Sorrows and trials are not only like the sand and grit that polish a stone, but I shall be made to taste, through the trouble, what Christ is to me.

If an angel from heaven were to come to my bedside and tell me that Christ was occupied with me as a member of His body, should I be more certain of that love than I am? It is no delusion, but a fact, that Christ loves me, and will love me right on to the end; and He will not cease making me know it till He gets me into the Father's house to be eternally in the full fruition of it.

My Fellowship

My fellowship with the Father is my taste of the delight He has in the Son.

My Life Is Hid With Him in God

I can trace everything connected with my circumstances, and what I am here, to the first Adam; but, connected with all my blessings in Christ, I have to go up there where my life is hid with Him in God. How wondrous the grace of God! His mercy does not rest merely in the cleansing blood, vast as that blessing is, but it puts the sinner into association with the Son, in life above (Col. 3:3). God reckoned to Him our guilt; and if we are freed from guilt and in association with Christ in life, we get power from Him to walk as living men.

The Name of Jesus

Look where you will, whether it be in the domain of science, of religion, or philanthropy, or moral reform, and you will see the same sedulous and diligently pursued purpose to banish the name of Jesus.

It is not said so in plain terms, but it is so nevertheless. Scientific men, the professors and lecturers in the universities, talk and write about "the forces of nature" and the facts of science in such a way as practically to exclude the Christ of God from the whole field of nature.

Scripture tells us (blessed be God!) that by the Son of His love "were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Col. 1:16, 17.

And again, speaking of the Son, the inspiring Spirit says, "Who being the brightness of His [God's] glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. 1:3.

These splendid passages lead us to the divine root of the matter. They speak not of the "forces of nature," but of the glory of Christ, the power of His hand, the virtue of His Word. Infidelity would rob us of Christ, and give us instead the "forces of nature." We vastly prefer our own beloved Lord. We delight to see His name bound up indissolubly with creation in all its vast and marvelous fields. We vastly prefer the eternal record of the Holy Ghost to all the finely spun theories of infidel professors. We rejoice to see the name of Jesus bound up in every department of religion and philanthropy. We shrink with ever increasing horror from every system, every order, every association, that dares to shut out the glorious name of Jesus from its schemes of religion and moral reform. We do solemnly declare that the religion, the philanthropy, the moral reform which does not make the name of Jesus its Alpha and its Omega is the religion, the philanthropy, and the moral reform of hell.

This may seem strong, severe, ultra, and narrow-minded; but it is our deep and thorough conviction, and we utter it fearlessly in the presence of all the infidelity and superstition of the day.

A Narrow Path With a Large Heart

The following message has spoken much to my own heart. Perhaps it would be of the Lord to share it.

It is one of our great difficulties of the present moment - indeed it has ever been a difficulty - to combine a narrow path with a wide heart. There is very much on all sides tending to produce isolation. We cannot deny it. Links of human friendship seem very fragile; many things crop up to shake confidence - many things which one cannot possibly sanction - and the path becomes more and more isolated.

All this is unquestionably true, but we must be very careful how we meet this condition of things. We have little idea how much depends on the spirit in which we carry ourselves in the midst of scenes and circumstances which, all must admit, are very trying.

For example, I may retire in upon myself and become bitter, morose, severe, repulsive, withered up, having no heart for the Lord's people, for His service, for the holy and happy exercise of the assembly. I may become barren of good works, having no sympathy with the poor, the sick, the sorrowful, living in the narrow circle within which I have retired, thinking only of myself, my personal and family interests.

What, we may well inquire, can be more miserable than this? It is simply the most deplorable selfishness; but we do not see it because we are blinded by our inordinate occupation with other people's failures.

Now it is a very easy matter to find out flaws, foibles, and faults in our brethren and friends.

But the question is, How are we to meet these things? Is it by retiring in upon ourselves? Never; no, never! To do this is to render ourselves as miserable in ourselves as we are worthless, and worse than worthless, to others.

How truly delightful and refreshing to turn from this dismal picture to the only perfect Man, who trod this earth. His path was indeed an isolated one - none more so. He had no sympathy from the scene around Him. "The world knew Him not." "He came unto His own [Israel], and His own received Him not." He "looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but He found none." Even His own beloved disciples failed to sympathize with or understand Him. They slept on the mount of transfiguration in the presence of His glory; and they slept in the garden of Gethsemane in the presence of His agony. They roused Him out of His sleep with their unbelieving fears, and were continually intruding upon Him with their ignorant questions and foolish notions.

How did He meet all this? In perfect grace, patience, and tenderness. He answered their questions; He corrected their notions; He hushed their fears; He solved their difficulties; He met their need; He made allowance for their infirmities; He gave them credit for devotedness in the moment of desertion; He looked at them through His own loving eyes, and loved them,

notwithstanding all. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

Christian reader, let us have grace to manifest our blessed Master's spirit, and walk in His footsteps. And then our isolation will be of the right kind; and though our path may be narrow, the heart will be large.

The Narrow Way: Poem

"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jer. 10:23.

The narrow way is sometimes rough,

And I might stumble if alone;

But now my Lord directs my steps,

And holds my hand within His own.

However steep the path may be,

I cannot fall, so close is He.

A New Creature in Christ

The mark of a new creature in Christ is not the having a better heart, for that remains the same as ever, but the looking at everything as having God for the center, and not judging of things as though man were the center; seeing where God is; looking down deeper to the springs of love in God flowing to us through Christ the fountain; all one spirit with the Lord. How different are God's thoughts from man's as to walk! God looking at the One He raised up and saying, I have not a word against those who believe in Him; their guilt has been all rolled away; they are one spirit with Him whom I love up here; He is the Head; those poor things down there are His hands and feet; I love them, and have given them one spirit with My Son. Are these God's thoughts about us? Yes; and if we did but make them our thoughts too, we should have bright faces and happy hearts passing through this wilderness. What then were all my adverse circumstances? What all that tries me? If God be for me, what is all that is against me? The primitive Christians, when spoiled of their goods, took it joyfully; they lost everything, gave up everything, and had power to go forth with happy hearts, rejoicing in the Lord. Every necessity in us is only something for God to find grace in Christ to meet it.

Have you weighed that expression, "heirs of God"? What! are you heirs of God - joint heirs with Christ? Your names linked up with Christ's name in one lot or inheritance, as in the promised inheritance of the Jews? Each lot had a name attached to it. God has a lot, and from it Christ comes forth; your name is linked with His, and you are to share whatever is in that lot. Oh, what a lot it is! One lot has fallen to us - to suffer with Him here and partake with Him of His glory hereafter.

Your sorrow ought not to be the world's sorrow, but Christ's; singing for joy in the midst of it, because identified with Him. There is no sorrow we can suffer in association with Christ that has not sweetness in it.

Never, No, Never

There is great force in the way the statement of Heb. 13:5 is made in the original text.

"Himself has said, No; never will I leave thee; never, no, never will I forsake thee." Observe how emphatic it is! Himself has said, to thee the individual, not to you, merely in a mass; and then the repetition of the negatives, "No; never" - "never, no, never." Clearly, He would have us to know that there is one thought which neither has nor ever can have any place in His mind - that -of forgetting His people down here.

"NO; NEVER will I leave thee; NEVER, NO, NEVER WILL I forsake thee," is the Lord's banner for His saint - a banner that floats over every circumstance.

Not Under Law

A Christian is under the law for nothing whatever because he is under Christ dead and risen. Christ was under it once, but then I had nothing to say to Him. He passed out of it on the cross, and my association with Christ begins thenceforward. I am united with Christ in heaven, not on earth. What has Christ in heaven to do with the law? Hence we are said to be under grace, not under law. Further, this doctrine is most practical. The walk is amazingly lowered where a mistake is made about it, and Satan tries to bring in the law after believing, if he cannot pervert it to hinder believing.

Now and Hereafter

"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." John 13:7.

These words of our Lord, as we all know, refer to His washing the feet of His disciples. Behind that lowly act a hidden meaning lay which should be made quite plain to them one day. So when the work of redemption was accomplished, and Christ had taken His seat on high, and the Holy Spirit had come down, many a mystery was made clear, and many a thing told out that could not be told before.

But we are going to deal with these words in other connections now. Many a dear child of God is walking in a rough and rugged road and passing through circumstances hard to understand. He sees no reason why he should be dealt with thus. With anxious heart he looks up and asks, Lord, why is it thus with me? And the answer is, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." With this he must be satisfied, and await the clearing of the clouds.

For example, the little home at Bethany where Jesus was always welcome, had been thrown into great sorrow (John 11). Lazarus was sick. Now "Lazarus" means "GOD MY HELPER." To whom, therefore, should they turn in their distress but to Him who had come so near to them in grace? Short was the message which the sisters sent: "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." And there was every reason to believe that the Lord would hasten to their relief. For Jesus loved Lazarus, and if earthly love delights to do its best, what would not the love of Jesus do?

So everything encouraged them to look for an early deliverance. Yet it did not come! Their expectations were not fulfilled. The sisters' message was received, but after the swift feet of the messenger had departed, Jesus abode "two days" in the same place where He was. The delay must have sorely tried their hearts, nor could they divine a reason for it. And all the while Lazarus grew worse, and grim death knocked loudly at the door. In vain they looked for Jesus. He did not come, and their flickering hopes were finally extinguished when their brother breathed his last. Nevertheless, though they knew it not, His hand was all the time upon the helm, steering the ship aright. In the whirlwind and in the storm He has His way, and the clouds from which they shrank were but the sure sign that He was near, for they were "the dust of His feet" (Nah. 1:3).

"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter," are words which might have been well addressed to the dear friends at Bethany in their anxious hours. Their confidence in the love of Jesus was possibly unshaken, but this long and fatal delay was most perplexing. Could they, did they believe that all things were working together for good? that every detail was under the control of One who never erred, and whose love for them was deeper than the sea? We cannot tell. "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," are words which seem to come from hearts not quite submissive and at rest. But when the "hereafter" came, and the purpose of God in this sickness was fulfilled, and Lazarus was given back to his sisters, and the glory of God and of Him who was the resurrection and life was seen in cloudless and broadened vision, then how gladly would they have owned that God's way was perfect, and that blessed is the

man whose hope in Him is steadfast!

"Satisfied the way He taketh

Must be always best."

And we may look at Paul too, after he had been caught up into Paradise where he heard unspeakable words and received visions and revelations of the Lord (2 Cor. 12). Such high privilege exposed him to a subtle snare which at the time he did not see, but which the Lord knew, and from which He would save His faithful servant at all costs. For this, "a thorn in the flesh" was needful. There have been many conjectures as to what that thorn was, but they are only conjectures at their best, and therefore of no value. God has not told us, so it is not necessary that we should know. But it was something hard to bear - as men speak - and which Paul earnestly prayed might be taken away. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter," is a saying which applies to such a case as his. Think of that dear saint and devoted servant of Christ! Think of him as he bows his knees to the Lord and asks in fervent prayer that this distressing infirmity might depart from him! But no answer came, though he may have long and patiently waited for it. Again he prays, and again no answer. For the third time he prays; then the silence is broken, the tarrying time is over, the suspense is ended, and the answer comes. But there is no taking away of the thorn - that is left to rankle, to be felt always, and always to be endured with pain and patience. The answer to Paul's cry came in a form which was better than the removal of the distressing thing: "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Shall we then think it strange if the Lord's way with us is at times after the same order, though the pattern of it may be different? Have we prayed for deliverance, and as yet no hand has been stretched out to deliver? It is the tarrying time, the "two days" of the Bethany story. Alas! with many of us these testing times show that our faith is but a slender plank that will bear but little strain. Let none of us think that the Lord has forgotten us. A mother may forget her child, but He will not forget us. Our names are ever before Him, graven on the palms of those hands once pierced for us at Calvary. The present moment may be the "now" when we know not; tomorrow may be the "hereafter" when we shall fully know our Master's end and aim.

And if, as in Paul's case, the answer to our oft-repeated cry comes not in the way of deliverance; if instead of removing the trying thing, He speaks to our hearts in tender, gracious power, saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee," shall we not bow submissively to His perfect will, assured that His choice is wiser and better than ours? May we not even go further, as Paul did when he said, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me"? It is a great thing to say, for glorying in our infirmities goes far beyond bearing them with patience and submission. But His grace enables His weak and suffering saints thus to speak when He is fully trusted and His will accepted in perfect acquiescence. We rest then as one rests on a bed of down, and we gladly leave ourselves in His hands as we hear Him say, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

The One Man

One winter evening a fellow worker in the gospel joined me in the railroad station to await the arrival of the train, and said pleasantly, "I got a good illustration from the man at the gate the other day as I got on a train. It was very cold, and everyone was grumbling, and some were abusing him as he made them get out their tickets and show them before they got past the gate. I said to him, 'You don't seem to be a very popular man around here.' "

" 'If I am popular with the man that put me here, it is all that I want,' was his reply.

"Ah," continued this friend, "if we could go through this world with the same thoughts toward Christ, what a straight path we would make!"

Popular with one Man. May this be our ambition, the only ambition the gospel enjoins. "Wherefore also we are zealous, whether present or absent, to be agreeable to Him." 2 Cor. 5:9; J.N.D. Trans.

If we please Him, we cannot please the world; and if we please the world, we cannot expect to please Him. Dear young reader, what is your life's ambition?

Our One Duty

There is a constant tendency in earthly things to press down the affections. Duties are more apt to lead away the soul from God than open sin. Many a Christian has been ensnared by duties, whose heart would have shrunk from open sin. But we have only one duty in all the varying circumstances of life - to serve Christ. And we should remember that if things on earth are dark, and the heart is tested in journeying through the world, all on the side of God is bright.

Peace and Joy

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Hab. 3:17, 18.

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." Phil. 4.

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." John 14:27.

The Peacemakers

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Matt. 5:9.

When we go in and out among the Lord's people, are they happy and thankful to see us? Or are they relieved when we pass on? What kind of a spirit do we manifest in our dealings with one another?

As the days become more godless, the Christian and the Church are tremendously influenced by the moral state of things "without." But as we consider also the condition of things among the saints of God, we see and hear of strife "within."

It is well then that we appreciate the high esteem in which our Lord holds a peacemaker. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Let us note that it is not they who live in peace, or hold their peace, who receive this divine benediction, but they who **MAKE PEACE**.

This distinction is important, as some who may have a peaceable nature are the least qualified to make peace, and may be unfaithful for the sake of peace. But peacemaking is something else. It is the grace of the Lord Jesus in blessed activity, pouring oil on troubled waters without compromising the holiness of God, or saying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace"; for there must be truth and purity along with peace.

Every Christian possesses the resource of "the grace that is in Christ Jesus" to be a peacemaker, but all may not draw upon it. It would seem that the quality or measure of grace necessary in a peacemaker depends upon one's own state of soul in the presence of God. He must be breathing the sweet peace of communion with God himself. Can we not say too that he who walks with God must live in the spirit of self-judgment - must judge all that belongs to himself naturally - and thus gain complete control over his own spirit, temper, words and ways? Who can have God's thoughts about matters and situations save those who judge themselves and walk in the light of His presence.

Now what of those who forget their heavenly mission of peacemaking and trouble the saints? Disturbances do arise, and elements of discord are at work when these - rather than ministering peace at every step - display a spirit of faultfinding and contention. Some may in mistaken zeal cause difficulties in the name of truth and righteousness. In some minds a mistake may be magnified into an offense, an inaccuracy of statement into a deliberate falsehood; and miscellaneous things may be together construed as constituting a grave charge against one who is unconscious of his "guilt." Sometimes all may be true up to a certain point - but who has God's thoughts in cases where there is no moral or doctrinal evil, but only apparent inconsistencies which some minds are quick in censuring? Oh, for a peacemaker at such a time! A little patience, a little wisdom, a little love, a little consideration of human infirmity, a little waiting on the Lord may well pour oil on troubled waters. Oh, for a little of that sweet peace brought down by the hand of faith into our difficulties! This would not only be Christ-like, but also save us from many sorrows of

heart and bitter tears. "Blessed are the peacemakers."

Those who feel they are not appreciated as they ought to be are another group that disturbs God's people. Out of communion and unhappy in themselves, they get others to sympathize with them. A party spirit is apt to spring up, and sorrow with it. Wounded vanity and jealousy will be found at the root of all such feelings. What could be more sad than for one to be more concerned for his own importance than for the peace of his brethren? But self in some of its many expressions is a prolific source of trouble. Could we but crucify self, and care only for the Lord's glory by walking worthy of that sweet title, "They shall be called the children of God" - all would be peace and love.

He who sows discord, from whatever motive, in place of keeping and making peace, is doing the devil's work (see Pro. 6:19).

It may be that on occasion a Christian causes turmoil in certain places because of faithfulness to Christ; that is quite a different thing. Satan may even stir up many against such because of his wholeheartedness for Christ. Still, he will study to give no offense and to take none. He will keep clear of strife and contention, meekly suffering for Christ's sake, and praying for the careless and unbelieving around him. A little prudence, a little patience and waiting on God may go far to silence the strife of tongues, to calm the ruffled temper, to abate opposition, and to win souls for Christ. May we not say that none of the Christian graces so distinctly reveals God in His people as this peacemaking spirit? "They shall be called the children of God."

Oh, my Christian friends, may our sonship be manifested in declaring that which God is and delights in! He is the great Peacemaker. He delights in the title, "God of peace," which appears seven times in the epistles. He loves peace. Without peace there can be no edification.

Christ "made peace by the blood of His cross," and when His blessed work was finished, He returned to His Father, leaving behind Him the full blessing of peace for His disciples: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The peace which He made on the cross, and His own personal peace which He enjoyed with His Father while passing through the sorrows of this world, He leaves as the rich legacy of His love to all who believe in Him.

Oh, my friends, what a legacy - and forever! Such is our portion even now. May we go forth filled and clothed in peace, and all our paths be indeed the paths of peace. May it never be said that we troubled the Lord's people.

The Pentateuch

Genesis gives us the election, Exodus the redemption, Leviticus the worship, Numbers the walk, and Deuteronomy the moral government, of the people of God.

The Perfect Will of God: Wait on the Lord

Be very careful never to press the Lord for anything which is not quite clear to your conscience to be His will, lest in righteous anger at your mistrustful solicitations and dictations, He lets you have your own way, and that may prove a disastrous loss. "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." Psalm 106:15. No good thing, but certainly every evil thing, will He withhold.

Wait then upon God from day to day, from hour to hour, in perplexity, in temptation, in depression, in need of every kind. He will not be dictated to, but He loves the appeal of faith. Be not cast down, nor think your power limited, when you have no power whatever. You do not need it. Dare not to think or act for yourself at all, but refer everything to Him, wholly trusting His will and wisdom (which is infinite) to make all things - yes, all things - work together for your temporal, spiritual, and eternal good.

Wait on the Lord. His promise is sure - "I will guide thee with Mine eye." "If... thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Do not take a single step until God gives you light; but the moment you get divine light for one step, then take that step with firm decision, and wait still on God for the next. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

A Plant of the Lord

You are a plant of the Lord, set by Him in His plantation on earth to have a certain leaf, blossom, and fruit. He knows where He has set you, and He takes into account all the adverse influences which bear on you. He puts the plant where it can best show forth the beauty He has given it. He knows the amount of frost, wind, and sun which suits it.... As the plant of the Lord you are an exotic, and there is no other plant like you.... I think it is a great thing to be assured that I am not only a peculiar plant, but that I am placed in a peculiar spot, and that if I do not express the virtues and qualities of the exotic there, I should do so less in any other circumstances.

The Lord knows the only spot in His plantation where you could grow according to His intentions.

Whatever our circumstances may be, dark or bright, they are really the most favorable and the most adapted for growth, and this is an immense comfort.

From the Poems of Francis Quarles

Let wit with all her studied plots effect
The best they can;
Let smiling fortune prosper and perfect
What wit began;
Let earth advise with both, and so project
A happy man;
Let wit or fawning fortune vie their best;
He may be blest
With all the earth can give; but earth can give
no rest.
Whose gold is double with a careful hand,
His cares are double;
The pleasure, honor, wealth of sea and land
Bring out a trouble;
The world itself, and all the world's command,
Is but a bubble.
The strong desires of man's insatiate breast
May stand possesst
Of all that earth can give; but earth can give no
rest.

[1634]

"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." - Matt. 11:28.

Power for Following

Divine energy is needed to pursue the path marked out by Him who has gone before. The Apostle Paul, who knew Christ in glory, heard His voice speaking from glory, and had seen Him in glory, followed Him. He said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:14. The mark denoted the spot, as it were, whither he pressed; the prize was that for which he ran. He did not think of his eye or his feet. That on which his eye rested, and for which his feet pressed on, was everything to him; purpose of heart, earnestness, energy there must be, as well as self-abnegation every step of the course; diligence of soul and vigilance of heart too; but if Christ seen and known in glory does not form and maintain these in the heart, I know of no other motive or power. May we be kept hearing and beholding and following Christ, that the tastes suited to Him may be both formed and kept alive in us; and we ourselves, thus divinely strengthened to refuse everything of the first man because we are so satisfied with the second Man; and that we may show forth His virtues and glories and excellencies in a crooked and perverse generation among whom we shine as lights (heavenly bodies) in the world, holding forth the Word of life.

Priesthood and Advocacy

The epistle to the Hebrews views the Christian as walking down here in weakness and trial, but as perfected forever by the work of Christ, no more conscience of sins, and the priesthood is exercised not to restore communion, but to find mercy and grace to help. 1 John speaks of communion with the Father and Son. This is interrupted by any sin, and Christ is our Advocate with the Father to restore it. The book of Hebrews is occupied with access to God within the veil, the conscience being perfect, and we enter with boldness; hence, failure and restoration are not in question. The Father is not spoken of. In John, as I have said, it is communion, and the actual state of the soul is in question.

Address on Psalm 106: Part 1

Psalm 106 is the closing psalm of the fourth book of the Psalms. I am speaking to the young folks this afternoon and it is not amiss to call attention to the fact that the Psalms divide themselves into five books. You can readily find these books marked out by the closing verses peculiar to each. Notice the end of this psalm: "Let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD." There is a sort of finality about the closing verses, that mark them unmistakably.

The five books of the Psalms answer no doubt to the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, etc. If that is true, we have before us in this book, Numbers. The Jews used to call the Psalms "the Pentateuch of David."

We have in this psalm a rehearsal of the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness; their failure, their apostasy, and breakdown, and God's sovereignty that came in mercy again and again.

This book begins with that very familiar 90th Psalm which tells of the frailty of the first man. O what a frail being man is! He is just like the flower of the field - here today and gone tomorrow. The next Psalm (91st) tells us about the second Man. The more we know about the first man the more we take delight in the second Man. How good it is to learn that. We learn what man is from the Word of God. We also learn what man is from our own bitter experience. It takes a lifetime to learn the wretchedness of the human heart. We should learn it from the Word of God, but as a matter of fact we learn much through bitter personal experience. After we become thoroughly sick, as it were, of the first man, the heart just delights to sit down and contemplate the second Man. There we never find disappointment. There is no one in this world we can afford to know too intimately if we desire to maintain our idealism about him; but when it comes to the blessed Lord, our marvel increases as we sit in His presence - as we contemplate the contrast between Him and ourselves.

We sometimes wonder what we will be doing in that eternity we were speaking about this morning. There is not much doubt that we shall be contemplating Him and discovering new wonders in Him all through those coming ages. Then we shall be free from all hindrances, and all the energies of the Spirit of God can be occupied with revealing Christ to us. We know that we could not exhaust His glories in any manner; there will be so much to learn about Christ.

In this book of the Psalms we have the wilderness journey, the failure and breakdown of the children of Israel; but the same book contains the introduction into this world of the Only Begotten according to the promise of the second Psalm. So that we find after His introduction in the 91st Psalm, we go on to the praise Psalms, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th down to what we call "Old Hundred," where we get a sort of summary - consummation - of praise in the establishment of this blessed One in power in this world; and in the 101st and 102nd we retrace His path of humiliation and infamy that made it possible for Him to take that place of pre-eminence and authority in the ages to come. So we descend into the valley in the 102nd Psalm especially, and find out how very far down He came. He came all the way from glory down, down, down to that valley of the shadow of

death, to that time when He was "cut off and had nothing." It is very touching, the closing of that 102nd Psalm. We get God's answer to that humiliation and see Him exalted and taken out of the mire and made very high. We get God Himself accosting Him as "the Same" - the One whose years fail not - the One who was, forever and forever.

Then we go to the 103rd, and there again we find what a frail thing a saint is in his pathway through this world; God knows that. He knows what we are. The blessed Lord has been down here; as a man He passed through this scene and He understands the frailties that beset us as we go through the wilderness. That 103rd Psalm gives us the sympathies of the blessed God with us.

In the 104th Psalm we have the magnitude of creation; and the blessed Lord, the One who was down here, is the same One bearing up the canopy of heaven, and He is for us.

In the 105th Psalm we get the marvelous rehearsal of God's ways with Israel in which we see God's side of the picture and find that God had His purposes and counsels for that people, and from His viewpoint; He was leading them on, according to His purposes, to the land of promise and blessing. In that remarkable 105th Psalm He passes, over their failures and tells of His triumphs for them. That is like the 11th of Hebrews. How our souls delight in reading the 11th of Hebrews! What a cheer, help, and encouragement it is; but a tremendous lot of history is omitted there; indeed it is! If we could read the history that is omitted we would have to hang our heads in shame for the failures of those very ones whose triumphs are celebrated in that 11th of Hebrews.

God has been pleased to put the two Psalms together, side by side - the 105th and the 106th - and it is something like looking at a piece of cloth. This side, you say, is the finished side, and the other is the unfinished side. So sometimes when we go to spread a cloth, we say, Be sure to put the nice side up. We might say we get the finished side in the 105th Psalm, and the unfinished in the 106th. God is letting us see in the 106th the shadowy side of Israel's history to magnify His own grace.

Dear young Christians, you perhaps have already had some humiliating experience in your life in which you felt ashamed of yourself. If you haven't had some of those experiences yet, I suppose I would not be considered a prophet of woes if I told you those experiences may sooner or later creep into your life. Would God that you might escape them all, but as we go on down through our history here as individuals, we find God has to teach us through experience what He has already told us in His Word; and the result is, God has to let us reap the fruit of our doings. The reason is that we would not learn it the better way - from the Word.

The nice thing about this 106th Psalm is that it starts out celebrating the goodness of God, and it closes the same way.

Dear young believer, your path down here became a path of blessing when you came to Christ; that was a happy event. Some of the happy experiences we older people have, is to witness the joy that fills the heart of the newly converted soul, especially if that one is converted young in years - to see how all else is lost sight of for the time, and that soul is bubbling over with joy and victory. That is a delightful thing to see. God intends the beginning of that experience shall be one of joy, and He is going to see to it that the end of that journey is joy too. If you are a Christian, you are going to land in heaven. You are a candidate for that company that is going to tread that golden street that we read about in the Word of God; and all the power of the enemy cannot rob you of the

promised safe delivery into the glory. You are going to be there. But there is a wilderness journey between - longer for some than others. It is terminating each day for some of God's people; none know who is the next candidate for the end of the journey; that is mercifully kept from us. Some who were with us here a year ago are not here now; they

are absent from the body, present with the Lord.

Address on Psalm 106: Part 2

This 106th Psalm begins with Hallelujah and ends with Hallelujah - "Praise ye the LORD," for that is what Hallelujah means. Your pathway begins with "Praise ye the LORD" and ends with "Praise ye the LORD." It would be nice if all that comes in between would be filled with Hallelujahs. We find that all the history of those traced in this psalm was not all Hallelujahs.

We will read twelve verses; those verses give the salvation of the children of Israel founded upon one great national event in their history - their deliverance out of Egypt. God founds our salvation upon one great event, and ever and again He is directing our hearts back to that foundation event. With the children of Israel it was that deliverance out of Egypt. That is what we find here in verses 8-11. The result of all that - the sense of it in their souls - is expressed in this: "Then believed they His words; they sang His praise." v. 12.

That is what the Lord Jesus has done for you. Every one of your enemies is a vanquished foe; you are delivered; you are free. There is no more bondage for you. There is no excuse for any one of us to ever spend one day of our life in bondage to Satan. We are a free and redeemed people.

That is the first time they sang. We have no right to sing until we are delivered. With ten thousand sins behind your back, the judgment of God hanging over your head, and a lost eternity staring you in the face, how dare you sing? It is only a redeemed people who have a right to sing.

"They sang His praise." They were redeemed and delivered and they sang His praise. That is happy. We who have been redeemed love to sing about the Lord.

Verses 13-24 are the second portion of the Psalm, filled with tragedy, with pathos. What is the secret of it all? In the 13th verse we get it: "They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel." If you fail in your Christian life, it will be for the same reason - forgetfulness of that marvelous deliverance wrought for you at Calvary's cross, and not waiting for God's counsel in your life.

The Lord knowing the forgetfulness of our hearts, instituted a memorial feast, eating the bread and drinking the cup and showing His death. We will not need those memorials in heaven; it is only "till He come."

Sometimes people say, Well, I think that is too often - once a week - in our church we do it once a month. With some, it is once in six months (I remember that is the way I used to do where I went). With some it is once a year. Some have given it up altogether because there are so many unconverted ones in the church; the converted ones refuse to do it along with the unconverted who are leading ungodly lives.

The Lord knew better than we, the forgetfulness of our hearts. We do come together each Lord's Day to remember Him in His death. As we sit in His presence and feel the coldness that has swept into our hearts since last we remembered Him, that in itself should be a testimony to us that once a week is none too often. The Lord can give nothing more calculated to bring us back to the sense of

His love than sitting down in the presence of those emblems of His death; nothing could be more calculated to make us feel the preciousness of His love and our own undeserving condition as we sit in His presence and are reminded that the Son of God loved us and gave Himself for us - that He died for us! Dear young folks, keep that before you - He died for you. The blessed Lord Jesus gave Himself for you - died for you that He might deliver you from this present evil world. Keeping that before your soul will help to keep you from the snares.

"They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel." How often we see that among dear young Christians - they wait not for His counsel. Perhaps they go to see some brother they pick out. They generally pick out someone favorably disposed, and go and lay before him some projected course of action, and ask, What do you think of that? He does not want to dampen their ardor or throw cold water on their plans, and they launch out on a course that perhaps is going to take them away from the Lord.

Anticipating a little, look at the 43rd verse: "Many times did He deliver them; but they provoked Him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity." At the present time we hear of some of our young men who seem to feel that it is the expedient thing to more or less take things in their own hands and help the Lord out in their plans. Such and such is going to happen, so I had better do this; and in place of waiting for the Lord, His counsel, they act on the ground of expediency - human wisdom - and plunge ahead, as it were, to help the Lord out - a sort of steadying the ark. One has known of some cases where that sort of thing has wrought havoc. They not only did not save themselves from the thing they feared, but got into something much worse. "They waited not for His counsel."

This thing is progressive: they forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel; then the next thing is, "But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert." There is plenty around us to tempt young or old. What a world it is! How attractively Satan has dressed the thing up, and there is something to tempt the lust of your heart and mine. That word "lust" is not synonymous with gross, debasing sin. It simply means the desires of the human heart; it may be the desires of the flesh or the mind, but it is the heart lusting after something apart from the will of God. It is like a garment cut to our measure, to fit exactly. It does not make any difference whether you are sixteen or sixty - just something in this world to appeal to your heart. The "lust of the flesh" - how we are warned against that! - "the lust of the eye and the pride of life." How susceptible we are to these things! They lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. In other words, they said, Is God able? They did not understand Him, and actually began to doubt His ability!

A very solemn thing happens. "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." Are you not thankful, dear young Christian, that you have not had all your prayers answered? I am thankful that He did not answer all mine.

For example, here is a little tot; he sees his father shaving with that glittering blade, and he wants to get it. You know what would happen if he got it. Or perhaps it is the boiling coffee pot on the stove that the child wants to get hold of. How many times we are like little children; we are insisting that God give us something that if He did would be our ruination. But sometimes God in His government permits us to have a taste of things for our good and blessing in the end. "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." You say, I am going to have so-and-so; I am

going to get this position, this degree, this honor; I am going to advance; I am going to have different ambitions realized. He may let you have it. What will you get along with it? "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."

I was sitting in the office of a brother, a younger man, and he showed me a tract entitled, "My Leanness, My Leanness." I remarked, all unguardedly without thought of personality, Brother, did you ever feel that way? He colored, and I saw he resented the remark. I made it in all innocence, for I felt it keenly myself. He resented it. What was the secret? I cannot describe it too much in detail, lest I betray who it was. It was not long till this brother began to drift, and now he does not come near a meeting. "Gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not" (Hos. 7:9). That is one of the saddest conditions that can happen to a Christian - unconscious of his state of soul.

24th verse: "Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not His word." They just decided it was not worth thinking about; there was not enough there to offer any attraction. They were thinking about that other land they had left. "They despised the pleasant land."

That reminds one of some young people who sat in these very seats and heard these same precious truths ministered, and where are they today? Out serving divers lusts and pleasures in the world, and reaping the fruit of their own ways.

Dear young people, if you feel the beginning of a state like that in your soul, I hope you will get alone with God and weep it out before these meetings are over. Ask the gracious Lord to come in and give restoration to your soul. Do not despise the precious truth; it will do you good all the days of your life; you will have Christ for your companion until the journey is over. Do not despise the pleasant land.

"Many times did He deliver them; but they provoked Him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless He regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry: and He remembered for them His covenant, and repented according to the multitude of His mercies. He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives." vv. 43-46. There is the gracious heart of God - your God and Father. That is the heart of your precious Savior. Though they rebelled again and again, when they repented and turned to Him He forgave them; the heart of our God is tender when there is the cry of repentance. If something has come into your life that is leading you away, go to God about it; He will be very tender.

This Psalm began with Hallelujah and closed with Hallelujah; and though I may have said some things that sounded rather somber and not very encouraging, yet I do want to leave with you that word, "Praise ye the LORD." He will carry you through and make you a victory. Put your hand in His; learn to trust Him; He will carry you through. Hallelujah!

Repentance

Repentance, however deep and sincere, is not the ground or procuring cause of a sinner's forgiveness. A convicted prisoner might truly repent the doing of the deed of which he had been found guilty, but no judge would be justified in letting him go free on that account. Another might recklessly go into debt, and then repent of his folly, but his repentance would not pay his debts or release him from financial obligations. So it is with the sinner. The most profound repentance, the most acute sorrow for sin, witnessed as it might be by many and bitter tears, furnish no ground for pardon. Were it otherwise we should need no Savior and no atonement. The one sole ground of forgiveness is the precious blood of Christ shed judicially upon the cross of Calvary. It is that and that alone which maintains inviolate the justice of God, and at the same time enables Him to justify the ungodly (Rom. 3:26; 4:5). Kindly read those two passages with care, and also 1 John 2:12.

Still, repentance has its place. A repentant soul is one who has not only undergone a change in all his thoughts about sin and God, but he also sides with God against himself, and owns with anguish of heart that he is guilty and lost. But with it there is always the thought, however feeble, that in God alone must help be found. So the repentant prodigal said that in his father's house there was "bread enough and to spare"; he knew there was none for him elsewhere. Simon Peter too, when confessing himself a sinful man, nevertheless clung all the while to Jesus - "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Luke 5:8. It is always so. The repentant sinner hopes in God, though at the time he may know but little of the goodness of God, and nothing of the joy He has in welcoming His prodigals back.

The Secret of Our Weakness

The solemn question that needs to be pressed home again and again upon the hearts of the children of God is, What is the secret of our weakness? We have been born again; we have received the indwelling Spirit; we have much knowledge of Scripture, of God's dispensations and ways, and yet weakness - spiritual weakness - is our prevailing characteristic. There are few who would not assent to this statement. Let us speak boldly, and challenge the consciences of the saints if it be not so. Let us ask whether the sense of it is not often painfully present to our souls. In our contact with the world, are we not often made to feel it? Beholding our fellow believers entangled in the snares of the world, or in evil associations, do we not often pass them by because we are conscious of our powerlessness to extricate them? If others are overtaken in a fault, how many of us are "spiritual" enough to restore them in the spirit of meekness? Do we not often have to confess that we do not know how to meet the difficulties that arise in the Church? Is not our weakness expressed in every direction of our spiritual life? In walk and in service, in private and in public? If this be so, why is it? It is quite true our blessed Lord said, "Without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

But it is equally true that His servant Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13); and the same Apostle reminds Timothy that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." 2 Tim. 1:7. If we are taught that we are not "sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves," we are also told that "our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. 3:3). Again therefore we ask, Where does our weakness come from? There is reason to fear that it all springs from want of waiting upon God. "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isa. 40:31. This scripture is conclusive, and assures us that spiritual strength is the direct consequence of waiting upon God. It is so of necessity, for in so doing we confess our weakness and express our dependence; and it is only when we are dependent that the Lord can display through us His almighty power. It is here therefore that the recovery must begin.

Let us then individually, and when we meet together, seek for a larger spirit of patient, persevering waiting upon God. The effect of this would soon be manifest in every department of spiritual life. Ministry, worship, prayer meetings, testimony, and walk would all be in the power of the Holy Spirit. We should then fear no difficulty, be afraid of no opposition, but conscious of our utter weakness in ourselves, we should yet continually rejoice in the all-sufficient and omnipotent resources of our God. "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: WAIT, I SAY, ON THE LORD." Psalm 27:14.

Service and Communion: a Word to Young Workers

If I had the ear of my younger brethren in Christ who seek to serve their gracious Master in the ministry of the Word, in Sunday-school work, in street preaching, in tract distribution, or any other form of Christian labor, I would say to them in deep affection, See to it that your service is the outcome of communion with Christ. Rivers of living water can only flow from those who go to Him and drink, and you must go continually. Be careful to allow nothing to becloud your enjoyment of divine love, for the joy of the Lord is your strength; and seek to realize for yourselves the exceeding preciousness of Christ, so that when you speak of Him it may be out of the fullness of a heart made abundantly happy. It is true the outward form of service may be sustained by the mere energy of nature, and apart from communion with Christ; but then every element will be wanting that makes the service acceptable to Him, and your own soul will be enfeebled and become like withered grass.

And I would further say, Be on your guard against making service your one object. They seldom serve well who do. We have known earnest men who have fallen into this snare. They are never satisfied unless always on the move, and they think little of others who follow not in their steps. Now Martha served much, and found fault with one who seemed to serve less; yet the latter received the Lord's commendation, and Martha missed it. There is a zeal that compasses sea and land, but it is not fed from celestial fires. There is a running to and fro with restless feet, and a doing of this and that which after all may be but the goodness of the flesh which fades away. The Spirit of the Lord blows upon it and it is gone.

Cultivate communion with God, be much in prayer, and study the Word of God that your own soul may be fed. How else shall you feed others? "It is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written." 1 Cor. 9:9, 10. In thinking of others and laboring for their good, God would have us feed for ourselves. We shall soon famish if we do not, and spiritual strength will decline - a keeper of the vineyard of others while our own vineyard will not have been kept.

You will find it a deadening habit to read the Word only to search out something for other people. Moreover, what you gather up and set before others will be mere religious information in which there will be no heavenly unction. It differs from the living ministry of the Holy Spirit as chalk from cheese.

Be faithful also in little things; it may be that God will then entrust you with greater matters. We are a little afraid of those who neglect the commonplace duties of everyday life for what they are pleased to think and call the work of the Lord. At all events do faithfully and well whatever comes to your hand. In a humble school, far removed from public observation, God is wont to train His servants for their higher mission. Moses was forty years in the back side of the desert keeping the flocks of his father-in-law ere he was called to lead out the tribes of Israel from the house of bondage; and David in the wilderness watching over the few sheep of Jesse, was there prepared

for his conflict with Goliath in the valley of Elah. The years thus spent were not wasted years; the fruit of them was seen ever afterward.

But though I say this, let none hold back from serving Christ under the mistaken plea of youth or inexperience. An infant's hand may plant the acorn that will yet become a stately oak. It is no common thing for small beginnings to have endings that are by no means small. What know we of Andrew's public preaching? Nothing. But it was he who brought his brother Simon to Jesus, and we know Simon's ministry was blessed to thousands. When John Williams was an apprentice lad, a humble Christian woman invited him to go with her and hear the gospel. Williams went and was converted and afterward became a famous missionary whose labors in the South Sea Islands led multitudes to Christ. We may not be able to do much, but let us do what we can. A word fervently spoken, a tract discreetly given, may yield abundant fruit if God's blessing goes with it. Be it ours to sow the seed in prayerful hope, for who can tell but what the harvest shall be most abundant. "Withhold not thine hand." "Freely ye have received, freely give."

The Silences of the Lord Jesus

When the Lord Jesus was before the high priest He was silent (Matt. 26:62, 63). Oh, those silences of Jesus! They are very solemn. He never was silent to a poor sinner; but to men like these who were going down to the pit, He was silent. The high priest was God's representative on the earth, and the Lord did not answer till asked if He were the Christ. He bore witness to the truth about His own blessed Person, and it cost Him His own blessed life. Then they spat in His face - the most contemptuous thing one can do to a fellow being. He was mocked by both Jews and Gentiles.

He bore witness unto the truth and said, "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth?" (See John 18:33-37.) He was the truth, and He revealed in Himself the truth about the Father.

The Smitten Shepherd: His Work and Some of Its Results

If you will read Psalm 22, you will find detailed there the sufferings of the Lord Jesus as the smitten Shepherd in the day of His great sorrow. It is a psalm of the crucifixion.

The prophecy of Zechariah, uttered centuries before Christ came, was at length fulfilled - "Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd." Zech. 13:7.

There was no voice to arrest the uplifted arm as there had been in the earlier day when Abraham on Mount Moriah lifted up his hand to slay his son.

It was a solemn hour - an hour that stood alone. There had been none like it, nor will there ever be. To that hour the eye of the redeemed shall look back unwearyingly. At the remotest point to which our thoughts can carry us in the far-off eternity of the future it shall be as an event of yesterday. It shall stand alone in its solemn glory as long as eternity exists. Never shall it be forgotten, and every remembrance of it shall fill the heart with adoring wonder.

Many sorrows were in the smitten Shepherd's cup, which human hands placed there. Great sorrows which He felt as no fallen child of Adam ever could. The violence and rage of brutal men pursued Him. Strong bulls of Bashan, as He terms them, beset Him round. They gaped upon Him with their mouths as a ravening and roaring lion. There dogs compassed Him; the assembly of the wicked enclosed Him; they pierced His hands and His feet. On these we linger not, but hasten on to speak rather of that greater sorrow, and of those profounder sufferings which dwarf all others - sufferings which were the result of God's hand being against Him on account of sin - atoning sufferings, without which the whole human family would have been forever lost.

Men of genius have assayed to paint Calvary on canvas. Their assaying such a task shows how poor and far astray their thoughts of Calvary must have been. A cross, an agonizing form thereon, a dying thief on either side, the mocking priests, the weeping women, and the watching crowd, these they may depict. But where is God? They have left Him out, and He it was who dealt with Jesus there. How could pencil picture Him, or the darkness, the desolation, the spiritual agony of the blessed Lord, when all God's waves and billows went over Him, and when high above the shouts of mingled hate and triumph arose the piercing cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Into those solitudes we may not enter. Shrouded in eternal mystery the deeper sufferings of the smitten Shepherd must remain; no mortal can fathom them. Standing like children on the shores of that dark, lone sea we may look across the wide waste of waters, but we know not what is beyond; it is hid from our eyes.

From the horns of the unicorns the smitten Shepherd was heard (v. 21), and then we see Him on the resurrection ground, and hear Him speak of "My brethren" and of "Thy name."

Then by Mary of Magdala, who stood weeping at His empty tomb, the risen Savior sent that wondrous message - "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." John 20:17. Mine and yours.

And this message in its blessedness far exceeds mere clearance from guilt, and our being sheltered from judgment by the cross of the smitten Shepherd. Thank God, our sins have been put away, and so put away that in every respect of them God has been glorified. Let no one question that. He who doubts it, doubts the efficacy of that precious blood shed in death for us at Calvary. On that work alone our eternal hopes depend. How fully God has been satisfied therewith is shown in the resurrection and glorification of Christ. And when the Lord appeared in the midst of His disciples on the evening of the day on which He arose from among the dead, He saluted them with words of peace - "Peace be unto you" - and He showed unto them His hands and His side. Peace was their portion now, and it is ours no less than theirs - peace made by the blood of His cross. Can anyone bring up the question of our sins again here or hereafter? He who would do so must first impeach the Savior's finished work, and disprove its atoning merits. "By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified"; and our sins and iniquities, God declares, He will remember no more.

But "My brethren" and "Thy name" disclose a wider range of blessing, and speak of a place and love which had been His alone, but which He would now share with others. Never had He so spoken of them before. But now that the work of redemption had been accomplished in His cross, He, as man risen from the dead, associates them with Himself in the closest and tenderest way. Beautifully is this expressed in Hebrew 2 where the Spirit quotes from this psalm of suffering: "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee." And in the day of glory that is coming, He will take His place as first-born among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). How this tells of our present and eternal identification with Christ the Son of God's love. How powerfully it appeals to our affections; and what an estimate it gives of that atoning work in virtue of which the exceeding riches of God's grace can be thus displayed.

And not only are we before the face of His God and ours as His brethren, standing there in Him, the last Adam, in all the infinite worth of that work which He wrought as the smitten Shepherd, made, as it is said, "the righteousness of God in Him"; but He has declared unto us the Father's name - "My Father, and your Father." How far beyond deliverance from judgment this carries us, those whose hearts have by the Spirit entered into it alone can tell. It cannot be learned from books; it must be experimentally known. Interesting it is to observe that the very name of "Abba, Father," which the blessed Lord used in Gethsemane, is that which the Spirit puts in the mouth of each believer now (Rom. 8:15). Brethren, what nearness to God is ours! What a place! Ourselves too the objects of the Father's love - loved as Christ is loved (John 17:23, 26).

But let us not forget that if His place is ours, His relationship as man to the Father ours, the love wherewith He is loved ours, and ours too His glory by-and-by, let us not, I say, forget that He it is who has brought us into it, and that we owe it all to Him who gave Himself for us. His was the toil, His was the shame, His was the suffering, His was the death. If we are the redeemed, He is the Redeemer; if we are saved, He is the Savior; if we are the sheep, He is the Shepherd; if we are the

many brethren, He is the First-born. The glory then of Redeemer, Savior, Shepherd, First-born, is His, and His alone. Who can share that glory with Him? None. We love to think that it must be so. Who that knows Him would pluck a laurel from His brow to grace his own? Were anyone so base, all heaven would cry him down.

Other streams of blessing follow in this psalm as the fruit of the smitten Shepherd's work. The seed of Jacob shall fear and glorify Him, and all the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord. It is sweet to think of this. In the day of Israel's restoration, Jehovah "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. Then they will know that He was wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities; that the chastisement of their peace was upon Him, and that by His stripes they are healed (Isa. 53). And then will be fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet:

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the LORD: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer. 31:31-34.

From among restored Israel, God will raise up His messengers who will declare His glory among the Gentiles (Isa. 66:19). Their mission shall be fruitful in blessing. "Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD." Zech. 8:22. But we refrain from entering into this deeply interesting subject, as it would carry us beyond the limits of our present paper. Our psalm describes these widening circles which find their center in the cross of Christ, "My brethren," "the seed of Jacob," and "the ends of the world." Each shall have its appointed glory; for the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. In them all the Lord shall be glorified, and the sufferings of the smitten Shepherd shall be a subject of wonder and praise throughout eternity.

Solemn Warnings to All Children of God: on the Epistle of Jude

The Apostle now takes up the true subject of his epistle. Are you not struck with the solemnity of this beginning? "Beloved, using all diligence to write to you of our common salvation, I have been obliged to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." Jude 1, 3; J.N.D. Trans. His first thought was to take up the pen, filled as he was of the great desire to present to them a subject which shall always be the joy of the redeemed, "our common salvation." Before all else he wished to have all believers in fellowship one with another, rejoice in the wonders of the work of the Savior. But the pen falls from his hand. What has happened? Dangers have surged, and these poor Christians may not even be aware of it! It is urgent to warn them lest they fall asleep into dangerous inaction. The Apostle gives up then his first theme and again takes up the pen to exhort them to contend for the faith.

Dear friends, this exhortation is more timely now than then. The war is declared, the enemy occupies the country, dangers threaten on all sides, traps are set, deceitfulness abounds all about us. Perhaps the Lord's sheep are not on their guard against these strangers which come to them with fair speeches and flattering words, seeking to undermine the very foundation of their faith. Perhaps their hearts are not simple enough to hear only the Good Shepherd's voice. The Apostle decides to write to us. We must be awakened from our sleep, rise and fight against the tide of evil all about us. What is the banner we are called to hold up? "The faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

We find in a number of passages, which it would take too long to enumerate, that "the faith" is not here the gift of God put in our heart enabling it to lay hold of salvation. "The faith" is the whole of the Christian doctrine taught to the saints, and which their faith has laid hold of. Now the character of the evil in the last days, is the surrendering of this doctrine. Notice the word once. It was delivered once; it is immutable and has never been modified. When Jude wrote, he spoke of this teaching as belonging to the past; it was what the first Christians had learned from the mouths of the apostles. This same teaching we now have in the Word. God has seen to it that it be given to us in the Holy Scriptures, and it exists nowhere else.

What is uppermost upon my heart is to convince you, beloved, that the great task incumbent upon us today is to hold up with a firm hand the banner that has been entrusted to us, around which all the "called" without exception must group themselves - the banner on which are written two names that are but one: the Word of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we are confronted with the moral evil that exists in the world and which is on the constant increase, displaying everywhere irreligion and unbelief and, danger greater still, appeals to man's reason to overthrow the truth, do not believe it necessary to engage in much controversy. We are much too insufficient for this, and I am persuaded that in our state of weakness we are no longer capable of doing it.

At the time of the Reformation and even until the past century, controversy, without convincing the adversaries, could establish the souls of the Christians struggling against the enemy. Seeing our little strength, our present business is rather not to let ourselves be turned aside from the things once taught to the saints, and to hold them fast. In this consisted Philadelphia's struggle: "Hold that fast which thou hast," said He that is holy, He that is true (Rev. 3:11). Do not think that this requires much knowledge and intelligence; only one simple thing is needed, love for Christ, and the most ignorant among us can possess it. If the Lord occupies in our hearts the place that is due Him, we shall certainly gain the victory; for Satan can do nothing against Him, and we shall maintain the faith once delivered to the saints, for it has nothing but Him for its object.

One sees by this epistle that at the time the Apostle wrote, the division already morally at work in the Church, was not as yet an accomplished fact. It took place only after the departure of the last Apostle, but Jude presses and declares that which was going to happen, and appeals, as we have seen, to the whole of God's family in its simplest and broadest acceptance, so that not one Christian might elude his duty when it is a question of repulsing the attacks against faith. It is to be noticed that the state of the Christians to whom the Apostle was writing was far from being what it should have been. He said to them: "I would put you in remembrance, you who once knew all things" (v. 5; J.N.D. Trans.). They were about to forget those things formerly well known which had been taught to them once, at the beginning. They had received the unction of the Holy Spirit, by which they knew all those things; but their faith had grown weak, their thoughts had turned toward the world, and Jude felt the need of reminding them concerning the scene toward which they were casting covetous eyes. Likewise, the Apostle Peter in his second epistle felt the need of awakening the sleeping Christians by reminding them of these things (2 Pet. 1:13). And we, believers of today, do we think it not time to remember them? Are we already awakened from our sleep? The call to the battle was sounded long ago. Oh! may we hear and heed these words of the Apostle: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. 5:14.

The second section of the epistle of Jude (vv. 5-16) describes the evil which characterizes the last days. I deeply feel, dear brothers and sisters, that the subject I now call your attention to is neither rejoicing nor uplifting, but at certain times God brings us to the brink of a precipice and invites us to take a look at it. The view is helpful when we have, like Lot, been seduced by the beautiful appearance of the plain of Jordan. Only let us remember that where it is a question of resisting evil, nothing will enable us to do this like occupation with good. As you think of it you will see that "the whole armor of God" (Eph. 6), to be able to withstand in the evil day, consists above all in a good state of soul, and that victory entirely depends upon it. Words alone do not gain the victory, but a life consecrated to Christ and spent in communion with Him does.

"For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained [marked out] to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." v. 4. These men had crept in among the faithful, privily bringing in "damnable heresies" (2 Pet. 2:1). But the Word reveals to us that in the days of old these men who came so long afterward had been ordained beforehand to this condemnation. This term does not at all mean that God had predestinated them to everlasting judgment, a serious error which figured in Calvin's doctrine. This passage means that God had spoken beforehand of these wicked ones of the last days and proclaimed in the days of old the cause of the accusation

that should be brought against them and for which they should afterward be condemned. The first time a prophet was raised in the world (Enoch), he announced that an accusation should be brought to the charge of the wicked of our day, which should afterward bring on them a terrible judgment. Oh! may they have, in time, their eyes opened to learn of the fate awaiting them and to know God's horror of their doctrines, proved by the fact that He condemned from the beginning of the world, before the flood, the principles taught today.

These are "ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Two characters of evil are marked here, that we may easily recognize them. These ungodly men of whom the Apostle speaks, are the men of our days who were not born under law, but under grace. What do they do with it? They despise it, slighting the moral obligations it imposes upon them, and take advantage of it to give themselves up to unrestrained corruption.

The second character of these ungodly ones is that they deny "the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." This term is used many times in this epistle. The Word does not say here that these ungodly men deny the Person of Christ, but they deny Him as Lord. They accept not His authority, and this is what characterizes Christendom before the final development of apostasy. These men look for authority only in themselves and in that which they call their conscience. It is the iniquity of which 1 John 4:3 speaks, selfwill or the refusal of all laws other than one's own law, every one being a law to himself. Christ's rights are thus trodden under foot; His Word is not the rule; everyone feels free to judge it, taking what suits him, rejecting what does not. Let us not forget that these "ungodly" often profess the greatest admiration and the most profound respect for the Person of Jesus while rejecting the Lordship of Christ. Before the Word which reveals Him, they reserve the right and the authority to judge, which belong to God only. Their religion therefore is the exaltation of man, and shall be so more and more until the day when the "man of sin" "sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:4).

Solemn Warnings to All Children of God: on the Epistle of Jude

After having shown the two characters of the "ungodly," the forsaking of grace and the rejection of the Lord's authority, the Apostle passes over to the judgment of the evil; but he first establishes the fact that God withheld no resource from them. The history of the people of Israel is a witness to this. God had delivered them from Egypt through redemption. Why then was this people destroyed in the wilderness? It is because they believed not; lack of faith was the cause of their judgment, for there is no real blessing which is not the outflow of faith.

As it was with Israel, unbelief in professing Christendom is the cause for its judgment. But, first of all, the Apostle wants to characterize apostasy, consequence of this unbelief, and the judgments that overtake it. "God," says he, "hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation." v. 6. Under whatever form it may be, the abandonment of our first estate is apostasy. The Apostle alludes to certain mysterious events referred to in Genesis, and which the Word leaves in obscurity, as the fallen angels who were the perpetrators of them. It does not behoove us to lift this veil, but what we do know is that the judgment of the great day shall overtake these corrupted spirits, even as the punishment of eternal fire has already overtaken the profane cities of Sodom and Gomorrah who had acted "in like manner with them" (v. 7; J.N.D. Trans.). We find

here two kinds of judgments, one future, the other immediate and final; one under darkness, in chains, to await the sentence of the divine tribunal, the other actually by fire, which is a fire everlasting.

Jude now passes on to the wicked who lived in his time, and whose character shall grow worse and worse until the final judgment. "Yet in like manner these dreamers also defile the flesh, and despise lordship, and speak railingly against dignities." v. 8; J.N.D. Trans. He calls them dreamers, people who are guided not by the truth, but by an imagination that knows no rule. From the moment man forsakes the Word of God, he has no reason for not giving himself over to irrationalism and fables. These dreamers have two characters already mentioned in verse 4 - they defile the flesh, despise lordship, and speak railingly against dignities. Contempt for the lordship of Christ has as fatal consequence an injurious attitude toward dignities, while the Christian, acknowledging the Lord's authority has no difficulty to submit himself to the authority of those appointed by Him. Should there be magistrates without morals, or sanguinary tyrants, the believer would submit himself to them except in the things wherein obedience to God is above that due to man. Even Michael the archangel (v. 9) dares not bring a railing accusation against Satan, who sought to take possession of the body of Moses, doubtlessly to seduce the people anew, leading them again into idolatry.

"But these," adds the Apostle, "speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." v. 10. The word "these" occupies a very important place in this short epistle. It characterizes the men who lift up themselves against God, from the days of Jude through ours and unto the coming of the Lord in judgment. Hence, these men exist in our days. Peter in his second epistle styles them in the same way: "These, as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption." Chap. 2:12. In what contemptible terms the Spirit of God speaks of those who in their pride dare lift up themselves against God, boasting of their intelligence and lowering themselves to the level of brute beasts; for they suppose, fools that they are, that man without God can be intelligent!

The Apostle adds: "Woe unto them!" For on the one hand, they provide contempt for God, and on the other hand draw upon themselves His judgment. The Lord has pronounced woes upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the cities of Galilee, and all the prophets of the Old Testament, upon the Jewish people and upon the nations; but here, as in Rev. 8:13, the woe is pronounced upon Christendom - woe more terrible than all because of the higher privileges accorded the Christian nations.

Dear friends, do you believe this? Have you felt the weight of the woe which hangs over the Christianized world in the midst of which you are called to live?

"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core." v. 11. We find in this verse three examples which describe to us the progress of evil from its inception to the apostasy, three steps of which bring men to the final revolt against God and against Christ.

The first case is that of Cain. Cain's religion admits not that God's curse hangs over man and the world because of sin. Cain presents himself before God with the illusion that a sinner can set

himself right with Him by his own efforts; so he brings his best corn, fruit of his work and of his efforts, for a sacrifice to God. This natural religion, beginning of apostasy, differs not from the religion of the men of our days, for it is of "these" the Apostle speaks when he says, "They have gone in the way of Cain." Their religion consists in setting themselves right with God by their own works. In defiance of His express word, it turns away from the conscience the thought of our inevitable judgment. But the example of Cain has yet another meaning. Abel's faithful testimony to the justification by faith, becomes the occasion of Cain's hatred against his brother, picture of the world's hatred against the believers, picture too of the Jewish people's hatred against Christ. This hatred against what is born of God characterizes particularly the last times all through Revelation.

If Cain represents the state of the whole religious world, the case of Balaam has a more limited bearing. It is, if I may express myself thus, the ecclesiastic evil. You know what Balaam was - prophet - not a false prophet, for he had received his gifts from God, but he combined them with idolatrous practices. He went "to seek for enchantments." He who knew God's thoughts, knowingly and willingly taught the error, and with what object? For a reward! He was paid for this; he received a salary for his teaching designed to destroy God's people. That Satan had a hand in it mattered not to Balaam, provided he was enriched thereby. He "loved," says Peter, "the wages of unrighteousness." The book of Revelation reveals to us a second character of Balaam, necessary development of the first. It speaks of the "doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." Rev. 2:14. It tells us what the book of Numbers is silent about, that Balaam seeing his reward slipping from him, gave counsel to Balak to seduce Israel through the daughters of Moab to bring them to bow down before Baal-peor (Numb. 25:1-4).

Sad indeed it is, my dear friends, to have to admit it as a fact that the teaching of error for a reward is a trait of the apostasy and belongs to the Christianity of our days. One sees standing in the pulpits men who deny the most important truths of the faith, teaching the error concealed by words designed to deceive the simple by hiding the poison they contain. This error is not a future thing, for it began to manifest itself in the days of Jude. It exists today, and God's Word pronounces woe upon those who spread it.

We see in the case of Core a last step in the evil. They "perished in the gainsaying of Core." Core was a Levite who had the ambition to usurp the dignity of Aaron in the high priesthood. He wanted to lord it over the people of God by seizing upon an office assigned in his time to Moses' brother, and conferred now to Christ. Moreover, you read in the book of Numbers that he had associated himself with Dathan and Abiram, Reubenites who rose up against Moses and positively refused to obey him. Moses was in his time the true king in Israel (Deut. 33:5).

Today this true King is Christ to whom God has committed all authority. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram refuse him obedience. It is the type of the open rebellion against Christ, the last character of apostasy, future still in part. The day is near when Christendom shall want no more of Him, neither as Priest, King, or God. It shall deny the Father and the Son. This last character, the apostasy of Core, is the worst of all. One sees from the judgments that fell on these several persons what God thought of their acts. Cain, cursed of God, was a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth; Balaam fell by the sword of Israel with the kings of Midian; the earth swallowed up Core and his associates, and they went down alive into the sepulcher, precursors of their last

representative, the antichrist who shall suffer the same fate in the lake of fire.

Such is, dear brethren, the development of the principles of evil. It is necessary that we all realize what the world is in its relationship with God, and what fate awaits it; and if we do, the knowledge of its future will fill us with a profound pity for it, and, as we shall see at the end of this epistle, an ardent zeal to save the souls who are in it. But, on the other hand, we cannot seek after its friendship at the time when judgment hangs over it. Moses said to the people at the time of Core's revolt, "Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan and Abiram" (Numb. 16:24). Would an Israelite have been obedient to the word of the Lord, had he gone to shake hands with them and declared himself as their friend? Would not this disobedience rather have exposed him to the danger of sharing their fate?

"These," adds the Apostle, "are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are

without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." vv. 12, 13.

All these references to the end, as uttered by Enoch the prophet, are made to "these"; that is to say, to the men of the last days, and those days are the days we are living in. The Apostle adds to his picture one more general trait, in which you will recognize the world of today - continual anxiety and endless restlessness. They are, says he, clouds without water, carried about by winds, raging waves of the sea. Isaiah expresses the same thought: "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Chap. 57:20. If haply they seem to take root, they are "trees... twice dead, plucked up by the roots." Yes, the world of our day realizes the perpetual motion, and its course quickens more and more. It hastens on toward the abyss, fearing, it would seem, to pause for a moment in this maddening rush to find out where it is heading for and to seriously consider its future. Alas! like the wandering stars, it shall disappear in everlasting darkness. The Christian alone possesses rest in this world, because his rest is in Christ. His heart and his conscience are built upon the Rock of Ages, eternal foundation of the faith.

It is also of "these," men of the present time, that Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied. "Behold," said he, "the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." vv. 14, 15. Enoch prophesied before the flood. Evidently, his prophetic eye could discern the judgment that centuries later would fall upon this world in the flood; but he looked much further on in the future. His prophecy, through thousands of years, reaches our days; for it speaks to us of Christ's coming in judgment with ten thousands of His saints. Enoch was looking not for the flood, through which he did not go, but for the Lord. And his hope was realized; he was taken up without going through death, and shall come again with Christ when He shall come accompanied by His armies to execute His vengeance upon the ungodly men of our days.

Solemn Warnings to All Children of God: on the Epistle of Jude

After having drawn the picture of the ungodly in their relations with God, the Apostle yet considers their moral character. This examination is of great moment, for it is a common thing, when we do

speak of the terrible condition of the ungodly, to hear well intentioned persons answering, no doubt it is distressing that their thoughts on this subject differ from ours; however, they are honorable, devoted people, irreproachable in their deportment, etc. Does the Word speak of them in this wise? Listen to what it says: ' These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.' v. 16. "Murmurers, complainers"; is this not what characterizes more and more in our day this world seeking to live without God? A veil of discontentment and bitter sadness stretches itself everywhere over people's minds. One seeks to set it aside with feverish agitation, but without success. Has one ever found a happy man in the world? Moreover, the thought that others have attained to what they themselves desire, gives rise to jealousy in the heart; they are "complainers" about their lot. The Apostle adds that they walk "after their own lusts, and their mouth speaketh great swelling words." Boasting, self-satisfaction, pretension to virtue, walk side by side with the hidden search for the secret desires of their hearts. Finally, they admire men in view of their own profit. Is not this the world's custom? One professes admiration for others, speaking pleasing words for the sake of profit.

We have followed to the end this sad enumeration of the elements of evil already largely developing in our days, but which are about to precipitate their course in an irresistible manner. It is with the apostasy as it is with those avalanches one sees forming in our mountains. At first they are only fragments of ice rolling down a snowy slope. These fragments pick up others and suddenly, with frightful swiftness, this solid torrent rushes on, crushing everything along its path until the whole valley is filled with its debris. This moral cataclysm of the end is daily becoming closer at hand.

We have just seen what the actual state of Christendom is, and the judgment it shall bring upon itself. Now the Apostle addresses himself to the faithful, to you all, beloved, called of Jesus Christ, to exhort you. "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." v. 17. This word, "But... ye" is the counterpart of the word "these." It is you, children of God, that the Holy Spirit teaches what you must do and what is your safeguard before the increasing evil. He brings you back to the Word of God as it has been given to you in the New Testament by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. The second epistle of Peter, which contains the same exhortation, adds to the New Testament the contents of the Old: "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior." Chap. 3:2. So the 18th verse of our epistle, "How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts" corresponds to 2 Pet. 3:3: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts." We must remember that in "the last time," or in "the last days," mockers shall come. Their present appearance proves to us that we certainly have arrived at the last days. On the one hand, we feel relieved to think that in a very short time all further development of this evil shall have ceased, and that we shall be introduced into the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; but on the other hand, to see this last form of evil established is most solemn and must put us all on our guard. The third chapter of Peter's second epistle gives a detailed description of these mockers. "Walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." They are not, as one might think, people who jest about anything and turn to ridicule the divine things; this turn of mind

was in fashion about a century and a half ago. The mockers of the last days are serious mockers who reject the Word of God in the name of science and of reason and esteem as worthy to be believed only such things as they can see. They believe in the eternity of the matter, since it has not changed "from the beginning of the creation." If they sometimes profess a high esteem for the Person of Jesus Christ as a historical and authentic Person, as far as they are concerned, His career ended at His death. Consequently they reject this promise of His coming.

"These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." v. 19. When Jude wrote, the Christian assembly still existed as a whole, with those who separated themselves in its midst. Do not forget, dear friends, that there are two kinds of separation, one approved of God, the other condemned by Him. The first is separation from the world, as it is written: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6:17, 18. The other is the separation of these "sensual, having not the Spirit," from the Christians. They had crept in among the faithful without being of them, and bringing in their "damnable heresies," feasting with them and corrupting the center into which they had gained admittance, and who should never have received them. The first epistle of John shows us a second phase of the separation of these men. "They went out from, us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." Chap. 2:19. The duty of every Christian in the present day is to be separated from them - not to admit them in the assembly of believers, and not to join himself to them on the ground upon which they stand. Is this what is being done? Alas! the noxious influence of these men, "sensual, having not the Spirit," is tolerated and accepted today in the midst of Christian profession!

After having warned us, the Word of God exhorts us, and enumerates our resources in presence of this state of things. We again find here the precious truth, of which we have already spoken, that God can be perfectly glorified by His own in the midst of ruined Christendom. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,..." v. 20. The first exhortation is to build up ourselves on our most holy faith - the faith which was "once delivered unto the saints" (v. 3). This faith, the Christian doctrine, contained in the Word which has been entrusted to us, is most holy, and the Lord wants by this means to separate us entirely from the world, for Himself. "Sanctify them through Thy truth," said Jesus, "Thy word is truth." John 17:17. Such is our first resource to glorify the Lord.

The second exhortation is, "Praying in the Holy Ghost." If God sanctifies us for Him, through the Holy Scriptures, He does so also through prayer. This latter expresses our dependence upon God. Through prayer we approach Him and present our needs to Him. We enter thus in direct relation with Him in our daily life; only prayer to be effectual must be in the Holy Spirit. Thus we are sanctified, separated to God, first by the Word, then by the habitual exercise of prayer.

The third exhortation is of the greatest importance: "Keep yourselves in the love of God." The Holy Spirit has shed this love in our hearts and we are to keep ourselves in it, carefully watching that we do not allow in our souls the least thing that might hinder our enjoyment of it.

The fourth exhortation is, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (v. 21). This is the Christian's hope. This passage contains the three characteristic traits of the child of God so often mentioned in the New Testament - faith, love, and hope. This latter is as important as

the other two; it looks for eternal life into which the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ alone can introduce us. Eternal life, which we now possess, is viewed here as that into which the believer is going to enter, while he enjoys it but imperfectly down here. Notice that in these two verses our resources consist in our relations with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

But, as Christians, we still have duties toward those who contest, and duties toward our brethren. "And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." vv. 22, 23. As to the mockers who dispute, like Satan their master disputed of old with Michael the archangel, we are, like the latter, to answer them with these words: The Lord rebuke you! It is henceforth useless to seek to persuade them. We are in the times of which it is said, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Rev. 22:11). But the souls of our brethren may be seduced by these reasoners and their false doctrines which challenge the Word of God and the Person of the Savior. What are we to do for them? We are to save them with fear, pulling them out of the fire. A Christian has compared the epistle of Jude to a house on fire. One must at all costs get the inhabitants out, at the risk of one's own life; no effort is to be thought too great by us who know the value of these souls. They must be made to realize the imminent danger to which they are exposed. Let us save them with fear. Such is our principal aim in addressing to Christians the solemn warning contained in these pages.

As to ourselves, if we would be helpful to others, let us learn to hate "even the garment spotted by the flesh," to avoid all intercourse with an impure profession (the garment is the emblem of profession) of which this epistle speaks and which it calls the defilement or filthiness of the flesh (see Rev. 3:4). It is thus that in the second epistle to the Corinthians, after speaking of our bounden duty as the family of God, to be separate from the world, the Apostle adds as to our individual testimony, "let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1).

May God give all His dear children to realize these things, and to each to ask himself or herself, Do I bear the characters recommended by this epistle in view of the present time? Should we not feel deeply humbled by the fact that we manifest so little that which the Lord desires?

How blessed that we yet have one resource - God remains. He alone can keep us. Let us trust Him, for is it not true, we cannot trust ourselves? "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." v. 24. Is it not marvelous that this epistle, picture of the irresistible development of the evil in the last days, shows us at the same time the possibility of being kept from falling, in a path strewn with obstacles and snares? It encourages us with the assurance that God is able to accomplish perfectly that which we are incapable of doing, and to present us for eternity faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. How much encouragement in these words! How precious that they are addressed to us for the present time, and not for a time when all was comparatively in order. How good to be able to say, The power of God has not changed, is not modified by circumstances, and is all the more glorified because displayed in a time of moral desolation and ruin. The more the apostasy grows, the more it is necessary to have no confidence whatever in ourselves, but to lean on the One who wants to keep us and will bring us in the eternal enjoyment of His glory.

"To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." v. 25. You will not find one epistle in the New Testament where the praises of the Savior God so richly overflow as in this short epistle of Jude. Not only can we glorify God in our walk in these difficult times, but the more difficult the circumstances through which we are passing, the more we shall appreciate His glory. Only by keeping the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not denying it when it is attacked on all sides, are we qualified to understand and celebrate this glory; and this gives us a foretaste of the great heavenly reunion where words such as these shall be uttered around the throne: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power" (Rev. 4:11). "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Rev. 5:12. "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Rev. 5:13.

Dear brothers and sisters, may God give us to take these things to heart, and not to delude ourselves as to the character of the days in which we live, and to heed the exhortations of this epistle.

Thus, instead of showing a guilty indifference with regard to the evil, or being discouraged by it, we shall walk from strength to strength, having with us the power of God, all ready to lead and sustain us and to keep us from falling until the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.

Solemn Warnings to All Children of God: Part 1, on the Epistle of Jude

Beloved Brethren: The epistle we now have before us, while very short, embraces a vast historical period. It presents to us the apostasy of Christendom from the earliest elements that crept into the assembly to corrupt it, in the days of the apostles, down to its final judgment at the appearing of the Lord. This epistle shows us how the Church, forsaking the truths which God had entrusted to her, has made rapid progress toward ungodliness which will culminate in the rejection of the Father and of the Son. In that day, still future, moral darkness will replace the light of the gospel shining at present in this world; nevertheless we see at work even today the various elements which characterize the apostasy. And the epistle of Jude instructs us regarding the attitude to be taken by every Christian in our day toward this evil, and the manner in which he may glorify God in these sad circumstances. Let us ever remember that the Christian can glorify God just as completely in a time of ruin as in the most prosperous of the early days of the Church. Circumstances have changed, no doubt; but God may be honored by His own, honored in a different manner perhaps, but just as truly as when the Spirit fell on the disciples at Pentecost. God does not ask us today to rebuild that which we have ruined ourselves, nor to deport ourselves in the midst of Christendom as if all were in order, closing our eyes to its declension; but He reveals to us a way which leads us through the midst of ruins, a path approved and known of Him, which the eagle's eye could never see, but which faith learns to discern.

Notice first of all the very general way in which Jude defines the Christians to whom he writes: "Jude, bondman of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to the called ones beloved in God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ. v. 1; J.N.D. Trans. The other epistles are addressed to them in very different words; it is true that they are there named twice, "called saints"; that is to say, saints by, calling, but never just "called." When God wants to win a soul to Him, He begins by calling it. It is thus he did with Abraham, the father of believers; and one could not give to the children of God a character more general than this. It takes them all in, for they are all called, without a single exception.

Do we not find here a very evident intention? This epistle which deals with the present times, is an appeal to all the children of God, excluding none, without distinction of walk or of knowledge, and regardless of what might divide them. All then are responsible to listen and to conform to it. Hence this term "called," at once so broad and so individual. When an apostle addressed a local assembly, many a Christian who was not a part of it might have (in this, very unintelligently, no doubt) considered himself not bound by the whole contents of his epistle. With Jude, such a thought would be inexcusable. Every member of God's family in this world must say to himself, The Lord is here speaking personally, individually to me.

It is to be remarked that there are two things which give to these "called" an absolute certainty as to their relationship with God. They are "beloved in God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ." There should never be in God's great family a single soul doubting its relationship with the Father,

and not having the certainty of its salvation. Let those who doubt it meditate these words: The love of the Father for you is as perfect as His love toward Christ, His beloved; this is why He says to you, "beloved in God the Father." Your security is as perfect as that of Jesus Christ's. For this reason He says to you, "Preserved in Jesus Christ." If the salvation of those who are called were dependent upon their faithfulness, not one of them could reach the end of his career. We are equally powerless to keep as to save ourselves. Our eternal security is assured, not because we are faithful, but because God in love sees us in Christ before Him.

The salutation of the Apostle is of great importance: "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied." v. 2. In the epistles to Timothy, the word "mercy" is part of the salutation, but none of the epistles addressed to an assembly of Christians contains this word. It is because mercy is a necessary thing, not to an assembly collectively, but to each believer individually. I am a poor, weak being, failing in many ways, exposed to continual dangers. My state calls for divine compassion which comes to my assistance, warns me, is interested in all the details of my walk. Such is the character of mercy. But here, a collective epistle, addressed to all who are called, without distinction, invokes mercy upon them. How are we to explain this anomaly? For the very solemn reason that in a time of ruin Christian testimony takes a character increasingly more individual. This does not in any way signify, as one sometimes hears it said to believers discouraged before an ever growing tide of evil, that Christian testimony can no longer have the collective character of an assembly of saints. Those who thus speak are in gross error, and this very epistle of Jude proves it. It mentions people who crept in among the faithful, that are spots in their feasts; their very presence is a proof that there exists an assembly of saints. But the teaching we get here is that we are bound in presence of the terrible moral state of Christendom, to be more and more faithful in our individual testimony, for God takes special notice of this. Doubtless, the hearts of intelligent Christians can rejoice together over the blessed privilege afforded them to unite around the Lord's table - blessed token of collective testimony, and proclamation of the unity of the body of Christ in a time when it is trodden under foot in professing Christendom. Needless to say, the testimony today is extremely feeble compared to what it was at the beginning; nevertheless, God takes notice of it, for that which is most elevated in Christianity, worship, is connected with the gathering of His children apart from the world. But that which we insist upon is that if our collective testimony can be so impoverished that it is reduced to the gathering of two or three around the Lord, individual testimony should in no wise suffer such hindrances. It can be as powerful as when the Holy Ghost filled the Christians individually in the early days of the Church. The Holy Spirit's power in the individual is no more limited now than it was then, if we are careful not to grieve the Divine Guest in our walk, while the Church's worldliness and unfaithfulness, its ruin in short, necessarily restrains the Spirit's operation in the assembly.

An individual testimony faithfully maintained in the present time, a holy separation from evil in all its forms, are all the more necessary when because of prevailing iniquity in the Church, we cannot look for much support and help from our brethren; but the Lord remains, and we can count entirely upon Him.

Here, perhaps, many Christians will interrupt me. You are speaking, they say, of the progress of evil, of Christendom's state of ruin, of its impending judgment. You seem to intentionally turn away your eyes from all the good that is being done around you, the activity in our churches, the considerable amount of efforts put forth for charity and solidarity which characterize the Christian

world today, of the immense sums spent to promote the kingdom of God. I am far from denying all that faith produces among the children of God, but my answer to those who thus reason is, God considers not the state of Christendom as you do, nor as the world does. He judges the state of men by the manner in which they deport themselves toward His Son and toward the Scriptures that reveal Him; and you would not be sincere if you sought to deny that the professing body to which you belong is making rapid progress toward the surrendering of the Word and the denial of the Son of God.

This character of God's judgment is confirmed by the Scriptures from beginning to end. It is the moral state of the world toward God, not its material progress or its estimation of its attainments and of its devotedness that gives the measure of God's judgment. Complete apostasy consists of the denial of the Father and of the Son, and it is what the epistle of Jude, the second epistle of Peter, and the first of John, among others, set forth in all clearness. Satan has a thousand ways to turn men away from God and to blind them by feeding their pride and keeping them occupied with their progress, which is not the least of his wiles.

"Peace, and love, be multiplied"! (v. 2). Dear brothers and sisters, this is what the Apostle wishes for us all. He does not speak here of the peace with God, and of His love to which nothing can be added, but he desires that we realize these in a practical way. He knows the Christian's difficulties in these last days, when the world is characterized on the one hand by perpetual restlessness, and on the other by the coldness of all legitimate affections and by selfishness which primes all other considerations. "Love be multiplied"! I believe, dear friends, that if in the present days the "called" of the Lord should receive in their hearts what the Spirit of God wishes for them here, they would all be good witnesses of Jesus Christ. The enemy seeks in every way to cool off love which is the bond between the children of God. He must not be successful in this. It is never difficult for us to see and point out evil in others, but is the discovering of evil a remedy? No, it is love that heals, restores, and strengthens our brethren in their walk. Grace wins the heart; severity may repress evil, but it has never won anyone. If it is so with our brethren, it likewise applies in connection with the gospel preached to the world. Grace attracts, reaches the conscience, produces repentance, brings to Christ, and if it is necessary to tell man the truth to make him understand how far he is from God, it is grace which bares his condition to remedy it, for grace and truth. came by Jesus Christ. In a time when the love of many has grown cold, and iniquity abounds, do we not all need that love be multiplied?

Something for the Lord

Many years ago a young man in Canada heard the clear gospel of the grace of God, and believed it to the saving of his soul. It was a deep work, producing repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Out of this exercise came a real desire to please the Lord, with the result that he felt he could not go on using tobacco, so he gave it up definitely and finally.

Some time later a friend asked him if he had ever been tempted to return to his tobacco. This dear brother S. quietly replied, "The odor of it does sometimes awaken old desires, but then I am thankful that there is something I can give up for the Lord." He remained a faithful and devoted follower of Christ, and for many years was used in blessing to others until that happy moment when the Lord called him to be with Himself.

Worldliness so rampant, calls for renewed separation from all that is not according to the Word of God. Departure from the plain paths of Scripture is on the increase, and we are in danger of being overcome by the plausible reasons and fair speeches of those who advocate toleration of that from which God in His grace has delivered us.

What a thought! to be so one with Christ, so living Christ, that we have to put as a test to everything, Would my Lord like this or that? The Christ of God, who has made me one with Himself; what does He think of it?

Stored Treasures

I remember hearing of a dear old Christian who was troubled with a bad memory. He seemed to forget everything he wanted to remember. At last a happy thought struck him. Why not ask the Lord to remember for him? Accordingly, the next time he heard anything good which he desired to retain, he simply looked up and said, "Now Lord, keep that for me till I need it," and he continued this practice to the end.

"The time of need" evidently did not come to the dear old saint till he was lying on his deathbed; then the blessed truths which he had "banked" with the Lord were again returned to him, no doubt with interest, for the comfort and joy of his own soul. But not only so; they rolled out of his lips for the comfort, joy, and blessing of others also.

Often have I thought of the dear old man. What a wise thing to do! What a safe bank to put his spiritual treasures in! What a gracious God to commit them to! He knows best when we need them, and when to return them to us. When He does that, it is real food for the soul.

Teach Thy Sons and Thy Sons' Sons: Need for the Word of God in Home

"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." Deut. 4:9.

These are weighty words for all of us. They set before us two things of unspeakable importance; namely, individual and domestic responsibility - personal and household testimony. God's people of old were responsible to keep the heart with all diligence, lest it should let slip the precious Word of God. And not only so, but they were solemnly responsible to instruct their children and their grandchildren in the same. Are we, with all our light and privilege, less responsible than Israel of old? Surely not. We are imperatively called upon to give ourselves to the careful study of the Word of God - to apply our hearts to it. It is not enough that we hurry over a few verses or a chapter as a piece of daily religious routine. This will not meet the case at all. We need to make the Bible our supreme and absorbing study, that in which we delight, in which we find our refreshment and recreation.

It is to be feared that some of us read the Bible as a matter of duty while we find our delight and refreshment in the newspaper and light literature. Need we wonder at our shallow knowledge of Scripture? How could we know aught of the living depths or the moral glories of a Volume which we merely take up as a cold matter of duty, and read a few verses with a yawning indifference while, at the same time, something else is literally devoured?

What mean the following words to Israel? - "Therefore shall ye lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes." Deut. 11:18. The "heart," the "soul," the "hand," the "eyes," all engaged about the precious Word of God. This was real work. It was to be no empty formality, no barren routine. The whole man was to be given up in holy devotion to the statutes and judgments of God.

"And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thine house, and upon thy gates." vv. 19, 20. Do we, Christians, enter into such words as these? Has the Word of God such a place in our hearts, in our homes, and in our habits? Do those who enter our houses, or come in contact with us in daily life, see that the Word of God is paramount with us? Do those with whom we do business see that we are governed by the precepts of Holy Scripture? Do our children see that we live in the very atmosphere of Scripture, and that our whole character is formed and our conversation governed by it?

The new nature loves the Word of God, earnestly desires it, as we read in 1 Pet. 2 "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

This is the true idea. If the sincere milk of the Word be not sought after, diligently used, and eagerly fed upon, we must be in a low, unhealthy, dangerous condition of soul. There may not be anything outwardly wrong in our conduct; we may not be publicly dishonoring the Lord in our ways; but we are grieving His loving heart by our gross neglect of His Word, which is but another term for the neglect of Himself. It is the very height of folly to talk of loving Christ if we do not love and live upon His Word. It is a delusion to imagine that the new life can be in a healthy, prosperous condition where the Word of God is habitually neglected in the closet and the family.

We do not of course mean that no other book but the Bible should be read, but nothing demands greater watchfulness than the matter of reading. All things are to be done in the name of Jesus, and to the glory of God; and this is among the "all things." We should read no book that we cannot read to the glory of God, and on which we cannot ask God's blessing.

We feel that this entire subject demand the most serious consideration of all God's people; and we trust that the Spirit of God may use our meditation on the chapter before us to stir up our hearts and consciences in reference to what is due to the Word of God, both in our hearts and in our houses.

No doubt, if it has its right place in the heart, it will have its right place also in the house. But if there be no acknowledgment of the Word of God in the bosom of the family, it is hard to believe that it has its right place in the heart. Heads of houses should ponder this matter seriously. We are most fully persuaded that there ought to be in every Christian household a daily acknowledgment of God and His Word. Some may, perhaps, look upon it as bondage, as legality, as religious routine to have regular family reading and prayer. We would ask such objectors, Is it bondage for the family to assemble at meals? Are the family reunions around the social board ever regarded as a wearisome duty - a piece of dull routine? Certainly not, if the family be a well ordered and happy one. Why then should it be regarded as a burdensome thing for the head of a Christian household to gather his children and his servants around him and read a few verses of the precious Word of God, and breathe a few words of prayer before the throne of grace? We believe it to be a habit in perfect accordance with the teaching of both the Old and the New Testaments - habit grateful to the heart of God - a holy, blessed, edifying habit.

What would we think of a professing Christian who never prayed, never read the Word of God, in private? Could we possibly regard him as a happy, healthy, true Christian? Assuredly not. Indeed we would seriously question the existence of divine life in such a soul. Prayer and the Word of God are absolutely essential to a healthy, vigorous Christian life; so that a man who habitually neglects these must be in an utterly low state.

Now if it be thus in reference to an individual, how can a family be regarded as in a right state where there is no family reading, no family prayer, no family acknowledgment of God or His Word? Can we conceive a God-fearing household going on from Lord's day morning to Saturday night without any collective recognition of the One to whom they owe everything? Day after day rolls on, domestic duties are attended to, the family assembles regularly at meals, but there is no thought of summoning the household round the Word of God or round the throne of grace. We ask, Where is the difference between such a family and any poor heathen household? Is it not most sad, most deplorable, to find those who make the highest profession, and who take their places at the Lord's table, living in the gross neglect of family reading, family prayer?

Reader, are you the head of a household? If so, what are your thoughts on this subject? And what is your line of action? Have you family reading and family prayer daily in your house? If not - bear with us when we ask you - why not? Search and see what is the real root of this matter. Has your heart declined from God, from His Word and His ways? Do you read and pray in private? Do you love the Word and prayer? Do you find delight in them? If so, how is it you neglect them in your household? Perhaps you seek to excuse yourself on the ground of nervousness and timidity. If so, look to the Lord to enable you to overcome the weakness. Just cast yourself on His unfailing grace, and gather your household around you at a certain hour each day, read a few verses of Scripture, and breathe some words of prayer and thanksgiving; or if you cannot do this at first, just let the family kneel for a few moments in silence before the throne.

Anything, in short, like a family acknowledgment, a family testimony - anything but a godless, careless, prayerless life in your household. Do, dear friend, suffer the word of exhortation in this matter. Let us entreat you to begin at once looking to God to help you, as He most assuredly will, for He never fails a really trusting, dependent heart. Do not any longer go on neglecting God and His Word in your family circle. It is really terrible. Let no arguments about bondage, legality, or formalism weigh with you for a moment. We almost feel disposed to exclaim, "Blessed bondage!" If indeed it be bondage to read the Word, we cordially welcome it, and fearlessly glory in it.

But no; we cannot for a moment regard it in any such light. We believe it to be a most delightful privilege for every one whom God has set at the head of a household to gather all the members of that household around him and read a portion of the blessed Book, and pour out his heart in prayer and praise to God. We believe it is specially the duty of the head to do so. It is by no means necessary to make it a long, wearisome service. As a rule, both in our houses and in our public assemblies, short, fresh, fervent exercises are by far the more edifying.

It may be said that there are many families who seem very particular about their morning and evening reading and prayer, and yet their whole domestic history from morning till night is a flagrant contradiction of their so-called religious service.

And when you travel outside the domestic circle, and mark the conduct of the heads and members of the family toward those outside - mark their business, if they be in business; hear the testimony of those who deal with them as to the quality of their goods, the style and character of their work, the spirit and temper in which they carry out their business; such grasping and griping, such covetousness, such commercial trickery; nothing of God, nothing of Christ, nothing to distinguish them from the most thorough worldlings around.

Under such painful and humiliating circumstances, what of the family reading - the family altar? Alas! it is an empty formality, a powerless, worthless, unseemly proceeding - in place of being a morning and evening sacrifice, it is a morning and evening lie.

We should measure everything in our private life, in our domestic economy, in our daily history, in all our intercourse, and in all our business transactions, with that one standard; namely, the glory of Christ. Our one grand question in reference to everything that comes before us, or solicits our attention, must be, Is this worthy of the holy name which is called upon me? If not, let us not touch it; yet, let us turn our backs upon it with stern decision, and flee from it with holy energy. Let us not listen for a moment to the contemptible question, What harm is there in it? Nothing but harm, if

Christ be not in it. No truly devoted heart would ever entertain, much less put such a question. Whenever you hear anyone speaking thus, you may at once conclude that Christ is not the governing Object of the heart.

We trust the reader is not weary of all this homely, practical truth. We believe it is loudly called for in this day of high profession. We have all of us much need to consider our ways, to look well to the real state of our hearts as to Christ; for here lies the true secret of the whole matter. If the heart be not true to Him, nothing can be right - nothing in the private life, nothing in the family, nothing in the business, nothing in the assembly, nothing anywhere. But if the heart be true to Him, all will be - must be - right.

No marvel therefore if the blessed Apostle, when he reaches the close of that wonderful epistle to the Corinthians, sums up all with this solemn declaration, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha." In the course of his letter he deals with various forms of doctrinal error and moral depravity; but when he comes to the close, instead of pronouncing his solemn sentence upon any particular error or evil, he hurls it with holy indignation against anyone, no matter who or what, who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ. Love to Christ is the grand safeguard against every form of error and evil. A heart filled with Christ has no room for aught beside; but if there be no love to Him, there is no security against the wildest error or the worst form of moral evil.

Teaching by Contrast

Have you not noticed that one of the principle methods by which the Scripture teaches is by contrast? From the very beginning we think of the contrasts between Cain and Abel; Abraham and Lot; Jacob and Esau; David and Jonathan, and many more that we might mention. What lessons can be learned as we examine the histories of these, their motives, and God's dealings with them? As we consider the contrasts between the above we discover that this is one of the Bible's ways of teaching - presenting not two theories, nor diverse principles, nor two types of doctrine, but two men. It tells us too that "Two men went up into the temple to pray." How can we fail to comprehend the teaching of our Lord as He tells us of these two? Forever these two men stand in contrast - one full of "religion," thanking God that he is not as other men are, the other smiting upon his penitent heart and crying for mercy.

This contrast is impressive. Think too of the solemn truths told out in the difference between the rich man and Lazarus!

We've been mentioning "two men," but we have especially on our hearts two sisters. Have you ever noticed that you never see Mary apart from her sister Martha? These sisters are brought before us in the gospels three times to teach us by contrast.

The first mention of them is in Luke 10. Martha was "cumbered," "careful," and "troubled"; but Mary "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word." Some might say that here we have two desirable types of Christians - the practical and the worshipful - both being needed. But Jesus did not infer that.

Another might think that here are two different temperaments; that Mary and Martha were made that way, and could not do or be otherwise. But Jesus did not say that either. He did say, "But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." Mary chose to put acquaintance with Jesus and His word first in her life. Martha chose to serve Him first.

The next time these sisters come before us (John 11), we discover that Mary - because she began aright - did more for Jesus than Martha, for "then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus, did, believed on Him."

As with us, these sisters each had naturally her own circle of friends who, when the news of Lazarus' death went abroad, gathered to comfort them. Then came Jesus, and Lazarus was raised. Something in the bearing and testimony of Mary in her affliction and sorrow had impressed her circle of sympathizers, so when the mighty work was done, many who came to Mary believed on Him. Who then was the real servant? The soul winner?

And now please turn to John 12, and we shall see the beautiful and touching scene of the anointing at Bethany. What was in her heart as she poured out her most cherished possession? Was it to show her love to the Lord? Doubtless this was part of her devoted act, but we feel not the depth of Mary's thoughts. We wonder if this is not something that would speak to - rebuke - us,

who give our least valued things and time to Him?

Was it her way of showing that there was at least one of Israel - the people who had rejected Him as King - who desired to anoint Him as her King? We do not think her thoughts were upon His titles just then, either. Was it her way of expressing her gratitude for the resurrection of her brother Lazarus? No. Does not Jesus Himself give us the motive for her touching act? "Against the day of My burying hath she kept this." Mary had comprehended the truth that He had thrice announced: He must die.

Mary alone, who had begun her education in a disciple's life at the feet of Jesus, could at last enter into a fellowship of His sufferings. And of her Christ spoke the highest words of approval in the Scriptures, "She hath done what she could."

So we are shown that Mary was not only more FOR Christ in the conversion of her friends, but she was more TO Christ than any of His disciples in the fellowship of silent sympathy - and all this because she began right! What an example, beloved, what an encouragement for us to do as Mary - to choose and put acquaintance with Jesus and His word first in our lives!

The Third Heaven: Words of One Who Was Caught up

(Read 2 Cor. 12:1-10)

Every Christian is "a man in Christ." There is no such thing as a Christian not being a man in Christ; the moment I can say of one that he is a Christian, in the sense in which it is spoken of here, there is a man in Christ - a man who as to his standing has entirely parted company with man in the flesh. Of course if I am not watchful and self-judged always, the flesh will get power over me; but there is a great difference between being what is called overtaken by the flesh, and being a man in the flesh. As a man in Christ, I am in a new place altogether.

We must see the difference between standing in the old thing, and standing before God in a new condition in Christ. Paul refers to the time when they were in the flesh, but now he says, "Ye are... in the Spirit." So it should read, "I know a man in Christ" - not "I knew a man in Christ." Observe he does not speak of himself as Paul; this is very blessed. If he had anything humiliating to say of himself, he spoke of Paul; he said, "Through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall"; there was nothing very elevating to a man in that. It was a humiliating position, so he said, "I." But the moment he came to speak of that which was elevating, it was no more "I"; it was "a man in Christ" - that which is true of every Christian. "I know a man in Christ."

After this he speaks of that which is not true of every Christian. Every Christian is a man in Christ, but every Christian is not "caught up into Paradise" (J.N.D. Trans.). None of us have been caught up as Paul was; it was a distinct thing peculiar to himself. And then he heard words not possible for a man to utter. "Possible" is the word, rather than "lawful." He means to say that as soon as he returned to the consciousness of being in the body, he found he had no vehicle of communication with which to express the greatness of the things that he had witnessed. And so it is, the deeper a thing is in our souls, the greater the difficulty we find in speaking of it; we cannot convey to another the sense, the impression, of that which we have got ourselves. How difficult it is when we have received anything from God Himself, to convey to another anything like what it is to our own heart!

This is one thing. And then comes another thing which brings out the watchful care of God for His servant, and is most solemn to see. The blessed God, knowing that the flesh in Paul was just the same as before - his having been in the third heaven did not change it in the least; it was there ready to rise at the first opportunity - anticipates the working of it by "a thorn in the flesh."

I do not know anything in Scripture which gives a greater idea of the preventive watchfulness of God. We all know that He restores our souls when we fall; but do we enough think of all the little things that occur in our daily life that He has prepared and arranged to the end that we may not fail? It is "lest I should be exalted" - not bringing me back after failure but preventing its occurrence. It was a grievous thing for Paul - a messenger of the devil. Who but the blessed God could use Satan against Satan? This very thorn, this messenger of Satan, took away from Satan the power to work upon Paul's flesh. Is it not a blessed thing to think that God can do it? We are very prone to the language of infidelity, and apt to say, This or that happened to me. Would it not

be more blessed to say, God sent me this or that? Is there not a sweetness about anything, however grievous, when I can say, My Father's hand in watchful love brought me this thorn? "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh"; it was not a crushing trial that happened to Paul; it was a given mercy.

Now the first thought with the Apostle was, Could not I get out of this difficulty? Saints think if they could only get out of their circumstances! But do you not know that if you did, you would take with you the nature that makes the circumstances in which you are so trying to you? That which makes the present ones so trying would soon make just as much difficulty in the new ones. Here the Apostle goes to God to change his circumstances; we often change them for ourselves. He said, in substance, Take it away, Lord, three times. What a contrast between the thrice repeated prayer of the blessed One to His Father, ending with, "Not My will, but Thine, be done." It was the perfection of Christ to shrink from drinking that cup. Paul, imperfect, feeble, prayed, Lord, change my circumstances. The answer came in this - Do you want Me to put you in circumstances where you will not need My power? "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." To any pressed one I would say, Would you take from God occasion for displaying His power in your weakness, and from yourself all opportunity for turning to and leaning upon that power? This is really the answer of God here. He says, I will not take away the thorn, but I will give you My power. It is not only relief; it is that I am positively put in the place of power at His own side. "My grace is sufficient." Weakness is the platform on which it displays itself; the thorn becomes the blessed occasion for Christ to show how His strength comes in. What a wonderful thing to move through the world leaning on the power of Christ!

The Three Raisings of the Dead

Mark 5:22-43; Luke 7:11-16; John 11

Three times only, as far as we know, did the Lord Jesus while upon earth raise the dead to life; namely, the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus. Each of these cases has its special characteristics and instruction. The daughter of Jairus had but just expired when the Lord entered the chamber and turned the weeping of the night into the joy of the morning. The son of the widow of Nain was being carried to the grave when the procession of death was arrested by the Prince of Life. Lazarus was in his tomb - had been dead four days - ere, at the bidding of Him who was the Resurrection and the Life, he came forth again into the light of day. Thus did Christ vindicate His power as the Son to quicken whom He would, for "The hour," said He, "is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." John 5:25.

There was a divine reason too for the selection of these cases. Had the Lord raised only the child of the Jewish ruler of the synagogue, infidelity in its shameless presumption might have questioned the reality of the death; and so also in the instance of the son of the widow. The case of Lazarus, therefore, was of another kind - one whom death had claimed and retained for four days, so that even his sister exclaimed, "Lord, by this time he stinketh." But He who stood by the grave had "life in Himself" (John 5:26), and was about to die and rise again that He might be Lord both of the dead and living (Rom. 14:9). Death therefore had no power, no, could not exist, in His presence; and He in His condescension and grace has proved it for us by meeting and overcoming death in every stage of decay and corruption. He will prove it again in a still more wondrous and victorious way at a later time, when "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [judgment]." John 5:28, 29.

The motives also, it may be remarked, of the Lord's action in these respective instances, were different; that is to say, His motives as revealed in the several scriptures. He went to the house of Jairus at the earnest request of the sorrowing father. "He fell at His feet, and besought Him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray Thee, come and lay Thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live." Mark 5:22, 23. It was faith, so to speak, laying hold of the heart of Christ, and constraining Him to answer its appeal. It was the heart of Christ delighting to meet the need of one who in all confidence was casting his burden of sorrow upon Him. What consolation! yes, what encouragement to every poor burdened soul - burdened with whatever grief or anguish - to come to Christ and evoke the sympathy and succor of His unfailing and inexhaustible grace and love! Truly all such shall find that He has a heart for every woe.

But there was no appeal from the widow of Nain. Whatever her sorrows, exercises, and desolation, they are all unrevealed save in her circumstances. They are left to be gathered from that one pathetic word, "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." But this one word is enough. It is a living picture of unequalled sorrow and heartbreaking grief. Divine sustainments

there may have been, but, if we speak after the manner of men, it is a picture of dark and hopeless desolation. Knowing therefore something of the heart of Christ, we do not wonder that it says, "When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not." Luke 7:13.

We have said that this poor widow made no appeal to Christ. No, her hopeless sorrow, her total bereavement, constituted her appeal. The Lord saw her, estimated as no other could the depth of her need and thus, moved by His own heart, He went to her relief. We do not sufficiently understand this. All can comprehend that the Lord should listen to the cries of His people, but how many of us live in the power of the blessed remembrance of the fact that our own griefs and sorrows find an answering response in His heart? "In all their affliction He was afflicted." Isa. 63:9. "We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin [sin apart]." Heb. 4:15.

If a parent bends over his suffering child with yearning pity, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him." Psalm 103:13. Some who read these lines may be lying on beds of pain and affliction; others, bereaved, may be weeping over their dead; and others again may be mourning over those who are dead in sins. Surely then it will be a comfort to all such to remember that He who, when He saw the widow of Nain following the bier of her only son, had compassion on her, has the same heart for their griefs - that He stands by them with infinite tenderness, waiting both to succor and to console.

"His heart is filled with tenderness, His very name is Love."

The case of Lazarus differs from both. There was not the faith in the heart of Martha, or even in Mary, that characterized Jairus. They had faith, but it only embraced the power of Christ to raise up from sickness. Both alike said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." (John 11:21-32.) Nor did the Lord, as in the case of the widow of Nain, act from His own heart. On the other hand, He refused the appeal to His affections. The message of the sisters was, "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." John 11:3. No doubt they concluded that this constituted the most effectual entreaty they could make, believing that they were laying hold of those strong cords of love that bound Him to Lazarus.

They made no mistake as to the fact of His affection, for the Spirit of God carefully adds, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." v. 5. But still the Lord refused the motive presented. It says, "When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was." Wherefore this delay? It was not, as we have seen, that He had no heart for Lazarus, nor that His heart would not prompt Him to speed to the succor of the one He had honored with His love, but it was because the sickness of Lazarus was "not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." v. 4.

Every word He spoke and every act He performed was for the glory of God, for it was His meat to do His Father's will and to finish His work. But it has pleased God to unfold to us the different ways in which' the Lord acted for that glory, and thus to display the manifold perfections and the varied moral glories of His beloved Son. Here therefore we see Him losing sight, as it were, even of those He loved, that it might be known that He was actuated in this wondrous exhibition of resurrection power solely by the glory of God. Hence it was that He abode two days still in the place where He was, after the cry of those sorrowing hearts had reached Him; for though He was the eternal Son,

the Word that was with God and was God, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And in coming down to this scene, He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him (John 6:38). He would not therefore act at the prompting of His own heart, because He had taken the place of obedience, and thus waited for the Father's word before He responded to the appeal. Cold must be the heart that is not moved by this outshining of His moral glory, this combination of infinite greatness with the lowliest grace and humility. It is in fact the revelation of what He was.

What needed lessons are thereby conveyed! Human affection would have prompted to instant succor; but allowing death to come in first, brought, in raising Lazarus, as nothing else could do, not only glory to God, but also to Christ Himself; for if this sickness was for the glory of God, it was also "that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." How then it should still our hearts in the presence of God when He seems to delay to answer our cries! Urgent need or pressing danger is generally importunate and impatient. Has not God said, we repeat at such times, that He will hear our prayers? How then is it that we have cried in vain? Ah, no! we never cry to Him in vain; "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers." 1 Pet. 3:12. If the Lord waits, He waits only for His own glory and our fuller blessing.

Martha and Mary would naturally conclude that if Lazarus died the case was hopeless, for they had not counted upon resurrection power. In like manner we often limit God, and thus it is that He leaves us, like Paul, to have "the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." 2 Cor. 1:9. We would challenge our hearts as to how far we have thus learned God as the God of resurrection. Martha and Mary needed and learned the lesson and, on the evening of the day on which their brother had been raised up from death, would thank God that He had permitted him to die ere the Lord came upon the scene. What was thus for the glory of God, and glorified the Son of God, secured at the same time from His people unspeakable blessings.

These three different motives for the Lord's action may in another way be connected. If we begin from man's side, as presented in Jairus, we see that it is faith which lays hold and secures the intervention of His power on our behalf. If we look at His side in relation to ourselves, we learn that it is His heart which moves His arm of power in answer to our cries. And then if we inquire what is the object He has before Himself in all the exercise of His grace and power, we find that it is solely the glory of God. Thus, ere He came to earth, in the past eternity, foreseeing man's condition and the failure of everything to satisfy God's claims, He presented Himself, saying, "Lo, I come... to do Thy will, O God"; and before He returned to the Father, but taking a place in spirit beyond the cross, He said, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." John 17:4.

A few words may be added upon the dispensational teaching of these three cases, leaving for the present and more general instruction. All symbolize Israel in different ways. But it must be remembered, as another has said, "that while dispensationally Israel has great importance as the center of God's government of this world, morally Israel was just man where all the ways and dealings of God had been carried out so as to bring to light what he was. The Gentile was man left to himself as regards God's special ways. and so unrevealed." Christ was a light "to reveal the Gentiles" (as the Greek puts it). The daughter of Jairus sets forth the condition of Israel on the Lord's return. Christ was on His way to heal the nation, but while on His way the poor woman who

had been afflicted with an issue of blood twelve years (Mark 5:25), and had come to the end of all resources, whether in herself or in others, in vainly seeking for cure, comes in the energy of faith to Christ, and at once obtains relief. This is what has happened. The nation of Israel refused their Messiah, but faith, even while He was on earth, proved His ability to save, and still proves it now that He is on high. The present dispensation, therefore, comes between His mission to Israel and His actual restoration of the nation to life. The son of the widow of Nain also speaks of Israel's moral condition. Remarkable enough too the incident comes after a striking exhibition of faith - faith in Christ as having the power of God - and such faith as the Lord had not found in Israel (Luke 7:9). But in this case it was a Gentile, and not one of the chosen people. He was a Roman centurion. Luke, however, presents Christ as the Son of man, revealing God in grace outside of all dispensations, although, as a matter of fact, He was in the midst of Israel. Hence the prominence given to the faith of the centurion who was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenant of promise. It is in contrast with this that the son of the widow of Nain is introduced. Morally Israel was dead and as such beyond hope save for the intervention in grace of resurrection power - a power unknown to the ordinances of the law. Israel then must be the object of sovereign grace and mercy equally with the Gentile. (Compare Rom. 11:30-32.)

Lazarus typifies in like manner the state of Israel, as indeed the state of man as displayed in Israel. In John 8 the Jews reject the word of Christ; in chapter 9, His work; in chapter 10, He as the Good Shepherd, calls His sheep out of the Jewish fold. This excites the enmity of the Jews, and they take up stones again to stone Him (10:31). They had done this before (8:59). Not only, therefore, had they rejected Him, but they had also displayed the murderous enmity of their hearts against Him as the Son of God (10:33-36). It was consequently all over with them as a nation, and in the next chapter their state in death, as the fruit of their sin, is displayed in Lazarus. They had sought to stone Christ as the Son of God; God testifies to Him in this character in the resurrection of Lazarus. "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Moreover, if Israel is dead, the question is, Can these dry bones live? If so, it can only be by the sovereign exercise of resurrection power in grace. And this is what will take place, for "Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." Eze. 37:12. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." Rom. 11:33-36.

The Tie That Binds

I have one word to press upon you before going away, "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable." If our hearts are not close to Christ, we are apt to get weary in the way.

There is not a single thing in which we have served Christ which shall be forgotten. Lazy, alas! we all are in service, but all shall come out that is real, and what is real is Christ in us, and Christ only. The appearance now may be very little, not much even in a religious view, but what is real abides. Our hearts clinging closely to Christ, we shall sustain one another in the body of Christ. The love of Christ shall hold the whole together. Christ being everything, and we content to be nothing, helping one another, praying one for the other. I ask not the prayers of saints, I reckon on them.

The Lord keep us going on in simplicity, fulfilling as an hireling our day, till Christ shall come, "and then shall every man have praise of God" - "Praise of God"! Be that our object, and may God knit all our hearts together thoroughly and eternally.

To Him That Overcometh

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving him that receiveth it." Heb. 2:17.

It must be joy to anyone who loves the Lord Jesus to think of having His individual peculiar approbation and love, to find that He has approved our conduct in such and such circumstances, though none know this but ourselves who receive the approval. But, beloved, are we really content to have an approval which Christ only knows? Let us try ourselves a little. Are we not too desirous of man's commendation of our conduct? or at least that he should know and give us credit for the motives which actuate it? Are we content so long as good is done, that nobody should know anything about us? even in the Church to be thought nothing of? - that Christ alone should give us the "white stone" of His approval, and the "new name" which no man knoweth save only he that receives it?

Are we content, I say, to seek nothing else? Oh, think what the terrible evil and treachery of that heart must be that is not satisfied with Christ's special favor, but seeks honor (as we do) of one another instead! I ask you, beloved, which would be most precious to you - which would you prefer - the Lord's public owning of you as a good and faithful servant, or the private individual love of Christ resting upon you, the secret knowledge of His love and approval? He whose heart is specially attached to Christ will respond, The latter. Both will be ours, if faithful, but we shall value this most, and there is nothing that will carry us so straight on our course as the anticipation of it.

Two Parables of Our Lord

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

The interpretation sometimes given to this parable is, that when a man sees the value there is in Christ, he gives up all and abandons all that he may possess Christ.

We are sure that this is a mistaken view of the parable. When does man ever sell "all that he hath"? and if he did, would it purchase Christ? The mere giving up is not enough. We read, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." 1 Cor. 13:3. Whereas, the invitation of the gospel is, to buy, "without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1). Christians are, indeed, called to be loosed from all earthly ties. Our Lord said, "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:26. But that is not simply that I may win salvation, but when I have that, I am called to forsake all that I have (v. 33), that I may be Christ's disciple, or true follower. Phil. 3:4-11 has also been quoted, but surely this way in consequence of the Apostle possessing salvation that he desired to win Christ, and not that he might gain salvation by his self-denial.

We doubt not the parable points to Christ as the One who finds a treasure in His people, and for joy sells all that He has, that He may obtain possession of it; as, indeed, we read, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8:9. Yes, as the parable says, He sold all that He had; and, as the passage from the epistle to the Hebrews proves, He kept in view the joy that was set before Him, which joy our parable also speaks of.

We must, indeed, look at who Christ was, and the position He had as Creator (all things were made by Him, and for Him), and as God from eternity; and then look at our Lord in His humiliation, His agony in the garden, and His shameful death - being made sin for us, and enduring the hiding of God's face - before we can even get a glimpse of what it cost Him to purchase the field in which lay hidden the treasure of His heart.

But there is another point in the parable. It says not only that the man purchased the treasure, but also that he bought the field in which the parable of the sower says, "The field is the world." Then our Lord bought the world - all mankind. And here lies an important truth. It is like a rich man going to a plantation of slaves, and after paying down a price for the whole of the slaves, he sends forth a proclamation, that whosoever will may be free. But, alas! the slaves like their plot of ground, and their earthly ties, and prefer to remain in slavery.

So our Lord bought, in His death, all mankind, and has sent forth His ministers to beg men to be reconciled to Him. But, alas! men prefer the chains of Satan, and the baits he skillfully lays for

them.

This illustrates also the difference between "buying" and "redeeming." Many are now deluding their fellow men with the thought of universal salvation; whereas there is a wide difference between buying slaves and offering them liberty, and the actual bringing them out of their slavery. We read of some - lost souls - who deny the Lord who bought them (2 Pet. 2:1), whereas, those who are redeemed are actually translated out of the kingdom of Satan, and "into the kingdom of His [God's] dear Son" (Col. 1:13).

Such then is the parable of the hidden treasure. Christ is the purchaser; His saints are the treasure; all men are the field. It is called the hidden treasure, for none could have discovered that Christ had a treasure where all was sin and wickedness. The doctrine of the Church too had been long hidden; as we read, Paul made known "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations" (Col. 1:26). Then all were to see "what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God" (Eph. 3:9). Christ had then endured the shameful death of the cross - having become poor, sold all that He had - but He will have the treasure with Him by-and-by - a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing! To His name be all the glory!

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE Matt. 13:45, 46

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

This parable is very similar to the last under consideration. Here the merchantman sold all that he had to possess the prize. There is nothing said of buying the field; it is simply the pearl that is bought, the pearl of great price.

It is Christ who sought goodly pearls. Israel was, and will yet be, one of God's pearls, and He may have many others. But the Church was the pearl of great price - the bride, the Lamb's wife and our Lord sold all that He had, and bought it. Here also, who can tell what is included in that saying, "sold all that he had"? We must look at the height from which Christ came, and the depth to which He stooped, and then we can never fathom how much it cost our Lord in becoming poor. We can, indeed, only wonder, admire, and adore!

Now, if Christ calls His Church a pearl of great price - of such value, indeed, that to obtain it He gave up all - what value should not we set upon it, and think of every saint as a part of that pearl of great price? And how anxious we should be to answer to that value He set upon us! It should, indeed, cause us to give up all, and count all but dung and dross, that we might win Christ. (Phil. 3:8.) But this can surely be done only by those who already have Him as their Savior, and who desire to have Him solely as the object of their hearts, though never fully realized till we see Him as He is and are with Him in the glory.

Unbelief and Its Fruit: God's Loving Care

One who has promised to give the land of Canaan to the seed of Abraham, His friend, for an everlasting possession."

But as Israel had not faith, as the inspired Apostle tells us in the third chapter of Hebrews, "They could not enter in because of unbelief." Here lay the great difficulty. The walled cities and the terrible Anakim would soon have been disposed of had Israel only trusted God. He would have made very short work of all these. But ah! that deplorable unbelief! It ever stands in the way of our blessing. It hinders the outshining of the glory of God; it casts a dark shadow over our souls, and robs us of the privilege of proving the all-sufficiency of our God to meet our every need and remove our every difficulty.

Blessed be His name, He never fails a trusting heart. It is His delight to honor the very largest drafts that faith hands in at His exhaustless treasury. His assuring word to us ever is, "Be not afraid, only believe." And again, "According to your faith be it unto you." Precious, soul-stirring words! May we all realize more fully their living power and sweetness. We may rest assured of this, we can never go too far in counting on God; it would be a simple impossibility. Our grand mistake is that we do not draw more largely upon His infinite resources. "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

Thus we can see why it was that Israel failed to see the glory of God on the occasion before us. They did not believe. The mission of the spies proved a complete failure. As it began, so it ended, in most deplorable unbelief. God was shut out. Difficulties filled their vision.

"They could not enter in." They could not see the glory of God. Harken to the deeply affecting words of Moses. It does the heart good to read them. They touch the very deepest springs of our renewed being. "Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. The LORD your God which goeth before you, He shall fight for you" - only think of God fighting for people! Think of Jehovah as a Man of war! - "He shall fight for you, according to all that He did for you in Egypt before your eyes; and in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God, who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day."

What moral force, what touching sweetness in this appeal! How clearly we can see here, as indeed on every page of the book, that Deuteronomy is not a barren repetition of facts, but a most powerful commentary on those facts. It is well that the reader should be thoroughly clear as to this. If, in the book of Exodus or Numbers, the inspired lawgiver records the actual facts of Israel's wilderness life, in the book of Deuteronomy he comments on those facts with a pathos that quite melts the heart. And here it is that the exquisite style of Jehovah's acts is pointed out and dwelt upon with such inimitable skill and delicacy. Who could consent to give up the lovely figure set

forth in the words, "as a man doth bear Ms son"? Here we have the style of the action. Could we do without this? Assuredly not. It is the style of an action that touches the heart because it is the style that so peculiarly expresses the heart. If the power of the hand, or the wisdom of the mind is seen in the substance of an action, the love of the heart comes out in the style. Even a little child can understand this, though he might not be able to explain it.

Unleavened Bread

"Should unleavened bread be used in the remembrance of the Lord in death? Was it not unleavened bread that the Lord used when He instituted His supper?"

ANSWER: It seems quite evident that the Lord Jesus used unleavened bread on that "night in which He was betrayed," for it was at the Passover; and in Exodus 12 the Israelites were told to eat the Passover lamb with "unleavened bread." The day following began the feast of unleavened bread which was to last seven days, during which time leaven was not even to be in their houses. Some people, therefore, have concluded that only unleavened bread should be used by Christians in keeping the Lord's supper. Such a conclusion, however, is a mistake; it is an attempt to carry over the actuality of the type, rather than its typical significance, into Christianity.

Leaven was forbidden in any offering made by fire to the Lord (Lev. 2:11). Inasmuch as it typifies the working of evil, it could not be offered in a sacrifice which spoke of Christ. There were two occasions where leavened bread was used, and both of these tend to emphasize the same truth. In the peace offering the offerer was to present "leavened bread" besides unleavened cakes and wafers (Lev. 7:12, 13), but this offering spoke of communion or worship, and the leavened bread shows that sin was present in the offerer, who later ate the bread. In Leviticus 23 leaven is also found in the two loaves that typify the Church as formed on the day of Pentecost; here again it is evil as found in the Church on earth. All this is conclusive proof of the typical significance of leaven.

When we come to the New Testament we always find the same meaning involved in the use of the word "leaven." The leaven of the Pharisees was hypocrisy, and the disciples were to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees (hypocrisy) and of the Sadducees (infidelity). The corruptions of Herod, who was a proselyte to Judaism, were also spoken of as leaven, "the leaven of Herod." (Luke 12:1; Matt. 16:6, 11, 12; Mark 8:15.) Then in Matthew 13 in the parables of the "kingdom of heaven" - was the sphere of profession on earth - there was the woman who hid leaven in three measures of meal "till the whole was leavened." This is the secret working of evil doctrine which has well-nigh permeated the whole lump of Christendom. Its progress was to be steady, and eventually embrace the whole of profession. It was not to be checked or eradicated by men.

In the Church proper the case was different; evil workers were to be put out, for "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5). The man who was guilty of immorality was to be excluded, for before God the assembly was unleavened. The Apostle, by the Spirit of God, then brings in the practical application of the feast of unleavened bread. If the Israelites were to put away leaven for seven days (a picture of a complete cycle of time), so were the Christians to keep that feast in its spiritual application by keeping free from evil. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast (feast of unleavened bread seven days, or the whole of our lifetime on earth), not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." vv. 7, 8.

In Gal. 5:9 the evil doctrine which was at work among the churches in that province was referred to as leaven, and the same word is given: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." This is indeed salutary, for some Christians admit that moral evil would contaminate the whole body of Christians, and yet allow evil doctrine to work without expulsion. The two evils are classed in the same category - leaven that defiles all.

In no single instance is the Christian enjoined from using material leaven; such injunction would bring him back under the Mosaic economy. He is to keep himself free from that which leaven typified; that is sin; but the shadows in the ceremonies of the past age are not for him to observe. He may use leaven or not as his taste may dictate. There is no wrong in his use of leaven - yeast. The same thing is true of many outward observances obligatory to the Jews; they have no place in Christianity.

Nowhere is it mentioned whether or not the loaf the Lord Jesus used in instituting His supper was leavened or unleavened. In Christianity it is immaterial; the great point is that it was a loaf of bread, and that that loaf unbroken bespoke the Lord's body before it was offered; and when it was broken it symbolized His body given unto death for us. To bring in anything as to leaven is to miss the mind of the Spirit, and to get souls occupied with something else rather than the Lord Jesus in death. It is quite natural that the natural man would be occupied with natural things - bread and wine - but may we be so occupied with Himself that we lose sight of mere nature and see "Jesus only." It is hard for nature to get above itself, like the woman of Samaria; she could not understand what the Lord spoke about for she could not get beyond the actual well, water, and waterpot.

The same type of question has often been raised about the "fruit of the vine" used in the Lord's supper, whether it was fermented wine or unfermented grape juice. How gracious of the Lord that neither the one nor the other is insisted upon; He merely said "the fruit of the vine." No doubt it was fermented wine that He used on that occasion, and certainly the Corinthians used wine, for some became intoxicated when they joined their "love feasts" with the Lord's supper; and they had to be rebuked (1 Cor. 11). In those days there was no way of preserving unfermented grape juice; it was not thought of. Doubtless wine was used.

But surely the Spirit-taught Christian should be able to remember the Lord in death with either leavened or unleavened bread, wine or unfermented grape juice; and Scripture leaves it without comment or instruction. Certainly if only unleavened bread were available it should not distract any heart from the purpose of remembering the Lord in death, nor should the availability of grape juice instead of wine change our one thought as to the meaning to us of "the cup." It is the "loaf" and the "cup" that bring the Lord before our souls, not the fermentation or the lack of it in either case.

We might add a few more words, as to a subject closely akin to this one; that is, the Lord and His disciples were in an upper room. Here again nature would get occupied with the location of the room, rather than with "the Lord's death." Perhaps a significance can be taken from the upper room, that it was apart from the world, and so should our remembrance of Him in death be; but this could be true in a cave below the surface of the earth, or on any floor of a building above it. Let us not interpose anything between our souls and the all-absorbing object for which we come together - "This do in remembrance of ME."

God in His grace has left no instruction in His Word on some points. Not one word is given as to what hour of the day we should thus remember Him. Circumstances in certain countries might make afternoon or evening the only time allowed, or might preclude the use of wine or of leavened bread (or the reverse); but all this should, in no way affect the simple remembrance of "the Lord's death till He come." May we give more attention to coming self-judged into His presence, so that there may be no hindrance to the discerning of the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11:28, 29) and the leading of the Holy Spirit of God. These are things that should concern us, not the things of nature.

Victory Through Christ

One subject we find in the Bible is the history of the struggle between God and the devil. This one thing runs from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. It is not merely a question of man, but of Satan working by man to dishonor God. The earth was the place where the battle was fought. The first Adam comes, but falls; and all the history of the Old Testament records the failure of the first Adam, with promises and predictions of the triumph of the Second. Then the New Testament comes; the battle is over, the triumph is won. We (believers) are put with the Second Adam, and Christ wants us to be victorious. But we are never victorious except so far as Christ is our Object, when He is before our eyes at each moment, in each difficulty or trial that comes before us here below.

When are we happy? When Christ is before our eyes - not when we are looking back to the happiness of yesterday. Satan would have us look back upon past happiness, and perhaps date our blessing upon such or such a day. But it ought not to be so. I am, of course, to have a joyful recollection of all that the Lord shows me, and I shall certainly not forget the first moment of blessing from Him. But how miserable if this only be our comfort and stability now, and our assurance that we shall be with Christ! No, it is a living Christ that we have - a Christ that died and is alive again, and a Christ that would imprint His own character upon us, making us truly great. It is holding fast what Christ has given us that delivers us from self, and holding it fast in Christ Himself.

Vitality

"In every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered." 2 Chron. 31:21.

It is not given to many of God's children to hold great audiences spellbound by their ministry, but it is the calling of us all to walk in such a way that the world may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. This was true of the early disciples of whom we read in the book of Acts. May our "acts" be done in wholehearted obedience and devotion to Him, and they will prosper (Psalm 1:1-3).

I cannot do great things for Him

Who did so much for me,

But, Lord, I'll do the little things

In fellowship with Thee.

Waiting and Watching

God has no need of us, but He has need of a people who walk in the truth and love and holiness. I find in the Old Testament, "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD [Jehovah]." Zeph. 3:12.

And I find the same spirit in Jude, who speaks of the mixture which would bring on judgment, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." vv. 20, 21.

The gospel we may and must rejoice in, yet it only makes the testimony of brethren outside the camp more necessary than ever; but it must be real.

May they indeed be waiting for the Lord, and as men that wait for their Lord! His love is not wanting. May we, in earnest love to Him, be waiting for Him, because we do so love Him, and be found watching!

Waiting for Christ

That which should characterize the saints is not merely the doctrine of the Lord's coming as that which they believe, but their souls should be in the daily attitude of waiting, expecting, and desiring His coming. But, why? That they may

see Himself, and be with Him and like Him forever! Not because the world which has been so hostile to them is going to be judged, though God will smite the wicked. It is true there will be mercy to those who are spared. But we have obtained mercy now and we are therefore waiting for Himself - for what He is in Himself to us, and not because of judgment. That would not be joy to me, though it will be to some on the earth; for "in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the LORD {Jehovah} shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps," etc. Isa. 30:32. This is not our hope, but simply waiting for Himself. The whole walk and character of a saint depends upon this - on his waiting for the Lord.

Everyone should be able to read us by this, as having nothing to do in this world but to get through it, and not as having any portion in it - "Turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven." This is thought a strange thing now; but the Thessalonians were converted to this hope, for they belonged to a world which had rejected God's Son; therefore they had to turn from these idols "to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven."

What I desire to press upon you all, and myself too, is the individual waiting for the Lord - not as a doctrine merely, but as a daily waiting for Himself. Whatever the Lord's will may be, I should like Him to find me doing it when He comes. But that is not the question, but, Am I waiting for Himself day by day? In 1 Thessalonians 2 the hope is connected with ministry: "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" Then Paul would get the reward of his service to the saints. Then in the third chapter the hope is connected with our walk as a motive for holiness: "Unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." Then in chapter 4 where the doctrine of the hope is unfolded, the manner of it comes out: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Thus we see what a present expectation the coming of the Lord was; therefore Paul says, "We which are alive and remain." But why does he say "WE?" Because he expected it then. This was Paul's character then, that of waiting for the Lord. And does he lose that character because he died before He came? No; not at all. Though Peter had a revelation that he should put off the tabernacle of his body, yet did he daily wait for the Lord's coming then. And this will be Peter's character when the Lord does come; he will lose nothing by his death. "Be ye like unto men that wait for their Lord."

The character of their waiting was to be like servants at the hall door, that when the master knocked, they were ready to open to him immediately. It is a figure, of course, here; but it is the present power of the expectation that is alluded to. And the ruin of the Church has come in by practically saying, "My lord delayeth his coming." "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching."

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning" - "your loins girt about with truth" for service. You must not let your garments flow loose; that is, you must not let your thoughts and affections spread abroad, but be ready with your garments well girt up, and your lights burning. This is not rest, for it is an exceedingly tiring thing to have to sit up and watch through a long dark night. But in the spirit of service the heart, affections, thoughts, feelings, and desires must all be girt up. And this requires real painstaking not to let the flesh go its own way; for it is a great comfort sometimes to do this, if but for a moment; but if we do we shall surely fall asleep like the virgins.

For as the virgins went to sleep with their oil in their lamps, so may we go to sleep with the Holy Spirit in our hearts. But blessed are those servants who are found watching. The Lord says this is the time for you to be girded, to take your turn in love to serve and watch; but when I come again, and have things My own way, then I will take My turn in love; ungird you and gird Myself, and come forth and serve you. You must be well girt up and watchful in the midst of evil; but when the evil is done with, then you may take your rest. When in the Father's house you may lie down and be at ease; and then your robes may flow down without any fear of their being soiled. In that blessed place of holiness and purity you may let your affections, thoughts, and desires flow out without the fear of their being defiled.

Watching and Waiting

May the Lord give us such an apprehension of redemption and of our position in Him as may so fix our hearts on Himself, that we may be daily walking down here like unto men that wait for their Lord who has promised to come and take us to Himself, watching in the midst of a night of darkness, aware that it is night, although we are not of the night; but watching and waiting for the day, having the Morning Star arisen in our hearts. May the Lord keep us from idols, and above all, from everything that savors of Jezebel, that we may be in dread for fear of grieving Him in any of those things which have come in to spoil and corrupt that which He once planted so beautiful, to be for the manifestation of His glory in this dark and evil world.

What Think Ye of Christ?

This is a testing question for every heart - for every conscience. Religion, ordinances, and doctrines may well be laid aside for a little in order that the soul may be free to give an answer to the solemn query, What think ye of Christ?

Where Sin Abounded: Accuracy in Quoting the Word

"Where Sin Abounded"

The Word of God differs essentially from any human book. We may take up the loftiest efforts of man's genius, and with care and application may master their contents. With "the oracles of God" it is, however, far different. Like the mighty ocean, they contain depths that will ever remain beyond our sounding; as the receding rainbow eludes the grasp of the child who thinks to reach it by crossing over a field or two, so the infinite God, though brought so near by His revelation of Himself in Christ, dwells ever in light unapproachable.

In the "Scripture of truth" we feel the impress of the divine mind, and are under the gaze of the all-seeing eye. Here only is the truth told as to man's condition - truth which, once told, the natural conscience must needs bear witness to, but which all the religions of ancient and modern days dared never aver. Here too is the love of God as expressed in the mission and death of the Son of God, to the conception of which no merely human mind ever rose; but when the priceless secret that "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 3:16), is imparted by those divine yet human lips, we instinctively feel that this is a worthy and incomparable exhibition of the benevolence of the eternal God toward fallen and perishing man.

But not only in its plan but in its detail is the Book divine. "The words of the LORD are pure words" (Psalm 12:6). "Every word of God is pure" (Pro. 30:5). "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" said the Lord Himself (John 6:63). "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" echoes Paul the Apostle (2 Tim. 3:16). Herein lies the deep importance of the allegiance of the Christian to the very words of Scripture, and to every scripture contained in the blessed volume. Sometimes well-intentioned friends of revelation forget that even in the nicest detail the Word of God should not be altered or adulterated, else is the whole structure dislocated. We heard a preacher repeat more than once in a discourse from Romans 5:20 that "the law entered that sin might abound," instead of "the law entered, that the offense might abound," an alteration, it is true, of but a word, but one which nullifies the reasoning of the Apostle, and indeed states of the blessed God that which is untrue and derogatory, as we may see when we examine the verse a little in detail (compare James 1:13,14).

As is well known, in the doctrinal portion of this most important epistle the Apostle treats of two subjects - "sins" and "sin" - the acts that render me guilty, and the nature that produced them. Rom. 5:11 concludes the first subject. The next verse commences the examination of "sin," the root of the tree that had borne the terrible fruits alluded to in the first part. "Sin" entered by one man, Adam; and the penalty, death, passed universally upon the human family. From Adam to Moses - a period of something like five and twenty centuries - according to the graphic language employed, "death reigned." In undisputed sway "the king of terrors" wielded his grim scepter, rendering men "through fear of death... all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:15).

Then came the law. It is not here to our purpose to consider the circumstances under which it was given, but merely to notice what God says was His object in permitting its entrance into the scene of man's responsibility. "The law entered, that the offense might abound" (Rom. 5:20); "it was added," says the same writer elsewhere, "because of transgressions" (Gal. 3:19). Now when definite prohibitions were given within the circumscribed limits of the people of Israel, sin took a new character, that of "offense" or "transgression"; that is, a perverse will was discovered, which worked by disobedience to a known commandment. Clearly this is far worse. Man is proved under law, not only to have a weak and sinful nature prone to wander, and proclivities toward that which the holy nature of God cannot approve, but he is discovered to be at enmity with God, and as a result obtains from the law the curse that is pronounced upon every infringement of its precepts.

So we have brought together the two distinctive companies of mankind - the Jew with "the offense" abounding inheriting the curse of God (Gal. 3:10), and the Gentile "under sin" with death reigning still, "having no hope" and being "without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). How thankful we may well be that it was not only where the offense "abounded" that grace has super-abounded. This would have left out the poor Gentile, hopeless and helpless to his doom. How blessed and admirable is the change as embodied in the sentence, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Where did sin not abound? Universal as its presence and power is in this creation, the free and undeserved favor of a Savior-God has been more abundantly manifested.

Free as the air we breathe, wide as the open canopy of heaven, "grace" now reigns "through righteousness." Another has now the throne and the crown, and in Him - the blessed glorified Savior - grace reigns triumphant through righteousness unto eternal life. Not yet has He taken the throne in this world; this would be to crush the rebels. Now He lives to be their Savior, and it is your happy portion, dear fellow believer, to tell of such reversal of the havoc that the first man wrought when he by his sin bequeathed such a solemn heritage to his posterity. "For as indeed by the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted righteous." Rom. 5:19; J.N.D. Trans.

Who Are the Fearful?

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burn eth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Rev. 21:8.

It should not be hard to see who are meant by the "fearful, and unbelieving" - the two classes that head the list of those whose end is here solemnly described. The unbelieving are those who have never drunk of the fountain of the water of life so freely and graciously offered to "him that is athirst" (see v. 6), while "the fearful" are the very opposite of the overcomer mentioned in verse 7. To overcome requires courage, and courage is the fruit of faith; but "the fearful" conjure up difficulties, and suffer themselves to be frightened from a course that involves confession of Jesus as Lord, and the setting of the face against the whole current of evil. Thus, instead of overcoming, they are overcome, and reap the eternal consequences of their sinful fear. O that "the fearful, and unbelieving" would give heed to the solemn words of warning which Infinite Love has written in view of the awful end of all who continue in that state.

Who Is This Son of Man? the Higher Mysteries

"The people answered Him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?" John 12:34.

What a question for a poor sinner to essay to answer! Tread softly here, O my soul, and let it be with unshod feet, for thou art on very holy ground. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father"; therefore guard thy words with jealous care. And, when Thou hast said thy last syllable, think not that in knowledge thou art more than a child standing ankle deep in the great sea, and whose eyes behold but a little of those mighty waters that roll away and wash the shores of many a far-off land.

For there are many things revealed in the Scriptures which, in their fullness, no creature can comprehend. How should he, seeing they are infinite? And the receiving of them necessarily involves the subjection of the mind to God, against which the proud mind of man rebels; and in that rebellion lies the root of nine-tenths of the infidelity of the day. What an immense, what an awful loss, were the truth of God to be trimmed and shaven down until the mind of man was able to measure to an inch and weigh to an ounce all that God has been pleased to reveal! It must shrink and shrivel up exceedingly before that could ever be.

To the dissenting Jews, the Son of man there standing in their midst, was no more than the carpenter's son. Some might hold Him for a prophet, and others regard Him as "a man sent from God," whose credentials were sufficiently attested by the miracles which He wrought. And the thoughts of thousands of so-called Christians in this day rise no higher than that, if indeed as high. Christians they are not, save in name; for it is of the very essence of the Christian faith that this Son of man was God manifest in flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). In Him dwelt, and dwells, all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). Whosoever be he who confesses not that, is no Christian at all.

How unspeakably precious is this! "God has been manifested in flesh" (J.N.D. Trans.). How? When? In the Person of the Son of man. God has come nigh to us. God has spoken to us, not through the prophets as in olden times, but He Himself has spoken; He has been here. We gaze upon the Son of man, we listen to His words, and we behold God manifest in flesh. He who would have been forever unknown and unknowable, save as creation revealed Him, and the prophets made Him known, has been manifested in flesh. For the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

Finite we are, and how sensible of this we become when dealing with that which is infinite and eternal. Who can go back to "the beginning" of John 1:1? It is easy to think of the beginning of creation, easy to conceive a time when created things were not, when you might have searched the boundless fields of space for sun, moon, and stars, and searched for them in vain. Nor is it impossible to comprehend a time when God in the fullness of the Trinity dwelt alone in sublime solitude - the all-sufficient, self-existent One. But let your thoughts explore those remote recesses of eternity until, weary of wing, they falter and stop and can go no further, then this Son of man was - not indeed as Son of man, but as the eternal Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the

Word was with God, and the Word was God." Eternal existence, distinctness of being, and Godhead are thus ascribed to Him who became flesh and tabernacled among us - Son of man, Son of God, the Christ, "who is over all, God blessed forever" (Rom. 9:5).

In a magnificent passage in Colossians 1 the Holy Spirit declares the creatorial glories of Him who for the glory of God and our blessing became Son of man. "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (subsist). And if the same Spirit speaks in simpler strains through John the Apostle, yet they have a beauty all their own, and an emphasis to which nothing could add force. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1:3. Thus the material universe and all created intelligences in it are the creatures of His hand - He the Maker of all and the Sustainer of all, and all of them formed for His glory, and to sound forth His praise.

And we must guard with no less jealous care the true and sinless humanity of Him of whom we speak. A real man was He who suffered hunger (Matt. 4:2) and thirst (John 4:7), who grew weary (John 4:6) and wept (John 11:35) and prayed (Luke 9:28), and who never used the attributes of deity, which were ever His, to shelter Himself from the consequences of the position which He in profound grace had taken up. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. 2:8. If obedience to God and dependence on Him should ever mark men, He, having become man, was always under all circumstances obedient and dependent. When tested in the wilderness He repelled every attack of Satan by the Word of God (Luke 4), thus honoring those ancient scriptures which men nowadays in their presumptuous daring treat with such ignorant disdain. In all this He is our great Exemplar. Oh! how perfect were His ways here below! How full of moral beauty! What a sight for angels to behold (1 Tim. 3:16), and for the eye of God the Father to rest upon! Pause here, my soul, and wonder and worship.

It is a fathomless mystery, this union in one blessed Person of God and man! Can we explain it? Can we comprehend it? Never! It were easier far to pour the ocean into a tiny shell, or to bind leviathan with a straw. But the heart taught of God receives it, and cherishes it as one of the most sacred mysteries of our most holy faith.

"His glory - not only God's Son -

In manhood He had His full part -

And the union of both joined in one

Form the fountain of love in His heart."

And remember, O my soul, that this great mystery is no suited subject either for cold and curious speculation, or heated and acrimonious debate. If others embark thereon, refuse thou to follow them. Weary not thyself in seeking to comprehend the incomprehensible, or to compass that which cannot be compassed by any creature; but cultivate a lowly, reverent spirit that receives with meekness what God has been pleased to make known in the Scriptures of truth; so shalt thou be built up and blessed.

"The higher mysteries of Thy fame,
The creature's grasp transcend;
The Father only Thy blest name
Of Son can comprehend.
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should bow."

Why Should We Not Trust Him?

"They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee" (Psalm 9:10).

As to His care: He feeds the fowls, clothes the lilies, thinks of every individual sparrow, and has numbered the hairs of our heads.

As to His love: He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.

As to His purpose: He will have us to be conformed to the image of His Son in glory.

As to His wisdom: He has pledged Himself to make all things work together for good to those who love Him, and who are called according to His purpose.

Why should we not trust Him? Has He not done everything to win and retain the confidence of our hearts?

The Woman of Canaan

Matt. 15:21-28

The Lord Jesus had just exposed the heart of man which, He says, was so bad that those things which come out of the heart defile the man; then He shows the heart of God in His grace to a poor Canaanite woman.

But the lesson to be learned from this case is one which each sinner needs to take deeply to heart. The lesson is - he must take his true place before God in order to get the blessing.

The woman was a Gentile and therefore outside the privileges of Israel; besides, she belonged to the accursed race of Canaan, and such ones were not to enter into the congregation of the Lord to the tenth generation. But she was in deep sorrow and need, her daughter being grievously vexed with a devil. Her need was real, her sorrow was great; but when her cry for mercy fell on the ear of the Savior, He answered her not a word.

Was He indifferent to her appeal? Had He not a heart filled with love and compassion for every needy soul? He had. But she came to Him on wrong ground. She said, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David." What had the Son of David to do with a Canaanitish woman? As Son of David, He had come to fulfill the promises to Israel, and she was outside the pale of Israel. The disciples wanted the Lord to grant her request and send her away, but He answered that He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Then we have her second appeal, "Lord, help me." Was there even a trace of hardness in His reply, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs"? Oh, no; it was all designed to bring her down to take her true place as having no claim upon Him whatever. And so it is in principle with every sinner. Sometimes it requires a long process to bring us to own our utterly lost and helpless condition before God.

And now the question was, Will she be turned aside because her request is not granted at once? Will she go away sorry and disappointed? No, indeed; her faith rises above everything that might seem adverse in His dealing with her, and she goes right down to the bottom as to her true place and standing before Him. She gives up all claim, every bit of right to anything, and casts herself on pure grace. Was there not even a crumb for a dog like her?

And thus it was her faith that opened the door so that all the grace and love which dwelt in the heart of Jesus might flow out, and He answered, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Her daughter was healed from that very hour.

So it ever is. Faith would lead the sinner to take his place as lost, and thus get the blessing on the ground of pure grace.

The Woman Who Was a Sinner

The case of the woman of the city who was a sinner, in Luke 7, is peculiar. It stands alone in the midst of all the illustrations we get in the gospel narrations of poor sinners and their communion with Jesus.

We know not who she was. Her name is not recorded. No memorial of her whatever remains either in the world or in the Church, beyond this one notice of her in the Pharisee's house. The story serves the uses of the Spirit of God with our souls, and that is all.

She crosses the path of her blessed Savior only this once, and that but for a moment, and then retires to be heard of and seen no more. But this once is enough. More, I am bold to say, would have rather lowered the impression which the Spirit, as I judge, purposed to make.

She comes forth with the treasures of her heart and her house to worship the Lord. She comes behind Him as He sat at meat with Simon the Pharisee, and worships at His feet. Whether He would heed her or no, she inquires not - whether the Pharisee might upbraid her or no, she cares not. She was a true worshiper in the only sanctuary of God. She came as a heart-attracted sinner into the presence of her redeemer, with all that she either had or was, to lay them at His feet.

But what did she learn from Him? That she could be at home there - a sinner in enjoyment of assured and settled forgiveness. She came to Jesus with the expression of what her heart felt about Him; the life of her spirit shown out in her gift, and she was at home in His blessed presence, whoever or whatever might be there.

Her tears and her kisses and her ointment belonged to Jesus; and she brought Him on this occasion just what her "love," the fruit of her "faith," had already dedicated to Him, expressing in His presence the liberty and joy she was experiencing; and He sets her conscience at rest by the forgiveness of her sins.

This blessed woman came forth just on this one occasion to tell the secrets of her heart. She reminds one of Melchisedec, though that may sound strange. But her action reminds one of his. He came forth just on one great occasion to greet the conquering servant of God in the name of God, and to receive from Abram tithes of all. She comes forth just on one occasion to worship the Lord God of Abraham and of all pardoned sinners, with the fruits of faith and love, and to receive from Him some fresh token of His most precious peace and favor. Melchisedec presents God to the believing sinner, and this poor woman presents the believing sinner to God; but each of them just (on two several occasions) came forth to tell the secrets of their different sanctuaries - he, the secrets of the house and priesthood which God had appointed - she, the secrets of a trusting heart which the Holy Spirit had filled with treasure for Jesus!

Words to a Dejected Saint

Look away from yourself and from your backslidings which have filled your heart with darkness and despair. There is no profit in dwelling on them. Look up. There is One in heaven who suffered for the sins you deplore, and who, having loved His own that are in the world, loves them unto the end. When He rejoiced over you as the shepherd over the sheep, He knew everything - knew all about these backslidings even as He knew Peter would deny Him with oaths and curses. They have not taken Him by surprise. Go then to Him, unburden your soul to Him, and go confiding in that love which never alters. Jesus is the same; and He who spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, loves you with a Father's love. Return then, poor wanderer; never did a warmer welcome wait for any than for you.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35).

"We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

We can always count on the love of Christ. The greatest Person in the universe loves us and has expressed His love in death. The more I think of all His greatness - the Creator, the Heir of all things, the First-born, the Son of the Father's love - the more I see the glory of His love which could go into death. That love lives in His heart today. We have the present reality of it in Himself, alive for evermore, and we prove it in His unfailing sympathy and support all along the pathway.

Your Description

You will never find your own full name in the Bible. Search it as you may, you cannot hope to find it written there; but on its sacred pages your character is described with amazing fidelity, so that you can answer to it without any hesitation, and the words God is pleased to employ so as to shield us from the agony of uncertainty are, "whosoever," "everyone," "all." Thousands have thus entered, and not one ever had his title called in question.

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