

# CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 34

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*A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 34, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.*

139 Chapters

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## Christian Truth Volume 34

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## 1 John 1:7

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"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7. The Apostle is speaking of what that blood is in its own intrinsic nature before God; and what is that? That it cleanses; that is to say, that is what it effects, that is its abstract nature. As poison kills and food nourishes, so that blood cleanses. It is not the continual application, as some would, in their mistaken zeal, assert. The perpetual application of the blood would be the destruction of its efficacy. There is no surer way to cast a slight, even though unwittingly, upon the efficacy of the blood of Christ, than to speak of it as being continually applied. Therefore to say here, "is cleansing," meaning thereby as continually applied, is to reduce it to the level of the blood of bulls and goats. But when you speak of it in its own blessed nature, as God does, and say that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," it is simply unfolding it as God does there. And it is so blessed and so full that the believer stands before God in the acceptability and nearness and dearness to God of Him whose blood it was, and in all the value of that blood as God measures it.

Now what a blessed, living reality that is! Here, then, is a basis that never changes; here is a relationship that can never be broken; here is a place in Christ before God, that knows neither variation nor shadow of turning. The precious blood of the Christ of God in its efficacy is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever"; that is, to the ages of ages. What He has accomplished in His grace by the shedding of His blood puts us, in all the unchangeableness of its own blessedness, before God according to God's measure of it. It is an immense thing for our souls to know the ground upon which we are, and our God has set us on no less a footing than this. And I am assured that nothing could be more important for every one of us than to be established in all the truth and reality of it by Himself. Bear in mind it is not our taking a place. We have no right to take a place; but if God puts us in such a place before Him, can we exaggerate its blessedness or make too much of the grace that bestows it upon us? Or would it be possible to exalt too highly the changeless efficacy of Christ's blood, and thus the glory of the One whose blood was shed?

How much the truth of God has suffered from and been lowered by such thoughts! What a really blessed thing it is to look at that precious blood as the blood of Him who upheld and vindicated all the glory of God. And who will limit the issues and consequences of all this work? Christ glorified God down to the very dust of death, where His precious blood was poured forth and shed, for, remember, the blood came from the side of the One who had been crucified-it came from the side of a dead Christ, not of a living Christ. If, let me say, Christ glorified God down to the very dust of death, down to where we lay in our moral ruin and distance from God, who will deny that we must be blessed up to the very heights of where that Christ is? If you lower the blessing, you must somehow reflect upon the Blessor. And that is the very reality which we should strive to impress upon one another's hearts more and more every day.

If you omit or lower the blessing, you correspondingly take away from the glory of the One who secured it. But the more your heart has been impressed with the sense of the glory and perfections of Him who has made all this good for His Father's glory, and for us, the higher your

conception must be of the blessing. I repeat it, if Christ has given to God a glory that He went down into the dust of death to secure and make good; if the blessed God has been glorified down to the lowest depths where He went and lay in death, then I say the believer must be blessed up to the very heights of where that precious One is, whom God has raised up from among the dead and claimed as His own. And therefore, Christ's acceptance, blessed be His name, is the measure of ours. His acceptance as man, the glorified Man in heaven, is the acceptance of His saints who, through grace, believe in Him. Then see, beloved friends, what a wonderful comfort that is, because it settles and establishes everything as certain. It does not leave things uncertain or undecided; it settles everything, and forever; it puts everything into a fixed, settled position before God; and that is outside all the flittings and all the ebbings and all the flowings of our poor life down here.

## Comments on 2 Corinthians 3

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At the commencement of this chapter, the sad state of the Corinthian saints is described. The Apostle could not write to them as unto spiritual men. That is to say, they were falling short of what their real privileges and responsibilities were. They were spiritual, for every Christian is. An unconverted man is natural, but a converted one is spiritual. We must not misunderstand the use of the word "spiritual" in this passage. We sometimes hear people speaking of some Christians being more spiritually minded than others, but this is not the sense in which the word is to be understood in this chapter. Every Christian is spiritual, for every Christian has received the Spirit of God. The natural man is a man who has not the Spirit; the spiritual man is a man who has the Spirit.

But the Corinthians were walking in such a manner that the Apostle could not address them as spiritual. He used another word to describe their state; they were carnal, and walking according to man. This carnality showed itself among the Corinthian saints by the envy and strife that raged among them, and the divisions that even then were commencing. Oh, if the Church of God had but heeded the earnest entreaties of the beloved Apostle who was inspired to beseech "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you," what power of an ungrieved Spirit there would have been in walk, worship, and testimony!

But how quickly man became prominent, when Christ alone should have been exalted! The gifted servant was displayed where the Master only should have been seen. "One saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos." "Are ye not carnal?" is the withering rebuke of the Spirit of God through the Apostle; and may it not be said with equal force and far greater ground in these closing days of the Church's history?

There is such a thing as contending earnestly "for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3. This is our sacred duty, and all the more called for as the tide of apostasy rises higher and higher. But the exaltation of favorite teachers leads to strife and division among the saints; this is of the flesh and not of the Spirit.

We should thank God for every gift that He has given for the spread of the gospel and the building up of the saints. "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas... all are yours." In these evil days, gifts may be found, in ignorance and untroubled conscience, amid associations where it would be sin for those who have greater light to be found; "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Jas. 4:17. But we cannot ignore the fact that the ascended Christ, according to His own promises, has given gifts, and will continue to do so unto the end, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Eph. 4:12. And it would be folly to deny that large numbers of these are at work, and are richly blessed of God both in the conversion of sinners, and in the comfort and edification of saints, even though they may be walking in paths that most of our readers judge to be contrary to the Word of God.

"Let no man glory in men" then; let us not despise the gift, or we should despise the Giver; on the other hand, let us not unduly exalt the gift at the expense of the Giver.

The servant, however gifted, is only the instrument used of God to lead another to believe. The instrument is nothing in itself. A Paul may plant, and an Apollos may water, but God alone gives the increase. This is humbling to the pride of our hearts, but it exalts the Lord and glorifies God. He that plants is nothing, he that waters is nothing; and yet, for the servant's encouragement it is said, "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor."

#### The Foundation Laid

The grace of God enabled Paul, as a wise master builder, to lay the foundation; it was already laid, and none other could be found; Jesus Christ is that foundation. This may seem to be simple truth and yet never was it more important for the soul to be established therein than in these last days. Multitudes are building upon Peter, as though he were the rock alluded to in Matt. 16 But there cannot be any other foundation than Jesus Christ. Peter was a stone; Christ was the Rock.

There are others doctrinally free from the errors of the Ritualistic system, who are far too prone to rely upon other foundations; and when amid the storms of Church trouble and the strife of tongues, their foundation begins to tremble and they imagine that all is over. But Jesus Christ remains; the sure foundation of God stands. Thank God, then, the foundation is laid, and never can be shaken.

#### Builders at Work

But here the responsibility of each individual servant comes in: "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." The Church is looked at here as a building, and not, in this instance, as the body of Christ-"ye are God's building." In the body of Christ, there are none but true believers united to a glorified Christ by the Holy Spirit.

But the Church is also spoken of as the house of God; moreover, the house is presented in two ways-first, as that which Christ builds; second, as that in which man acts, which man builds.

All that Christ builds must necessarily be perfect; the gates of hades cannot prevail against it (Matt. 16:18). It is composed of living stones, and is built up, by divine power, a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5); it grows into a holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2:21). In these three passages, there is no builder but Christ. The living stones come, and the building grows-it is not yet complete.

But in 1 Cor. 3, God makes use of man as a builder, and here the responsibility of the servant comes in-"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble."

The history of Christendom during the ages past illustrates this very point. How frequently doctrines have been introduced by man which are like building with wood, hay, and stubble! Baptismal regeneration, for instance, has introduced masses of lifeless professors into the house of God.

#### The Work Tested

Three kinds of builders are here contemplated.

1) "If any man's work abide," etc. The testing day is coming. In that day, the fire of God's judgment shall reveal of what sort the servant's work has been. He who in dependence upon the help of God's Spirit has proclaimed the Word of God publicly or from house to house, will then be seen to have built into God's building solid and precious material; his work shall abide; it shall abide through all eternity when earth and heaven shall dissolve away, and he shall receive a reward.

Work on, then, ye beloved laborers in all parts of the world-missionaries amid scenes of heathen violence, toilers amid the slums of our cities, teachers in the Sunday schools, distributors of gospel tracts, and helpers in every variety of work for the Lord-preach the Word, seek the positive conversion of sinners, and the establishing of the children of God in their most holy faith!

"If any man's work shall be burned," etc. Here is a sad and sorrowful matter for reflection, Christendom abounds in this kind of work. Think of the methods of worldly entertainment often resorted to in order to reach the masses-worldly bazaars, concerts, and a host of other things degrading to the dignity of the servant of the Lord, and hateful in the sight of Him who, with eyes of fire, walks amid the candlesticks. How sad if any real believer in the Lord Jesus Christ should lend the sanction of his presence to any such debasing efforts to swell the members of the great house of profession. Such is all wood, hay, and stubble; and when the testing fire of God's judgment sweeps through the building, all such work will be burned up. Here the case supposed is a converted man building worthless material, for it says, "he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire [or through the fire]." The fire which burns up all his work does not touch him, but oh! what loss he sustains. It is terrible to contemplate the rude awakening that awaits many a child of God in that day.

"If any man defile [destroy] the temple of God," etc. Here the case supposed is that of a willful enemy of God and His truth, introducing damnable heresies and doctrines of demons, undermining the faith, and bringing upon his miserable followers swift destruction and eternal perdition. Many such are at work today in the professing church; many a pulpit is occupied by men of this stamp, men who have never experienced the converting power of God's grace, and who, under the name of Christian ministers, are in reality ministers of Satan-"Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." 2 Cor. 11:13.

We are, indeed, living amid the perilous times foretold in the Scriptures of truth.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." 1 Cor. 16:13.

## All - His

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Let us give up our work, our thoughts, our plans, ourselves, our loved ones, our influence, our all, right into God's hand; and there will be nothing left for us to trouble about or to make trouble about. When all is in His hand, all will be safe, all will be wisely dealt with, all will be done and well done. "He led them on safely."

## All Things Are Ours

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Every possible glory indeed is ours: The blessedness that is in God Himself, as far as it can be communicated, for we dwell in God and God in us. Relative blessedness, for we are children. Associated blessedness, in union with the blessed One, for we are the bride. Official nearness and glory, for we are kings and priests. Human blessedness, for we shall be perfect men, after the image of the last Adam. Corporate blessedness, for we shall have joy together. Individual, for we shall have a name given which no one knows but he that receives it, and we shall have the fullness of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, unhindered by these poor bodies, yes, clothed upon by a vessel suited to the power of the divine inhabitant, so as to be able in full largeness of heart to enjoy all this.

## All Unsaved People Servants to Satan?

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Answer: From the time that our first parents listened to the voice of the tempter, and fell, the whole race, apart from the delivering grace of God, has been under his mastery. He led mankind on to fill the earth with corruption and violence before the flood, and after it, to worship idols, behind which were demons. Rom. 1 gives us the downward trend of idol worship; it began with images of men, then birds, then quadrupeds, and finally creeping things. Men might not have accepted worship of creeping things if that had been advanced first, but the descent was easy and natural to a heart estranged from God. In the worship of creeping things, Satan was showing himself more clearly.

The enemy of God and man was not called the prince of this world until the cross, for there his mastery of the race was fully exposed. He led the whole world on to cast God out of the scene when He had come into it in grace (John 14:30). He is also called the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). As the former he has subjects; as the latter he has worshipers, or at least controls their worship.

In Luke 11 he is called "the strong man," who guards his palace and keeps his goods in peace. His goods are people, and he serves many and various opiates to keep their consciences quiet so they will remain peaceful on the brink of hell. The Lord Jesus was the "stronger" Man who came upon him and overcame him (Luke 11:22). He entered into the strong man's house, the world (Matt. 12:29), and bound the strong man in the wilderness with "It is written" as we read in Luke 4; then immediately he began to spoil his goods by casting out demons and healing the sick. He overcame the strong man by dying (Luke 11:22), and coming forth in resurrection He wrested from him the power wherein he trusted (Heb. 2:14, 15), and then "divideth his spoils" (Luke 11:22) by setting his captives free.

We need to remember that when man fell, he fell spirit, soul, and body; and as fallen, he became an easy prey to the wiles of the devil. Satan controls the unsaved, and so the world in general, through the "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." With great cleverness he knows how to appeal to man's fallen nature, and these three principles govern the whole world. "The wicked one" not only deludes the unsaved with these lusts which find their answer in the evil heart of man, but he presents the same things to the Christians; hence we are warned against loving the world, for "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:15.

In John 8:44 the Lord addresses some thus: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." This refers to the Jews of Jerusalem who had rejected Him and were bent on His destruction-it is a certain class. 2 Cor. 4:4 indicates a special class who had rejected the gospel and were blinded to it by the god of this world-Satan.

## Alone With God

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Many years ago there was a great preacher whose name was Paul Gerhardt. He was an earnest Christian man, and loved to preach about the Lord Jesus. The ruler of the country, however, did not like that kind of preaching, so he said that Gerhardt must either give up preaching or be banished from the country. Paul Gerhardt replied that it would be very hard for him to leave his country and friends, and to go with his family among strangers where they would have nothing to live on, but he would rather die than preach anything else than what the Bible taught. As a consequence, he and his little family were banished.

At the end of their first day's journey, they rested for the night at a little inn. The little children were crying with hunger and clinging to their mother, but she had no food to give them and no money with which to buy any. She had tried to keep up her spirits all day, but now she began to cry too. This made Paul Gerhardt very heavyhearted. He left his family and went alone into the dark woods to pray. In this time of great trouble there was no one to whom he could go for help but to God.

While alone praying, a text of Scripture came to mind. It seemed as if an angel had come and whispered it to him: "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." Psa. 37:5.

This gave great comfort. "Yes," he thought, "though I am banished from my home and friends, and do not know where to take my wife and children for shelter, yet God, my God, sees me in this dark woods. He knows all about us. Now is the time to trust in Him. He will see us through; He will 'bring it to pass.'"

He was so happy in thinking on this text, and so thankful to God for bringing it into his mind, that as he walked among the trees, he composed a poem about it. Each verse of the poem begins with two or three words of the text, so that when you have read through the hymn, you get the whole text. The poem reads:

Commit thy way, O weeper-  
The cares that fret thy soul-  
To thine Almighty Keeper,  
Who makes the world to roll.  
Unto the Lord, who quieteth  
The wind, and cloud, and sea;  
Oh! doubt not He provideth  
A footpath, too, for thee.  
Trust also, for 'tis useless

To murmur and forbode;  
The Almighty arm is doubtless  
Full strong to bear thy load.  
In Him hide all thy sorrow  
And bid thy fears good night;  
He'll make a glorious morrow  
To crown thy head with light.  
And He shall bring it near thee,  
The good thou long hast sought;  
Though now it seems to fly thee,  
Thou shalt, ere long, be brought.  
To pass from grief to gladness,  
From night to clearest day,  
When doubts, and fears, and sadness  
Shall all have passed away.

When he had finished composing these verses, he returned to the inn and told his wife about the precious text that had come into his mind and the poem that he had composed about it. She soon dried her tears and began to be as cheerful and as trustful as her husband. The husband and wife knelt down together and prayed, resolving to commit their "way unto the Lord," and leave it for Him to "bring it to pass" as He saw fit. Then, after writing down his poem, they went to bed.

Before they fell asleep, a great noise was heard at the door of the inn. When the landlord opened the door, a man on horseback was standing before it and said in a loud voice:

"I am a messenger. I come from Duke Christian, and I am trying to find a minister named Paul Gerhardt, who has just been banished. Do you know whether he has passed this way?"

"Paul Gerhardt?" said the landlord, "Why, yes, he is in this house, but he has just gone to bed and I can't disturb him now."

"But you must," said the messenger. "I have a very important letter for him from the Duke; let me see him at once." The landlord immediately went upstairs and told Gerhardt, who came down to see the messenger.

The messenger handed him a large, sealed letter and, to his great joy, he read in it that the good Duke Christian had heard of the banishment of himself and his family and had written to him saying, "Come into my country, Paul Gerhardt, and you shall have a home, plenty to live on and liberty to preach the gospel just as much as you please."

Gerhardt went up and told his wife, and together they praised God for His love. The next morning the whole family started off with glad hearts and cheerful feet toward their new home.

## A Cure for Anxiety

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There always have been and always will be trials on the way; but then we have the word in Phil. 4, "Be careful for nothing." This is a magnificent sentence, and leaves no loophole. It would have a quieting effect upon us if we had faith when we had discouraging thoughts concerning the saints and the testimony of God on earth. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:6, 7. Who would have thought that such a thing could be?

## Authority and Power

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If ever there was a moment in the history of the professing church in which it behooved people to have divine authority for their path and divine power to pursue it, this is the moment. There are so many conflicting opinions, so many jarring voices, so many opposing schools, so many contending parties, that we are in danger at all points of losing our balance and being carried we know not whither. We find the very best of men ranged on opposite sides of the same question; men who, as far as we can judge, seem to have a single eye to the glory of Christ, and to take the Word of God as their sole authority in all things.

What then is a simple soul to do? How is one to get on in the face of all this? Is there no peaceful haven in the which to anchor one's tiny vessel away from the wild tossing of the stormy ocean of human opinion? Yes, blessed be God, there is; and the reader may know the deep blessedness of casting anchor there this very moment. It is the sweet privilege of the very simplest child of God, the merest babe in Christ, to have divine authority for his path and divine power to pursue it-authority for his position, and power to occupy it-authority for his work, and power to do it.

What is it? Where is it? The authority is found in the divine Word; the power is found in the divine presence. Thus it is, blessed be God, and each and all may know it-ought to know it, for the stability of their path and the joy of their heart.

In contemplating the present condition of professing Christians generally, one is struck with this very painful fact, that so few, so very few, are prepared to face Scripture on all points and on all matters, personal, domestic, commercial, and ecclesiastical. If the question of the soul's salvation be settled-and oh, how rarely it is settled- then, verily, people consider themselves at liberty to break away from the sacred domain of Scripture, and launch forth upon the wild, watery waste of human opinion and human will, where each one may think for himself, and choose for himself, and act for himself.

Now nothing is more certain than this, that where it is merely a question of human opinion, human will, or human judgment, there is not a shadow of authority-not a particle of power. No human opinion has any authority over the conscience, nor can it impart any power to the soul. It may go for what it is worth, but it has neither authority nor power for me. I must have God's Word and God's presence, else I cannot get on. If anything, no matter what, comes between my conscience and the Word of God, I know not where I am, what to do, or whither to turn. And if anything, no matter what, comes in between my heart and the presence of God, I am perfectly powerless. The word of the Lord is my only directory; His dwelling in me and with me, my only power. "Have I not commanded thee?" "Lo, I am with you."

But, it may be the reader feels disposed to inquire, Is it really true that the Word of God contains ample guidance for all the details of life? Does it direct me in my personal path, in my domestic relationships, in my commercial position, in my religious associations and opinions?

Most assuredly it does. The Word of God furnishes you thoroughly to all good works; and any work for which it does not furnish you is not good, but bad. Let us bow down to its holy authority in all things. Let us humbly and reverently yield ourselves to its heavenly guidance. Let us give up every habit, every practice, every association, be it what it may, or be it sanctioned by whom it may, for which we have not the direct authority of God's Word, and in which we cannot enjoy the sense of His presence-the life of His appreciating countenance.

This is a point of the very gravest moment. Indeed it would be impossible for human language to set forth with due force or in adequate terms, the vast importance of absolute and complete submission to the authority of Scripture in all things-yes, we would say, and with all emphasis -all things.

One of our greatest practical difficulties in dealing with souls arises from the fact that they do not seem to have any idea of submitting in all things to Scripture. They will not face the Word of God, nor consent to be taught exclusively from its sacred pages. Creeds and confessions, religious forms, the commandments, the doctrines, and the traditions of men-these things will be heard and yielded to. Our own will, our own judgment, our own views of things will be allowed to bear sway. Expediency, position, reputation, personal influence, the opinion of friends, the thoughts and example of good and great men, the fear of grieving or giving offense to those we love and esteem and with whom we may have been long associated in our religious life and service, the dread of being thought presumptuous, intense shrinking from the appearance of judging or condemning many at whose feet we would willingly sit-all these things operate and exert a most pernicious influence upon the soul, and hinder full surrender of ourselves to the paramount authority of God's Word.

May the Lord graciously stir up our hearts in reference to this weighty subject! May He lead us, by His Holy Spirit, to see the true place and the real value and power of His Word. May that Word

be set up in our souls as the one all-sufficient rule, so that everything-no matter what-may be unhesitatingly and utterly rejected that is not based upon its authority. Then we may expect to make progress. Then shall our path be as the path of the just, like a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. May we never rest satisfied until, in reference to all our habits, all our ways, all our associations, our religious position and service, all we do and all we do not do; where we go and where we do not go, we can truly say we have the sanction of God's Word and the light of His presence. Here, and here alone, lies the deep and precious secret of AUTHORITY and POWER.

## Baptized for the Dead

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1 Cor. 15:29

It should be carefully noted that this verse is connected with verse 19, the verses between (20-28) being a parenthesis. "If in this life only," says the Apostle, "we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable"; that is, if there be no resurrection of the dead. He further goes on to say, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" It would be folly to take the place of danger and liability to death through persecution (see vv. 30-32) if there be no prospect of resurrection. It is this which gives the key to the difficult expression, "baptized for the dead." Through the perils incident to the confession of Christ in those early days, martyrdom was of frequent occurrence. The ranks of Christians were thus continually thinned; but through the grace of God converts were constantly added, and in this scripture they are regarded as filling up the vacant places of those who had departed to be with Christ; and thus, when they were baptized unto Christ, as being baptized for, or over (see note to J.N.D. Trans.) the dead. Such a step, the Apostle argues, as led of the Spirit, would be without reason "if the dead rise not at all"; for why should they be baptized for the dead-come into a place where death was a daily possibility-if they had not an assured hope beyond the grave? But, blessed be God, they had this hope; for Christ was risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

## Be Careful for Nothing

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"The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing." Phil. 4:5, 6.

A captain said, "We had a terrible storm, coming up channel. I was on the bridge continually. But when the pilot came on board, I went straight to bed and in two minutes I was sound asleep." Why was that anxious captain at liberty to get rest? The pilot was there. The responsibility had been lifted from his shoulders, and was now on the pilot's. Our Pilot, the Lord Jesus, does not need to come on board. He is always nigh at hand.

## Blowing the Silver Trumpets

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Read Numb. 10:1-10

What is it that we need first and most if the life that lies ahead of us, if the Lord will, is to be fruitful in the things that are pleasing to God? How are we to fulfill the relationships of life, and in them adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things? What is it that lies at the basis of all spiritual life and service, and without which we can only fail in every sphere of life? With the exercises that come to most of us as we face the future, we may well ask such questions as these; and if we do we shall find that there is but one answer to them, and it is this: What is needed first and most and continuously, and without which we know nothing of the art of Christian living, is **THE FULL AND UNRESERVED ACKNOWLEDGMENT THAT WE BELONG TO GOD**. Without this we build without a foundation, we waste our energies, and live unreal and useless lives. Now if we belong to God, His claims are paramount; since He is God, that must be so, but the fact that He has redeemed us gives Him a double title; and for our blessing as well as for His glory we must own His claim and obey the word, "YIELD YOURSELVES TO GOD."

This great and indispensable truth is remarkably illustrated for us in the use of the silver trumpets. They figured largely in the everyday life of Israel, for never a day passed that they did not make their appeal to that people. They were blown on God's behalf for people to hear, and they were blown on the people's behalf for God to hear. It must be noted that they were made of silver. Every Israelite that was numbered from twenty years old and upward had to bring half a silver shekel as an offering to Jehovah—no more and no less. It was called atonement money. It was the acknowledgment on their part that they belonged to God who had redeemed them by blood and power out of the bondage of Egypt for His own pleasure, and the silver thus offered was devoted to the service of the sanctuary; and of part of it these trumpets were made (Exod. 30).

When the priests blew long and loud upon these trumpets, they proclaimed to the uttermost limits of Israel that the people belonged to God; that He had redeemed them and had rights over them that could not be challenged. They were to hold themselves at His disposal. It mattered not with what they were engaged, God's call was imperative, and their own pursuits must take second place, must be abandoned in fact, and that immediately at the time the silver trumpets sounded out their assembling call.

Let us give attentive ears to the truth that the silver mouths of these trumpets proclaim, for their story has been written for our learning. Do we not hear the sound of them in the New Testament in such words as these in 1 Cor. 6:19, 20? "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, **AND YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN? FOR YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE,**" and again in 1 Pet. 1:18, 19, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." In clarion tones these words call to our souls. Yet there is nothing discordant in their sound to him that has ears to hear and a heart to understand; for they do not only tell of an insistent claim but of a great love, a love that paid the price and shed the

blood, that it might possess us righteously and without a rival.

The words themselves are pure like silver, for "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Psalm 12:6. And obedience to the words of the Lord purifies the soul; for we read, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." (1 Pet. 1:22). For practical and continuous purity of heart and life we must keep the great fact that we belong to God before our souls. It is the word of God to us morning by morning. The silver trumpet of His Word proclaims His redemptive rights over us, and the way of blessing for us is to respond in a glad subjection to His will.

### 1. Calling the Assembly

The first use to which these trumpets were put was "for the calling of the assembly." The tabernacle was the God-appointed center for His redeemed people in those ancient days, and from that center His words went forth, and to it He summoned them when He would. That was the shadow, the picture; Christ is the substance, the reality. And if we are obedient to the Word of God, Christ will be our one and only center. Hear then the call of the silver trumpet of the Word in this respect. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Heb. 10:25. "This do in remembrance of Me." 1 Cor. 11:24. If lethargy of spirit has come over us, or if indifference of any sort has crept into our hearts in regard to these matters, may the words of God awaken us from it! And let each of us take heed to himself and not be influenced by another, for "the manner of some" must not affect us, but the Word; and the appeal that the Word makes is a personal one.

Suppose that when the priests at the tabernacle blew upon the silver trumpets calling the people together to hear the Word of the Lord, they were so engrossed with other matters that they did not heed the call. Suppose that Judah had a quarrel with Benjamin, and they considered their quarrel to be of more importance than the call of God, and so did not respond together to it. Suppose each tribe had made a center for itself, with its own laws, creed, and regulations. Suppose some were too busy with domestic, commercial or personal matters to hear the summons. What then? Would God be indifferent? No! The call would continue until some were aroused by it, and from first one tribe and then another there would come forth those who felt and owned God's claim. And there they would stand at last in the God-appointed meeting place, where He could speak to them and commune with them. Not many, we will suppose, only two or three when compared with the multitude of the people, but obedient to the call of God and united in that obedience! Would the Lord despise them? Would He refuse to say to them what He would have said to the whole of Israel if they had been there? We may be sure that the Word would not be less rich, or the meeting less blessed because not all were there. And so it is and will be as long as God's Word abides; and those who obey it, though but two or three, will prove how faithful He is to it. He cannot deny Himself.

### 2. The Journeying of the Camps

The people were pilgrims in that great wilderness, and they were not to settle down and make their home in it. They were traveling to Canaan, and they needed to be reminded of the fact. So when

the time came for them to pass on, an alarm was blown; the trumpets kept them on the move, and this we need also. How soon we can stagnate and sleep and forget our heavenly home and calling! Yet God is gracious, and His Word awakes us to renewed spiritual energy. It blows an alarm and says to us, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. 5:14. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Col. 3:2. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. 1:13. In such words as these do we hear the silver trumpets sounding an alarm, lest we should mind earthly things and forget our high destiny and our Father's house. For these two purposes the trumpets were blown on God's behalf in those times of old, and for us in these last days the word comes to us saying, "He that hath an ear, let him hear," and "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only."

### 3. When in Conflict With the Oppressor

Then the priests had to sound the silver trumpets on behalf of the people that they might be remembered before God. They had to do this when they were in conflict with their foes, for they had foes to meet, and they were never by their own prowess equal to them. And God made them that way, that they might in times of stress depend upon Him. They could not do without God. He was their refuge and resource and strength. When they blew the trumpets in the day of battle it was as though they said, "O God, we are Thine, for Thou hast redeemed us; undertake for us against the oppressor." And God ever responded to their appeal. And will He disappoint us if we take up this stand in faith? Let us test Him and see. How fierce are the struggles in which some Christians engage! They desire to do right and be overcomers when sore temptations beset them; they yearn after the victorious life, but they seem to yearn in vain; hope and disappointment have alternated in their experience, and the outcome of it is that, finding the foe too strong for them, they are discouraged and ready to give up the fight. Let all such learn to use the silver trumpets. Let the great fact that they are redeemed of the Lord get a firm hold upon their souls, and let them tell it out to God. Let their cry be, "O God, I am Thine; full of failure I am, often defeated I have been, yet I am loved by Thee, and redeemed by Thee, and at so great a cost; I cannot fight this battle; fight it for me; my foes are Thy foes, and Thine are mine; I hide in Thee and own that only through Thee can I be more than conqueror."

The Christian life is not a life of ease. It is not described in the Word in the language of the bedchamber, but of the battlefield. The world, the flesh and the devil are opposed to us if we belong to God. If we lose the sense that we belong to Him, we cannot prevail in the fight; but when we blow the trumpets before Him, then will the word be fulfilled, "Ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies." Numb. 10:9.

These sons of Jacob were to acknowledge God in all their circumstances. Whether they were exalted or brought low, whether they prospered or suffered adversity, whether they rejoiced or wept, the redemption note had to be dominant. And how else shall we be kept from independence of God when things go well with us? We are safe in the days of gladness if we rejoice before the Lord and own Him as the giver of every mercy, and if we hold ourselves and His gifts for Him, the Giver to whom we belong. And we are comforted and sustained if we call upon Him in the day of sorrow. If we blow the silver trumpet and say-

"LORD I AM THINE, though sorrows gather round me,

And death's dark shadow thwart my path is thrown; Savior divine, Thy outstretched hand upholds me,

And, being Thine, I shall not walk alone."

#### 5. At the Beginnings of Their Months

The beginnings of their months spoke of the constant changes in this life. At every change it is our privilege and our safety to depend upon God and to do His will whose we are. "Ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." Jas. 4:15. No change in our circumstances ought to be contemplated, much less completed, without the use of the silver trumpets. "O God, we belong to Thee; guide us in all our ways," should be our cry. The young man entering business, young Christians forming friendships, associations, new relationships, should let the great fact that they are bought with a price control them, and pour out the joyous notes of this blessed truth in the Lord's ear. Thus will they be spared many sorrows and preserved from great disaster. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Pro. 3:6.

#### 6. Over Their Burnt Offerings and Peace Offerings

With these sacrifices the people approached

unto God. The burnt offering was a type of our

worship, and the peace offering of our fellowship; our worship which has Christ, the beloved Son of God who went into death, as its subject, and our fellowship which finds its life and its food in Him also. But we cannot approach to God for worship except as redeemed by the blood of Christ. Vain and presumptuous is the notion of the modernist that he does not need this; "Without the shedding of blood is no remission." And the blood that has redeemed us gives us boldness before God, so that we can in holy fellowship unite in worship before Him, His redeemed ones. Hence we sing the new song unto our great and blessed Savior: "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

"I AM THE LORD THY GOD," is God's final word in the instructions given for the use of these trumpets. He can brook no rival. He must be supreme. For His pleasure He has redeemed us, and His will for us is good, perfect, and acceptable. It is not against us, but for us. It is against all that could do us harm, and has nothing but blessing for us; and as we own Him and live as those who belong to Him, as we daily, hourly, blow the silver trumpets, we shall prove that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

## The Canaanite Woman

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Matt. 15:21-28

"Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tiro and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me. But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Matt. 15:21-28.

It is in Matthew's Gospel that we find this most instructive incident, which reveals the Lord not merely as the minister of circumcision for God's truth, but as the display of His sovereign grace where God's curse lay, and Satan's power.

The Lord withdrew from the proud religionists of Jerusalem who made void the law of God for the sake of their tradition. He also laid bare to the disciples that only the plants of His Father take root, while all that issues from man's heart is defiled and defiling. The sinner needs God's grace to save him. This is shown in the otherwise desperate case of the Canaanite, whose daughter was sorely possessed of a demon.

Through this incident, many a soul learns why the Lord does not accede to its appeal. Hers was deep and earnest, yet He answered her not a word. For what claims on the Son of David had a Canaanite woman? When He reigns, there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts (Zech. 14:21).

When the two blind men cried, saying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us," He touched their eyes, which were then opened according to their faith (Matt. 9:27-30; 20:30-34). But repentance has its place as truly as faith, and God will have the soul to judge itself aright. "Cursed be Canaan" is the word from of old, and yet, was she not now asking His pity who is to avenge and deliver Israel?

How many today have said the words, "Father... forgive us our sins"! Yet, they, too, have received no answer; nor would they assert or believe that their sins are forgiven. They have gone on wholly untenable ground. They are not His sons by faith in Christ. They are not born of water and Spirit. They stand on law, supplemented by ordinances. They are unrenewed, serving divers lusts and pleasures, a prey to the power of darkness. They do not cry to God and own the truth of their estate, but they imitate the language of disciples, which they, in heart, are not. Have we not experienced it ourselves? Our state was below the Canaanite's.

The woman of Canaan evidently knew that no Israelite ever appealed to Christ in vain. She had faith in Him, but she had overlooked her own dismal position. Theirs were "the promises"; but what did she have? Not promises, but a curse. And He who is the truth would have her feel it. The disciples would have Him dismiss her. This was far from His heart. They disliked the discredit of her importunity, and wished to be rid of her. He meant to bless her, but it must be in the truth, as well as the grace of God. For this He waited, and she, as yet, had no answer; but He answered them, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Now faith, where real, perseveres; and the woman came and did Him homage, saying, "Lord, help me." He is, indeed, Lord of all-that is truth without assumption of privilege. To such an appeal, He does reply. "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and give it to dogs."

Thus does His grace help her to see where she was lacking. The light of God shines into her heart, and she bows at once. For she said, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." She apprehends where and what she really was, and takes her true place before God. She had forgotten that she was not a "sheep", privileged to claim the succor of Israel's Shepherd, but was truly a "dog" before Him. Yet, while no longer hiding this from her soul, but confessing it freely, she rejoins, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

What refreshment such faith gave to our Lord Jesus! She savored the things of God. She appreciated, believed, enjoyed the grace of which she was the object. And the Lord owned her "great... faith," and gave her all she wished.

## Christ As the Morning Star

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"The morning star" is the symbol of the Church's hope. There is beauty in this thought, derived as it is from Rev. 2:28 and 22:16.

The characteristics of the morning star are brilliancy and solitariness. It glitters beautifully, off in its distant sphere, but it is all alone. It does not command the notice of the world, as the sun does. It is only the watchman or the early riser that sees it. The time for its appearing is quite its own-it is neither night nor day. It fills a moment that is quite its own, and it is only the watchman, or the child of the morning, the one that is up before the sun, that has to do with it.

Is there not a voice in this, dear young Christian? Does it not tell your inmost soul of a coming that is to precede the sunrise-of the appearing of One who does not belong to the world, whose business is not with the earth, or with the children of men, but with an elect people who wait for an unearthly Savior?

"Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching" (Luke 12:37).

## Christ for My Sins and Christ for My Cares: Part 1

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It is a wonderful thing to think of the reality of the intimacy with which the Lord carried on intercourse with people in this world-His ways and manners with them-and who He is. In truth it changes all our thoughts of God.

He has visited men before the day of judgment, and we find Him giving, and not judging-dealing with them in quite another way. He who is to be the Judge had to come beforehand to be the Savior; came in grace, seeking worshipers; came to visit the hearts of men where they were (naughty hearts); came to such, not to judge at all, but to deal with our souls about the very sins for which He would have had to judge us. If I see Him there, I find He has dealt with my sins already in a totally different way. It confirms the judgment, of course-puts the seal of God's testimony on it in the strongest way. But at the same time it gives me to know and understand that the whole thing has been decided in a totally opposite manner. Instead of coming to claim the debt, He comes to pay it; both ways prove the debt was there, but the dealing is totally different.

He comes and deals with sinners in exactly the opposite way to claiming the debt, and deals effectually; that is the gospel. "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." It is a Savior we have to tell of, and I could not speak thus if He were not a Savior who has wrought an effectual salvation. Then comes exercise of heart and the discovery of what we are by His Word, to bring us to repentance; but it tells us we are saved. "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." It was at all cost to Himself that He could say it; but He did not recall it, or deceive this woman of Samaria. Can we go in peace? We go with the consciousness that we go on the Lord's own warrant in perfect peace, and with nothing to fear as to the consequences of sin, if He has said, "Go in peace."

Therefore He sends out the word to the children of Israel, "preaching peace by Jesus Christ." And "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Beloved friends, do you have peace? Do you have what He announced and sent out to be preached? It is no good telling me you cannot have peace. There it is. Was it to be preached and not believed? God would have us happy with Himself, and therefore sends the testimony of peace. It is no light thing, for He has made peace through the blood of His cross; and being justified by faith, we have peace with God. It is a real thing, an effectual thing, a divine thing, founded on what has been perfectly done. If I believe, I come into this to enjoy it. It is that God has visited us to bring us peace. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "In Me... peace." Hence God gives Himself, over and over again, the name, "God of peace." It is the name of predilection which He gives Himself. He never calls Himself the God of joy-joy may change, but peace is eternally settled.

We see how He dealt with this woman. It was through grace. "Salvation is of the Jews." They had the law, the temple, everything that belonged to God, like the elder brother of Luke 15. But the Jews cast Him out, and He must needs go through Samaria. This was the beginning of His

ministry.

The Pharisees were jealous of Him, so He goes out and leaves this place of salvation according to promise. It is the terrible condition of the world, that the Son of God has been in it and they cast Him out. He came here and has been rejected; hence the testimony is, that the whole world lieth in the wicked one. The world not only sinned, but rejected Him who came into it when man had sinned-the world that had grown up since God cast man out of Eden. If I call myself a Christian, I profess that the world has cast out and crucified the Son of God. Still the grace goes on. God took that as the means and occasion to bring it out. That is what is so glorious in the cross, that that which was the perfect expression of man's enmity, was the perfect expression of God's love. There was the meeting place between man's hatred against God and God's sovereign love to man. In John 4 He was not yet there, but was walking in the grace and spirit of it.

Here, rejected out of Judea, He must needs go through Samaria, and we get the blessed truth that God is above all sin, because Samaria was most hateful. He can exercise His love in the scene of the thing He abhors. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He gave His blessed Son, one with Himself, down to death, to drinking the cup of wrath for those who were nothing but sinners. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

Now, mark another thing we have here. We find Him thoroughly a man, coming down to this world, "who... made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." O that hearts could get hold of this! I speak now of the way that He came-of His death I will speak again-that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor. It is brought out in the circumstances of this history. Wearied with His journey, He comes to the well and sits down where He can find a seat. Do our hearts really believe that this was the Lord? Why was He in a condition to be weary? Why there? It was perfect love. He comes down to take this place. He passes through the world-the Holy One that could not be contaminated to bring sinners the love they needed.

This was expressed in the most lovely way in the case of the leper in Luke 5, "Who... besought Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." The leper was sure of the power, but did not know the love that was there. He carries the love right up to the leper, "and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean." If a man touched a leper, he was unclean and put out of the camp. But He could not be defiled. This is a picture of the way the Lord was here. Holiness, undefiled and undefilable, carries to sinners the love they need.

"Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well," and the disciples go away to find meat. Oh! to think of the Lord Himself, whom none of the princes of this world knew, but who was the Lord of glory, sitting weary on the well, thirsty and dependent upon this world for a drink of water-the world that was made by Him, and knew Him not! "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink." He was dependent on this woman for water. In this very fact she finds out that there was something remarkable in the Man. It was extraordinary that a Jew should speak to her, a woman of Samaria, and her mind is attracted by it.

Let me say a word as to this woman, so full of blessed interest for us, as drawing out into exercise the heart of the Lord. She was a poor, vile creature-alone there. Hers was an isolated heart; she

had isolated herself by sin. She finds One more lonely than herself, and that One was the blessed Lord! She could go to the men of the city, but He was totally alone and had not one to go to, though Himself the most affable and accessible of men.

There were no circumstances in which He was ever found where power, love, goodness, and truth were not readily in exercise. There was no weariness if a poor desolate sinner came. When the disciples returned, they said, "Hath any man brought Him aught to eat?" No matter what company He was in, He was always accessible to their hearts; but there was no sympathy for Him. No love and goodness met Him in going through this world; His heart was utterly a stranger in it; yet He had all sympathy for others. When He had to answer for Himself before the chief priests who were hunting Him to death, the moment the cock crew, His eye was upon Peter-never wearied. No circumstances He was in could ever touch the spring of grace and goodness that was in Him.

But mark what comfort for us! Here was the Judge of quick and dead-not as judge, of course, but the Person who is to be Judge, meeting with the poor sinner in grace, sitting with the very person that deserved to be judged. In that sense, in the communion of grace, He is sitting with us. It is just what is going on through the gospel. "We are ambassadors therefore for Christ, God as it were beseeching by us." 2 Cor. 5:20; J.N.D. Trans.

He is sitting on the well asking drink. She says, "How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" Mark the answer of the Lord. It has two distinct points in it. "If thou knewest the gift of God." It is the ground He takes with you: "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The next thing is, "And who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink." That is, if you knew-not who I am, but-who it is that has come down so low as to ask a drink of water; if your eye were opened to see God giving eternal life-come to require nothing (and who would not get it if He did)-you would be in perfect confidence before Him.

He once came looking for fruit and found wild grapes. Under the law He sought for fruit and His servants were killed. He said, I have yet one Son, but when they saw the Son they said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him." The effect was no fruit but hatred to Him and His Father. Now He does not come (I do not say producing fruit-He does-but) looking for it. He has come to sow (not looking for fruit), dealing with the sinner personally in the gospel; and where there is grace, and the sense of need, there will be the fruit of the Spirit, and He will look for it.

Human nature judges God, but God's nature comes out entirely superior to that. He gives. Thus we get these two blessed principles: that God is giving, and that the Lord has come down to such poverty as to be dependent upon a creature for a drink of water-come to put Himself down under the wants of those who had nothing but wants, so as to meet them. She is attracted; there is power in His word; and He begins speaking of spiritual things to her.

## Christ for My Sins and Christ for My Cares: Part 2

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"The woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." John 4:15. This is a remarkable expression of confidence in His word. But mark the state of her heart, entirely occupied with her water pot and her wants. Do you know anybody like that-people who own the Word of God to be the Word of God-who own its authority, but are in heart completely occupied with the things of life? As a natural person she received not the things of the Spirit of God. Her mind was awakened to respect for His word, so that she could believe what He said, but she could not grasp spiritual things; they had not the smallest entrance into her heart, so full was it of temporal things.

What was to be done? He had been pouring out words of grace; all had flown over her head-passed over a heart absorbed with the things of the world. He takes the other side, not the gift of God, but the state of man-"Go, call thy husband, and come hither." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Quite true. She tells the truth to hide the truth-as is often done in this poor world. The conscience is reached now, and there is where the Word enters always. It is quite right that it should attract the heart, but the conscience must be reached. "Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly." It is all out now; her conscience is brought into the presence of God. Everything must be out in the light that has come into this world. It is wonderful how quick memory even becomes under this action of the light. Sins are recalled which have long been forgotten. Light has come in; she has understanding now; before, she had not understood a word; she was completely buried in her cares.

Verse 19. "The woman saith unto Him, Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet." The Word of God had reached her conscience, and wherever it does it has authority, and it is the only way. When I find a book that tells me all that ever I did, I know what it is. It does not require to be proved by man. No book in the world has authority till it reaches the conscience. Then it is its own witness to the folly of attacks made upon it, and proves the folly of unbelief. It is the Word of God itself-its own witness. I do not take a candle to see if the sun shines. But do you not see that it shines? Then you are blind. The only thing that brings authority with it is the Word of God coming into the conscience-"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

God is love-His blessed Son, a poor Man speaking to the woman, but He is also light come in. These always go together. You never find when the gospel is received, that it does not get in as light to the conscience. There is no fruit without it. Where it gets in, it will be light, exposing all that is there; and if it does not, there is no root. The point where intelligence is brought into the heart of this poor woman, is where her conscience is reached. How would you like Him to tell you everything? Does He not know every wicked thing I have done? It should come up in judgment, but my comfort is that it was all out before Him when He was dealing with me in grace. Now I can bear it that the eye of God searches everything through His Word. In dealing with the soul, love has brought the light here. Love attracted Peter (Luke 5). Why does he not run away? Why go up

to Him and say, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord"? He was drawn by the love and grace, and convicted by the light that love had brought in. Light that manifests to myself what I am in the sight of God, brings me there, so that I am in the light as He is. There must be truth in the inward parts, but did that hinder the Lord's saying, "If thou knewest the gift of God"? Now instead of trying to make things straight with God, I have found Him, knowing everything I have done, in perfect grace. There is then no hiding sin. All is brought into the light by God.

Mark another thing. God is bringing in something new. Was He going to trust the heart of this poor woman? No. He was going to get her to trust His heart. People say, May not my heart deceive me? To be sure it may. Will His deceive me? The grace of God brings salvation to us- brings us everything we need. So He brought strength at the pool of Bethesda-"Take up thy bed and walk." He is not requiring anything from us, but brings the thing we need-brings Himself. And there is nothing we need like Him. He brings us to repentance-to the conviction of what we are, as here. But He comes saying, "If thou knewest the gift of God." God has something to give-eternal life through Jesus Christ. But I shrink from coming to God. Quite right, to a certain extent. But who is it that I am with, that is bringing in this light? The very Man that asked for a drink of water. "If thou knewest... who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink"-a poor Man with nothing but words of grace-you would have trusted Him. "Thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." Do you think I could trust God in the day of judgment? But can I trust the poor Man sitting on the side of the well? It is when my eyes are upon the Person and work of the Lord, that I find I have been talking with the Lord Himself, and He had not a word against me, and yet knew all that ever I did. My heart has the blessed consciousness that it has met God.

There are the poor infidels beating out their brains to find out about God, but I have met Him. He had nothing but kind and gracious words, though He knew all my sins. His whole ways and words and works are perfect love to me, and the love of one come to seek me as a sinner. The Father seeketh worshipers. You have not to go to this mountain or that. He sent the Savior seeking. How many does He find? Does He find hearts here that would pass by the Lord Jesus-that have read hundreds of passages in which His grace was manifested, and gone away untouched, unmoved, though God was spending His heart on them?

See how even the heart of the Lord rejoices over this one poor sinner (v. 32), "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Do you believe that of Christ? He had come to open her eyes, and that was the Lord's meat. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." It is lovely to see the Lord's heart in that way. Just see how it opened out to all the rest. "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest." He has actually been rejected out of Judea, but the case of this woman has so comforted Him now, it opens out His heart to say, The fields are white to harvest.

Then we have to go on to see that sins having been perfectly manifested, the love and cross of the Lord Jesus comes in, because sins never could be allowed. Nothing remains but the love that comes for the sinner. The heart was won; the conscience was reached. But what about these things that she had done? The very Lord who was speaking to her, goes under them and puts them away. We do need something else than that which reaches the conscience; we need that which purges it. Though our sins were as scarlet, they are made white as snow, and we are bound

to believe it, for "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." He has charged Himself with them. I was convicted, and then humbled about them. But before the day of judgment comes, Christ came, and on the cross was bearing the sins He would have had to judge. The cross was God's dealing with Him about them. When He comes in judgment, I say, That is the Man who put away my sins. Before the time comes for judgment, the Person who is to be the Judge has come Himself to bear the judgment. The question is not then whether I deserve condemnation-"There is none righteous, no, not one"-but what has God wrought? Can I dare to doubt it?

If I am out in the light before God, there is no place where I see sins so terrible as in the cross. But if they are not all perfectly put away forever, they never can be, for Christ cannot die again. See Heb. 10 He will rise up for judgment, but He is sitting down now because all is completely done; if not (I mean as to the work, not as to your feelings), it never can be. That being so, therefore, when the soul is exercised, I look at the cross and say, He has borne my sins. I hate them the more. That is right; it is the work of the Spirit in us; but I speak of the work done for us. Do not speak of the past, present, and future sins; it is a foolish confusion of the time when my heart laid hold of it, and of the work that put them away. As to future sins, I ought never to think of sinning again. As to past sins, how many were past when Christ died? The work was done when they were all future. It is confounding the work done, with the effect in me. He is raised in glory; is there then any question whether I am to be glorified?

There is another thing as to the cross. It all passed between God and Christ alone-of which the outward darkness was the sign-according to the exigencies and righteousness of God, where it must be according to the absolute perfection of those who wrought it. Men had nothing to do with it; all we had to do with it was our sins, and, we may add, the hatred that killed Christ. It was a divine work about my sins.

Now as to the effect of it. We saw the poor woman absolutely absorbed with her water pot; but the moment her conscience was thoroughly reached, she went off to testify to the others-If you only get Christ, He will tell you all things. She leaves her water pot. The Holy Ghost has not recorded it for nothing. The thing that absorbed her is gone. The word and power of Jesus, that gave her conviction of sin, also substituted Christ for the things that had power over her heart. Christ for my righteousness instead of my sins; Christ as the object for my heart instead of my cares.

I add a word for the comfort of any soul that is convicted of sin, but has not peace. Supposing a person has received the word of Christ, but cannot say he has got Him, but says, If only I could find Christ! I find so much sin in me. I would give anything to have Christ. What put that desire into the heart? You have got Him as a great Prophet; His word has reached the heart, you are convicted of sin, but do not know if you have Christ as Savior. He has spoken to you about eternal life, and you have received a word that has made Christ precious to you, and your conscience bad. Then you have got Christ. His word has had the authority of the Word of God in your conscience. If, that be so, the Christ that has visited you is the Christ that has borne your sins. The Christ who thus speaks to us to bring these thoughts to our hearts, is the One that through grace has borne our judgment before the day of judgment comes.

Now, how is it with you? Has your heart given up its water pot for Christ? I do not mean that there will be no conflict. But has your heart so heard His Word that it has penetrated into your conscience? Do you think you are going with your sins into heaven? How many sins had Eve

committed when God turned her out of Eden? One!

You have committed more. Do you expect to get into heaven with your sins or without them? Are they all put away? How can you rest a moment until you know it? What madness and folly!

The One who deals with our conscience is the One who came where we are, and is now beseeching us to be reconciled to God. It will be a terrible thing in the day of judgment to have had the heart closed against the voice of the Charmer. Has He not charmed wisely? Were ever words like His?-words of grace, unutterable grace, with which He has sought to win us. It is a blessed truth that before the day of judgment comes, the Judge has come Himself to deliver. Of course you will have to be judged then, if you do not accept the deliverance now!

## Christ Is All

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More and more, I am made to feel that Christ does not have His proper place among the children of God. He is not the object. It is either a doctrine, a dogma, a party, or our experience-something besides Christ. We seem possessed with very much the same spirit that actuated Peter on the mount, when he said: "Let us make here three tabernacles." The Father solemnly rebukes this, "While he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud which said: 'This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.' And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid; and Jesus came and touched them, and said, 'Arise, and be not afraid.' And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only." (Matt. 17:1-8.)

Have you ever been in the "cloud," dear brother? Have you ever heard the "voice"? Have you been on your "face"? Have you felt the "touch"? Then, have you heard another voice, "Arise"? Do your eyes see "no man save Jesus only"? Many, perhaps, have reached the top of the mount; but few, very few, have been in the "cloud," have heard the "voice," have been on their "faces," have risen to see "Jesus only."

"Christ is all." (Col. 3:11.) Do we make Him this? Is it a question of my salvation? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16:31.) Is it a question of relationship with God? "Ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:26.) Is it a question of experience? "For to me to live is Christ." (Phil. 1:21.) Is it a question of service? "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13.) Is it a question of my path? ".am the way." (John 14:6.)

Is it a question of heaven or the place to which my path leads? He would define it as "where I am." (John 14:3.) "O, let us know more of that rich blessedness which comes of making Christ all," of seeing "Jesus on/y. " Our cry should be-"O, to know Him!" (Phil. 3:10.) In our selfishness we cry and beg for blessings. It is the Blessor we need, HIMSELF. HE is the joy of the Father's heart. Let us taste with Him the delight He takes in His Son. Christ is infinitely higher than doctrine or experience. Experience we shall have, but only with Him can our hearts be ravished and raptured.

Why is it we are not changed more from "glory to glory"? The veil has been rent; the blood has been sprinkled; the Spirit has been given. The reason is we are occupied with ourselves and the work of the Spirit in us; rather than with Christ alone. This is the weakness in the widespread holiness movement, so much of which is superficial. Let us look more in that unveiled face, from which streams the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. (2 Corinthians chapters 3 and 4) All else will pale and fade if we will but linger there.

Let me say here-the Spirit never occupies me with His work in me. And if I am thus occupied, I am experimentally out of the Spirit. The word is, "He shall glorify ME." (John 16:5-15.) To go further, the work of Christ, wonderfully blessed as it is, can never be the object of my heart. It gives my conscience peace, sweet peace, but only His PERSON can satisfy my heart. And O, how His Person does. Ten thousand hallelujahs to Him!

The Father directs our attention to Him. (Matt. 17:5.) The Holy Ghost would occupy us with Him. (Acts 7:55, 56.) The Word of God testifies of Him. (John 5:39.) He is the object of faith; He is the object of love; He is the object of hope; and the faith, or love, or hope, that does not make Him the object is spurious and unreal. He is all for my path; He is all for my service; He is all for my worship; blessed, blessed, be His Name. He is not on the cross, He is not in the grave; He is on the throne. Wondrous fact, a Man in the glory of God, and that One my Savior; my Priest; my Advocate; the One who died for me; the One who lives for me; the One who is coming for me; the Bridegroom of His Church. It is not surprising that Peter should say, "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." The ungodly world as well as the religious world are equally bent upon shutting Him out. The former is "reserved unto fire," the latter He will vomit out of His mouth. (2 Pet. 3 and Rev. 3.) Therefore keep clear from them both, if not clear, let us "Go forth unto Him." (Heb. 13:13.) He is enough, and it pleases His heart for us to make everything of Him.

May it be with us. Christ, Christ, CHRIST. You cannot get a better portion or place than He gives. Your portion here will be "food and raiment," your place "outside." Your portion there is "all spiritual blessings," your place "in Him."

And now, dear brother, let every affection, every desire, every thought, and every aim, be gathered to, and centered in Him.

## Christ the Life

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The true God is a God of active love. Scripture allows no such thing as God not caring for what is going on. But you say, Does He not allow evil? Certainly; He let angels and men fall, but this in both was the fault of the creature only.

Have you not all known at some time or other of your life a season when you resolved to repent and do good? How has it turned out? Did you succeed? or have you not proved that you are bad, and can do no good thing? Why is this? Did God make man so? God made the earth and the race without one evil in either; God pronounced everything to be very good; and evil would have been kept out if man had looked to God. But man fell; and since, "the world by wisdom knew not God."

The wisdom of the world does not want God. Man wants his own way and will, whereas the glory of one that knows God is to do His will.

The Bible read in faith explains not merely how evil spoiled all, but how Jesus came as the way, the truth, and the life, and how He justifies God in receiving poor sinners. Grace alone can meet the need; and as He came in love to win us, so He died in the fullness of love to give us a purged conscience that, so reconciled to God, we might worship and serve Him. If He had left man in rebellion, it would have been a strange proof of love. Where would be grace in giving man food and all things necessary for this life and then letting him perish forever at last? No; He gave His Son that the believer should not perish.

The very least thing that God made bears the stamp of His hand; and not only so, but of His mind, of His beneficent goodness. From the first, God looked into man's condition and graciously met it all, unsought and unexpected, in His grace. He sent His Son, His well-beloved, His only begotten, the One who thought it not robbery to be equal with God. This is the One God gave for your salvation.

God has done what is far better than slurring over your sins; He spared not His own Son. And mark the manner of it. The Son became man, the obedient One, the only man who never sought to do His own will. Where was there ever such a sight, such a reality, before? He could say, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." The very idea of such obedience was as far from every heart till Jesus came, as was God's love to lost sinners. Nor this only. Jesus, when asked, "Who art Thou?" could answer, "Absolutely what also I say to you" (John 8:25; W. Kelly Trans.). Who could ever say this but One? Jesus was always just what He also said. Blessed truth, and how suited for God and for man! He Himself was the truth, the perfect truth, sent down to poor sin-blinded man; so that he has the truth, not only detailed in a book, but embodied in a Person, and this a Man in the world tried as nobody ever was. It is everywhere the same truth, and all is perfect harmony with the utmost variety. No doubt there are shades of distinction in many different books of the Bible, but it is surely our ignorance when we find them irreconcilable.

The mere handiwork of God is beyond the wisest of men, and the wisest are precisely those who are most ready to acknowledge their ignorance. The more men really know, the more deeply they

feel and own how little they know. Just so with the Word of God. What are difficulties to me may not be so to someone more spiritual; and when by faith I see more clearly, the difficulties not only vanish but turn into the strongest confirmation of revealed truth. One Person puts everything into its proper place- Christ. If He were not God, He could not bring into relation with God; if not a man, He could have no point of contact with me. Both are necessary for His work. It is He who says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Man feels his weakness, his unworthiness, his unfaithfulness, when he judges himself before God. What life is this that Jesus is? What life did He manifest? Was it the life of Adam? Adam, we read, was made a living soul, but who and what is Christ? A quickening Spirit. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." Was it of angels? No; of men. It was not merely for Israel; the pride of the Jew did not like such grace.

Let us go back to a Sabbath day at Nazareth when our Lord went into the synagogue, and the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him; and He read those blessed words of chapter 61, "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me, because Jehovah hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor," etc. (W. Kelly Trans.). He declared that this prophecy was that day fulfilled in their ears and so stopped reading in the middle of our verse 2, the end of what He was then accomplishing, and as distinct from the still future "day of vengeance of our God". When He had read so far, He closed the book and sat down, with words of grace to all. Did He speak the truth? A great deal turns on this for our souls. Was He really the One foretold by the Spirit of Jehovah, the One that God the Father had sealed? If so, our salvation turns on Him.

He went down into death to bear the judgment of every one that believes on Him. Was not this infinite love? Yes; but it was more-it was righteousness. It was not by power that He met the judgment due to sinners; it was by suffering. He suffered, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. This explains the way, certainty, and fullness of salvation, which would all be a myth if He were not God as well as man. There is nothing that binds all the truth together if He be not Emmanuel, God with us.

"In this was manifested the love of God." Is it because He gave the law? No; for this brought in nothing but condemnation on guilty man. Although the law was in itself righteous, at best it made men feel their state. Love was "because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him," and this brings out the glory of His Person. He was the Son of God, above, outside, and beyond all else, both the incarnate and the Creator, the eternal Word of God; and the Father would have it known. It was necessary that the testimony should go forth if man was to live Godward and be blessed. And what was the purpose for which this only begotten Son was sent? "That we might live through Him."

Adam only transmitted his own fallen nature, but in Christ we have One who only did His Father's will, and He is a life-giving Spirit-the Head of a new family. Those who look thus to Him, live. God declares that whosoever believes in Him has everlasting life and shall be saved. What grace! And this is the sure but the only way. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

He, the Eternal Life, came to die atoningly; He became a man in order that He might die for our sins. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He became a man not only that I might partake of His life, eternal life in Him, but that He might die to take away my sins. It is God's testimony about His Son; it is His declaration of Himself; "He that believeth on the Son bath everlasting life." Life is given me now in this world that I might live the life of Christ, and not according to my own old life.

The moment we have life in Christ, we have a divine sense of our sins as hateful and intolerable. You know that all you have been doing has its spring in self, in nature. But if you receive the new life, you have also in Him the efficacy of His death to meet your sins, and this is salvation. It is sad shortcoming to preach only the death and not also the life of Christ, to be satisfied with merely showing how sins may be forgiven by the blood, without a word about life in Him. It looks like man taking only what man wants, the negative relief of what clears the conscience, not the positive devotedness to God. But this is not enough for the saint, still less for the glory of God. We cannot have part of the blessing, but a whole Christ. God's will is that every believer should live in and of this new life; that is, the life of every soul who is born again. God is better to him than his own thoughts. The truth is that it is Christ, and not his own notions, or even conscience, that he must rest on by faith. Endued with natural life as a son of Adam, the believer has just as truly a new divine life in Christ. Is it possible to lose this new life? It is eternal life. What does "eternal" mean? But it is possible and easy to lose the joy of this life.

It is most important for a believer to distrust himself, but it is wrong to God and His Word, as well as weakness to self, to doubt His faithfulness, or to think that Christ's life does not stand forever. If the new life in any way depended on himself, he must soon fall away into irreparable ruin. People talk of "the perseverance of the saints" as if it were they who held fast, whereas it is really they who are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." It is not then my perseverance, but divine power, that keeps me through faith.

That is the word that I leave with you. How plain it is that the whole practical walk of believers flows from life in Christ, and is based for their peace on the blessed fact that they have been brought to God. The death of Christ takes away my guilt and bonds, but what is to be the spring of new life? How am I to mortify my old life? You may tell the old man to die, but it does not wish to die. God declares that He has given me, if a believer, another nature-new life in Christ. Nicodemus had to learn that he needed to be born afresh, not only to hear what Jehovah had to teach. You may be sure that when a soul really goes to God for its wants, it always receives through the Lord Jesus; whenever a soul asks in faith, God fails not to give. Grace never sends away empty.

Where is the man who looked to Christ and did not find Him? Does He not say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life"? He is the only way of deliverance from all danger, evil, and sin; His blood, if you believe, brings you now to God without a stain upon you. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." If you have Him, you have life in Him. Mere nature is incapable of pleasing God. Faith is the means of life, pardon, peace, strength, everything for the needy; and faith lays hold of what God says and does and gives in Christ, and it is the Spirit of truth which produces faith by our hearing the Word. Thus we see the importance of the Spirit applying the Word to our souls. But all-important as the Word and the Spirit are, neither could avail for the soul without Christ for life, and Christ's death to take away our sins.

## Christian Obedience

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Christianity substitutes obedience to a person, for that of obedience to a law. In legal obedience, a person fulfills a contract which he has undertaken. Christian obedience is like that of a slave to his master whom he loves. He does what he is told, without a will of his own. If I bid my child do three things, and he does only two of them which he likes to do and takes his own way in the third, insubjection of will is as much evidenced by his disobeying in one point, as if he had in all.

Christ's obedience was perfect. Every trial He was put through only manifested that in Him is no sin. In the garden of Gethsemane He chose rather to have God's face hidden than to fail to obey. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. There is nothing so humble or so unselfish as obedience. It supposes that we have no will of our own.

## The Church - the Bride of Christ

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It is now about one hundred and forty-five years since the Spirit of God opened the eyes of many of the beloved saints to the truth of the Church as the body of Christ, united to Him by the Spirit, to wait for His coming as the Bridegroom for His bride.

Looking back over the history of the years before this precious recovery, we together thank God for the grace that at all times preserved a testimony to the truth of the gospel and that gave the knowledge of forgiveness of sins, and peace with God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Many noble witnesses suffered for the truth in those dark days of superstition. Their names and their record of faithfulness will not be forgotten.

While we rejoice and give thanks for this testimony of faithfulness maintained by the grace of God through the dark ages, we would not forget the recovery that added the blessedness of the long lost truth that "Christ and we are one." God by His Spirit has now gathered a testimony on that ground, bearing witness to the truth that the Church is a heavenly company, waiting as the chosen bride for her Beloved, separated in spirit by the calling of that grace that has made us heirs together with Him, to be glorified together when He comes!

It is with these thoughts in mind that the following meditation has been written. Are we not in danger of losing the preciousness and freshness of this truth, dear saints of God? Can we be reminded too often of this wondrous secret, hidden in God, but now disclosed from the heart of Christ in glory? May we hold it fast, and live in the joyful anticipation of seeing the face of Him who "loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25).

Let us first think of what the Church is to Christ. "Christ... loved the church, and gave Himself for it." His present service is to separate the Church, through the revelation of His love for it, that it might be His peculiar treasure as the espoused virgin of His choice. He, the Son of God in Manhood, is to have a bride! We, the members of His body, were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, to share with Him in Manhood all His given glory unto the ages of ages. It is this revelation of coming glory with Christ that separates our hearts from the vain glory of this present world, and gives to the Church its proper stranger ship and pilgrim character. While enjoying this, we do not desire or seek the honor and the glory of a world that has rejected the precious Object of our affections.

The Church as the bride is the object of His love. This love was proved even unto death, when He, the eternal Son of God, bore the wrath and the judgment of God, exhausting all of it, that we might know nothing of those waves and billows. By this He revealed the depths of the divine bosom, while at the same time making atonement for sin according to the holiness of God. Language itself is exhausted in telling the suffering of those three hours of darkness when the wrath of God fell upon Him. He is the very One upon whom the heavens had opened to declare that He was, and is, the delight of the Father's heart. Every moral glory shone out in noon-day radiancy at the cross. God was there made known in His holiness. He who dwells "in the light which no man can

approach unto," (1 Tim. 6:16), was there judging sin according to the true nature of God, and at the same time revealing Himself in love in its fullest measure. He suffered all this so that we might know the divine bosom in all its blessedness, as the source from which we have received grace and been made heirs together with Him. Christ in resurrection is the beginning of new creation. The Church, His bride, shares His headship over all things.

While we rejoice in the truth that: "The Son of God... loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20), as an individual, let us never forget what the Church is to Christ, collectively. Every one that is indwelt of the Spirit now forms part of the body of Christ. How rich the revelation of this blessedness! Paul received it by revelation from Christ in glory (Eph. 3:1-10). He tells us of the precious expression of it in the breaking of bread, when the unbroken loaf on the table speaks to our hearts of our place as members of His body (1 Cor. 10:17), while the broken loaf tells us of His death (1 Cor. 11:24), for "Christ... loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25).

How precious to "come together" as gathered in His name; not as a sect or party, but as members of His body, gathered by His Spirit to give expression to the truth of the "one body" in the breaking of the bread, till He comes to receive His bride.

The Church, united to Christ in glory, is absolutely heavenly in calling and hope. We are now gathered to a rejected Christ (John 12:32). At His coming we shall be gathered to a glorified Christ (Eph. 1:10). The life we have received is heavenly in its source (1 John 1:1-3). The Object of that life is Christ in glory (Phil. 3). The hope of that life is our being "glorified together" with Him (Rom. 8:17). The Church will be the Eve in His paradise, the Queen on His throne, the richest and brightest glory of the inheritance He has won. In calling any out of the world, He betroths them to His Son, to be one with Him in thought, desire, and hope now, and eventually to be glorified together with Him in His glory! O let us not lose in our souls the preciousness of what the Church is to Him! Let us rejoice in being gathered as members of His body, bearing His reproach, because of our heavenly calling, as we remember Him in His death, while living in daily expectancy of His coming for His bride. While rejoicing in our individual blessing, may we hold fast and rejoice in the rich revelation of the truth, "Christ... loved the church, and gave Himself for it."

#### The Vision of Coming Glory

"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." Pro. 29:18. Keeping the law in the book of Proverbs is walking in wisdom's ways. In the Old Testament we have the vision of coming glory. on the earth. The voice of wisdom in the Word will lead to that "perfect day" (Pro. 4:18).

For us, the "vision" is of coming glory with Christ above. The truth of the Church as the bride of Christ in glory was "hid in God," and given to the Apostle Paul by revelation (Eph. 3). It is that "better thing" of which we read in Heb. 11:40. Should we not value this precious revelation, and burst into praise as we discover the revealed secret of such infinite grace that has made us heirs with Him, of the whole vast scene of new creation? -He, the One "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:2. This energy of faith is seen in Paul, who having been caught up to paradise, and hearing and seeing the blessed Lord in glory, with all the rich revelation of coming glory, now tells us that he pressed "toward the mark for the prize of the calling on high of God in

Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:14 (J.N.D. Trans.) There we shall be with Him and like Him, when He shall subdue all things unto Himself.

The vision of this coming glory, as revealed in the Word, sustains the believer in the path of faith. He lives in a new atmosphere, with new thoughts, new hopes, new pleasures. We know that Christ is "head over all things to the church, which is His body" (Eph. 1:22, 23). The knowledge of resurrection glory with Christ strengthens the inward man, so that we faint not, knowing that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. 4:17.

Oh, what loss when the beloved flock of God loses this vision of coming glory! We need the finished work of Christ on the cross to give us peace, the Person of Christ for our meditation, and the coming glory with Christ to separate our hearts from the vain-glory of this present world.

"O worldly pomp and glory, •

Your charms are spread in vain!

I've heard a sweeter story!

I've found a truer gain!"

In the epistle to the Ephesians we are seen as already seated with Christ in heavenly places, while we await the time when He will "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." Eph. 1:10. Then the next verse tells us: "In whom... we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." v. 11. This is followed by the prayer of the Apostle that the eyes of our heart (J.N.D. Trans.) may be enlightened to "know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." v. 18. Oh! beloved saints of God, think of that blessed Man in the glory waiting to take His inheritance until He has His bride with Him! His saints, now united to Him as members of His body, to be presented to Him "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing"! Eph. 5:27. "Quickened... together" (Eph. 2:5), we have life in a risen Christ. "Raised... together" (v. 6), by the Spirit united to Christ in glory, soon to be "glorified together" (Rom. 8:17). What a revelation of blessedness to cheer our hearts as we own that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth! May we glory in our heavenly calling, though it brings the reproach of Christ.

In the epistle to the Colossians we have the widest scene of glory in the revelation of God. First Paul marks the real fruit of the Spirit in these dear saints in chapter 1, verses 1 to 8. Then he earnestly prays that they "might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (v. 9). This understanding would give character to their walk (v. 10), and would enable them to suffer in patience, and even in joyfulness, because of the vision of coming glory with Christ (v. 11).

Paul then looks on and sees Christ in headship over all the new creation scene of glory, "In which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Col. 2:3 (J.N.D. Trans.) Hence we see old things passed away; behold all things become new; and in this new creation, "all things are of God" (2 Cor. 5:18). The true nature of God is seen in all this new creation. Shortly, every trace of sin, and all the ruin brought into this Adam creation by sin, will be gone forever! This is "the day of

God."

Now philosophy and man's vain (empty) deceit would rob the child of God of this precious revelation (Col. 2:8). Paul gloried in his sufferings, desiring that the truth of the Church as the body of Christ might be apprehended by faith. The revelation given by Paul was that "better thing," contrasted with the Old Testament promises of earthly blessing which had been the subject of Old Testament prophecy. These Old Testament saints who died in faith will have their place in heavenly glory, though never forming part of the Church. They are the "friend(s) of the bridegroom," of which Scripture speaks in Rev. 19:9 and John 3:29.

No wisdom of man could ever discover the things that belong to revelation (1 Cor. 2:6-16). They were hid in God, but given to us through the revelation given to Paul. Now, after being long lost to the Church, they have been recovered to us now in precious grace, but only enjoyed in the measure in which faith walks in obedience to this exceedingly precious revelation.

There will be various families in heaven and earth in the coming day of glory (Eph. 3:15; J.N.D. Trans.). He who is the bridegroom of the Church will have His bride as the espoused Queen of His marvelous grace, to sit with Him on His throne, and share all the glory of that new creation with Him unto the ages of ages. Then He shall be crowned with many crowns, while eternal praise will rise from the whole redeemed throng. Heaven and earth will burst forth in His praise.

The heavenly hosts will be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb will have come, and His wife will have made herself ready. Their song shall be one mighty "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. 19:6). This One who sits upon the throne is the precious Lamb of God who loved the Church and gave Himself for it.

May the blessedness of this wondrous revelation of His grace warm our hearts, give character to all our ways, and lead our hearts to say with the energy of the Spirit, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"! (Rev. 22:20).

May the precious remembrance of Himself in death, from week to week, lead our hearts to worship and praise Him who has made known the marvelous truth that "Christ and we are one."

"That bright and blessed morn is near

When He, the Bridegroom, shall appear  
And call His bride away.

Her blessing then shall be complete,

When with her Lord she takes her seat,

in everlasting day."

## Consider Him

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Read Hebrews 3:1-6; 12:1-3

"Jesus, Thou art enough, the mind and heart to fill." I have sometimes thought it might be said that man's superiority over other creatures is in mind and heart. The angels excel in strength. It is never said that they are made in the image of God. Man's heart is very large. There is but One who can fill man's heart. When the Lord is before us, we have One who can and does fill the heart and mind. The above two scriptures bring Him before us in two different ways, perhaps three. He is brought before us in many ways in Scripture. Sometimes in His eternal glory; then again in His manhood; then back to glory. His glory is great and His glories are many. Joseph's father loved him, and made him a coat of many colors; apply this in type to the Lord Jesus. He has personal glories, and glories that have been given Him.

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." Much there is in these few words! "Consider" (the word "consider" is found again in chapter 12) "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (J.N.D. Trans.). His apostleship was on earth; His high priesthood is in heaven. Let us consider these two things. What is our confession? It is that God is known, is revealed, is no longer concealed, no longer in darkness. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." In 1 John 4 we get "God is love" twice, but in the first chapter it is "God is light." The next thing is, where God is; that is, "in the light." Then as to our confession, it is walking "in the light." He told the prophets of old a great deal about Himself, but when He is revealed, it is alone in the Person of His Son (John 1:18).

In the first chapter of Hebrews where we have the Lord as the Apostle of our confession, it begins, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us" in the Person of "His Son." Now, see what it says, once our attention has been called to that Person. "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." Such is our confession, of which the Lord is the Apostle. What a subject for consideration!

The High Priest brings Him before us in heaven, as the One who is qualified to sustain us in the circumstances of faith-as the One who lives within the veil, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

His advocacy (1 John 2:1) is another thing; it is the grace which restores our souls if we wander and sin. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." There, it is the Lord as restorer of our souls. He brings the soul back into the communion of the relationship into which we have been brought.

His high priestly service is another thing. It is His sustaining us in the midst of difficulties; and we are exhorted to consider Him in this capacity. In chapter 5 the priesthood is the position to which He has been called, and there He sustains us. How precious that makes the Lord to us! He has felt

what we feel, has entered into all that we pass through. Do we know what it is to consider the Lord in that way? It is a wonderfully sustaining truth in sorrow to know Him thus, who lives in sympathizing love for us.

Another thing is the position He occupies in the house of God. God has a house on the earth. "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God." God's dwelling place on earth is in the midst of His people. The place that the Lord Jesus occupies in the house is not as a servant in the house, but He is a Son over it. Moses was a servant in it, and was faithful to Him who called him. The Lord Jesus is a Son over the house, and "faithful to Him that appointed Him." We get Him in Revelation, chapters 1-3, as Son over the house in addresses to the churches. "I have not found thy works perfect before God," etc. Here it is the Lord maintaining what is becoming to the house of God.

In Heb. 12 we find the Lord, not as Apostle, not as High Priest, but as what? "The beginner and completer of faith." He began and completed that path in all perfection. How far is it our habit to consider the Lord in the path of faith?

In these three ways we are called upon to consider Him: as Apostle, as High Priest, and as beginner and completer of faith, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." This is very precious. He was sustained in that path of faith. What sustained Him? That which was at the end-"who for the joy," etc. What can sustain us in the path of faith fraught with difficulties from beginning to end? One way to be overcome is to get occupied with the difficulties. We need to look at Him. So "consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest," etc. If we get occupied with the circumstances, we faint in our minds; we need an object before us.

Paul said, "If by any means I might obtain," etc. The object was before him. In going up a steep hill, if the mind gets occupied with something else, one is soon there. Keep the eye on an object, and the heart is sustained.

If we go back to the first chapter, we find Him at the right hand of the Majesty on high. This is another view-point.

With these few thoughts before us, let us consider Him: the Apostle, High Priest, and the One who endured, lest we be weary and faint in our minds. Long or short, the way is difficult. What enables us to surmount is to consider that One who has gone before and has reached the goal.

## A Corn of Wheat

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In the early pioneer days of Ontario, Canada, a farmer named David Fife received a small quantity of seed wheat from a friend in Glasgow. He planted this, but out of the whole plot only one grain grew and ripened, producing a handful of hard, red grains. Farmer Fife kept the seeds and planted them the next year. He kept on doing this from year to year until there was enough wheat to use himself and sell to his neighbors. In a few years "Red Fife" wheat was in constant demand.

Within twenty or thirty years from the time when the first kernel was sown, "Red Fife" was grown far and wide in the great plains of the West. Since then, from this seed has come the finest wheat in the world. Picture miles upon miles of ripening wheat, elevators choked to overflowing with golden grain. In a single year there has been grown in the Canadian West alone more than four hundred million bushels of "Marquis" wheat-a product of "Red Fife."

When farmer Fife planted the seed wheat over a hundred years ago, he little dreamed that from a single kernel there would spring the overflowing harvests that have helped to fill the granaries of the world!

What a wonderful illustration this is 'of the words of the blessed Lord when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, 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.

He was the blessed "corn of wheat" who died that we might live; and when those myriad voices acclaim Him in the glory-voices out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation-this will be the theme, "Thou art worthy...for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood" (Rev. 5:9).

Then "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11).

## Counsel for Young Christians

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Get your portion, young friends! Some persons read the Scriptures and seem to get nothing out of them. It reminds me of a beautiful butterfly in my little garden the other day. It came over the hedge and fluttered about, but nothing seemed to suit it. Presently, however, there came a honey bee which buzzed around the garden, then darted into an open flower and sucked and sucked till it got its portion, and then sped away satisfied. Friends, you must be like the bee-get your portion.

## Day of Small Things

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It is truly a day of small things, but the Lord is working. It gives me great confidence in a day such as this to remember "The Father loveth the Son" equally as much today as when those words were uttered, and it therefore pleases Him to work for His sake. This true and precious thought has been quite an inspiration to me.

We are apt to look around and within and feel, if we do not say, We cannot expect God to work; whereas if we look above at Him, we get quite different thoughts.

Occupation with Him leads to believing, hopeful occupation for Him.

## Dead With Christ

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The death of Christ has annulled my existence before God in the flesh. Suppose there is a man who is a thief, and he is put into prison to be punished, and he dies in prison-what is to be done with him? The life that sinned is no longer there to be punished; the man must be buried and be put out of sight. So, speaking of Christ as taking in grace the sinner's place, it is said, "In that He died, He died unto sin once." There is an end of the whole thing. And now, the very principle I get, the thought of being dead and alive again, is this perfect law of liberty in which the flesh has no kind of title in any shape or way. You are not alive in the world; you are dead with Christ. How then can you go on as if you were still alive in the world?

## The Divine Anathema

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"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha." 1 Cor. 16:22.

The position which this solemn anathema occupies is truly remarkable. In the course of his lengthened epistle, the Apostle had to rebuke and correct many practical evils and doctrinal errors. There were divisions among the Corinthians. They were puffed up one against another. There was fornication among them. They went to law one with another. There was gross disorder at the Lord's supper. Some of them called in question the grand foundation truth of the resurrection of the dead.

These were grave errors and formidable evils- errors and evils which called forth the sharp and stern reproof of the inspired Apostle. But, be it carefully noted, when at the close he pronounces his solemn "Anathema, Maranatha," it is not directed against those who had introduced the errors or practiced the evils, but against "any man" who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ. (The word "Anathema" signified anything devoted to death; and "Maranatha" signifies the Lord comes to execute judgment.) This, surely, is well worthy of serious thought. The only security against all manner of error and evil is genuine love to the Lord Jesus Christ. A man may be so strictly moral that no one could put his finger upon a single blot in his character-or a single stain in his reputation-and underneath that strict morality there may be a heart as cold as ice, as far as the Lord Jesus Christ is concerned. Also, a man may be so marked by a spirit of benevolence that his influence is felt throughout the entire sphere in which he moves, and all the while his heart may not have a single pulsation of love to Christ.

Finally, a man may possess in the region of his understanding, a perfectly orthodox creed, and he may be devotedly attached to the ordinances and observances of traditionary religion, and be wholly without affection for the adorable Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It may even happen that all these things-lofty morality, noble benevolence, sound orthodoxy, and devoted attachment to religious forms-exist in one and the same individual, and that individual be wholly void of a single spark of genuine affection for the Lord Jesus Christ; and, as a solemn and startling consequence, stand exposed to the burning Anathema of God the Holy Spirit. I may be moral through love to self. I may be benevolent through love to my fellow. I may be orthodox through a love of dogmas. I may be religious through a love of sect. But none of these things can shield me from the merited judgment which is denounced by the Holy Spirit against "any man," no matter who or what, who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a deeply solemn and most seasonable word for the present moment. Let the reader deeply ponder it. Let him remember that the only basis for true morality-the only basis for genuine benevolence-the only basis for divine orthodoxy -the only basis for "pure religion"-is love to the Lord Jesus Christ; and where this love does not exist, all is cold, sterile, and worthless-all exposed to death and judgment by the "Anathema, Maranatha" of the Holy Spirit. If the heart be really touched with the vital spark of love to Jesus, the every outgoing of the soul is precious to the Father-precious to the Son- precious to the Holy Spirit-all is fragrant with the perfume of that

blessed name which is the theme of heaven's wonder, the center of heaven's joy, the object of heaven's worship.

May the Holy Spirit so unfold to our souls His matchless glories and peerless excellencies, that we may say with the Apostle, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

## Doing Good

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A sheep man in Indiana was being troubled by his neighbors' dogs which were killing his sheep. Sheep men usually counter that problem with lawsuits or barbed wire fences or even shotguns, but this man went to work on his neighbors with a better idea. To every neighbor's child he gave a lamb or two as pets; and in due time when all his neighbors had their own small flocks, they began to tie up their dogs and that put an end to the problem.

So it goes all through the New Testament: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Rom. 12:21.

## Ephesians 3:10

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"The manifold wisdom of God." God has shown His wisdom in creation, in providence, and in His government of His earthly people. Now we find a totally new thing in the wisdom of God, namely, that there are those who are united to His Son in glory, the whole question of sin having been so entirely settled that God can now bring us into the very same glory which Christ has taken as man. This is something entirely new that is brought out here in Ephesians, concerning which there was perfect silence in the Old Testament scriptures.

## Even As He Is Pure

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"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and 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 hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

1 John 3:1-3.

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 full of it.

Remember this, that the place you are in is that of an epistle of Christ. We are set for this, and the life of Christ should be manifest 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. "In 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 me 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 evil days, when we wait for the Son from heaven. Oh! if Christians were more thoroughly Christian, 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 that 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.

## Faith of Old

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Gen. 22 and Psalm 46

We cannot meditate upon Old Testament scriptures without being struck with the faith of the Old Testament saints. It was, no doubt, the pattern of that of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself when upon earth, who alone is the perfect example of faith, as of every other perfection. It will also be that of the godly Jewish remnant in the latter day under their last and bitter trials. It counts upon the faithfulness of God and pierces through all difficulties, discouragements, and natural impossibilities, right up to God Himself. We have a very striking example of it in Psalm 46 which may well put many of us to shame, as it often does me.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." A refuge is a place to flee to from impending and known danger. A sinner's fleeing for refuge to Christ implies a sense of imminent danger. He is everlasting security from impending judgment; He is the true city of refuge from the avenger of blood (Numb. 35:13, etc.). He is also the strength of His people in their conscious weakness. He does not always deliver us out of our troubles, but sustains us in them, and carries us through them, which is far better, and enables us to say in our feeble measure, "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Matt. 11:26.

Mary and Martha could never have known the present sympathy and resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ if they had not experienced the death of their brother. It was when sickness, death, the grave, and corruption had each done its worst and seemed to have robbed them forever of their beloved one, that the Lord stepped in and showed them Himself as they had never before known Him. The sisters had sought the Lord in their trouble, and such is always its effect where there is real faith. Blessings tend, because of what we are, to elate us; and often we run off with them to enjoy them, and forget God. Trouble brings us to our knees. It is good when our blessings also have this effect. See the beautiful example of this in Gideon (Judg. 7:15). He did not rush off, elated, to tell the hosts of Israel the cheering tidings he had heard, but first worshiped, before returning to the host. God was a very present help to him in his trouble, and such was the effect. But the psalmist goes on to say, "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

First, let us reflect, for a moment, what faith it was for a Jew, whose revealed hopes were connected principally with the earth, to use such language as this! All that was properly a Jewish hope was, humanly speaking, gone if the earth were removed. What faith it was, then, that could enable a Jew thus to count upon the faithfulness of God to fulfill His promises in the face of such a catastrophe! But faith always counts upon God. Again, what but implicit faith in the living God could enable the psalmist to speak of a city and a river to make it glad, if the earth were removed? The city here is not the heavenly Jerusalem, but the earthly. The land was yet theirs only by promise, and they waited till God should give it to them and settle them in it. In patience, they possessed their souls, and did not forestall God by building a city for themselves. The heavenly country they sought in Canaan was one with Jehovah in their midst. They waited for that, and

confessed in the meantime, that they were strangers in the land (Heb. 11:9).

We must not explain away what is Jewish and earthly, because of what is Christian and heavenly. The city spoken of in Psalm 46 is surely Jerusalem in Canaan, which is to be the center of blessing and of government for the whole world; as it is written, "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge [rule] among the nations" etc. (Isa. 2:3, 4). If all the saints of old were looking for heaven, death would have been a step in the direction of their hope, and there would have been nothing particularly remarkable in their dying in faith. But seeing that, for the most part, they looked for the fulfillment of God's promises concerning Palestine, it was stupendous faith for them to believe that, though they died out of it, God would give it to them. But, to return-"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." This must be the earthly city. The heavenly one, when established, will need no help. It will be out of the reach of harm. Not so the earthly; even at the close of the millennial peace and blessing, there will be the hosts of Gog and Magog gathered against her. But God shall help her, and that right early; no long conflict, no long siege, no protracted slaughter shall characterize her deliverance. Fire shall come down from heaven and consume them (Rev. 20:9).

How needful the exhortation is, "Be still, and know that I am God." We are very prone to agitate and busy ourselves in times of trouble, but it avails nothing; it only betrays our want of faith and entangles and distracts us still more. The proper effect of trouble is patience, and of patience, experience in the ways of God, etc. (Rom. 5:3, 4). "I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." This is emphatically an answer to the faith expressed in the Psalm; it is Jewish and earthly, but we can and do share with those faithful Jews, and rejoice with them in the prospect and assurance of their blessing, although God has prepared some better thing for us.

Having already alluded to the brilliant faith of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah, who counted upon God to give them the land of promise when dying out of it, I will close these few lines with references to that of Abraham in Gen. 22

God had called upon him to offer up his only begotten son in whom all the promise centered. We are familiar with the scene, but there are one or two features in it well worthy of continual notice.

We see, first, the promptness of the patriarch, the absence of all hesitation. "And Abraham rose up early in the morning." "He staggered not" at the requirement of God, through unbelief, any more than he had done at the promise of God (Rom. 4:20). His promptness was equal to his faith, and the fruit of it. Again, he was not more prompt than he was steadfast. He had ample time in his three days' journey to have reasoned himself out of his purpose, and to have persuaded himself that there must have been some mistake, etc. But no, he had the living God before his soul, and could trust Him to make good all He had spoken concerning Isaac, though he slew him. "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." What implicit faith in God that raiseth the dead (see Heb. 11:17-19)! And when they had come to the place, and the altar and the wood had been deliberately arranged, he "bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood," etc.

In Abraham, we see, in type, the Father offering up His Son, and now, at this point, we have the Son giving Himself. An obedient father had an obedient son; for, whatever others may think, I do not believe that the binding was to prevent resistance; I believe that Isaac here was an intelligent

and willing victim. But every type is imperfect, for what created thing could set forth the excellency of the Person or the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in perfection? Hence the importance of our not interpreting Christ by the types, but the types by Christ, lest we should attach to Him the imperfections of the types. This has been done, and teaching subversive of atonement and the personal glory of Christ has been based upon it to the damage of many souls. Isaac, although a beautiful type in the scene before us, was imperfect in three momentous particulars, at least.

He did not know, till the very last, what was coming upon him. The Lord Jesus Christ did. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.... By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once" (Heb. 10:9, 10). Oh, what devotedness to His Father! What unspeakable love to us! It was more than a cruel and ignominious death that He suffered; He bore the judgment of God due to us.

A way of escape was found for Isaac. There was none for the Lord! "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39).

3) If Isaac had died, he would not have made atonement for one sin. There could have been no virtue in his death, for he was only a man, and a sinner also. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man" (Jer. 17:5); but of the Lord it is said, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12). He was God, as well as man.

Does not such faith as we have been reviewing, put us to shame? Well it may. Yet, if we have not the faith of Abraham or of David, we have the all gracious, all-faithful and Almighty God, the same yesterday and today and forever. Let us look unto Jesus, the only perfect object and pattern of faith. Who could ever be tried as He was? Yet, when persecuted, crucified, and reviled, He patiently bore it all. Such contradiction of sinners He endured against Himself; that is, to His own disadvantage and reproach. "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Matt. 27:40); so He was taunted, but He endured. Everlasting praise to His precious name!

## The Father's Joy

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"It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad." (v. 32).

Have we understood how God rejoiced when we returned to Him as repentant prodigals? Luke 15 is given to teach us the joy of God in the blessing of men. It is infinitely more than the meeting of our need; it is the gratification of His heart. If the sinner's need were the measure of Christ's work, then human joys would suffice; but when divine love is the measure, the Father's house and the joys that are there are alone sufficient. It is the Father's pleasure that His house should be filled with gladness. This my son "was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." When our eyes are opened to see this side of the gospel, we begin to understand how cordial and full is our reception.

## Feetwashing

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How are we to resemble Christ in washing one another's feet? By endeavoring to remove from our Christian brethren everything that defiles their minds and consciences, and hinders the blessedness of their fellowship with Christ and the Father; bearing their burdens, comforting them in their afflictions, and restoring them to a right mind by affectionate reproof; also by praying for them.

We see but little of the glory of Christ, and of our glory in having a part with Him; and for this reason we are not inclined to imitate and obey our Lord and Master in washing one another's feet. As we behold this glory, and enjoy it, so it will be our inclination and pleasure to fulfill the lowest service for His disciples.

## Fellowship

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Fellowship with the fullness of Christ helps us, most of all, to fellowship with others. The gushing springs of mighty rivers come not originally from the basin where they are first visible. They have a secret connection, unseen but constant, with a hidden, unfailing, exhaustless reservoir, in unknown distance and depth. By continual supplies, thence received, the fountain overflows, and the streams flow on and come into fellowship with the other streams having a similar reservoir; and at last they all unite in the mighty ocean. So let us all draw from the hidden, unsearchable fullness of Christ, the exhaustless reservoir-hid from the eye of flesh, but known to the eye of faith. And we shall come in due time, after refreshing many a thirsty land on our way thither, into the full ocean of joy prepared for the whole Church of God.

## For His Sake

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It is often a great test for Christians to joyfully and gladly bear slander. It is hard for them to have so-called friends speak evil of them to others when they are standing firm and true for God. This is only until they love their Lord enough to enjoy suffering with Him. He was and is evil spoken of, and if we love Him above all else, we are glad for the privilege of sharing in His sufferings.

The Apostle Paul knew what it was to suffer for and with his Lord. He loved to be counted worthy of this and he said, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Tim. 3:12. He expected nothing else than to suffer for the One who suffered for him.

The Lord Jesus calls those blessed who suffer for Him. He said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Matt. 5:11, 12.

When the apostles were put in prison for Jesus' sake, they were happy. After they were taken from prison they were also beaten and told to speak no more in the name of Jesus. Do you think this made them sad? No; we read of them, "They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." Acts 5:41.

Peter was one of the apostles who rejoiced because he was counted worthy to suffer these things. He knew it brought him much joy to suffer for his blessed Lord, so later on he wrote to other Christians saying: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye." 1 Pet. 4:12-14.

So dear Christian, do not grieve or be sad when you are evil spoken of, but count it a joy, as Jas. 1:2 says. The Lord Jesus specially favors you when He allows you to bear suffering and shame for His sake. It is because He has set His love upon you, and because He would have you share in something so very precious.

## For Our Profit

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There are three ways that chastening may be received by us: 1) we may despise it; 2) we may faint under it; 3) we may be exercised and profit by it-Heb. 12:1-14. To despise it is not to pay any attention to it; to faint is to become discouraged because of it; to be exercised is to go to God about it, accepting it from Him. And though the exact cause of our chastening may not be known by us, and we wonder if we have learned our needed lesson, our gracious God and Father has beheld the good it has wrought in us in drawing us closer to Himself.

## For the Latter Days

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"I am come," says the angel to Daniel, "to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days." Dan. 10:14. Nothing can be plainer. It is put as a sort of frontispiece to the prophecy to show that the great thought of God for the earth is the Jewish people, and the main design of this prophecy is what must befall them in the latter days.... Prophecy in general may afford to give a little earnest close at hand, but we never see the full drift of it save in the latter day; and then the thoughts and plans of God always have as their earthly center the Jews and their Messiah.

I do not deny that the Church is a far higher thing than the Jews, and the relations of Christ to the Church nearer and deeper than His relations to the Jews. But you do not lose Christ and the Church because you believe in His link with Israel. No, if you believe not this, you confound them with your own relations to Christ; and both are lost as far as definite knowledge and full enjoyment go. This is for want of looking at Scripture as a whole.

## For Whose Ear?

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Music and fine singing in our day are likely to become a great snare against which he who would walk with God should be on his guard. We are no admirers of slovenly singing, nor do we regard it as evidence of high spirituality for hymns to be sung so slowly that few can join in them without being utterly exhausted; at the same time, we believe the singing of a poor old saint, whose voice has no melody at all but whose heart is right with God, is infinitely more acceptable in His sight than the singing of the ungodly, even if it be altogether perfect. Much of the music and singing which forms so large a part of what is called the public worship of God suggests the question, For whom is this "worship" intended? and whose ear is sought to be pleased? Alas! there can be but one answer.

## Forgiven and Forgotten

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"Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Heb. 10:17. 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 not a trace of it remains. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Precious words! God cannot only forgive, but forget.

"The trembling sinner feareth

That God can ne'er forget;

But one full payment cleareth

His memory of all debt.

When naught beside could free us,

Or set our souls at large,

Thy holy work, Lord Jesus,

Secured a full discharge."

Here is true rest for the exercised conscience. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7. The 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, so that it can be said, "He hath 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 Jesus has forever canceled the believer's guilt, so that it can never again rise against him.

## Four Great Sights

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Heb. 2:6-10

And now we turn our eyes to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and there we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honor. Yes, the One whom Simeon looked upon, a lowly babe at His mother's breast, the One whom John saw crucified and dead upon a cross, we see now in the highest place in the glory. God has raised Him from the dead and set Him there. Every Christian heart thrills at the thought of His exaltation, and yet that glory that has received Him has not made Him more glorious. It was the only place in the universe that was worthy of Him. His disciples anticipated the throne of David for Him, and He shall have it in due time, with every other throne; but there was only one place that was worthy of Him when He came forth from among the dead, and that was the Father's throne on high. The diamond is put in a golden setting, but its setting does not increase the value of the gem; it is the only fit setting for it. So it is with Jesus, whose name is now above every name, and who is crowned in heaven with glory and honor; He is in His right setting there. God has said to Him, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." He is not inactive there, but having passed through all suffering, He is the fully qualified Captain or Leader of God's many sons. I should like to deepen the desire within us to follow Him, and to awaken and stir up a holy enthusiasm for Him in the hearts of those He has saved.

Psalm 110 is a remarkable psalm; it is quoted in the New Testament more often than any other. It begins, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool," plainly presenting the Lord as faith sees Him now crowned with glory and honor. The third verse of it is very beautiful; it describes what is yet to be seen in Israel when the Lord shall rule in Zion, but I want to give it a present application which I feel is wholly just, and for this purpose I will quote it as it is in the J.N. Darby translation. "Thy people shall be willing (or offer themselves willingly) in the day of Thy power, in holy splendor: from the womb of the morning shall come to Thee the dew of Thy youth." All His foes are to be subdued beneath His feet, and Israel, a newborn nation, shall surround their Messiah and King with loud hosannas, nevermore to grieve Him. That will be a splendid thing to behold, but there is a greater splendor, and it may be realized and seen now. This is the day of His rejection by men. He is not wanted by the world, but those who love Him may come to Him with wholehearted devotion. They may be filled with enthusiasm for Him; as a newborn race they may follow Him with steady steps and loins well girt; they may make their boast in the Lord. This, in the eyes of heaven, is "holy splendor," and nothing else than this can please our God.

We see Jesus crowned with glory and honor, and it is as the victorious and crowned Savior that He is leading many sons to glory. Glory is our destiny, for we are following the One who is there. This is all real to men of faith, but not to those who walk by sight; and we must be on our guard against the glamor of "the things that are seen" which dims faith's keen vision, and often betrays the Christian into fearing men, or into admiring and following them. But the greatest of men can

offer us no destiny. Death is their master; it mocks at their promises, and shatters all their hopes and ambitions. Every day is a witness to this.

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike th' inevitable hour-  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

There is no hope beyond the grave but in Christ. He has overthrown death, and destroyed him who had the power of it, which is the devil, that He might deliver those who through fear of it were all their lifetime subject to bondage. And in Him we have a hope that maketh not ashamed. He will not fail us, nor be untrue to God who has entrusted His sons to His care. He is not only a great leader, but He is "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God," and He ever liveth to make intercession for us. And that brings us to another side of His activities for us in the glory. If the road is rough and the trials great, and if the fight waxes fierce and we grow faint, "He has said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and knows how to sympathize with us and to succor us in our hours of need. He considers us and cares for us and provides the grace that we need, so that when we look to Him and come to His throne of grace, we find the help already prepared and waiting for us. Jesus is not only a glorious leader, but He is a sympathetic friend. His name is glorious, and His arm is omnipotent, but His heart is tender. He has won our admiration by His exploits, but He has won our hearts by His love.

#### 4. His Coming Again

"We shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2. That will be the climax of our joy and the consummation of all our hopes, when the stress and strain of our pilgrimage is over and the testing is complete. We shall meet Him in the air and look upon His face; we shall see Him as He is. Later, when He returns to the world, He will come as the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, to judge and make war, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. But we shall not wail because of Him, for though we, too, shall see the splendor of His majesty, we shall see Him and know Him as we have learned Him here. What He is to us now, He will be when we see Him. We shall not meet a stranger whom we fear, but a Savior and a friend whom we love; One who has been near to us in our sorrows and carried us through them, who is our daily resource and joy; as He is to us now, so shall we see Him then. What precious experiences have bound us to Him in this valley of weeping, what intimate links we have with Him, and these we never lose.

We shall see Him also as the One in whom the Father delights, the Object of the Father's love, and in this we shall have full communion with the Father. This will be the supreme joy of the Father's house, where the Father's beloved Son is honored and adored by all.

We are to appear with Him when He comes forth to reconcile all things to God, and when His glory shall shine to the uttermost bounds of the universe that He has created. We shall see Him then, just as blessedly \perfect as He was in the manger, and on the cross, and on His Father's throne, and every remembrance of Him and every fresh view of His glory will call 'forth fresh praise from our willing hearts and

He is a great \ and glorious Savior, and I wish that I could set Him forth in a worthier way, but this is at once my joy and my grief; my joy that I am able to speak of Him at all; my grief because my words are so cold and dull when they ought to be words that would move you and thrill you and bring you in holy enthusiasm and full surrender to His feet. But a thousand times better than hearing of Him is to draw near and learn what He is for yourself, and that knowledge that you will gain of Him now, you will never lose. It will be your prized possession forever and ever.

## Four Great Sights: Part 1

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I offer you a chain of four golden links, four passages from the Scriptures for your consideration that show our Lord to us in four different positions. First, coming into the world; second, going out of the world; third, exalted to the highest place in heaven; and fourth, coming again. In a manger, on a cross, upon a throne, coming again in clouds of glory. How different the circumstances, yet the same Person, admirable and perfect wherever He is seen.

### 1. His Advent

Consider the first. The great hour had arrived, and He who had been promised had come. It was by God's own word that His coming had been foretold many centuries before, and faithful men had waited; their eager eyes had longed for the sight of Him, but He had not appeared in their day; they had died in faith, but had passed on the great hope to their successors, who had treasured it and passed it on to others in an unbroken line of faith. But now the due time had come, and the virgin daughter of David's royal house had brought forth her firstborn, according to the Scriptures, and laid Him in a manger. The great Deliverer had appeared, but not as some had supposed He would come, with mighty hosts attending and with great power and glory to insist upon His rights and to exercise an undisputed sway over all nations on earth, but in weakness, lowliness, and unparalleled poverty.

Only the anointed eye could discern who He was—the eye of faith—for though the angels voiced the gladness of heaven and proclaimed the greatness of that Babe, His lowly birth and great humility made no appeal to men, except to such as Simeon, who had the eye of faith. He was an old man, unknown and perhaps poor in the world, but rich in heaven's reckoning, and highly favored of God. He entered the temple and took the Babe, now eight days old, in his arms, and blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." Luke 2:29, 30. What an affecting scene was that! The aged saint who had waited until his natural eyes had grown dim for a sight of God's Salvation, looks upon Him at last and knows Him; his arms embrace Him, and he loves Him and presses Him to his heart, and is satisfied and at peace.

Yet things were not as a godly Israelite would have had them in the land. The nation was under the heel of a Gentile power; the proud leaders of it were as dead as corpses toward God; and darkness, demon-possession and disease held the people in bitter bondage. There was a great parade of external religion, but underneath the surface, moral putrefaction and death and everything that was hateful to God. Yet Simeon was at rest about it all; for though he saw not yet everything put right, he saw Jesus, and that was enough; the One who would put things right had come.

It is clear that only faith could have given him such rest; unbelief might have argued that some adverse force would appear that would shatter his hopes, or that the One upon whom his eyes rested with adoration and joy was but a helpless babe, dependent upon His mother, and she one

of the poorest in the land, the wife of a village carpenter; but faith saw Him to be Emmanuel, God with us, and was satisfied.

Yet here, indeed, is a marvelous thing; the Babe that lay in the arms of Simeon was He who had created the hosts of heaven, and without Him nothing was made that was made. He had come forth from the Father, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, and had come into the world, a human babe. This is the mystery of the incarnation. Who would dare to explain it? No creature mind can grasp the immensity of it, yet we can believe and rejoice and give thanks that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world, a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel. Yes, He sent Him from heaven, and He came bringing light and life and love from thence to men in their misery and sin.

That old man with his keen eye and his steadfast trust is a pattern for us, and we might well covet the rest of heart that he knew. Things are not as we would have them in the world; confusion and chaos abound; things are even worse in the Church. But has our faith laid hold of the great fact that the Son of God has come, and that upon Him help has been laid, and that He can and will undo the works of the devil and bring heaven and earth into reconciliation to God? In the knowledge of this, there is a peace and rest of heart.

## 2. His Exit

Simeon seemed to have realized that the road upon which Christ's holy feet would tread for the accomplishment of God's will would be a rough one, and that men would be tested and exposed by His coming; and it was even so, as we well know who have read and believed the divine record. We part company with Simeon beholding with adoration the lowly Babe, and we take our stand with John as, astonished and bewildered, he gazes upon a cross. Thirty-three eventful years had passed between the two, in the last three of which "Jesus of Nazareth... went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him." Acts 10:38. Yet, in spite of His life of ministry and love, He was hated and despised by men; His way was no royal progress to the throne; instead

"His path, uncheered by earthly smiles, Led only to the cross."

And John saw it and bear record that ye might believe. And herein is a strange thing, for what was it that John saw? He saw his Lord and Master, the One whom he trusted would have redeemed Israel, hanging upon a felon's cross, with thorn crowned head bowed in death, and blood and water flowing from His spear-ripped side. That was a sight that shattered the faith of many and destroyed their hopes, yet John tells us that he bears record of it, that we might believe. What was there in that sight to command our faith? It looked as though the cause of the Lord was lost. His foes exulted in what they considered was His extinction. His disciples, with the women who had followed Him, thought that He had been utterly defeated, and they mourned and wept in hopeless sorrow. But the conclusions of foes and friends were hasty and wrong; it was not defeat, but victory, as John had surely learned when he bore record of it that we might believe. But what are we to believe? We are to believe that God's love is greater than man's hatred, and that there and then when man's hatred of God broke all bounds and rose up to murder His Son and drive Him from the world that they claimed as their own, His love triumphed, and,

"The very spear that pierced His side, Drew forth the blood to save."

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:10. Seeing with the eye of faith what John saw, we exclaim with rapture, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love." We see not only God's salvation in His beloved Son whom He sent into the world, but we see in that cross the great atoning sacrifice, apart from which He could not have been the Savior; we see Satan defeated, sin expiated, and God glorified; and seeing it, we believe and admire and adore.

## The Gateway

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Like the bee, death has but one sting, and that one was lodged in the body of Christ Jesus on the cross. And since that is true, death may alight upon the believer, but there is no sting in it for him. Its power to torment is gone. Death is no longer the jailer of the grave, but the porter that opens the gate of paradise.

Thus it is that death is the Christian's possession. What a marvelous change! Viewed from nature's standpoint, man belongs to death; but from faith's standpoint, death belongs to man. In the old creation there is not so much as a single thing which death does not take from man; in the new creation, on the contrary, there is not a single thing which death does not give to him. There is not a privilege, not a blessing, not a dignity, which he possesses as a Christian that he does not owe to death. He has life through death; forgiveness of sins through death; everlasting righteousness through death; eternal glory through death—all through the precious death of Christ.

Glorious fact! Death belongs to the Christian. Since that is true, should he any longer fear it? Surely not, for its character is so completely changed that if it should come to him, it could do him only the very best service; namely, to dissolve his connections with all that is mortal; to snap the link that binds him to scenes of sorrow and trial; to deliver him from a world of sin and wickedness, and introduce him to a scene of ineffable bliss, holy repose, and unbroken communion.

## The Glory Manifested

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The glory also shall be revealed in us. Each saint shall bear it or be a vessel of it; and each of them shall be a child of light and a child of the day. Each shall be a son of glory, glorified together with Christ, so as to join with Him in shedding light beyond that of the sun or the moon, upon the creation beneath, that the present earnest expectation of that creation may be satisfied then in the "manifestation of the sons of God." "And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." They shall be intimately near Him, speaking face to face as a man speaketh to his friend, without suspicion, for their title shall be signed and sealed as with His own hand. He will have appropriated them to Himself; and this they shall know because His name shall be on them. And then, as within all veils, they will walk in the heavenly temple and look on their Lord, and love and wonder.

## God the Great Deliverer

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How often have the words of the psalmist king charmed us: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Psalm 37:25. How often, also, have the deliverances recorded in Scripture found a present-day illustration in our own lives or in the lives of others.

The Bible teems with deliverances and is full of hope. God does not always deliver out of trials, but He always carries His people through them, and gives them hope. But God often delivers; indeed, in some cases (we say it reverently), He must, because of His own character.

It is when circumstances close around us and we have no possible way of escape unless God makes it, that deliverance is sure to come. What escape was possible to the Israelites when the Egyptians pursued them? None, absolutely none, humanly speaking. How often have we sung:

"Thine arm hath safely brought us

A way no more expected,

Than when Thy sheep passed through the deep By crystal walls protected."

Only God could have made a way of escape for the three Hebrew children. Who would have thought that the fire would burn their bands, slay their enemies, and give them the company of the Son of God in such a splendid fashion? (Dan. 3).

Again, only God could have made a way of escape for Daniel in the den of lions. Only God could have shut their mouths and used them as a bodyguard for His servant instead of devouring him. They were hungry enough, as Daniel's enemies soon found out when they themselves were thrown into the den.

Do we need to multiply instances? The Bible teems with them. The Apostle Paul's life was made up of deliverances. He wrote of God those grateful and triumphant words: "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that He will yet deliver...." 2 Cor. 1:10.

Past, present and future! What a God! How we can trust Him!

Two instances come to my mind as happening under my own observation.

An old Christian lady was sitting in her armchair with her aged husband, an invalid, near her on the sofa. The last piece of food had been taken from the shelf and eaten, and the last shovelful of coal was burning out on the hearth. Yet her spirit was brave, and her trust, deepened by many an experience, strong as ever. Her husband grew petulant and wanted to know what was to be done. "God will provide," she calmly replied, and his impatient rejoinder was cut short by a knock at the door. A Christian lady handed them an envelope with the message that her mother could not rest until it was delivered. The envelope contained several dollars. The aged husband burst into tears of joy when he saw how God had answered his wife's faith.

A Christian young man was in need of work. He looked most industriously for it, and wore out two or three pairs of shoes in his search. Meanwhile he was living on a small sum of money received from the sale of an aunt's furniture. Smaller and smaller it dwindled, till at last he had spent his last dollar and hope of work seemed as far off as ever. A Christian, who had taken a deep interest in his case, gave him some money (which he could not well spare), but before it was spent, work was found most unexpectedly; and from that day to this, an interval of several years, he has enjoyed good health and steady work.

I have often noticed when the circumstances are hopeless as far as men are concerned, God comes in. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10:13.

## God's Welcome: Lessons From the Prodigal Son

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Many souls are like the prodigal in Luke 15. When he came to himself he had a deep sense of his sinfulness, and he resolved to return and hoped to get a hired servant's place within his father's door. Little did he anticipate the welcome which awaited him. It is so with thousands. They come to themselves; that is, they find out they are good-for-nothing sinners, and mercy is the most they hope for. To escape from hell and to get inside the door of heaven is the highest thought they dare to contemplate. Knowing God is merciful, they hope to be spared eternal punishment. Yet such human thoughts fall far short of the grace of God!

When God saves a soul, He does it in a manner worthy of Himself and for His own glory. When He blesses, He does it according to His delight in Christ His Son, and His estimate of the infinite worth of His sacrifice. Grace reigns through righteousness; and it is grace, perfect and free, which awaits all who come to Him.

The heavy-hearted prodigal "arose, and came to his father." Luke 15:20. It is easy to picture his miserable condition, his downcast look, his faltering step, his hesitating manner, as his father's house comes in view. How will he be received? Will he be turned away? Will he be kept waiting outside a closed door, or be ushered into the hired servant's room without even seeing his father's face? The thought of the father's love and grace never entered the repentant prodigal's mind.

But what does the Word say? "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Luke 15:20. The wayward wanderer had never ceased to occupy the heart of that loving father. Love reigned there. And when yet a great way off, his watchful eye discerned the lost one and, filled with compassion, the willing feet sped, and, casting his arms around his neck, the caresses of love told of pardon and peace and reconciliation, even before he had time to confess his sin. The eye saw, the heart was filled with compassion, the feet sped, the arms embraced, and the lips covered with kisses the son who would beg for a servant's place. The father knew him well. Nothing but genuine repentance had broken down that proud heart, and brought him there. The lips of the prodigal only told what that loving father already knew.

How wonderful is the story of grace! This is but a picture of God's welcome to you and me. There is not a single rebuke or reproach, nothing but love for those who return to Him in self-judgment. What a revelation for our souls; God occupied with returning prodigals; God's eye upon us; God's heart yearning over us; God's hastening to welcome us; God's reconciling us then and there with the kisses of peace! God is in all. Little do we realize what Christ and His work are to God. Little do we enter into His thoughts of grace, grace reigning through righteousness, the fruit of that finished redemption work.

The poor prodigal, folded in those arms of love, with the fond kisses of a father's grace upon his cheek, tells out his confession of sin-"I have sinned... and am no more worthy." It was a true and good confession of what he had done and what he was. To be right with God, we must have those

two things thoroughly out-I have sinned and I am the sinner. The death of Christ has met both, for at the cross God has judged both my sins and me. Christ took all upon Him there. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." 1 Pet. 2:24. And God "hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." 2 Cor. 5:21. And Christ is risen. It is enough. Grace reigns through righteousness. I judge and confess all, and on the ground of Christ's finished work receive all that grace can devise. So it was with this poor wanderer. So it is with everyone who comes back to God.

His thought about being a hired servant-part of his professed confession in the far-off country-never crossed his lips. How could he utter it when folded in a father's fond embrace? No; but when he reached the words "thy son," though owning his unworthiness of that relation, we read, "The father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." Luke 15:22-24. How great were his blessings: the best robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf, the feast, the merriment, the music, and the dancing! In a moment, all was changed. That quiet house becomes at once the scene of joy and festivity. The father, the son, and the whole household (except one) participated in the merrymaking. But first the son must be fitted for that joyful scene.

"Bring forth the best robe," says the commanding voice of the father, "and put it on him." And willing servants hastened to obey. The robe is ready, prepared against that day. It is "the best." An inferior one might have satisfied the prodigal, and far less than what God provides for us might have satisfied you or me. But God blesses.

"Not to suit my thoughts of fitness, But His wondrous thoughts of love."

The righteousness of God is "unto all and upon all them that believe." Rom. 3:22. This is God's best robe, prepared and waiting, as it were, for returning prodigals. It is Christ alone, the righteousness of God, that can fit us for His eye. "Put it on him." It is "upon all" them that believe. We have nothing to do but to stand still and see the salvation of God and to submit to God's righteousness in simple faith.

"Clad in this robe, how bright I shine;

Angels possess not such a dress.

Angels have not a robe like mine;

Jesus the Lord's my righteousness."

The robe is new, perfect, and the best. Nothing short of it will suit the Father's eye and heart and home. In Christ we are complete (Col. 2:10). What a change from the nakedness and filth of the far-off country! Marvel of grace! This is the gospel of God. "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Eph. 1:7.

"And put a ring on his hand." Wondrous favor! May we not learn from this that we are received back forever? The believer is not only in Christ, but sealed with the Holy Spirit for the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). We are saved and set in God's eternal favor.

"And shoes on his feet." The reconciled one has to walk henceforth in the presence of his father. He fits him for it. The Christian, clothed with Christ and sealed with the Holy Spirit, has to walk before God in communion with Him. It is God's grace that teaches us. It is God's provision that fits us. It is God's power that enables us. And "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." 1 John 2:6.

"And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry." The son being fitted in every way for the position of favor he is henceforth to occupy, the father now commands a feast. He and the son and the servants have their part in the joy. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Luke 15:10. God feasts when a soul is saved, and brings His loved ones into His banqueting house to feast with Him on the riches of His grace in Christ. Blessed communion!

Finally, note well the reason the father gives for the feast. "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." Luke 15:24. "This my son." Beloved fellow believer, this is what God says of you. He is our Father. We are His sons. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [children] of God." 1 John 3:1. We cry, "Abba, Father." Rom. 8:15. We are brought right home to God, and we are at home in His presence. Here we rest, and here we feast. Here we enjoy the blest relationship of sons forever. "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And we were dead. This was our moral state. But now we are alive. We have "passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). We are alive unto God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:11; 8:2). Eternal life is ours in the Son (1 John 5:11).

We were lost. But the Savior God found us when we were still far off. We would have been lost forever but for His grace. Through grace we are found forever. "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. How blessed to be at home now-at home with God. Believers have left the far-off country forever. By faith and in spirit we enter now where God our Father is. As the well-known hymn puts it-

"In spirit there already, Soon we ourselves shall be."

"And they began to be merry." Beloved reader, have you? The world's merriment is of short duration. Death and judgment are knocking at the door. But once you come to God and receive His grace, then heavenly merriment, spiritual, pure, everlasting, is yours. "They began to be merry." Truly for God and His loved ones it will never cease.

## The Good Way

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Very many content themselves with the assurance that at some time or other their children will be converted. But this is not taking God's ground with them now. If we have the assurance that they are within the range of God's purpose, why do we not act upon that assurance? If we are waiting to see certain evidences of conversion in them before we act as Scripture directs, it is plain that we are looking at something besides God's promise. This is not faith. The Christian parent is privileged to look upon his child now as one to be trained for the Lord. He is bound to take this ground, in faith, and train him thus, looking to God in the fullest assurance for the result. If I wait to see fruits, this is not faith. Besides, the question arises, What are my children now? They may be going about like idle, willful delinquents, bringing sad dishonor on the name and truth of Christ, and yet all the while I satisfy myself by saying, I know they will be converted yet. This will never do. My children should be now a testimony for God, and they can only be this by my taking God's ground with them, and going on with Him about them.

## The Gospels: Part 1 — Why Are There Four?

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It has been a standing problem in the Church of God to account for the various differences which are found in the four gospels—a problem too that has been very seldom satisfactorily answered. There have been many attempts to form "harmonies" of the gospels; but these attempts have only brought to light the great differences which unquestionably exist, and have proved the extreme difficulty of forming, from the whole, one continuous narrative. Of those who have made the experiment, none are agreed in every particular. The fallacy of these "harmonies" is self-evident, in that they seem to have established very little more than that the four gospels, in their opinion, may be made to harmonize; and it should be remembered that these harmonies can only be formed by many transpositions, accommodations, and studied conjectures, while they leave the main problem totally unsolved.

Some, however, have devised means of meeting the question, How are the differences in the four gospels to be accounted for? One of two answers is usually given.

1) They assert that the evangelists copied from one another, or from a common written document to which they all had access. One of them, a well-known writer says, "Mark, however, presupposes the existence of Matthew and, as it were, supplies his omissions. Luke does the same for both of them; John for all three. Matthew, an apostle, wrote first, and thus established an authority for both Mark and Luke. John, also an apostle, wrote last, and confirmed to mankind more fully the words of Mark and Luke, already sufficiently firm in themselves. Matthew wrote especially to show the fulfillment of the Old Testament scripture, and to convince the Jews. Mark produced an abridgment of Matthew, adding at the same time many remarkable things which had been omitted by his predecessor, and paying particular attention to the novitiate of the apostles."—Bengel's Gnomon.

Is it not strange that anyone should have stated such a theory as this to account for the differences between the gospels? We can easily understand that if two or more persons copied from one another, or from some original, they would agree in most if not all of the parts copied; but that the copying can account for the differences is manifestly inconsistent.

But there is a graver question at issue than this; and that is, Is God the author of the gospels? and if so, Is it worthy of Him that Mark should supply the omissions of Matthew? Is it not a marvelous fact that no book was ever written that is so full and comprehensive in such a condensed form as the Bible? And yet the attempt is made to tell us that one repeats what the other has written and supplies his omissions; then a third does likewise, and then a fourth! Again I ask, Is all this worthy of God's being the author of the four gospels? Assuredly it is not.

2) But there is another theory promoted; namely, that the apostles in preaching and teaching, related from time to time, the incidents connected with Christ's life, together with His discourses; and that the evangelists (or at least the first three) wrote what they had thus heard; the differences in the gospels are accounted for on this theory by our having them second-hand. Endeavoring to

establish this theory, another distinguished writer makes this amazing statement: "This common substratum of apostolic teaching -never formally adopted by all, but subject to all varieties of diction and arrangement, addition and omission, incident of transmission through many individual minds, and into many different localities-I believe to have been the original source of the common part of our three gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke).... With regard to those parts of our gospels which do not fall under the above remarks, there are various conceivable sources whence they may have arisen. As each evangelist may have had more or less access to those who were themselves witnesses of the events, whether before or during the public ministry of our Lord, or as each may have fallen in with a more complete or a shorter account of those events, so have our narratives been filled out with rich detail or confined to the mere statement of occurrences." -Alford's Greek Testament.

We must reply that if such a preposterous theory were correct, then much that appears in the various gospels must have gotten there by accident. An evangelist wrote what he may have heard! or what he "may have fallen in with!" Again the questions must be pressed, Is this worthy of God? Is it consistent with God being the author of the gospels? Assuredly it is not.

But why are we obliged to have any such imaginary theories? We know from Scripture that Matthew and John were apostles; we know from Scripture also that besides the twelve apostles there were men who had "companied with" them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from them

(Acts 1:21, 22); and Mark may have been one of these. And of Luke, we know from the Scripture that he "had perfect understanding of (or, was accurately acquainted with) all things from the very first." Luke 1:3. Surely then we have sufficient facts recorded in the Scripture itself as to those who wrote the gospels that render it altogether unnecessary to form elaborate human systems, no matter how cleverly wrought they may be.

But another question arises: Suppose any one of those theories were correct, would it at all account without direct inspiration for the things recorded in the gospels? Suppose, for a moment, that oral teaching was the foundation of our first three gospels, and that oral teaching was by the apostles; how could the apostles know accurately what took place before they were apostles? the conversation, for instance, between the angel and Mary, and the angel and Elizabeth? And then, when they were apostles, how did they know what took place at the temptation of Christ? Who was there to hear? How did they know the conversation that took place between Christ and the woman of Samaria? How did they know what Christ uttered in the garden of Gethsemane? Simply being apostles would not tell them these things; and how then could they record them? In John there are still deeper things: "In the beginning was the Word,... All things were made by Him," etc. We cannot answer these questions satisfactorily without bringing in divine inspiration. If God is the author, of course He could use any means that might exist, or He could make to the writer a direct revelation. He who revealed to Moses the account of the creation could as easily reveal to the evangelists what no human eye had ever seen, and what no human ear had ever heard.

But here these grave questions must be pressed:

Is God the author of the four gospels? and if He is, has He done the work perfectly or imperfectly? Now it is to be feared that many a Christian would shrink from answering these questions. As a

theory they hold, of course, the inspiration of the Scriptures, but if pressed with a few plain questions (for instance) as to the differences and apparent discrepancies in the four gospels, they bring in at once the human element, and alas, give that the prominent place. In fact, as they bring the human element into prominence, so they virtually shut God out, and virtually declare (though they would shudder to say so in so many words) that God has done the work imperfectly! One of these writers, although claiming to believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures, makes this contradictory statement:

"The men were full of the Holy Ghost-the books are the pouring out of that fullness through the men-the conservation of the treasure in earthen vessels. The treasure is ours in all its richness; but it is ours, as only it can be ours, in the imperfections of human speech, in the limitations of human thought, in the variety incident first to individual character, and then to manifold transcription and the lapse of ages."-Alford's Greek Testament.

Alas! alas! for us. Must we then give up the perfect inspiration of the gospels? Must we admit that we have them only "in the imperfections of human speech," and "in the limitations of human thought"? Our blessed Lord often referred to His "words," and many simple-minded Christians thought they had in their New Testament the very words Christ uttered; are they now to believe that this is a mistake, and that much is uncertain? Christians have been in the habit of resting for comfort on single words; such as, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Is this true or is it an "imperfection"? "My sheep... shall never perish"; is it true, or is it a "limitation"? "The Word was God"; is this true or is it a "variety incident to individual character"? May we not exclaim, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" But, thanks be to God, His foundations are not destroyed, and He has given us an assurance that answers fully and completely all these objections.

## The Gospels: Part 2

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In 2 Timothy 3:16 we read, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Now mark that passage. In the original there are but three words:

"ALL"-(or every) not simply a part, leaving a doubt upon obscure passages or apparent discrepancies; it is all, every book, from Genesis through Revelation, every word.

"SCRIPTURE"-the whole canon, the gospels as well as the epistles, the New equally with the Old.

"GOD INSPIRED"-through a human element, yet of God, as we appropriately call it, the Word of God.

Then God is the author, and the gospels must be worthy of Him as an author; and He could not have allowed the human instrument to spoil His Book with imperfections. Men often employ others to write at their dictation, but what author would let his secretary mar his work by something of his own? And yet we Christians are called upon to believe that because God used man as an instrument (and God could as easily use the various minds of men as we vary our writing with a ballpoint or a fountain pen), that He had to let man put in so much of his own that we only have it in the "imperfections of human speech," and in the "limitations of human thought." But, by God's help, we will not believe this. We will rest the comfort of our soul's salvation on the words God has used, and believe Christ when He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away." Mark 13:31.

Of course it is not intended to assert by this that every individual word of our English translation (or of any translation) is inspired. What is here maintained is, that every word that God caused to be written is inspired; and where a translation is correct, the words of the translation are of equal authority. It is true there may be a few passages where the translators have not accurately given the sense of the original; but there are none which in any way throw a doubt upon any one of the fundamental truths of Christianity, and these exceptions in no way affect the question of the verbal inspiration of that which God caused to be written. Christ said, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12:48. In 1 Corinthians 2:13 it is said, "The words... which the Holy Ghost teacheth." And in Proverbs 30:5, "Every word of God is pure."

But here it will be again objected that the various manuscripts of the Greek vary so much, by the lapse of ages and by errors of the copyists, that the theory of verbal inspiration is of no use to any who maintain it. But this is not correct; for if it be once admitted that the writers only wrote imperfectly what God intended to convey to man, then all is uncertain; whereas if God caused the right words to be written, then we are certain we have those very words, except where the instruments disagree; and where they do differ, the weight of evidence is often so decisive as to give a moral certainty as to which is right, thus leaving comparatively few places really doubtful. Verbal inspiration must be maintained.

But it is asserted that though we might believe this of some parts of Scripture, yet in the four gospels there are such real discrepancies that it is impossible that the very words of Scripture can be inspired; and an illustration is given in the inscription on the cross-not any two of the Evangelists, it is said, give it exactly the same, and therefore some must be incorrect.

In answer to this, let us take a familiar illustration. Suppose I go into a graveyard and, from a tombstone of some notable person, I take an extract, and I say, "On such a stone is written so-and-so." Another person does the same thing but, for a particular reason and to illustrate some particular fact, he takes a different extract, and he also says, "On such a stone is written so-and-so." A third takes a third extract, and in doing so he copies a part (but only a part) of what the first did, and a part (but only a part) of what the second did; he also says, "On such a stone is written " A fourth person takes still a different extract and says, "It is thus written on the stone."

Now in such a case as this, might not all these extracts be strictly and verbally true, and yet no two of them be exactly alike? They surely might, as no one of the writers undertook to quote every word that was on the tombstone, each having a particular reason for quoting what he did. And if we apply this to the case in point, all difficulty and apparent discrepancy at once disappears. Suppose the actual writing to have been:

This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews

Matthew quotes, This is Jesus the King of the Jews

Mark quotes, the King of the Jews

Luke quotes, This is the King of the Jews

John quotes, Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews

Is it not surprising that an apparent discrepancy, so simply solved as this is, should be put forth by eminent scholars as an unanswerable proof of the impossibility that the words of the gospels are inspired?

We are thus forced back to the Word of God itself, which declares that every scripture is God inspired; and the answer to the question, Who is the author of the four gospels? It is God, and none but God. And we cannot for a moment admit that He allowed the writers in any way to spoil His work.

But if this is true, our other questions return with their true weight: Why are there four gospels? and, Why do they differ? Now it must follow, if the gospels are God-inspired, and if the writers penned nothing but what He chose, that all the omissions and differences are designed, and designed too for some wise purpose worthy of God, the author. And if this is so, instead of laboring to form harmonies of the four gospels, our chief concern should be to try and discover what special object God had in giving them to us as He has.

An illustration may perhaps help us in the elucidation of this part of our subject. Think of such a man as the first Napoleon, and suppose there was someone who had been his constant companion from boyhood. At his death this friend is asked to write out the characteristics of Napoleon, illustrated by his life. But in such a man there were several distinct characters, and the

writer would soon discover that it would be far better to write separate memoirs; first, say, as a soldier; then as a ruler; then the moral character of the man; and so on. And suppose we take the last named, would not the writer feel he could not be hampered with chronological order? For instance, in speaking of a particular trait of his character, he might best illustrate it by an incident in his school days, followed by something that happened in Italy, and then by something in his private life; whereas the last incident may have actually taken place between the other two, the writer taking a moral order rather than a chronological order. And if a stranger were to take these three supposed memoirs and attempt to make one, would he not find the greatest possible difficulty in doing so? But would it not be great rashness to conclude, when he failed in his plan, that the writer must have made grave mistakes?

Now if we bring this to bear on our subject, let me ask, Has not the Lord Jesus Christ many different characters? And may not the four gospels have been written each to set forth Christ in a different character? And in doing which, moral order may have been far better than chronological order? And if so, will not this at once account for the many apparent discrepancies, omissions, transpositions, etc. that are said to be discovered? And will it not show what a great mistake is made by attempts to force the four into one narrative?

But let us further illustrate this point, for it is of great importance to see it clearly. Suppose an artist was requested to paint a full length portrait of, say, the Duke of Wellington. Surely his first question would be, In what character shall I represent him? If he was wanted as a soldier, it would not do to paint it as he appeared in the House of Lords, nor as he appeared in the family circle. Surely all must see that the artist must have a definite character in the man he is to portray, and nothing could exceed the folly of insisting that the painter must give all the characters in one portrait!

Now may not the four gospels be so many divine portraits of the Lord Jesus Christ in different characters? And if so, to attempt to mingle the four into one portrait would be as inconsistent as it would be to cut up four different portraits of the Duke of Wellington and put them together to make such an one as would give the whole man. The expression of the countenance, let alone the dress, would be very different in the politician from what it would be in the warrior; and the whole would be spoiled. So of the gospels: God being the author of them, if He designed to set forth Christ in different characters, He surely did the work perfectly; and we cannot alter a word or make a transposition without spoiling some of the fine touches in those exquisite portraits of our Lord as given by the Holy Ghost.

## The Gospels: Part 3

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We will now turn to the gospels to present the chief characteristics of each. In doing this we must leave the reader to examine the details for his own profit, begging him to notice that the designed differences in the gospels are not only in the broad outlines, but also in the minutest details.

### MATTHEW

The first verse gives us the key to Matthew's gospel. "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." It does not say "Son of man," or "Son of God," but "Jesus Christ, the son of David" and the genealogy is traced up to David, and thence to Abraham. We thus learn that in this gospel Christ is presented as THE SON OF DAVID; in other words, THE MESSIAH. The promise to Israel was, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Isa. 7:14. In Matthew (but in no other gospel) is this said to be fulfilled in the birth of Christ (Matt. 1:23). As Messiah He was of course presented to the Jews, and this gospel relates how He was in various ways presented to the nation, and alas! His rejection at every step. Indeed the gospel may be said to be a living manifestation of that one short sentence, "He came unto His own (as the promised Messiah), and His own received Him not." Note too that it was in the midst of this rejection that He speaks of the Church: "I will build My church" (chap. 16:18; and it is mentioned also in chap. 18:17). This is the more remarkable as in none of the other gospels is the Church, as such, ever mentioned. Here the mention of the church is beautifully in character with the rejection of Christ by the Jews, though even in Matthew it is not fully brought out as it is afterward by Paul.

Notice too that Christ as the seed of David was to abide continually. "I have sworn unto David My servant, thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations." Psalm 89:3, 4. And so Matthew's gospel does not record the ascension, but closes with Christ still alive on the earth.

The one fact alone that Matthew does not mention the ascension should open the eyes of Christians to the truth that God had a special design in each gospel. Matthew, of course, was present at the ascension and knew all about it, and yet he omits this very important circumstance. Why? It would not have been in character with his gospel.

Being the presentation of Christ to the Jews, we have in this gospel, as we might expect, more quotations from the Old Testament scriptures than in the other gospels; quotations with which the Jews would be familiar. Here too we have the principles of the kingdom more fully brought out than in the other gospels.

Notice that on Christ's public entry into Jerusalem the cry in this gospel is, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest." Chap. 21:9. This incident is related by the other three evangelists, but none of them mentions these words, "Son of David." It is only in Matthew that this title occurs, and it is only in Matthew that this title is said to stir up the anger of the Jews: "When the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things

that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased." v. 15. Surely this is not an accident, but at once will be seen to be in beautiful harmony with the distinctive character of the gospel.

The careful student will find many instances of words and sentences and incidents peculiar to Matthew, all of which are in full harmony with the character of the gospel, but which are presented differently in the other gospels, or are omitted altogether.

While speaking of Matthew's gospel in this way, we do not intend to convey the thought that Christ is never mentioned or alluded to in other characters also. The mention of other characters does not invalidate the truth that the Holy Ghost had a special design to manifest Christ in Matthew as the Son of David-the Messiah. The more Matthew is examined and compared with the other gospels, the more the special design of Matthew will be apparent and convincing. But we must turn to the next gospel.

## MARK

Mark's gospel opens with these words: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." It might be supposed that this is the key to the gospel, but it is not so. In Mark, Christ is presented as THE FAITHFUL SERVANT. This may not be seen at first glance, but it is well seen when Mark is carefully studied.

Notice that in Mark there is no genealogy, no birth of Christ, no parentage; for it is not usual to want to know the pedigree of servants (with reverence be it said of One who is our Lord). Again, masters say to their servants, "Immediately you have done so-and-so, I want you," or "Come immediately," or "Do this at once," and so on. So in this gospel we find the words "immediately" and "straightway" more often than in any of the other gospels. There is more reference in Mark to the service of the disciples than in Matthew, but above all it exhibits Christ as the faithful servant. Notice how He, immediately after finishing one work, proceeds to do another. See, too, how Christ in this gospel allows Himself to be intruded upon. In Mark alone we read, "And they had no leisure so much as to eat." Mark 6:31.

As we might expect, in Mark we have the nearest approach to chronological order; much, however, has been omitted that is in the other gospels.

In Mark we do not find Christ laying down the principles of the kingdom as in Matthew. They would be out of place in Mark's gospel. Nor do we meet with His judgment on the people in the words, "Woe unto you," so often repeated in Matthew. In this gospel alone are the words, "neither the Son," added in the passage, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Chap. 13:32. The mention of Christ's power to call twelve legions of angels is also omitted here, and in the closing commission the words, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth," are omitted.

Notice, too, that in this gospel Christ does not address God as "Father" but once, and this is in the agony in the garden, when His service of love is closed. It is remarkable that in this gospel His disciples never address Him as "Lord."

The reader will not fail to see how all this is beautifully in harmony with the character of Christ as the faithful servant, which is brought out in Mark's gospel.

## LUKE

In Luke's gospel, Christ is presented as THE SON OF MAN. Luke's genealogy traces back not merely to David and Abraham, as in Matthew, but to the first man Adam. Here we get the birth of Christ, and here exclusively we have the few incidents of His early life. He was subject to His parents, and He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. All this is surely in full harmony with Christ as Son of man.

This gospel takes a wider scope than Matthew- it is the Son of man presented to men. Doubtless it is to the Jews first, but afterward it is to the whole world. This is brought out in many of the details. Notice, for instance, the quotation (chap. 3:4) from Isa. 40, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." Matthew quotes this passage (chap. 3:3), and stops here, but Luke continues the quotation: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." This is remarkable because Luke quotes less from the Old Testament than Matthew; but here he quotes more, and there is divine wisdom in it. Doubtless the reader will see how it was in full harmony for Matthew to stop where he did in the quotation, and equally so for Luke to quote more. In Luke it is "all flesh" which is to see the salvation of the Lord. In like manner, when the twelve apostles are sent forth to preach, they are not charged (as they are in Matthew): "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." Here, too, we have the wider commission to the seventy (chap. 10:1).

In Luke, and only Luke, we get the great moral lesson of the good Samaritan, showing that all men are our neighbors. Here alone we get, in answer to the objection that "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (chap. 15), the beautiful parable of the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, and the prodigal son, exhibiting God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, engaged in the salvation of men. Here alone we get the divine insight into the future world, in the account of Lazarus and the rich man, with its fine lesson that outward blessing is no longer a sign of God's richest favor and its memorable declaration that if men hear not the means that God has appointed, neither will they hear though one rose from the dead. Here alone we get the beautiful story of the Pharisee and the publican. The reader will surely not fail to see how all these points show the setting aside of the Jewish system, and Christ revealing Himself as for man universally-the Son of man for man. This is the characteristic of Luke's gospel.

## The Gospels: Part 4

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In John's gospel, Christ is presented as the SON OF GOD. All are familiar with the grand opening of this gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God", and toward the close it is expressly stated that the object of the Evangelist was that men "might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." Chap. 20:31.

Here, surely, a genealogy would be out of place, so we have none; it is God being made known. In like manner we have no birth, no parentage, and no mention of Him as a child growing up. All these would be out of place and are omitted. Instead of these, we hear of Him as being with God before creation, and then of making all things. He is the true Light of men. And then "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Chap. 1:14.

In this gospel alone we get the raising of Lazarus from the dead with that majestic declaration, "I am the resurrection, and the life." Chap. 11:25. But again let it be noticed that while it is manifest that each of the gospels has in view a definite character of Christ, it is not to the exclusion of His other characters. The one is designedly prominent and characteristic, though the others are there also. Thus in this very chapter where Christ declares that He is "the resurrection and the life," we also read, "Jesus wept," which beautifully brings out His manhood.

### The Gospels-Part 4

In John's gospel, the cardinal truth of this dispensation is brought out-the personal presence of the Holy Ghost. "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me." Chap. 15:26. And mark those words, "whom I will send." Who could speak of sending One who is God, but One who is also God?

Here alone we have the record of that confidential address of Christ to His Father respecting His disciples and those who should believe on Him. The agony in the garden is omitted with the saying, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me," which is in substance given in the other three gospels. Here alone it is recorded that when they came to take Him prisoner, and He said, "I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground." Chap. 18:6. Here alone we have that declaration of Christ to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above." Chap. 19:11. And here we have no ascension. It was as Son of man He ascended, but here He is the Son of God. The reader will not fail to see how characteristic are the points noticed above as to Christ in His divine character as THE SON OF GOD.

This is a rapid sketch of the characteristics of the four gospels. It is believed that they will bear the fullest investigation and their characteristics will be found not only to lie in their broader outlines, but also in their minuter details. Nothing more is attempted here than the merest outline; but if Christians, instead of straining any part to form harmonies of the gospels, would more study the

characteristic differences of those divine records, it is believed they would, under the blessing of God, gain much instruction and see beauties they have never yet discovered.

And now we trust we have gained answers to the questions with which we started:

Why are there four gospels? Because God designed to set forth Christ in four different characters.

Why do the gospels differ? Because in this manner God has chosen to bring out those different characters.

3) Are the gospels, thus differing, fully inspired? They are, for God is the author. They are inspired by God, and He has done His work perfectly. Not only the statements, but also the words, are inspired; and to alter a word or leave out or transpose a sentence is only to spoil the work of God and mar the "fine touches" of the Spirit of God.

The writer is well aware that some will call this fancy or something worse. He knows that the full inspiration of the Scriptures is daily being more and more undermined. He has already quoted an accredited orthodox writer (as a type of many) who says we have the treasure only "in the imperfections of human speech and in the limitations of human thought." But then it must follow that God has done His word imperfectly, or allowed man to spoil it (though man would never allow a secretary to spoil his work), and we are not sure of any part. But we are sure. The gospels are inspired by God. He Himself declares it, and Christ's word shall judge the unbeliever in the last day (John 12:48). Then by God's grace we will believe it now-believe it all-and rest the assurance of our soul's salvation on it. And may He give grace to us all to understand His holy Word more fully!

"Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." Psalm 119:89.

## Gossip

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We often hear the word. What does it mean? Does it mean telling lies about people, or maliciously defaming their characters? Not necessarily. Indeed, it is often thought to be a "harmless" and rather amusing way of spending a leisure hour. This brother has such queer ways; this sister dresses so peculiarly or extravagantly-and so on.

Gossip is the thoughtless occupation with faults or weaknesses, or affairs of others; without exercise, not seeking their help; without self judgment or prayer. "Considering thyself," says the Apostle. There is nothing that grieves the Holy Spirit and quenches the spirit of intercession as this gossip. Let us stop it ourselves, and gently seek to lead others rather to pray for the weak and foolish than to spread their faults abroad.

## Grace and Glory: Lessons in Jacob

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Jacob had offended the Lord, having taken the way of nature, listening to the counsels of unbelief, and thus departing from his path and his call as a saint of God. To learn the bitterness of his own way, he is put under discipline.

On the very night on which he left his father's house, his place of sleep witnessed the hand of the Lord, who still loved him. The place was, no doubt, the fruit and wages of his own transgression, but it told also that God was his God, for He was visiting him in fatherly chastening. It is, accordingly, such a place as God may own. It was not sin, but discipline, which marked it. Had it been the tent where he and his mother had dressed the kids for Isaac's feast, God could not have owned it, for deceit and fraud were practiced there. But the Lord could be at Luz (Gen. 28:19), where Jacob is under chastening, and He does come and manifest His love there.

He comes to make glory a great reality to this poor, solitary, disciplined saint. He does not come to soften his pillow, or to change his condition, or to send him back to the home of his father and the care of his mother. He leaves the present fruit of Jacob's naughtiness just as bitter as He found it. But He does come to make glory and heaven a great reality to him.

Onward, therefore, Jacob goes, and, as the story tells us, he served twenty years under a certain hard taskmaster in Padan-aram. But the Lord blesses him there, and he conducts himself in the fear of the Lord there, and all is well.

In due time, he is on his way back to Canaan. But, indeed, it is a different Jacob, as well as a different journey. He was an empty Jacob at Bethel; he is now a full Jacob at Peniel. He has become two bands. Flocks and herds, servants, wives and children tell of his prosperity. He had been on that road twenty years before, unprovided for and alone, with a staff in his hand; but now we see him thus accompanied and surrounded. He has become a rich man. He has a stake in the world. He has something to lose, and may be a prey to others, as he surely must be an object with them.

He hears of Esau coming, and four hundred men with him. He trembles; he fears for his cattle, his people, and his life. He manages as well as he can, and religiously commits all to the Lord; but unbelief has mastered his heart, and he is in fear of Esau.

The Lord comes to him, therefore, this second time, now on his journey homeward, as He had been with him on his journey out. But it is in a new character. He was only under discipline then; he is in the power of unbelief now; and the Lord comes not to comfort, but to rebuke and restore him.

"There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." This was the Lord in controversy with Jacob. His unbelieving fears concerning Esau and his four hundred men had provoked the Lord to jealousy, and He withstands him.

But what is the issue of all this? Grace is made a great reality to Jacob here, as glory had been at Bethel. The wrestling Stranger, in abounding grace, allows Himself to be prevailed on by the weak and timid Jacob, and the Spirit works revival of faith in his soul. "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me," says he. He comes "boldly unto the throne of grace." Faith is decided, and a blessing must be imparted, and Jacob becomes Israel. Grace is now made a great reality to him, as before glory had been. It is now the unbelieving Jacob restored, as then it had been the chastised Jacob comforted. The gospel is pressed on his soul here; heaven had been opened to his eyes there. There he walked as at the gate of heaven, and in the house of God; here, he walks under the shinings of the presence of God.

Such was "Bethel" on his way out. Such is "Peniel" on his way home. Such is God to him, according to his need and condition. Heaven in its bright, enriching glory was shown to him in the day of his sorrow. Christ, in His precious restoring grace, is given to him in the day of his failure. And these things are what we need-to have both grace and glory realized in our souls-to walk by Bethel and by Peniel. They sweetly vary the journey, but it is the one, unchanging God that opens His house to us, and sheds the light of His face upon us.

## Grace and Government

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There are two distinct principles on which God deals with man as such, and on which also He deals with His people. These two principles are grace and government. The former is the blessed characteristic of God; He is the "God of all grace." The gospel is the great setting forth of this principle, as the Church in glory will be the eternal witness of it. God takes up a person and blesses him absolutely, without any reference to how he has behaved, or what he deserves. That this might be done consistently with the claims of righteousness against the sinner, the cross was necessary. "Grace reign(s) through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Government, on the other hand, is the reverse of this. It is cognizant of the behavior of the person under it, and regulates its conduct toward him by his merits. The principle of government we get in those words in 1 Pet. 2:14, "Governors... are... for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well." This word applies to human government, but the principle is the same whatever the sphere in which government is exercised.

God judges as Almighty Governor of all, and judgment goes upon the ground of man's behavior. Thus in the final judgment we read, "They were judged every man according to their works."

Now these two principles of grace and government find an exhibition in the family of God, and it is most important for us to remember that God acts toward us as His people on both these principles. If I forget His grace when I have failed, I might get into despair. If I forget His government, I might grow careless, not remembering that "if ye live according to flesh, ye are about to die" (Rom. 8:13; J.N.D. Trans.), and our reaping depends upon our sowing.

I wish to refer to an example of God's acting on these two principles in the history of Abram. In the first place, of course, the call that made Abram a saint was sovereign grace. He was born among idolaters and was the object of God's electing favor just as distinctly as the chief of sinners. And the same is true of every saint of God. Salvation is all of grace. "Not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." But now that God had brought him to Himself, he came into the place where government as well as grace would be exercised toward him; and it is the same thing with ourselves when brought to God.

Abram had not been long in the place of favor before, under the severe pressure of circumstances, he gave up acting on the principle of faith, on which alone we can please God, and adopted the world's principle of sight. He had gone to Canaan in faith, in obedience to the divine word. There he met with a famine and without consulting God he did what prudence would suggest, and what every man of the world would well understand—he left the land of famine for Egypt, the land of supply.

Now Egypt and Canaan respectively represent the two principles of sight and faith. God as Creator made them to picture these two principles for us. Egypt is a country that draws its resources from itself. It has a river that supplies it, as it were, independently of heaven. Canaan, on the other hand, was watered from above. It would have perished unless remembered in heaven, as Israel

would have done in the wilderness had Jehovah forgotten to supply them. The physical characteristics of the countries are contrasted in Deut. 11 Thus when Abram went down from Canaan to Egypt, his action was symbolic of what his heart was really doing. He was going from faith to sight-from being a man of faith, to become a man of the world.

Now we must notice that Abram got what he sought. And as a rule it is so with people. If they seek money, they get it; or praise of men, they get it; or an improved worldly position, they get it. "Verily they have their reward," as the Lord said. For when Abram came back from Egypt, we find both himself and his companion Lot in flourishing circumstances (Gen. 13:2, 5). Another thing to be remarked is that the moment Abram was on the path of sight, away in spirit from God, he renewed an untruthful compact with his wife Sarai, which is suggested by the principle of human prudence. "Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister" (Gen. 12:13).

This does not save him from trouble, but God delivers him. "He reproveth kings for their sakes." This is pure grace. But the grace of God is more conspicuously shown in chapter 13. For God brought him not merely out of Egypt, but to Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning. And there, at the place of the altar that he had made at first, he called on the name of Jehovah. This is grace like that of which we read in Hosea, "She shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." Grace reinstates the soul in its original brightness.

But now we must notice God's governmental ways, as I believe them to be, with Abram in connection with this turning aside. Although his own soul was restored to God, and the principle of sight, or the world, was judged in his heart, as we see beautifully displayed at the end of this chapter, where he gave up all the land to Lot, yet the mark of Egypt appeared in his family when it no longer is seen in himself. Abram was a man of faith. He had come up out of Egypt without any love for Egypt, but not so his nephew Lot, whom he had taken into Egypt with him. This we see in the end of Gen. 13

There was one strip of the land of Canaan that was like Egypt. A lovely country that was like the garden of the Lord, well watered everywhere, not by the rain of heaven, but by a river "like the land of Egypt." Lot had a taste for a land like Egypt, a land that Abram had taken him to see. It was a place where a man might live without dependence upon heaven. What an attractive place for our hearts naturally! Abram could give it up, but not so Lot. Still one thinks that it must have been a bitter day for Abram when he saw Lot taking the path of sight which he, alas! had once shown him. The principle that on one occasion marked the uncle, permanently marked the nephew.

They parted, Lot adopting worldly or Egyptian principles, and Abram walking still before God; the one sowing trouble for himself because of God's government, the other treading the path, though trying to the flesh, yet of which it is written, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." May the Lord help us to walk in them!

Now was this, we may ask, the end of Egyptian principles in Abram's family? Alas, no. The next person to whom they appear is Sarai, and here Abram himself falls under them. There was in Abram's family a handmaid of Sarai, an Egyptian. That word Egyptian carries the mind back to that journey of Abram's into Egypt. And we see that the principle that governs Sarai's mind now is the same that governed Abram's mind then. She gave her maid to be her husband's wife. It was an act

that seemed the only way out of a difficulty. There was no thought of God in it. The result was long trouble again under God's government. It was fifteen years before the result of this act was put out of Abraham's house, in the casting out of the bondwoman and her son. And then it was with a broken heart to Abraham. And it was not until this point that the last trace of that turning aside into Egypt disappears from his house.

Now all this is not the tale of God's grace, but it is an illustration of His government. If Abram relieves himself by giving up divine principles, we find two results. In the first place, the blessed power of God restores the soul; and in the second, the government of God gives him to taste the bitterness of those principles on which he has acted, when they appear in other members of his family.

It is one thing to go into the world, and quite another to get the worldliness out of the household when once we have got it in. Still, the discipline of God is not in anger, but it is that of a father, in order that we might be partakers of His holiness. "Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" It needs much grace to sustain the spirit in passing through the governmental consequences of our actions. Yet it is here that grace is occasionally displayed in the brightest way, as we see in David's history (2 Sam. 15 and 17) and which is illustrated by what we have in Peter-humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due time (1 Pet. 5:6).

## The Greatest Wonder

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"His father saw him... and kissed him." Luke 15:20.

This is the greatest wonder of all. My Father loves me. And His love is not a blind love. He has seen all, knows all, has searched my sin to its very depth, and yet He loves me and has welcomed me to His outstretched arms and kissed me with a kiss that has reconciled me forever.

I had spent all in the unspeakable depravity of my sinful heart, but His love cannot be spent, nor can I ever pass out of the reach of it. As the heavens encompass the earth, so am I compassed about with that infinite love of God. There is my strength; my unending hope lies in that unending love. Yes, prodigal, you who have gone down lowest and spent all, this love abides, and abides for you. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Wonder of wonders, my Father loves me!

## The Hands of a Clock

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If ever there was a day when it is important for every true follower of Christ to be true and to stand fast to his profession, I believe it is the present day. There is no answer to infidelity like the life of Christ displayed by the Christian. Nothing puts the madness of the infidel and the folly of the superstitious more to shame and silence than the humble, quiet, devoted walk of a heavenly-minded and obedient Christian. It may be in the unlearned and poor and despised, but like the scent of the lowly violet, it gives its fragrance abroad, and both God and man take notice of it. Works, if only hypocritical doings, count for nothing; but works which are the genuine expression of living and walking with God in Christ are of the same value as the hands of a good clock. A good clock without hands is, for practical purposes, of no value; but the hands on the face tell the measure of the value of the works within, and record the lapse of time. "We are His [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10. Now (to him that has an ear to hear) is the time for works, and for overcoming.

## Hebrews 4:9

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The heart of man naturally seeks rest, and seeks it here. Now there is no rest to be found here for the saints; but it is written, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." To know this is both full of blessing and full of sorrow: sorrow to the flesh, because it is always seeking its rest here, so it has always to be disappointed- blessing to the spirit because the spirit, being born of God, can only rest in God's own rest, as it is said, "If they shall enter into My rest" (Heb. 4:4, 5). What God desires for us is to bring us into the enjoyment of all that which He Himself enjoys.

## His Joy

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If we have done some piece of work that has cost us a great deal of pain and trouble, we have satisfaction in seeing the results of our labor. Do you not think that the Lord Jesus has joy in seeing the results of His work? Are not we the results of His work? What joy He must have in seeing us gathered around Himself to remember Him! And when we are thus gathered, and, indeed at all times, we ought to see ourselves and our fellow believers as He sees us; that is, in all the value of His work, and acceptance in Himself before God.

## How Do You Worship?

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John 12:1-11

She came not to hear a sermon, although the first of teachers was there; to sit at His feet and hear His word (Luke 10:39) was not her purpose now, blessed as that was in its proper place. She came not to make her requests known to Him. There was a time when she had fallen at His feet saying, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (John 11:32); but to pour out her supplications to Him, as her only resource, was not now her thought, for her brother was seated at the table. She came not to meet the saints, though precious saints were there, for it says, "Jesus loved Martha... and Lazarus" (John 11:5). Fellowship with them was blessed likewise, and doubtless of frequent occurrence; but fellowship was not her object now. She came not after the weariness and toil of a week's battling with the world to be refreshed from Him, though surely she, like every saint, had learned the trials of the wilderness; and none more than she, probably, knew the blessed springs of refreshment that were in Him. But she came, and that, too, at the moment when the world was expressing its deepest hatred of Him, to pour out what she long had treasured up (v. 7), that which was most valuable to her, upon the Person of the One whose love had made her heart captive, and absorbed her affections. "Jesus only" filled her soul-her eye was on Him-her heart beat true to Him-her hands and feet were subservient to her eye and to her heart as she "anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair."

Adoration, homage, worship, blessing, was her one thought, and that in honor of the One who was "all in all" to her; and surely such worship was most refreshing to Him.

Some (v. 4) might murmur, but He upheld her cause, and showed how He could appreciate and value the grateful tribute of a heart that knew His worth and preciousness, and could not be silent as to it. It is a lasting record of what worship really is by the One who accepted it, and of the one who rendered it.

And now, dear reader, is this your mode of worship, or do you on the Lord's day go to hear a sermon, say your prayers, meet the saints, or be refreshed after your six days' toil? Oh! if every eye were on the Lord alone, if every heart were true to Him, if we were each determined to see "no man, save Jesus only," what full praise there would be! Not with alabaster boxes now, but our bodies filled with the Holy Spirit, a stream of thanksgiving, or worship of the highest character, would ascend to the blessed One that now adorns the glory as He once adorned the earth. May we thus worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Amen!

## How to Keep the Unity of the Spirit

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The Holy Spirit came down from heaven personally on the day of Pentecost, and dwells in each member of Christ individually (1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 1:13, 14, etc.); and the saints upon earth, thus indwelt, form God's habitation through the Spirit. He dwells corporately in the whole Church (Eph. 2:22, etc.). He unites each member to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17), and each member to the other members (1 Cor. 12:13), and all the members to the Head. This is the Church of God-the body of Christ.

This unity has remained untouched by all the failures of the Church. It is a unity which cannot be destroyed, because it is the Holy Ghost Himself. He is the unity of the body of Christ.

The Church of God was responsible to have maintained this unity of the Spirit, in practical outward and visible oneness. In this she has failed. The unity has not. It remains, because the Spirit of God remains. It remains even when the oneness of action is well nigh gone. The unity of a human body remains when a limb is paralyzed; but where is its oneness? The paralyzed limb has not ceased to be of the body, but it has lost the healthy articulation of the body.

Still, no matter what the ruin may be-no matter how terrible is the confused and unhealthy state in which things are-Scripture never allows that it is impracticable for the saints to walk in the fellowship of God's Spirit, and maintenance of the truth. It is always practicable. The Spirit of God pre-supposes evil and perilous days; still God enjoins us to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." He enjoins nothing that is impracticable. We never can restore anything to its former state, but we can walk in obedience to the Word, and in the company of the Spirit of God who enables us to hold the Head. (Col. 2:19.) He will never sacrifice Christ and His honor and glory for His members. Hence we are exhorted to keep the "unity of the Spirit" (not the "unity of the body," which would prevent us from separating from any member of the body of Christ, no matter what his practice). The Holy Ghost glorifies Christ and, walking in fellowship with Him, we are kept specially identified with Christ.

In this endeavor, I must begin with myself. My first duty is to separate myself to Christ, from everything that is contrary to Him-"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ (the Lord) depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. 2:19. This evil may be moral, practical or doctrinal; no matter what it is, I must get away from it; and when I have done so, I find myself practically in company with the Holy Ghost, and a nucleus for those who are likewise truehearted. If I can find such, that is, those who have done the same, I am to follow righteousness, faith, peace, charity, with them (2 Tim. 2:22). If I can find none where I am, I must stand alone, with the Holy Ghost, for my Lord. There are, however, the Lord be praised, many who have done likewise, and are on the line of action of the Spirit of God in the Church. They have the blessed promise as a resource, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20. They are practically one, as led by the same Spirit, with every member of Christ in the world who has done likewise. I do not now refer to their absolute union with the whole body of Christ, but of the practice.

The basis on which they are gathered (that is, the Spirit of God, in the body of Christ) is wide enough in its principle to embrace the whole Church of God-narrow enough to exclude from its midst everything that is not of the Spirit of God. To admit such would put them practically out of the fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

This endeavor does not confine itself to those who are thus together one with the other. It has its aspect toward every member of Christ upon earth. The walk of those thus gathered, in entire separation to Christ and practical fellowship of the Spirit, and maintenance of the truth, is the truest love they can show toward their brethren who are not practically with them. Walking in truth and unity, they will desire that their brethren may be won into the truth and fellowship of the Holy Ghost. They may be but a feeble remnant, but the true remnants were ever distinguished by personal devotion to the Lord who ever specially watched over them in the most tender solicitude, and associated Himself specially with them.

## How to Obtain Peace

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You may be thoroughly assured of this, dear friend, that you will never get peace by looking at your repentance, or your anything. If such a thing could be, it would simply be satisfaction with yourself; and this could never be right. Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross. God preaches peace by Jesus Christ. It is not by repentance; although, most surely, we believe in the necessity of repentance! But what would you say to a person if he were to tell you that he had found peace because his repentance was of the right kind-because he hated sin as God hated it? Doubtless you would say to him that his peace was a false one. Thanks be to God, the believer's peace rests on no such rotten foundation. The Apostle does not say, "Having repented enough, we have peace with God." No; but, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." The believer's peace rests on a divine foundation. It is based on the glorious truth that God is not only satisfied as to the entire question of our sins, but that He is actually glorified in respect to it. He has reaped a richer harvest in the matter of the putting away of our sins than ever He could have reaped in the fields of an unfallen creation. Nothing has ever glorified God like the death of Christ. The hearty belief of this must give peace to the soul. It is not the work wrought in us, whether repentance or anything else, that gives peace, but the work wrought for us. It is not the work of the Spirit in us, precious and essential as it is, that gives peace, but the work of Christ for us. This is a grand and most necessary truth for all anxious enquirers. It is well and right enough to judge ourselves, our state, our ways-to be humbled because of our shallow repentance, our coldness and indifference-but we shall never get peace by self judgment. If we have not found peace before we sit down to the work of self-judgment, we shall find it very dismal work indeed.

It seems to us, dear friend, that you are too much occupied with the thoughts of men. One preacher tells you this; another preacher tells you that; and your own heart tells you something else. Would it not be well to listen to what God says? This is what faith does, and thus finds settled tranquility. The believer's peace can no more be disturbed than Christ can be disturbed from His seat on the throne of God. This seems strong, but it is true; and being true, its strength is part of its moral glory. Let us entreat you to take up the lovely attitude of the soul in Psalm 85: "I will hear what God the Lord will speak" (not what this or that man will speak): "for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints: but let them not turn again to folly." May the blessed Spirit lead you into the enjoyment of that peace which Christ has made by the blood of His cross, which God preaches in the gospel of His grace, by Jesus Christ, and which faith finds in the simple testimony of Holy Scripture!

## The Human Heart

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"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Jer. 17:9.

The heart of man is like a barren field,

And fruit to God was never known to yield; Its choicest flowers are but cultured weeds, While thorns and thistles are its native seeds: Nay, more than this, there lies beneath the soil Far worse than what appears, however vile; For there lies buried, to the heart innate,

To God, and all His grace, a thorough hate.

## I Love Thee Still

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There is a growing looseness and laxity apparent to any who are taking account of things, and this especially takes the form of worldliness in amusements, dress, furnishing of our homes, our affiliations and companionships.

The cross in which we once gloried as crucified with Christ, seeing on the one side a dead world, and on the other a dead self, we view as the transaction in which our sins were put away and there we pause, disinclined to accept it as the end of ourselves for the world and the end of the world for us (Gal. 6:14). "God forbid that I should glory" has ceased to be our prayer. We do not want the world rendered an object of contempt and shame to us, nor do we want to be rendered this to the world; and yet this is where the cross should leave us.

We have lost Christ, maybe not as the object of faith, but as the object of affection. And this is where declension begins. For us it too often is enough to know Him just as a Savior. We are willing to use His sorrows and sufferings to separate us from our sins, but we do not want these to separate us from ourselves and from our surroundings. With the individual as with the Church, we are thus under the charge of "Thou hast left thy first love," and are solemnly called to "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen." There may be much in us that He can commend, but if He has lost His place in our hearts; if affections are alienated, we are "fallen." Searching and solemn indictment! And what is His word to us? "Repent!"

It is not enough to be on the ground, and to have the truth. We but repeat the sin of the Pharisees when we become content and complacent with externals. The truth must give us a state that agrees with the place we are in. If this is effected, we will not walk in the manners of that world from which His cross has separated us.

Has the blessed Spirit been so grieved that He can no longer make good to us what is true of us in Christ? Have we lost the sense of His preciousness in our souls (1 Pet. 2:7)? What disposition or desire can be satisfied apart from Christ in whom every beauty, every charm, and every glory meets? All else must be disappointing, temporary, and empty. The joy you are looking for, you are leaving behind you in turning away from Him. Once you counted the passions and pleasures, the gold and its glory as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord. "Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?" Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold.

But He is the same, and our failure has not diminished His fullness; it is for us still. However chilled in heart or wayward in walk, I hear Him saying, "I love thee still." Is there not a message from the cross, where love's sweetest story was so fully told, where we became His at such awful cost, where He bought us so dearly?

"I gave it all for thee;

What hast thou given for Me?"

How much are you missing by leaving Him out of your life? And how much He is missing! The next thing to being with Him above is to have Him with us here, to have His conscious presence, and so have our part with Him. When everything was slipping, Paul wrote Timothy, "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit." Do we catch this? It is the first lap toward being already in heaven. He was given for you. Glory to His name! But have you lost the realization of Him as the One who was given to you? O what a loss, since Christ is all. He is the exalted One, "far above all heavens," and you, not only the object of His consideration, but of His love!

Do you begin to grasp that height to which He has been carried: "far above all heavens"? He is at the top, at the top of the universe; and "I am His, and His desire is toward me." What a secret to be in on, a secret angels cannot know. Wait before Him until He fills you with His own fullness. For one look at Him there, Paul counted "all things but loss." No wonder he passed into an ecstasy, and was "beside himself." Stephen, enamored of Him, wore an angel's face. Look long and lingeringly on that face that streams with the light of His glory, and it will cast a shade on all below.

And are you passing it all by? It is your loss now, and eternally. Once in the secret of what Christ is, no wine can move itself "aright"; and earth's joys will become stale, and as His coming casts the light of the nearing glory across this "little while," it will take the burden from your cross, and the sharpness from the thorns as you hasten to meet Him with a bridal hymn

## In the Days of Ruin

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There is great instruction in the conduct of Zerubbabel related in Ezra 3. The son and heir of David takes his place with a remnant returning from captivity. He is content to labor in Jerusalem without a throne, without a crown. In building the altar of the Lord and the house of God, he simply served God in his own generation. As heir of the place that Solomon had formerly occupied in the days of prosperity and glory, he speaks neither of his birth nor of his own rights; yet is he faithful in all the path of separation, grief and struggling which he is obliged to pass through. May the Lord render us more and more peaceful and confiding in Himself in these days of trial. "When I am weak, then am I strong," is a lesson Paul had to learn by a very humbling process.

## In the Light

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The possession of an evil nature never makes the conscience bad in the Lord's presence. It is when the evil nature is at work in any way that the conscience becomes exercised. The cloud is felt, preventing the soul's enjoyment of communion in the light. Then comes in God's blessed provision for that which is made manifest in His presence where there is failure in our ways as Christians. It is confession of sins. Just as when a man with his clothing soiled or in disarray enters a room full of light and mirrors instinctively arranges his attire (for the light shows whatever was wrong), so one cannot help confessing anything that the light reveals if, when in the light of God, there is the slightest soil. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light," and God is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

When the sinful nature is yielded to and one "sins," the conscience is defiled and unhappy; the Spirit is grieved, and the more sensitive the conscience the more keenly it feels the stain. Here it is we learn what causes the bowing of the heart and conscience before God about the sin. The advocacy of Christ has been in exercise, not because I have repented of the sin and judged myself about it, but because I had sinned and needed that my soul should be bowed for the failure before the Lord. A living Person-Jesus Christ-deals by His Word s and the Spirit with my heart and conscience, makes me feel the sin, and bows my heart in confession to Him who is faithful and just to forgive "and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It is "If any man sin" (not repent of his sin), "we have an advocate with the Father" (1 John 2:1). He forgives the sin and cleanses the heart from the remembrance of that which had caused the sorrow and distress of soul.

True confession is a deep, deep, painful work in the soul. It has not only to do with the actual failure, but also with the root of the matter which, unjudged, had produced the sin. Peter's case in John 21 gives an illustration of this dealing of Christ when he needed a sense of his sin not heretofore possessed. Peter had "wept bitterly" over the sin (his denial of Christ), yet the roots were unreached and liable to break forth again. The Lord deals with him-not charging him with his sin or even making mention of it: "Lovest thou Me more than these?" Dost thou still have supreme confidence in thyself? for he had boasted that though others would deny Him, yet he would not. The Lord did not look to the stream, but to its source. The root was reached and all was out before His eye. The spring was laid open, judged, and dried up. Blessed dealing of One who loves us perfectly and cares too much for us to spare us when we need to learn ourselves.

## Is Christ My Life?

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A believer is looked upon by God as dead, buried, and raised up together with Christ. Not merely Christ a Rock in the desert to which I flee and find refuge, but I get in Him a vivifying power by which to walk in newness of life. "He that is dead is freed from sin"-not that the law of sin and death is out of his members, and that he has not still to watch against it, but the Spirit of God comes in as the seal of the truth on my heart, that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2). It is still there, but which is stronger-Christ in heaven, or that which remains in me? Which is stronger to overcome-the Holy Spirit sent down as a well of water springing up, or the weakness in man?

Paul was a man of strong passions, and what is the testimony of the Spirit in connection with him? "To me to live is Christ." Is Christ my life? What is the effect of that life on my life? It is a most blessed thing to be able to say that Christ, at God's right hand, is my Life, and that God looks at me only in Him, and I can be talking to God about Him. The consciousness of being brought where I can have that communion, puts perfect peace into my soul down here.

## Israel's Idolatry: Written for Our Learning

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### Israel's Idolatry

"But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day." Deut. 4:20.

Can anything be more affecting than this? Jehovah, in His rich and sovereign grace and by His mighty hand, brought them forth from the land of death and darkness, a redeemed and delivered people. He had brought them to Himself that they might be to Him a peculiar treasure above all the people upon the earth. How then could they turn away from Him, from His holy covenant, and from His precious commandments?

"Sadly, they could and did. "They made a calf" (Acts 7:41) "and... said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Exod. 32:4). Think of this! A calf made by their own hands, an image graven by art and man's device had brought them up out of Egypt! A thing made out of the women's earrings had redeemed and delivered them! And this has been written for our admonition. But why should it be written for us if we are not capable of and liable to the very same sin? We must either claim that God the Holy Spirit has penned an unnecessary sentence, or admit our need of an admonition against the sin of idolatry; and assuredly our needing the admonition proves our tendency to the sin.

Are we better than Israel? In no wise. We have brighter light and higher privileges; but, so far as we are concerned, we are made of the same material, and have the same capabilities and the same tendencies as they. Our idolatry may take different shape from theirs; but idolatry is idolatry, whatever the shape may be; and the higher our privileges, the greater our sin. We may, perhaps, be disposed to wonder how a rational people could be guilty of such overwhelming folly as to make a calf and bow down to it, and this too after having had such a display of the majesty, power, and glory of God. Let us remember that their folly is recorded for our admonition, and that we, with all our light, all our knowledge, all our privileges, are warned to "flee from idolatry."

Let us deeply ponder all this, and seek to profit by it. May every chamber of our hearts be filled with Christ, and then we shall have no room for idols. This is our only safeguard. If we slip away the breadth of a hair from our precious Savior and Shepherd, we are capable of plunging into the darkest forms of error and moral evil. Light, knowledge, spiritual privileges, church position are no security for the soul. They are very good in their right places, and if rightly used; but in themselves, they only increase our moral danger.

Nothing can keep us safe, right, and happy, but having Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. Abiding in Him, and He in us, that wicked one touches us not. But if personal communion be not diligently maintained, the higher our position, the greater our danger, and the more disastrous our fall. There was not a nation beneath the canopy of heaven more favored and exalted than Israel when they gathered round Mount Horeb to hear the word of God. There was not a nation on the face of the earth more degraded or more guilty than they when they bowed before the golden calf,

an image of their own formation.

## Jacob's Mistake

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What a mistake Jacob made when he said, "All these things are against me," when in fact they were, every one of them, for him (Gen. 42:36).

How different that beautiful utterance of faith in Rom. 8:28, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Beware of Jacob's mistake.

## Jesus Christ Come in the Flesh

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The ark and the camp were in some sense necessary to each other during the journey through the wilderness. The ark, seated in the tabernacle on which the cloud rested, had to guide the camp; and the camp, in its order, had to accompany and guard the ark and all connected with it.

This was the business of the camp. There was to be subjection to the will of Him who dwelt in the cloud; dependence on Him who led them daily; conscious liberty because of having left Egypt behind them, and hope because of having Canaan before them. Such a mind as this was to be in the camp; but its business was to conduct the mystic house of God onward to its rest, "the possession of the Gentiles" (Acts 7:45).

Their journeying through the desert would not have constituted divine pilgrimage. Many a one had traveled that road without being a stranger and pilgrim with God. In order to be such, the ark must be in their company.

The mind of the camp, of which I have spoken, might betray its weakness or forget itself, and this might lead, as we know it did, to chastening again and again. But if its business, of which I have also spoken, were given up, there would be loss of everything. And this did come to pass. The tabernacle of Moloch was taken up instead of the ark of Jehovah; and the camp, therefore, had its road diverted to Damascus or Babylon, far away from the promised Canaan. (Amos 5:25, 26; Acts 7:43.)

And thus it is with ourselves. We are to maintain those truths or mysteries which the tabernacle and its furniture represented; and the Apostle commits our entrance into Canaan to that.

"If ye continue in the faith"; and again, "if ye keep in memory what I have written unto you." Our safety, our rest in the heavenly Canaan, depends on our keeping the truth.

This, however, is to be added-that not merely for our own safety's sake, but for Christ's honor, is the truth to be kept. This is much to be considered. Supposing for a moment that our own safety were not concerned in it. Christ's honor is, and that is enough. Such a thing is contemplated in 2 John 10. The elect lady was inside the house; she was in personal safety, but she has a duty to perform to "the doctrine of Christ"; so that if one comes to her door, and brings not that doctrine, she must keep him outside, and refuse to have him where she is.

Title to entrance is confession to that doctrine, a confession of "Jesus Christ come in the flesh," a confession that involves or secures the glory of His Person. A full confession to His work only will not do. The one outside may profess a sound faith as to the atonement, sovereignty of grace, and like truths; but all this is not a warrant for letting him in. There must be confession as to His Person also. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed ('and give him no greeting.' R.V.): for he that biddeth him God-speed ('that giveth him greeting' R.V.) is

partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 9, 10, 11.

Surely this is clear and decided. I believe this is much to be considered. The truth touching Christ's Person is to be maintained by us, even though our soul's safety were not involved in it. I grant that our salvation is involved. But that is not all. He who owns not that truth is to be kept outside. It imparts tenderness as well as strength to see that the name of Jesus (the One of whom the ark was a type) is thus entrusted to the guardianship of the saints. This is what we owe Him, if not ourselves. The wall of partition is to be raised by the saints between them and Christ's dishonor.

Mere journeying from Egypt to Canaan will not do. Let the journey be attended with all the trial of such an arid, unsheltered, and trackless road, still it is not divine pilgrimage. A mere toilsome, self-denying life, even though endured with that moral courage which becomes pilgrims, will not do. There must be the carriage of the ark of God, confession to the truth, and maintenance of the name of Jesus.

Now in John's epistles the name "Jesus Christ" expresses or intimates, I believe, the deity of the Son. The Holy Spirit, or the unction, so filled the mind of that Apostle with the truth, that "the Word" which had been "made flesh" was God, that though he speaks of Him by a name which formally expresses the Son in manhood or in office, with John that is no matter. The name is nothing-at least, nothing that can interfere with the full power of prevailing assurance, that He is "that which was from the beginning," the Son in the glory of the Godhead. This is seen and felt at the very opening of the first epistle; and so, I believe, throughout. (See chap. 1:3, 7; 2:1; 3:23; 4:2; 5:20; 2 John 3-7.)

In the thoughts of this epistle, "Jesus Christ" is always this divine One, so to speak, the eternal life manifested. With John, "Jesus Christ" is "the true God." Jesus is the "He" and the "Him" in the argument of his first epistle; and this "He" and "Him" ever keeps before us One who is God, though in assumed relations and covenant dealings.

The confession, therefore, which is demanded by them is this-that it was God who was manifested, or who came in the flesh. (See 1 John 4:2 John 1:7) For in these epistles, as we have now seen, "Jesus Christ" is God. His name as God is Jesus Christ. And it is assumed or concluded that "the true God" is not known, if He who was in the flesh, Jesus Christ, be not understood as such; and all this simply because He is God. Any other received as such is an idol (1 John 5:20, 21). The soul that abides not in this doctrine "hath not God," but he who abides in it "hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9).

This, I judge, is the mind and import of the required confession that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." I here speak of God under the name of Jesus Christ; and it is, therefore, the demand of a confession to the great mystery of "God manifest in the flesh."

The very adjunct (as another has written to me), "come in the flesh," throws strongly forward the deity of Christ; because if He were a man, or anything short of what He is, it would be no such wonder that He should come in the flesh. And verses 2 and 3 of chapter 1 guide us to John's thoughts in the use of the name "Jesus Christ." That which was from the beginning, the eternal Life which was with the Father, was the Person he declared to them. The words "with the Father" are important, making it evident that the Son was the eternal One, the name of this eternal Son being Jesus Christ. And it is interesting to compare the close with the commencement of this

epistle- "This is the true God, and eternal life."

I desire to bless the Lord for giving my soul fresh assurance on such simple ground of Scripture, that this duty lies on us of maintaining the honor of the name of Jesus.

In the course of the Lord's journey on earth, we see Him in the following ways:

As the born One-holy, meeting God's mind in the nature or human material.

As the circumcised One-perfect under the law, meeting God's mind in it.

As the baptized One-meeting God's mind in dispensational order and righteousness.

As the anointed One-meeting God's mind as His image or representative.

As the obedient One-doing always those things that pleased the Father.

As the devoted One-meeting God's mind in all things, and laying down His life (John 10:17, 18).

As the risen One-sealed with God's approval in victory for sinners.

Thus He meets all the mind of God while providing for us. All was magnified in Him and by Him, all made honorable. God's proposed delight in man, or glory by him, has been richly answered in the blessed Jesus. While in His Person-He was "God manifest in the flesh," in the succession of His stages through the earth He was accomplishing all the divine purpose, delight and glory, in man. Nothing unworthy of God was in the man Christ Jesus, His Person, experiences, or ways.

## John 11 and 12

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These chapters show us in what different channels the Lord's thoughts flowed, from those of the heart of man. His ideas, so to speak, of misery and of happiness, were very different from man's natural thoughts.

Chapter 11 opens with a scene of human misery. The dear family at Bethany is visited with sickness, and the voice of health and thanksgiving in their dwelling has to yield to mourning, lamentation, and woe. But He, who of all had the largest and tenderest sympathies, is the calmest among them, for He carried with Him that foresight of resurrection which made Him overlook the chamber of sickness and the grave of death.

When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He abode two days longer in the place where He was. But when that sickness ends in death, He begins His journey in the full and bright prospect of resurrection. And this makes His journey steady and undisturbed. As He approaches the scene of sorrow, His action is still the same. He replies again and again to the passion of Martha's soul from that place where the knowledge of a power that was beyond that of death had, in all serenity, seated Him. And though He still has to move onward, there is no haste; for on Mary's arrival He is still in the same place where Martha had met Him. And the issue, as I need not say, comes in due season to vindicate this stillness of His heart and this apparent tardiness of His journey.

Thus it was with Jesus here. The path of Jesus was His own. When man was bowed down in sorrow at the thought of death, He was lifted up in the sunshine of resurrection.

But the sense of resurrection, though it gave this peculiar current to the thoughts of Jesus, left His heart still alive to the sorrows of others. For His was not indifference but elevation. And such is the way of faith always. Jesus weeps with the weeping of Mary and her company. His whole soul was in the sunshine of those deathless regions which lay far away from the tomb of Bethany; but it could visit the valley of tears, and weep there with those that wept.

But again: When man was lifted up in the expectation of something good and brilliant in the earth, His soul was full of the holy certainty that death awaits all here, however promising or pleasurable, and that honor and prosperity must be hoped for only in other and higher regions. Chapter 12 shows us this.

When they heard of the raising of Lazarus, many people flocked together from Bethany to Jerusalem and at once hailed Him as the King of Israel. They would fain go up with Him to the feast of tabernacles, and antedate the age of glory, seating Him in the honors and joys of the kingdom. The Greeks also took their place with Israel in such an hour. Through Philip, as taking hold of the skirt of a Jew (Zech. 8), they would see Jesus, and worship. But in the midst of all this, Jesus Himself sits solitary. He knows that earth is not the place for all this festivity and keeping of holy days. His spirit muses on death, while their thoughts were full of a kingdom with its attendant honors and pleasures. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

Such was the peculiar path of the spirit of Jesus. Resurrection was everything to Him. It was His relief amid the sorrows of life, and His object amid the promises and prospects of the world. It gave His soul a calm sunshine when dark and heavy clouds had gathered over Bethany. It moderated and separated His affections when the brilliant glare of a festive day was lighting up the way from thence to Jerusalem. The thought of it sanctified His mind equally amid griefs and enjoyments around Him. Resurrection was everything to Him! It made Him a perfect pattern of that fine principle of the Spirit of God: "And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not." 1 Cor. 7:30.

Oh for a little more of the same mind in us, beloved! A little more of this elevation above the passing conditions and circumstances of life.

## John 14:2

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The "many mansions" of John 14 set forth the blessed fact that there is room in the Father's house for the many families which shall share in the fruits of His everlasting love. But our Lord assures His disciples that His going to heaven was at once to prepare and define the place which they were to occupy. There was no place there for them till He went thither; but His place was to be theirs. Wondrous truth! The notion that the many mansions set forth the various rewards to be given to Christ's servants is, in our judgment, simply absurd. "I go to prepare a place for you." What has this to do with rewards? It is His entrance there, not our working here, that prepares our place in the Father's house. We believe, of course, in rewards; but John 14:2 has nothing to do with them.

## Justification and Some of Its Results

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"If we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us." Rom. 4:24-5:5.

We commence with "If we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord." We believe on Him that is God, the source of all, acting in divine power, raising the one who was delivered for our offenses. This act is God's approval and satisfaction of the work of Christ on the cross. This answers to the type of the Red Sea. The "Therefore" of chapter 5 verse 1 is the first consequence of this-justification. This is righteousness imputed to us. A righteous God imputes righteously His own righteousness to us on the principle of faith. Not only are our sins forgiven, but He looks upon us as if we had never sinned, all through the work of Christ. Merit, acquirement or works on our part have no place here. This constitutes the believer's standing before God based on Christ's work, and is therefore settled and unchanging.

The passage now sets before us seven blessed results of this justification which are divided into two sections with three and four parts each. In the first three, we have "peace with God", "access by faith into the grace wherein we stand" and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God", which apply to our past, present and future. "We have peace with God"-this first consequence of justification recorded is the reproach of guilt on our conscience before a holy God removed, and eternally removed. Not only are we justified before a holy God, but that God against whom we had sinned has Himself justified us. Old Testament saints had forgiveness governmentally or in a temporary or limited way, and the three instances of forgiveness during the Lord's life would go further than that of the Old Testament saints. The man with the palsy in the 5th of Luke certainly teaches governmental forgiveness, but may also have been judicial. The other two cases, the woman who was a sinner in the 7th of Luke and the disciples in the 20th of John, were judicial and anticipated the true Christian position-the work of Christ, His ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit. But we who live in the Christian era are eternally and judicially forgiven, and God will never raise with us the question of our sins-indeed, He looks at us now as if we had never sinned. This is peace with God.

"By whom we also have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." Our present standing before God is in grace, and the favor and love of God rest uninterruptedly upon us. Nothing can impair or impeach this. We got into this position by faith and certainly not by our own works. This is not enjoyment; had it been enjoyment it would have said "by the Spirit". No doubt this standing gives us great enjoyment, but we enter this standing by faith. This is the true grace of God wherein we stand-1 Pet. 5:12. This brings us to the third thing. The first had more to do with the past, the

second is our present standing, and undoubtedly the third has the future in view. "And rejoice in hope of the glory of God." The future display of kingdom glory in which Christ will have the central and prominent place—God's answer to the cross. This is our hope and we now rejoice in this bright future prospect when we shall be with and like Christ. The first three had to do with the soul's relationship with God, but the last four have more to do with God entering into our wilderness experience on our behalf. These last four are presented as normal Christian experience with development to soul maturity and a deep sense of God's love by the indwelling Spirit. These begin with "Not only so". Justification had already given us blessed results but now more would follow.

"But we glory in tribulations also." "But" is an adversative and suggests the contrary to that which is normal. Why so? Because of His great work on the cross, we are able thus to glory in the midst of scenes of contrariety and personal stress. There are cases when we look back with gratitude and praise at God's past deliverance and there are many examples of this in the Word. But this is not the case here. This passage informs us that when we are actually in these adversities, we glory. We rise above the plight and sorrows when we are in them and glory not with self-satisfaction but in the One in whom we have been consciously sustained, who passing through the valley of Baca maketh it a well.

"Knowing that tribulation worketh endurance" -it is a deeper experience to go through the storm with the Lord in the boat than to see the Lord exercise divine power in quelling the storm. Having been with God in the many and various trials that we are called on to encounter, endurance is the outcome. Trials which in earlier times would have distressed us and perplexed us are now entered into with God, which gives the valuable moral trait of endurance. The words "Thou art with me" have had their reward with us. We now know that endurance has been acquired by passing through tribulation with the Lord, and this is valuable in soul history. All this is based on justification.

"And endurance, experience"-this does not mean that we are occupied with experience so much as it teaches us what experience produces, and indicates a deeper acquaintance with the God whom we have been brought to know; a more intimate communion with Him whose wisdom, power and love we have learned to know in all adverse circumstances, and who has only our richest blessing in view. This brings us nearer to a God whose ear is always and at all times ready to listen to us, and whose ceaseless presence with us is a constant comfort. It is not now a question of trials, vicissitudes, anxieties and sorrows, but the God whose love we have learned so well in all these and above all these, in fact it is Himself and His presence which gives us experience of value of the richest kind. We know Him that is from the beginning, that is Christ.

"Experience, hope "-Passing through the many and varied trials, exercises and sorrows of the wilderness with God, we learn what the world is away from God, and long for a better. This engenders hope; then again having passed through the wilderness with God and having been accustomed to His support and presence, hope looms before us of being with this One whom we know so well, but in a more congenial environment and atmosphere.

"Hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us." The hope of outward manifestation of coming glory, of which Christ is the center, is assured to our hearts, therefore we are not ashamed. Being confident regarding this

hope and knowing that we shall not be put to shame gives assurance in our testimony before men. The love of God is the source of all. This, in the first place, brought about our justification in Christ. There this love is set forth objectively, but now, blessed be God, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. Here it is subjective-What an experience! What a reality! The first time in this wonderful epistle the love of God is mentioned, it is shed abroad in our hearts. And it tells us it is by the Holy Spirit which is given to us. Here it is not the new birth, but the indwelling of the Spirit, the result of the acceptance of Christ's work. The scriptural principle is "washed with water, sprinkled with blood, anointed with oil". This is a divine principle and concludes the seven results of justification.

## The Last Knock

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Rev. 3:8, 16, 20, 21

The Lord's last words to His assembly on earth are singularly solemn and instructive. In the closing moments of her history, when things are hopelessly bad, He still stands at the door and knocks. The witness of the bride and body of Christ on earth is about to cease forever; and He reminds the faithful of it by saying, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev. 3:11. Faithful ones surely are contemplated till He comes, however few they may be, and the overcomer is encouraged to the last moment.

It is clear that two things will be found here in the closing days of the history of God's assembly on earth—some true to the Lord, and many indifferent to His claims and honor. Though slighted, He knocks and presents Himself in richest grace to everyone who hears His voice and opens the door. We have in this chapter the Lord's commendation, His warning, and His entreaty.

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

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

The test is simple, but very searching. Are we keeping His Word? Not merely reading it, or even admiring some of its striking features, but using it as a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path; being in heart and conscience subject to it, and finding guidance from it for every part of our way.

Such, we judge, keep His Word. They love it, hide it in their hearts, have the Lord Jesus Christ ministered to their souls through it by the Spirit, and are thus kept in communion with Him, living for His glory, and waiting for His return from heaven. In this way there is not only intercourse with the Lord, but such holy intimacy that they count on His blessing being with them, for He said, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7.

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

Another mark of the faithful in the closing days of the Church on earth is that they have not denied their precious Savior's "name." We are persuaded there is a great deal more in this than many think. The way in which a person mentions the name of an absent friend often discloses the esteem or indifference in which the speaker holds him. And is it less true with regard to how we speak of the infinitely worthy name of our Lord Jesus Christ? We think not. And we do not hesitate

to say that nothing manifests the state of the heart more than the way in which His holy name is repeated by us. Quietly to take sides with the insolent who say, "Who is this Son of man?" or to maintain intimacy with the despisers who are wont to speak of Him as the carpenter's Son, or with scoffers who say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" betrays a heart that cares little for His name or for His glory.

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

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

It is the name, when mentioned, which sets forth the person, and at once claims our esteem or otherwise. We cannot ordinarily separate the name from the person. The name of our Lord Jesus Christ not only conveys to us true thoughts of His Person, but calls out our affections toward Him where He is now.

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

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

Besides our Lord's last commendation of some, His last warning to others is most solemn. "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth." v. 16. Their state and ways were so nauseous to our Lord as to be intolerable. Professing to love Him, their hearts were indifferent to His honor and His claims, so that they could only be rejected by Him who is "holy" and "true." There may be plenty of Bible knowledge and zeal for religious activities, there may be prosperity in the eyes of the religious world and abundant self-satisfaction, yet Christ be outside of it all.

How appalling is the possibility of such a state! But, unhappily, it does exist. Is it Christ that is before the soul-His Word, His ways, His interests, His people, His service, His honor, His glory? Is the love of Christ the motivating power which constrains us? Have we personal intercourse with the glorified Son of God, who is our life, our righteousness, and peace? Is communion with Him that which we seek and enjoy? Is Christ known, welcomed, and revered as "in the midst" of the assembly when gathered in His name? How can anything short of this be acceptable to Him? Those who do not desire His glory, who do not love His Word, do not seek to obey His voice and

to honor Him at some personal inconvenience and loss in this world are, we may be sure, among those who are "neither cold nor hot," and must be rejected by Him.

It is blessed, though, to turn away from the indifference of man in his utter failure to maintain the truth and honor of our Lord on earth, and to gather up the thoughts suggested by the gracious way in which our Lord presents Himself, and hearken to His loving entreaty, as He finds Himself outside the door and knocking. Does He thunder on them the immediate expectation of devouring judgment? Does He lead them to expect fire and brimstone to rain upon them because of their most inexcusable forgetfulness of Him?

Oh, no! The last words to His ruined Church on earth, which follow His last knock, abound with tender tones of richest grace. Let us seek to catch them, as it were, from His own lips. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Rev. 3:20.

Wondrous mercy! The highest blessing that can be known on earth, can be enjoyed by the feeblest soul who opens the door to Him. Let us not fail to notice here; first, that the Lord's place, as rejected even by His professed people on earth, is outside the door. His name, it may be, is often on their lips, but the rightful place is not accorded to Him as Head over all to His assembly. So indifferent are they to Him (His presence, His interests, and His glory) that they can get on and "have need of nothing," though Christ is outside, instead of being known in their midst when they are gathered together in His name. Oh, how solemn! Can it be possible that Christendom has sunk so low that any can speak of prosperity apart from enjoyment of Himself?

The next thing is the Lord's attitude. He cannot give up the professing church to its expected judgment as the great whore, as long as any will open the door to Him. His knock is loud enough to arouse the one who is true-hearted among the mass, and who hears the voice. There is no mistaking it. It is the voice of the Beloved, the Shepherd's voice, that still small voice which goes down deep into the heart and conscience, and rouses every true and proper affection of the soul of the one who knows that "Christ is all."

This is enough. The voice being heard, the slumbering faculties are aroused, the heart bounds to open the door, to remove every hindrance to being near Him, and to abide in Him and with Him. All must give way to Christ's voice.

Once the door is opened to Him, He comes in to the feeble one who has lifted the latch and removed every impediment to enjoying His company. Precious moment! And then (oh, wondrous grace!) He sups with them. His heart must be gratified in having personal communion with the one that has joyfully let Him in; and the humble, self-distrusting believer sups with Him.

Can anything exceed these riches of divine grace? and are we not told to be "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life"? This scene is mercy indeed; for while the mass of Christendom's professing people are to be spewed out of His mouth, a solitary one here and there is even now supping with our Lord Jesus, having personal communion with Him.

And let it never be forgotten that the Lord's "counsel" was to have personal intercourse with Him, and get from Himself the pure gold of divine righteousness which had been tried in the fire. He offers even on earth the consciousness of personal communion with Him; that is, in our small

measure, the same thoughts, the same joys, the same affections as Himself.

How amazing it is that we are not more aroused in heart and conscience so as to more enjoy fellowship with Himself; for we are, through infinite grace, "Called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

May the Lord's last knock and His last words to His assembly on earth duly affect our hearts at this time.

## A Lesson in Arithmetic

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Willie spent his life like most schoolboys. He went to school in the morning, back home at noon to dinner, then off again for the afternoon, and home to tea. The evening was spent in preparing his lessons for the next day. Nothing very exciting ever happened. In Willie's day there were not so many football and baseball games as there are nowadays, nor were there any motorcycles. But one day, however, he did get a surprise. On opening his desk at school to get out his books for the day's lessons, he found someone had been there before him and had written on the inside cover of his notebook the following lines:

"The one who by addition grows  
And suffers no subtraction,  
But multiplies a thing he knows,  
And carries every fraction;  
Who well divides his precious time,  
Each part proportion giving,  
To sure success aloft will climb,  
Interest compound receiving."

Who ever could have written it? It must have been one of the teachers, Willie thought, for the writing was clear and well-formed, too good a hand for one of the boys.

Willie is now grown up, but he has never found out who wrote the lines, nor has he ever seen the words anywhere again. The rhyme made a great impression on him, and he did his best to add to his knowledge, to divide his time rightly, the result being that he did well at school and later became an able and successful man. He is still adding and multiplying, but in a different way than when in school. Let us ask him and see what sort of arithmetic he is doing now. "Are you still doing addition, Mr. Willie?" "Well, yes, I hope so; there is plenty to be done." "But whatever are you adding?" "Peter tells us to add, doesn't he? If I remember rightly he gives us seven things to add. Let us read what he says: 'And besides this... add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity (which means love)' " 2 Pet. 1:5-7.

"And does it say anything in the Bible about subtraction?" "I think it does. Isn't there a verse that says, 'Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown' Rev. 3:11. This was said to the Christians at Philadelphia, and the same thing was said to the Christians at Thyatira in the second chapter of Revelation. It isn't much use adding if we allow Satan to come and subtract, so the Christians in both these places were warned to suffer no subtraction. And one of the best ways to avoid losing what we have gained from God, is to multiply what we have.

"Solomon says, 'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty' Pro. 11:24. And the Apostle prays that the Colossians may increase in the knowledge of God. You can light thousands of candles from one wick without dimming its light. Each one of us can increase by learning of God, and making the knowledge we have, known to others."

"But however do you carry every fraction, Mr. Willie?" "That was a lesson the Lord Jesus taught His disciples when here. 'Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost,' He said to them after the miracle of the feeding of both the five thousand and the four thousand. The bread of God, which the Lord Jesus Himself had blessed, was too precious for the birds of the air to feed on; it was to be eaten by those for whom Jesus had come to die.

"Then again, to continue our arithmetic lesson, a man of God was to divide well his precious time. Paul tells Timothy some of the things he was to attend to; his time was to be divided in giving 'attendance to doctrine'; to reading God's Word; to exhortation; to instructing those who oppose the truth. He was told to 'meditate on these things,' so he had no difficulty in knowing how to divide his time.

"Peter tells us what the result of diligence will be; it gives us compound interest. He says, 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.' "

Compound interest means that your capital is given back to you, added to your interest. This God will certainly do. He will never be any man's debtor. It is worthwhile to be diligent in the work of the Lord! "There is no man that hath left... for My sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time... and in the world to come eternal life." Mark 10:29, 30.

## Liberty in Christ

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### Rom. 8

Christianity is a divine power acting in man. It is not a law requiring something from a sinner, thought doubtless it does require the believer to walk according to Christ; but this is not its aspect. In Christianity God gives a nature which delights in the thing, and which is the thing that God requires. This is what James calls the perfect law of liberty. For instance, when a child has a strong wish to go somewhere, and his father gives him a command to go, it becomes a law of liberty to the child. It is obedience in the child to go, while at the same time it is the very thing the child wishes to do. On the other hand, if the father forbade the child to go when he wished, that would be no law of liberty, but a law of bondage. Christianity, or the gospel, is not a requirement of something from man in the flesh, but the power of life making the believer free from the law of sin and death. This is expressed in the second verse: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Oh, what a blessed thing it is to be free-free from the law of sin and death, free to holiness, free to live to Christ. We may cheat ourselves out of the blessing of this portion at times through giving way to the old nature which never alters in its evil character, but this freedom is our place in Christ. I can say to every true Christian, the Son has made you free, and now you are free indeed. A Christian can never say, when he has sinned, that he could not help it; for he has a life which has made him free from the law of sin and death.

The groundwork of this freedom is laid in the third chapter by forgiveness through the blood shedding of Christ. When a sinner is brought through grace to know his sins, the blood of Christ meets him and gives him peace about his sins; but then he has also to learn that he not only had sins against him needing forgiveness, but that he is a sinner, and this is a far more terrible discovery. He finds within him a nature that cannot do anything but sin. This exercise of heart is gone through in chapter 7. There we have one who is quickened, but who has not power. He is not free, and therefore he labors. He wants to get peace through victory over himself, but peace never comes through victory; victory comes through deliverance. Therefore, at the end of chapter 7 the question is, "Who shall deliver me?" Mark, it is not, How can I get forgiveness? but, How can I get deliverance? He comes, in chapter 7, to the end of himself. He finds that though the fruit has all been pulled off the bad tree, it will bring forth another crop just as bad as ever. He finds the flesh is too much for him. He hates what he does, and does what he hates. Now this is a useful lesson, but it is not liberty; it is rather bondage. He has struggled and labored to be free, and cannot get free; well, now he has to learn that deliverance comes in another way altogether. God has condemned sin in the flesh. Why, how is that? says the troubled soul-that is the very thing that is troubling me. Yes, and God has dealt with it in the Person of His own Son. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and (as a sacrifice) for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Rom. 8:3. The very thing you find yourself to be, God has condemned already.

Therefore, says the Apostle, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." It does not say here that there is no condemnation to them that are cleansed by the blood,

but there is no condemnation to them that are "in Christ Jesus." Here I find that this terrible thing, this body of death which I have been vainly struggling against, God has condemned, and I am no longer in the flesh, but in Christ Jesus. He not only died as a sacrifice because of it, but He is risen again, and the very same power by which the Father raised Him from the dead is that by which He quickened me when I was dead in sin. I am free from the law of sin and death through this power, "For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." Rom. 6:10. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which makes me free!

Oh, what a blessed thing it is to be free. What a blessed thing for a poor sinner, as I was, after groaning and struggling under this terrible thing-this law of sin in my members-to get a life by which I am altogether free from the law of sin and death, so that before God I am not seen in that condition at all. I have died to that through the body of Christ once for all. So the Apostle says in chapter 7, "When we were in the flesh," and in chapter 8, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." This divine life in a risen Christ has made me free from it altogether. No doubt we have to guard and watch against it, but we are not in it, but in Christ Jesus.

See too how solemn the place is. Am I made free by this divine life of Christ in my soul? Well then, whatever I do must be done in His name, or I am going off my ground as a Christian. This is what James means by being "judged by the law of liberty" (chap. 2). It is not a question of condemnation at all, but if I am free, I must walk according to the law of liberty. If I take up a book to read, I ask myself, Is that according to this Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? Can I do this in His name? We have liberty; we are free in Christ Jesus; so we must take care that we practically abide in this liberty. It is liberty to holiness-liberty to live to Christ-liberty to serve God. Therefore in the fifth verse we read, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." The mind of the flesh is enmity against God. All it does is independent of Him, in opposition to His law, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Thus we see that we have a life in Christ which has freed us from the flesh, as a law holding us in bondage to sin, though we shall always have to guard against its workings in us. We shall now see that the Holy Spirit personally dwells in our bodies as His temple. In verse 9 we read, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." He dwells in us as power. The body is held as dead because of sin. It is our privilege to hold it as dead, and never allow it to act, because its will is enmity against God. If you reply, Do you mean then to say that I am never to do what I like? Do what who likes? I ask, Do you want liberty to do what the old man likes, from which Christ has died to deliver us? Such a question is a practical denial of your being in Christ. "The body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." We have this life in a righteous way, God having condemned sin in the flesh in the death of Christ, raised Him from the dead, and in the risen Christ we have the life in us. Thus we are already delivered as to our spiritual condition from the standing of man in nature-from the old Adam condition. And we shall shortly be actually delivered as to our bodies, also.

## The Lion of the Tribe of Judah

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In Rev. 5:5, the One who can step forward when all others have failed-not one in heaven, in earth, or under the earth being worthy to open the book and loose its seals-is the blessed One who comes according to God's purpose in the royal line of Judah, and who, because of this, is termed, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah." He alone can take the book, open its seals, and unfold those things which are coming to pass upon the earth. He is the worthy and powerful One, but is not manifested as such till all others have been proved unworthy to undertake such a work. How suitable and appropriate is the name, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah"! We know Judah was the tribe from which Christ, or Messiah, came; and the name "Lion" gives the thought of majesty and power, so Jacob compared Judah to a lion in Gen. 49:9: "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?"

The same symbol is used in connection with Israel, and awaits fulfillment in a future day: "Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain." Numb. 23:24.

The Lord, in His character as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is the One who will bring this about. At present, He is still despised and rejected by man, but accepted of God, and seated at His right hand; He awaits the time when He will make His enemies His footstool, and all things shall be put in subjection under Him. Then His lion-like character of power and majesty will be manifested.

Another very important point which this portion brings before us, is that He does not take the place of opening the book because of His divine glory or because He is worthy, but because He "prevailed." His victory through His death is what is made prominent.

The Lord might at any time have taken that book and opened the seals because of His personal worthiness, but had He done so on that ground, we could not have known the wonderful unfoldings (or the secrets) of the book. No, He would not thus open the seals; but by having become man, and still being a divine person, He had power to go down into death and to rise victoriously. He overcame; He conquered; or, as the Scripture says, "He prevailed." On this ground He takes the book and 'Opens the seals and can unfold to us through John what is to take place on this earth after He will have His Church with Himself in the glory.

"Lion of Judah's tribe,

Thy kingly power we own;

All blessing, might, ascribe

To Him upon the throne.

For Thou halt purchased by Thy blood,

And made us kings and priests to God."

Dear reader, do you rejoice that the Lord Jesus Christ will yet have that place of honor and glory, or do you fear as you think of this? If you know Him in His lamb-like character, that is, as the One who has been a sacrifice for sin, and can say, "He died for me," you will rejoice that He will have His rightful place. But if you are not able to say so from the heart, you may well fear and tremble at the thought of His coming power and glory. Man must have Him as his Savior, or as his Judge. Which will it be with you?

## Living by Faith

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"The just shall live by faith." This weighty statement occurs in the second chapter of the prophet Habakkuk, and it is quoted by an apostle in three of his inspired epistles; namely, Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, with a distinct application in each. In Rom. 1:17, it is applied to the great question of righteousness. The blessed Apostle declares himself not ashamed of the gospel, "For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith (or, on the principle of faith, to faith): as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

In the third of Galatians, where the Apostle is seeking to recall those erring assemblies to the foundation of Christianity, he says, "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."

Finally, in the tenth of Hebrews, where the object is to exhort believers to hold fast their confidence, we read: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith." Here we have faith presented not only as the ground of righteousness, but as the vital principle by which we are to live day by day, from the starting post to the goal of the Christian course. There is no other way of righteousness-no other way of living-but by faith. It is by faith we are justified and by faith we live. By faith we stand and by faith we walk.

The life of faith embraces all that in anywise concerns us in body, soul, and spirit. To live by faith is to walk with God; to cling to Him; to lean on Him; to draw from Him exhaustless springs; to find all our resources in Him; and to have Him as a perfect covering for our eyes, and a satisfying object for our hearts; to know Him as our only resource in all difficulties and all trials. It is to be absolutely, completely, and continually shut up to Him-to be undividedly dependent upon Him, apart from and above every creature confidence, every human hope, and every earthly expectation.

## The Lord My Shepherd

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"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." Psalm 23:1.

Any pious Jew having a renewed nature, in old time, might know and use this psalm, saying, "Jehovah, my Shepherd." The holiness of God was not fully revealed; therefore, the conscience was not disquieted, nor the distance felt. They knew the favor of God, and counted on His goodness then; but now we are brought into the light, and see what judgment is. The veil is rent, and God's holiness is manifested, for we are in the light as He is in the light, through Jesus. "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1 John 2:8).

Now that sin has been fully shown out-the death of Christ proving what the enmity of the heart is-this matter must be settled. I cannot say, "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever," if I have not the knowledge of sins forgiven. I cannot talk of confidence if I have a fear of judgment and I see the desert of sin in the light of His holiness. I cannot consistently speak of One who may be my Judge, that He is my Shepherd, and I shall dwell with Him. To know Him as our Shepherd, we must not have the matter of sins being forgiven left unsettled. God cannot let sin into His presence. There must be a conscience purged. Christ has been accepted, and He puts us into His place, having made peace through the blood of His cross. He has "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26). "By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14). He has "entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12).

The starting point of Christian experience is God is for us; and "If God be for us, who can be against us?" I am the object of His favor which is better than life. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters." I shall find good everywhere. I shall lie down, no one making me afraid. Though the wolf may prowl in the way, I lie down in green pastures. It is "He leadeth me," and that must be in perfect peace and enjoyment, "beside the still waters." This is the natural Christian state. We realize all things as ours, for God is for us; therefore we may lie down.

We shall have conflict, etc., but amidst it all is enjoyment. If the sorrow gets between our souls and God, so as to produce distrust, it is sin. Even if sin comes in, sad as it is, He can restore the soul. Whether from trouble or from offending, He can restore. See what thoughts are here given about God! The psalmist does not say, I must get my soul restored and then go to God, but "He restoreth my soul." So "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father" (1 John 2:1). Who can restore but He? There may be something to correct in us, even if we have not actually fallen. There may be hardness in my heart, which trouble shows me, and the like. But if He restores, it is "for His name's sake." Whatever / am, God is for me, and not only in this way, but also against enemies. For, "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Man had reason to quail at death before Christ came, but now, in the fullest sense, we need "fear no evil." Death is "ours" now. "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." 2 Cor. 1:9. If they took my life, they could not hurt me, for I was

trusting to One who could raise me. Paul as good as says, If they take this life, I have lost nothing; no, it is positive gain, for it hastens me on the road. Death is not terrible now. Why? "Thou art with me." It is terrible without this.

"Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." It is not a rod, but Thine, so I shall fear no evil. No one can compete with God. Death is the very thing by which Christ has saved me, and it is that by which He may take me into His presence-"Absent from the body... present with the Lord." It may come as a trial to exercise my soul. Well, I have to remember, "Thou art with me."

There is not only death to face and failure in life, but there are other mighty enemies (verse 5). Nevertheless, I can sit down among them, and find everything given me for food. In the presence of all, I can sit down and say, I have done with them all, for "Thou art with me." I have found that power by which they are made nothing to me. Then we arrive at still further security, joy, and blessedness: "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." Now that Christ has ascended, and the Holy Spirit has been given, there is triumphant peace and abounding joy through the power of the Holy Spirit.

I now find God Himself as the source of all, and not only is this a present thing, but seeing what God is, I can say, "Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." For us, it is the Father's house. There are not only blessings conferred, but there is a place to dwell with the Father forever. Whatever it is we meet with by the way, we know it is all for good, and we shall dwell forever with Him. Wonderful grace!

## The Lord's Day

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In contrast to Judaism with its many days, there is only one day that belongs to Christianity. Each first day of the week, or Lord's day, is the resurrection day, and the day for those who know the Lord in resurrection to remember Him in His death in the breaking of bread (Acts 20:7). There are no yearly days, such as Christmas and Easter, saints days, or other days for the Church of God; and the observance of days that was brought in by the Judaizers when the apostles were still here, was an occasion for alarm (Gal. 4:10). The Sabbath even was "a shadow of good things to come."

## The Lord's Day: Do You Devote It to Him?

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That the Lord's day is a different day, and of a different character, from the Sabbath, will hardly be questioned by any for whom this little article is intended. The Sabbath was the seventh day of the week; the Lord's day is the first.

The Sabbath commemorated God's rest from His work of creation, and is a type of the eternal rest that remains for Him and His people, when He will again have ceased to work—a rest founded on redemption, and to be realized when sin will have been completely removed from God's dominions. This will be in the new heavens and the new earth. See Heb. 4:1-11; Rev. 21:1-7.

The Sabbath was also a "sign" between Jehovah and Israel, of the covenant He made with them, and was incorporated in the law of the ten commandments, with the penalty of death attached for its violation. See Exod. 31:12-18; Eze. 20:12. Nor is there any evidence that it was ever given to any other, or that it was ever observed before the Christian era by any except those within the sphere of Judaism.

The Lord's day celebrates the resurrection of our blessed Lord, and is a day known alone to Christianity. There is no specific command given to keep it as a day of rest, or to observe it in any way. But it does not, therefore, follow that there is no obligation, for Christianity is not a system of legal commands and declared penalties, but a revelation of truth from God which ought to command the obedience of every subject and loyal heart—"the obedience of faith." See Rom. 1:5; 16:26.

Let us now see how the day is characterized in Scripture.

As already stated, it is the day on which our blessed Lord arose from the dead—the day that declared before the universe His triumph over death and the grave, and over all the power of Satan. Surely this is a fact of deepest importance for our souls. At the cross the whole question of good and evil was brought to an issue; and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus revealed the triumph of good. It was life out of death, the bringing in of a new creation where the old had been condemned in the judgment of God. Such was the victory of the Lord Jesus; and His resurrection on the first day of the week proclaimed the completeness of the victory. It was thus also the bringing in of a new era, in which are unfolded to faith the deep, eternal counsels of God, and all the blessings of Christianity founded on redemption, and this is made good to us through the death and resurrection of Christ.

It is the day on which the Holy Ghost descended from heaven, inaugurating the full character of Christianity. The two great characteristic truths of Christianity are redemption, and the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, while Christ holds His session at the right hand of God. The first day of the week is the witness of these two things. For the proof of the latter, see Lev. 23:15, 16. "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord." This was

the feast of Pentecost, and it began on "the morrow after the sabbath"; that is, on the first day of the week. Acts 2 shows that this was the day on which the Holy Ghost descended.

It is the day on which the saints habitually met together to break bread in remembrance of the Lord Jesus. Of this Acts 20:7 is the proof. The record would seem to show that Paul and those with him arrived at Troas on Monday. There they remained seven days, as we may believe, to be with the saints at their assembly meeting on the Lord's day. Then we are told that, "upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached," etc. It is not that they came together to hear him preach. But the brethren coming together, as their custom was, to break bread, the Apostle took this opportunity of discoursing to them in the things of God. The passage shows that it had become the settled custom of the saints to break bread on that \_day. And the day is thus marked. The fact also that the Lord Jesus appeared to His disciples on the first day of the week, both the day of His resurrection and the next first day, when they were assembled together, and presented Himself in the midst of them, is also significant, and points in the same direction. So also is the fact that the Apostle instructed the saints at Corinth to lay by in store on the first day of the week, to make up a certain collection for the saints. All goes to show that the first day was the weekly day of assembling together.

In the last place, we find it called "the Lord's day" in Rev. 1:10. John was "in the Spirit" on that day, and received communications from the Lord for the saints in Asia. I would call special attention to this expression. In 1 Cor. 11:20, we get the expression, "the Lord's supper." Can anyone question what is the meaning of this? Is it not clearly the Lord's supper in contradistinction to every one eating his own supper in verse

21? Now when the day is spoken of, precisely the

same word is used-"the Lord's day," "the Lord's supper." It is peculiarly His day, and His supper-a day and a supper which He claims as His. His supper too was observed on His day.

Neither the day then nor the supper are common. Shall we treat them as common? What would we think of a man who held that he could treat the Lord's supper as his own? This is the very thing the saints at Corinth were doing, and for which the Lord was rebuking them. Weakness and sickness and death were there as the result of their course. It was the Lord's judgment. The very thought of treating the Lord's supper as our own may well shock every heart sensitive to His glory.

But it is His day as well as His supper, and if we are not at liberty to treat the supper as our own, are we at liberty to treat His day in this manner? I appeal to the reader's sense of what is right and fitting in the light of these scriptures. I would ask, Is it either right or fitting that we should take that day which He calls His and use it for our own pleasure, or temporal advantage? If His supper is devoted entirely to a holy and joyful remembrance of Him in His death and sufferings for us, and not for the gratification of our appetites, or for the satisfying of our hunger, shall we not as carefully observe the day as devoted to Him and His things?

Not infrequently we find saints (we will admit it may be under pressure of circumstances) accepting positions of secular employment which require them to work habitually on the Lord's day. And they plead their liberty to do so because there is no command not to do so. While not wishing to condemn any, I am perfectly satisfied that this is not of faith. And Scripture says,

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). Does not this make it very serious? If those who are tempted to such a course would say, "No, come what will, I will not dishonor the Lord," would not He make a way for His faithful disciples? Has He not said, "Them that honor Me I will honor"? (1 Sam. 2:30.)

But it is to be feared that many, and that too where no pressure of circumstances has place, think that if they go to the meeting on that day and break bread, when the meeting is over, then they are free to spend the remainder of the day as they please-visiting in a social way, conversing of secular affairs and interests, reading the newspapers, pleasuring, etc., etc. I ask, Is this devoting the day to Him? Is it giving the Lord the honor which is His due?

I do not say the day is a day of rest like the Sabbath, and that we are to cease from our labors, and simply do nothing. But the Lord claims the day, and it is but right that we should cease from our ordinary labors, and devote the day to Him in a way in keeping with its character, occupying ourselves with spiritual things which will be for profit to our own souls and the souls of others.

But there is no command, it is pleaded. I am aware. But why should you wish a command? Has He not told us it is His day? Why should you rob Him of His due? Besides, He has proved HIS love to us in laying down His life for us, going through a sea of unfathomable sorrow in order that we might be brought into blessing which only infinite love could conceive; and He counts upon our hearts responding to His love, and yielding loving and joyful obedience to His will. And shall we willingly, knowingly, disappoint Him, and grieve the heart that has trusted us, without putting us under the bondage of law, and saying,

"Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not"? Alas! it only shows what and where our poor hearts are. He has not the first place in them; His claim is ignored; and He is practically shut out by self-interest and worldliness.

He does not lay upon us as a legal exaction to observe the day, any more than He does to observe the supper, but He has not left us in the dark as to what is pleasing to Him, and our own blessing is bound up in obedience to His will. We cannot disregard His will in this, or in anything else, without loss to our own souls, becoming a stumblingblock to others, and bringing dishonor upon His name.

May the Lord give to both the reader and the writer to be sensitive to all that affects His glory, and to prove the blessedness of faithful and loving obedience to all His revealed will.

## Love and Obedience: the Correct Order

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Love is the spring of obedience. Any obedience that does not spring from love is legality, servility, or selfishness. Christian obedience knows no other spring than love. The Christian obeys because he loves, and because he is loved. "If ye love Me," says the Lord, "keep My commandments"; or again, the Apostle writes, "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."

Our love to the Lord is only the response of our hearts to His love for us. "We love Him, because He first loved us." Thus our love is the fruit of His-it is begotten by His, and is the result of it. We do not love Him in order that He may love us. That would be impossible. How could these wretched hearts force themselves to love one whom by sin they hate? Is not the carnal mind enmity against God? and how, then, could we love Him? We never would, if there were not a display of love on His side first of all-if His love were not free and spontaneous, acting independently altogether of us.

But, blessed be God, this is the very truth unfolded in the gospel of His grace! It was when we "were dead in trespasses and sins" that God loved us. It was when we were "yet sinners" that Christ died for us, and that God found occasion for this display of His own love. It was when we were hateful that the kindness and love of God appeared. And it was when we were lost that the Son of man came to seek and to save us.

Such is the truth of the gospel. The priority of the love of God to man before that of man to God is thus distinctly revealed. For instance, "God so loved the world" is the truth that takes the soul by glad surprise, for that uncalled-for and undeserved love shines forth in all its bright and precious radiance without the least encouragement from man, in spite of all that man could do to discourage and repel it. Yet that timeless, changeless love beams on like a sun that no cloud can darken-like a fire that no frost can chill because it flows from a heart, the very nature and essence of which is love itself. "God is love" is the grand and full explanation of the fact that "God so loved the world," and the reason, too, of His suffering long with that world which is day by day and year by year adding to its mountain load of sin and opposition to Him.

Oh! what a wondrous and soul-delivering truth this is! What a sight to behold the love of God in Christ Jesus bursting in upon this dark and dreary scene of sin and death and sorrow! How sweet to hear the story of that love, or to stand by Calvary's cross and let the proud heart be melted by that triumph of loving-kindness. Truly, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And by such a story the heart is won, the enemy reconciled, and the sinner saved. By such a truth there is kindled in the bosom a spark of love to Him. Thus love begets love, and the enemy becomes a friend and a follower.

There is a striking moral connection between the question asked by the Lord of Peter in John 21:17 and the command given to that Apostle in the 22nd verse of the same chapter. The question

is, "Lovest thou Me?" and the command, "Follow thou Me." The order is correct. Love is to precede obedience, and obedience is none the less to follow love. If the first can be established, the second will be secured. If the Lord can gain the heart, He can count upon getting the feet. And so with divine wisdom He tests the affections of the Apostle. "Lovest thou Me," who has so loved thee? And what was the answer of poor, heartbroken Peter? "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." What humble and touching words are these. "Thou knowest all things," said Peter, as though he would again have shed the bitter tears of penitence, and acknowledged the threefold denial of his loved and loving Lord and Savior. "Thou knowest all things"-my weakness, my folly, my self-confidence, and my sin- my repentance, my anguish, my sorrow, too. "Thou knowest that I love Thee." If none else should know it, Thou dost.

Then, "Follow Me," said the Lord. If the Lord is really loved, He will likewise be really obeyed. Obedience will be proportionate to and commensurate with love. "He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings." As the love, so the obedience. There may and must be different degrees of intelligence as to His will, but the spirit of obedience will characterize all who really love Him. An obedient heart is His delight. Such an one will be trained and nurtured by Him and, as He says, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." Oh! that these three words, "Follow thou Me, "may stand out in bold and clear relief before the grateful and loving gaze of our renewed affections. Then we may practically esteem Him worthy of all our obedience here, to whom we shall gladly bow the knee in the song of eternal adoration by-and-by when forever each blood bought saint shall say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." And if the crown that shall decorate each saintly brow is to be cast at His feet, shall not His name be honored now by the grateful, complete, and unreserved surrender of these poor hearts and hands and feet, yea, of all that we have and are, to the service of the same gracious Savior and Lord? Oh! let Him thus be glorified. He claims us as the purchase of His blood.

May our inmost souls hear His question, "Lovest thou Me?" and joyfully obey His command, "Follow thou Me."

## The Volume of Love in His Heart

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Do you comprehend the breadth, length, depth and height of God's thoughts about that divine Person? Look back those thousands of years to that time when that One whom man later nailed to the cross and put out of the way, was creating the world! And then, as man, God showed that a Person through the work of the cross, was able to deal with sinners, making them a part of the bride.

As a man, all human affections are in His heart. We know, if we believe that there is love in the heart of anyone toward us, how we enjoy resting on him. Ali! there is a volume of love in His heart, and it is fixed on each individual given Him by the Father.

It is not length, depth, breadth, and height abstractly; there is a Center-Himself. I know that the God-man who loves me is the center of all God's thoughts and counsels; my heart is resting on the very Object which God's heart rests on, and all that is precious to God is mine.

## Man of Sorrow, Patience, and Joy

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Christ is at God's right hand, now the Man of patience, once the Man of sorrows, and hereafter to be the Man of joy-three very different displays of Christ. In Christ down here-the Babe in the manger-despised and rejected, and acquainted with grief, we see the Man of sorrows; and yet nowhere do we get such divine glory as at the cross. As a sinner, what was I taken out of, and whither am I brought by that cross? Where is the Christ now, whose death did it all? He is at the right hand of God, where as the Man of patience He has been waiting nearly 2000 years for the glory and the people-His, as the recompense of such service. And what is He doing? Why, turning to us, and saying, I am occupied with you in the glory; I have an entrance into all your sorrows; turn your eyes up here, open your hearts to Me, let Me see everything. As a shepherd, I am occupied with each sheep, binding up each wound, making right each rent and tear in the fleece. But hereafter most blessed is the thought of seeing the One who was emphatically the Man of sorrows down here, as the Man of joy, "anointed with the oil of gladness" (joy) above His fellows! But it is well often to think of Him as the Man of sorrows, in connection with what we are passing through. Heap, pile up, all your sorrows, till you can heap no more; then turn to Him whose heart broke in woe, and talk of your sorrows and of all that has worn you down, if you can, in the presence of the One who says to you, Was there ever "any sorrow like unto My sorrow"? Yet He shall be the Man of joy; and, oh! is the thought of Christ's joy sweet to our hearts? Do you love to think that there will be no face so beautiful, no heart so bright and perfect in its joy as His? Nothing like His beauty! All the glory there will be but as the setting of that gem.

And that new name of His shall be written on you; surely that ought to give a little patience as you pass along the wilderness, tried by the roughness of the way, as though He said, Cheer up! only a little while more, and I will write on you My name of joy. Christ's heart is not fed with the externals of glory, but with the joy of serving God; it will be the joy of all the children being brought home, whom God has given Him-the new name written on them. That will be Christ's joy.

## A Man's Folly and a Woman's Faith

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"I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Luke 12:19, 20.

"O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Matt. 15:28.

The above two scriptures seem almost like a New Testament commentary upon the Old Testament story of Nabal and Abigail (1 Sam. 25). David was at this time, though God's anointed king, a homeless wanderer and fugitive from the hands of Saul, accompanied only by a small band of faithful followers who owned his claims.

What an illustration this is of the present position of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's King, rejected and cast out by the world. "The kings of the earth stood up," we read in Acts 4, "and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ." "We will not have this man to reign over us," was the world's verdict, and the last it saw of Him, He was hanging upon a cross between two thieves. When next it sees Him, He will be coming in "power and great glory," in righteousness to "judge and make war.... And... on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Rev. 19).

Well, here we find David needing provisions and, being in the neighborhood of this wealthy man of the world whose shepherds he had protected amid the rocky solitudes of Carmel, he sends to ask for supplies for the young men, with the quiet dignity of conscious power. "Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. And thus ye shall say to him,... Peace."

What a lovely word! How well calculated to touch the heart of even the most thorough worldling! It is just one thing that the world cannot supply, or money purchase. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" The world speaks of joy, mirth, pleasure, but never mentions peace, for it knows it not. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." Isa. 48:22.

"Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not?" said Nabal; and when David heard the reply, he said, "Gird ye on every man his sword." If he will not have peace, judgment must fall. Alas! for Nabal. The offer of peace rejected, he fell under the judgment of God. The sweet message of mercy scoffed at and ignored, he sat down to eat and drink while death was hovering over his threshold. "And it came to pass about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died."

"So David's young men... came and told him all those sayings." There is a sweet thought here for all the Lord's servants. When the Word has been preached and the people have dispersed, then it is your privilege to return and tell Him about it. "Send me away," said Eliezer, "unto my master" (Gen. 24:54). Flushed with the success of his mission, one less devoted might have been inclined to linger in the happy surroundings where he had been so blessed. But his heart was with his

master, and all the joy and success was incomplete till shared with him. So too, the apostles whom the Lord had sent forth, "when they were returned, told Him all that they had done" (Luke 9:10).

But it is a relief now to turn to Abigail and follow the footsteps of this woman of faith. Doubtless the fame of David had reached her ears. She had heard of his gracious acts, his mighty power. She believed him to be God's anointed, though at the moment a fugitive from the hands of Saul. Her servants told her how the message of peace had come to her household, and of its rejection; and, like one of an earlier day, "moved with fear," she determined to go to meet him, and seek the salvation of herself and of her people. Happy decision!

Abigail made haste. Three times we read that she made haste. She must make peace with David without delay. All other concerns must be thrown aside till this momentous matter had been settled, and her salvation secured. "Abigail made haste," and taking her true place before David in utter self-abasement at his feet, she owned her sins, sought his forgiveness, and acknowledged him as lord.

How sweetly must those words have sounded in the ears of the hunted fugitive-"My lord"- though they came from a feeble woman's lips. How cheering the confident confession, "My lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days... But when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid." Like the dying thief, she looked on to a day of glory and, like him, she received a ready reply to her petition-"Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person."

What a marvelous picture of Christ's way of receiving sinners! And how sweet it is to His heart now, to be sought and owned by poor lost ones like you and me in this day of His rejection. Listen to His own words as He describes it when the poor outcast of John 4 owns Him in her heart as "the Christ"; "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," and in Luke 15, "Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost."

And listen to what David says to Abigail: "Blessed be thou." Why? What was she blessed for? Because she took her true place as a needy suppliant, and owned him as her savior. Because her faith recognized him as God's anointed and, cost what it might, she determined to throw in her lot with him. So he calls her blessed.

Well, David never forgot Abigail's faith. But he was not content that she should remain at a distance from him; so, after the death of Nabal, he sent for her to be his wife. And will anything short of union satisfy the heart of Christ for His blood bought ones? No; "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

As Abigail shared the fortunes of David, as she roamed with him from one hiding place to another-sharing his poverty and hardship-some might have said, What folly to give up a luxurious home and the broad acres and great possessions of her husband Nabal, for a life of trial and privation. But a day of reversal was coming, a day for which she was content to wait, when David, with the kingdom restored to him, would be reigning at Jerusalem, and she reigning with him. And how richly did that time compensate for all the sorrows of the past!

"He and I, in that bright glory,

One deep joy shall share;

Mine, to be forever with Him,  
His, that I am there."

## Martha and Mary

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They were both dear to the Lord. Jesus, and they both loved Him, but they were different. The eye of the one saw His weariness, and would give to Him; the faith of the other apprehended His fullness, and would draw from Him.

Martha's service was acceptable to the Lord, and was acknowledged by Him, but He would not allow it to disturb Mary's communion. Mary knew His mind. She had deeper fellowship with Him. Her heart clung to Him. She sat at His feet, drinking in from the streams of grace and truth that flowed from His lips. Blessed it is to serve the Lord, but still more blessed to enjoy Him; and therefore the moment Martha would bring the outward services of the hand in competition, the Lord lets her know that Mary was refreshing Him with a richer feast than the abundance of her house could supply.

This lovely narrative illustrates a great principle. It is the glory and delight of God to give. What He wants is the empty, longing, and believing heart, as a sphere in which He can allow His goodness to overflow. What He wants is to bring us into the enjoyment of His own blessedness. The highest place is properly His. He is the giver, and from Him we are to receive. The place of blessing is His; the place of debtors is ours, for, "without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better" (Heb. 7:7).

As acceptable to the Lord as are the willing services of His people, nothing is more gratifying to Him than that we should be continually receiving out of His treasury of grace. Nothing honors Him more than that we take our place of creature-dependence, and acknowledge His Godhead glory, allowing Him to be still giving, still blessing, still pouring forth on thankful recipients from the inexhaustible fountain of His own fullness.

## Comments on Matthew 7:18

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The writer was privileged to be conducted through some experimental plots belonging to the College of Agriculture of the University of California by a member of its faculty who is a devout Christian. (Contrary to many scientists who shut God out of His own creation, here is one who definitely does not. This man, like others here and there, distinguishes between true scientific knowledge and the false speculations of science which are produced by men whose wish is parent to the thought that God is not the creator, but that all things came into being through so-called natural processes. The basic aim of all those who in the enemy's service propound these theories is to prove that man is not God's creature, and consequently does not have to give account to Him who will judge according to every man's work.)

The trip was very interesting and supplied examples of some well-known truths of Scripture which opened up material for thoughtful consideration.

One plot was a row of large, fully-developed pear trees. They gave evidence of being well cared for and their foliage was a good green color. At one end of the row the trees were loaded with beautiful, almost perfect fruit. Such healthy pear trees would have been an asset in any man's pear orchard. Their fruit was delectable. At the other end of the row the pear trees appeared to be healthy and vigorous, but here the Christian plant pathologist paused and plucked some fruit; it was worthless. The fruit was shriveled and knotty. It was astounding that trees so near to each other, and of the same outward appearance as to foliage and vigor should bear such vastly different fruit. What was the explanation? Could there be a simple answer for the seeming mystery?

The scientist explained the reason for the bad fruit. We will quote his words: "Those trees are bad, and there is nothing that can be done for them; they have a virus disease that pervades them from the roots to every extremity They cannot produce good fruit." Together we then spoke of the Lord's words: "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Matt. 7:18. A tree is judged according to the quality of its fruit; and so with men. John the Baptist searched the hearts of his would-be followers by saying, "The ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Matt. 3:10. Mere religion or profession will not correct the root cause. Adam fell and pulled down his whole posterity; and every man from that day onward has been born with an evil nature which can only bring forth evil fruit. What man needs is a complete change, a new birth, a new life, so he can bring forth fruit for God. Otherwise he will be cut down and cast into the lake of fire.

Another comment by the scientist gave emphasis to a picture of man's hopeless condition apart from a complete rebirth. Referring to the bad trees he said, "No amount of pruning, watering, spraying, or fertilizing will improve those trees or their fruit. To give them special culture would only increase the bad fruit they would bear." Here was food for meditation; could not man be improved by education? by environment? or by any of the means so often tried? No! Man by nature is as hopelessly bad as those diseased trees. He may indeed present an outward appearance which

compares favorably with those who have a new life from God, and yet his heart be unchanged-it is enmity toward God. This led us to reflect on all that had been done to improve man, apart from God and new birth. Many and varied are the means that have been tried to give the world a moral uplift-to stop vice, crime, blasphemy, murder, war, etc., etc. Have they changed man? No. In fact it might be said that educated man has only become more prolific in the production of bad fruit. Wars, for instance, were bad enough before men became so civilized; now they are frightfully worse. Men used to kill one another by club or sword in hand-to-hand combat; now with a higher degree of civilization men have discovered how to wipe out the inhabitants of a whole city with one blast, or to destroy all the crops of another country with chemicals and so bring famine upon the populace, or to spread the worst plagues by bacteriological warfare and thus wipe out a people by disease. It is just as true of the highly civilized people of the mid-twentieth century as it was of the heathen world before Christ came- "The way of peace have they not known," and "destruction and misery are in their ways."

The disease pervading those bad pear trees is like sin, the root and nature in fallen mankind, which in activity produces wicked acts-sins. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Mark 7:21, 22. The epistle to the Romans carefully distinguishes between sins (the acts committed) and sin (the nature which bears bad fruit). Rom. 5:11 concludes that portion of the epistle dealing with the subject of sins, and the next verse begins the subject of sin. For sins, God has forgiveness for all who believe in the Lord Jesus, and He has been proved righteous in forgiving their sins because of the work of Christ; for sin, God has only condemnation-He "condemned sin in the flesh." He treats the old nature as beyond improvement, and passes sentence on it. The seventh chapter of the epistle shows the struggles of one trying to mend what is unmendable, and then the struggling one finds full deliverance in the last verse of that chapter and the first verse of the eighth: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." He is now in a new position entirely-"in Christ Jesus"-and has power to walk after the Spirit (Rom. 8:4).

There was another comment of interest on the bad pear trees, and that was that they could not produce progeny that would be any better. No young trees derived from those bad ones would be better than the parent stock. How true that is of the human pattern we have been considering! The offspring of fallen man is also fallen. The innocent babe has within it the bad stock that will in maturity bring forth the same evil fruit.

The plant pathologist's final comment on the pear trees pointed up another likeness to the human family. He said, "Even grafting in a branch from a good tree will not improve the condition of a bad tree." In like manner, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh"; it can never be anything else. And when a man repents and believes the gospel, and consequently receives a new life from God which can bring forth good fruit, that does not improve his old nature one particle. It is a lie of the devil to say either that the old nature can be improved, or that because one is saved the old nature can be burned out. We Christians have a wholly new life, but we also carry the flesh with us, and if it is not judged and kept in the place of death it will bear the ugly fruit which is all it is capable of bearing.

In another experimental station we saw good tomato plants which had been transplanted into soil that was bad, and oh, how sickly they looked. The plants had been good, but they were having great difficulty growing in diseased, unhealthy soil. Here, we thought, was another lesson for us. We as Christians have a life that belongs to heaven, and there is nothing in this poor world that will nourish that life which is from above. Our lives as children of God must draw all their sustenance from another source or we shall be as sickly as those tomato plants. The very climate of earth tends to blight our spiritual lives. The new life of the Christian is not indigenous to this world and must grow here in an adverse climate against many ill winds; the secret of a healthy Christian with robust spiritual energy is to be drawing fresh resources from above, and feeding on Christ, the Bread which came down from heaven.

Finally, the plant pathologist called attention to some plants that had been transplanted into sterilized soil. All the evil contamination had been killed or rendered ineffective by the process, but still the plants drooped, for there were not sufficient nutriments in that particular soil to sustain them in vigor. Thus the mere absence of evil is not enough to promote spiritual health; there must be the positive source of good. Nutrition must be furnished for our souls or we cannot grow. May we see to it that we get a sufficient quota of that which will feed us, and draw freely from those rich streams of the water of life for refreshment as we travel a barren wilderness. Our blessed Lord and Shepherd is engaged in ministering sustenance to us.

"Our Shepherd is the Lord,

The living Lord who died;

With all His fullness can afford,

We are supplied.

He richly feeds our souls

With blessings from above,

And leads us where the river rolls

Of endless love.

"Our souls He doth restore,

And keeps us in His way;

He makes our cup of joy run o'er,

From day to day.

Through love so full, so deep,

Anointed is our head;

Mercy and goodness us shall keep,

Where'er we tread."

## The Meaning of "Being Crafty"

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The expression, "Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile" (2 Cor. 12:16), is the low insult which "deceitful workers" insinuated among the Corinthian saints, to defame the Apostle and exalt themselves. They dared to say that if the Apostle did not burden them directly, he all the more craftily reaped what he could through Titus and others. None fall into such depths of baseness as self-seeking Christian professors. In short, then, this expression is the language not of the Apostle, but of his adversaries, whom he exposes for our admonition; and he calls speaking about himself, "folly," because it was not about Christ, but himself; but for the brethren's sake he was compelled to.

## The Most High

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I have been looking into the force of Elion (the Most High). That it ultimately refers to God in the Millennium as the supreme God then manifested, to the exclusion of what is false, is evident. This is the force of the word-One who, to the exclusion of and superiority over all others, holds the place of the one true God, but exalted as supreme in government. Jehovah is, as we know, the God who is in relationship with Israel, but He is the supreme God, the Most High. The full statement of the title, and the time of taking it, is in Gen. 14:19, 20, 22. Abraham's enemies are entirely discomfited, and delivered into his hand, and the heir of promise blessed of Him who possesses heaven and earth. He is supreme, and has taken all things into His possession.

Still God is, of course, always such, and referred to in trial as the One who will set all right. When the Lord is just coming into the world to set all in order, the question is raised, Where is the secret place of the Most High? Where is He to be found as a protection? Whoever finds Him will have the protection of Abraham's God-the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob-the place of promise. Jehovah is it, the God of Israel. And in fact the full divine care of the supreme God, the God of promise, is found, possessor of heaven and earth, revealed in connection with the Melchisedec priest.

Hence, too, when Nebuchadnezzar is restored from a state that represents the character of the empire which began in him, he owns the Most High (Dan. 4:25-34).

In the Psalm the use of it is frequent. In Psalm 21 it is connected with the royalty of Christ as the glorified Man and King. His hand will find out all His enemies, and by the favor of the Most High He will not be moved (Psalm 46). God is again in the midst of His people on Messiah's triumph (Psalm 45). The tabernacles are those of the Most High. His power is fully displayed in the earth, Jehovah being with Jacob. So more fully as to the world in Psalm 47. In Psalm 50, Most High is connected with the judgment of God in power. In Psalm 9; 10; 55, and 57, it is calling upon Him in this character by the remnant when in distress, the first of the two latter speaking of the distress, the second of the delivering supremacy over all the earth. Psalm 73 is the first of the third book, and the power of the Most High is despised by the adversaries; but, going into the sanctuary, their judgment is discovered. The years of the Most High are remembered in Psalm 77; His way in the sanctuary and in the sea, not looking to heart failing in man, but to Jehovah the Supreme who accomplishes His good pleasure. In this Psalm and the next, it is Jehovah's right to this name, as in all the history of Israel. For this is all Israel. Psalm 82 and 83 both speak of judgment at the close, and in the fullest way recognize that Jehovah is the Most High over all the earth. Psalm 91 has been spoken of. Psalm 92 is the same perishing of the enemies, and exalting the true David. Psalm 97 is expressly as Jehovah reigning, and as Most High over all the earth, and exalted above the gods when He comes to judgment. In Psalm 107 it is Israel re-gathered who celebrates God's government, and His chastisement for their rebellion against Jehovah who is the Most High.

We have the Most High in Dan. 7, though in most of the occurrences in Daniel it is in the plural for "high" or "heavenly places." There its connection with God's title, and making good His dominion,

and this connected with Israel, is evident. Thus, though Jehovah is looked back to in self-judgment in the history of Israel as in Psalm 56; 57, and 73, yet the force of the title is evident.

## The Mystery of Godliness: Formative Power of True Godliness

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They are not human motives that form and fashion and produce the morality of a Christian, any more than it is human power that accomplishes his salvation. It is "the grace of God" that teaches him as well as saves him.

This is very remarkably shown in a passage in Timothy (1 Tim. 3:16), the force of which is very frequently overlooked. The Apostle would teach Timothy how he ought to behave himself "in the house of God"; and he then presents the formative power of all true godliness in the words, "And confessedly the mystery of piety is great. God has been manifested in flesh, has been justified in (the) Spirit, has appeared to angels, has been preached among (the) nations, has been believed on in (the) world, has been received up in glory." (J.N.D. Trans.)

This is often quoted and interpreted as if it spoke of the mystery of the Godhead, or the mystery of Christ's Person. But it is the mystery of godliness, or the secret by which all real godliness is produced—the divine spring of all that can be called piety in man. "God... manifest in the flesh," is the example and the power of godliness, its measure and its spring. Godliness is not now produced, as under the law, by divine enactments; nor is it the result in the spirit of bondage in those, however godly, who only know God as worshiped behind a veil. Godliness now springs from the knowledge of the incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. It takes its spring and character from the knowledge of His Person as "God... manifest in the flesh"; the perfectness of His obedience as "justified in the Spirit"; the object of angelic contemplation, and the subject of testimony and faith in the world; and His present position as "received up into glory."

This is how God is known; and from abiding in this flows godliness. The object of faith is the power of life.

## The Nazarite

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### Numb. 6

The great principle of the energy of the Spirit of God in us while passing through the wilderness, is brought out in the book of Numbers. Exodus shows us redemption and relationship; Leviticus, the way of sinner's approach to God; Numbers, priesthood in the tabernacle in the wilderness. Up to Sinai all had been grace on the part of God with His people. Here is the intercourse of God with them in the tabernacle of the congregation in the wilderness of Sinai (chap. 1:1). The principle of the red heifer in chapter 19 is the ground on which all the sacrifices are taken in this book-the energy of the Spirit of God in giving comfort to the soul, taking the ashes of that burnt long ago, and applying it with present efficacy to the conscience that has contacted defilement in its walk through the wilderness.

In chapter 6 we have the positive separation to God in the energy of the Holy Ghost (v. 2)-"unto the Lord." So the Lord Jesus, particularly after His ascension-"For their sakes I sanctify Myself," that we, by the energy of the Spirit in us should be separate now in the wilderness, walking in white, keeping our garments unspotted by the flesh. Again, the Lord did separate Himself that He might be about His Father's business, and for this did He separate Himself from His "mother's children" (Psalm 69:8)-the flesh, which by sin was under the power of death. He still holds the Nazarite character, because all His disciples are not yet gathered to Him; and now, in a certain sense, with us it is separation from joy-"the fruit of the vine"; we must not let the heart go. In glory it is the great spirit of rest; there will be no need to

gird the heart then. Now the effect of the energy of the Spirit is to gird up the loins of our mind lest we get defiled; but in glory we shall let our garments flow, because we shall not fear defilement there. In the city of refuge the man was safe, but he could not go out or enjoy his possessions.

Verse 3: "Separate himself from wine"; that is, joy. The Lord came in character expecting to find joy among men, expecting to find a response to His love in the hearts of men, but found none, and so was a Nazarite from the first. To be a Nazarite is to be separated from every natural affection which can be touched by death-to be separated unto the Lord. No honey could be offered to the Lord, and now the Spirit is a new power come in, detaching us from everything natural. The Lord filled with the Spirit for service said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" All nature by sin has come under the power of death, so the Nazarite "shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother... because the consecration of his God is upon his head." v. 7. See also Luke 14:26. The Lord's tie in nature was with the Jews as Son of David; but all this He gave up as natural, for "when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them." Natural affections come from God and are therefore good in themselves; but they do not tend to God, being spent on the object. John was a Nazarite from the womb. Paul was a Nazarite, and Jeremiah also. So we are Nazarites. Our own proper joy is beyond death; therefore all I give up here which savors of death is just giving up that which hinders a deep apprehension of the joy and blessing of that life which is beyond the power of death. The Lord broke the link at the cross. "By these things men live, and in

all these things is the life of my spirit." Isa. 38:16.

"All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord." v. 8. This is the great principle in the Nazarite-holy to God, and in however short a degree he may attain to that character, yet in Christ it is perfect. All this is a distinct thing from innocence. Adam was innocent, but not separated unto God. Separation unto God supposes a knowledge of good and evil, and yet separation from evil. Adam got the knowledge of good and evil by the fall; the Holy Spirit is come to take us out of that evil. The Spirit is a new power altogether, separating us unto Christ in glory now that evil and self-will have come in. It is a most trying thing to us to know good and evil, for by nature we are in the evil-loving the evil and hating the good. The Holy Spirit is now taking us out of the evil, and here is the pain-His energy in us keeping us from the evil while passing through a world of sin and death. We cannot be innocent now that sin has come in, but we are holy in Christ.

Verse 9: "If any man die very suddenly by him." Death came in on everything in nature as the sign of God's hatred of sin. The spirit of real devotedness to God always was perfect in Christ, but it is failing in us. Wherever the old man works, there is the principle of death; therefore we get into death for the time when the old man is working. Therefore the word to us is, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts"; and again, "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man." All this is solemn. Not only have we peace, but while we are passing through this scene of sin, we need to be kept holy and devoted to God by the energy of the Holy Spirit in us.

Verses 9, 12: If I go back from devotedness to God, it is true that hair may grow again; but the head must be shaved close, and the time lost. It is not a question of sin here, but of loss as to the energy of life. A tree that has been much mutilated and broken down will grow up again; it was not killed, but only injured; yet its stature will not be the same as an uninjured tree. It is letting Satan mar and hinder the work of the Spirit. Samson let his heart go into the weakness of nature, and when we let in nature, our strength is gone. Samson, as a Nazarite, was a type of the energy of the Spirit of God; he let out the secret of his strength, and it left him and he became weak as other men. True, in due course his strength returned, and with mighty energy he lifted the foundations of the temple. If we are not careful and watchful to keep the secret of our strength in communion with God, and worldliness and sin come in, we may not be conscious of it ourselves, but the truth will appear when we rise to shake ourselves-it may be in service-and we find ourselves weak as other men. And when in our weakness, like Samson, the devil will put out our eyes.

The Lord was the true Nazarite, and He never departed in the whole course of His walk from His Nazariteship. It was not a light thing for Him to tread the path of suffering, but He prayed. In the garden, "being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly" before the temptation came, and then we see He halted not; He could not. So we should first pass through the trial with God; then God will be with us in the trial. Peter slept and did not pray, and when the trial came he met it in the flesh and drew his sword. Jesus had prayed that the cup might pass from Him; but when the chief priests and soldiers came, though Satan was in it all, yet He saw the hand of God and could say, "The cup which My Father hath given Me"; then it was no temptation at all, but an act of obedience.

Verse 9: "Die... suddenly," a careless thought, and communion is lost for the moment.

The offerings to be offered: All that was in Christ is presented to God (v. 20); so we really come in the power of these sacrifices to God; but until the Church be gathered, the Lord keeps His Nazarite character.

## Needed Advice in an Evil Day

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In the first verse of Acts 18, two cities of Greece are mentioned by name-Athens and Corinth. They were very different in character, although located within less than 100 miles of each other. Athens was the great center of learning and philosophy, far out-distancing any other city in the world. Corinth was a dissolute and licentious place, so much so that if a Greek turned to lead a loose life, he was said to have gone to Corinth. Its inhabitants, although they sought after wisdom, and gloried in erudition, generally wanted ease and fleshly indulgence.

The Apostle Paul visited and preached the gospel in both cities. At Athens he had to descend to the lowest point and speak of the Creator's power and the evidences of His work, for with all their striving after knowledge (Acts 17:21), they did not know the living God. (How often this has been true among the wise of this world!) Notwithstanding the earnest efforts of the greatest preacher of the cross of Christ, there was little fruit from his labors. Dionysius and Damaris, with a few others, believed on the Lord Jesus; but we never read of Paul's going there again, nor of an assembly being formed there. No apostolic letter addressed to saints at Athens has been left to us.

To Corinth, Paul went once and again. At first the opposition was strong, but he was encouraged by the Lord with these words: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city." (Acts 18:9, 10.) What? much people in the rich, profligate Corinth, and not in Athens? Yes, God has salvation for lost, ruined sinners; but the proud, philosophic reasoners against God knew no need. The Areopagites might speculate about the "new things" the "babbler" said, but they cared not for that which made nothing of man or his boasted wisdom. It was foolishness to them.

At Corinth a flourishing assembly was formed, and Paul addressed two long epistles to them. Various other brethren visited them, and the saints there came behind in no gift, but they were inclined to glory in men and in the gifts which they possessed. They were carnal and walked as men, and had to be reproved for it (1 Cor. 3:3), for party spirit and strife was the evidence of carnality.

Before they were saved some of them had been "fornicators... idolaters... thieves... drunkards... extortioners," etc.-"such were some of you:"-but they had been saved, washed, and justified (1 Cor. 6:9-11). What a wonderful change the gospel brings into the lives of people! "Moral rearmament" and social reforms might effect certain changes in people's conduct, but it cannot wash and justify sinners, and transform them from within.

There was, however, a danger that when the love of the truth had lost its power over their souls, there might be some slipping back and occasional falling into old ways and habits. This happened at Corinth, and gave occasion to the Apostle to write to them to put out a man guilty of fornication. The assembly was responsible to judge them who were within their ranks, for they were unleavened-evil had no place there. To meet this ever-present danger, the Apostle reminded them that they had been purchased at a great price, and hence they were no longer their own-they

belonged to another whom they were to please. They now were to glorify God in their bodies and not live like the careless heathen around them-the body was for the Lord, not for self and indulgence of fleshly lusts. (1 Cor. 6:18-20)

These warnings in the Word of God are particularly salutary in the days in which we live. Morality is at an all-time low in so-called Christian countries. People are abandoning themselves to indulgence of the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. We are living in the last days, when Christendom, by and large, is loving pleasure rather than God. (See 2 Tim. 3:1-5, J.N.D. Trans.) Our dear young people (even children in grade schools) are being brought up in an increasingly corrupt atmosphere in the world, and need to be instructed, like the Corinthians, that we are joined to the Lord, are one spirit with Him. Hence all we do and allow should bear the impress of our being His: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. 7:1.

The Apostle Peter addressed the Christians, referring to their "pure minds." We need to guard our minds that they do not become defiled by the filthy conversation of the wicked, as poor Lot's was after he went to Sodom (2 Pet. 2:7, 8; 3:1). "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6:17, 18.

Thessalonica was not far removed from Corinth, and the same general moral conditions prevailed in that vicinity; in fact it was widespread in the days of the old Roman Empire, so the Apostle exhorted them: "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.... For this is the will of God... that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor." 1 Thess. 4:1-4.

What we all need more and more is attachment of heart to the Lord Jesus-ardent affection in the soul-with the Word of God having power over our consciences. Thus we shall be able to "walk and to please God." Enoch "walked with God" and he "pleased God" (Gen. 5:22; Heb. 11:5), although he lived amid surrounding corruption and moral depravity; for the world was then heading for the flood, as now it is going on to the perils and destruction of the great tribulation and the subsequent judgment of "the great and terrible day of the Lord." Enoch so walked "three hundred years," but that was done just one day at a time. We need grace for each day as it comes-"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." "He giveth more grace," and we need not anticipate the difficulties or trials of tomorrow. We have only to "walk and to please God" today with the grace and strength supplied by Himself; it is available to all who wait upon Him.

## A Needed Word

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It is a blessed word we have in the Psalm, "He led them forth by the right way." There is only one right way, and our loving Guide makes no mistakes in it. How dependent we are kept from day to day, and in this way we learn the all sufficiency of Christ. He never fails us, and He never will fail us as long as we are in the wilderness. We may therefore trust Him wholly and always.

## A Neighbor Unto Me: the Certain Samaritan

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Some have hastily concluded in reading of the certain Samaritan (Luke 10:33) that the Lord answered the question, "Who is my neighbor?" by pointing out that wherever there is need we should do our duty toward our neighbor. But it should be observed that the man who fell among thieves is not mentioned as a neighbor toward the Samaritan, but the Samaritan was neighbor unto him. This is another principle of acting altogether than what was in the lawyer's mind when he said, "Who is my neighbor?" It stands out in contrast, because the lawyer merely wished to justify himself; that is, to have clearly defined those who had any claim upon him, that he might have no outstanding debts. We know for ourselves the satisfaction in being able to say, I owe nothing. Thus, what prompted that question was really love to himself, and not love to his neighbor. Where love is in exercise, it does not ask, Who? but has its own delight in acting apart from the question of who deserves it. And this is the principle of grace which is here shown out in contrast to the principle of law, which was the fulfilling of duty toward one's neighbor. The one is meeting claim; the other is meeting need apart from the question of claim altogether.

And this is why the term "Samaritan" is employed, to present one on whom there was no claim-"for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans"-so that the Samaritan acts from himself, and not from any claim the other had on him. And this brings out what the gospel of the grace of God is. It is not the fulfilling of claim or promise, but the acting out of God's love to the lost. There were no promises to Adam, and a sinner has no claims upon God. Forgetfulness of this often keeps souls from having the blessing of the gospel; they will not have it for nothing. If they can establish some claim, whether by their prayers or religious observances, they would like it better. Why? Because this would give them some importance; but to be of no importance at all is humbling to the pride of man.

It was this that kept the Syrophenician woman from the blessing at first. She pleaded the promises in saying, "Thou Son of David," and was thus putting in a claim on Him when, as a woman of Canaan, she had none. She was taking the children's (Jews') place when she was only a dog; and so the Lord says, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Then she said, "Truth, Lord." She relinquishes all claim upon Him, and takes the place of deserving nothing; but there she gets everything. "Yet," she says, "the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." The "yet" shows she had resources, though not now in the promises or in herself in anywise, but in Him and the love that brought Him down to meet the need of the lost. This was faith in Him, which He at once owns; for although He must deny her false claim, "He cannot deny Himself."

The Lord would willingly have been a neighbor unto the lawyer, and uses the law to produce a knowledge of his need. The law is not a way of getting righteousness, as the lawyer was using it, but "by" it "is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20), and this is how God uses the law. The Lord still further says, "Go, and do thou likewise," that the man might know his deceitful heart. Such a principle of acting, that is in mercy, was foreign to his nature altogether. Thus, he might learn his

need. We find the Lord always deals with souls according to their state. To a soul with felt need He would never say, "Go, and do thou likewise," or, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," as He says to another who was merely inquisitive, and not feeling his need.

The point of the teaching of this portion may be summed up in these words: It is the principle of grace in dealing as a neighbor, instead of the claims of God toward a neighbor.

## No Confidence in the Flesh

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The history of Saul shows how far one can go on with God and in favor of His people by an energy which after all is fleshly. The history shows how Saul was put to the test and how God was with him in a certain sense, for He gave him another heart-not conversion, of course-so that he became another man; and yet all that is brought out in result is, how far flesh can go in pursuing the objects of God and where it all ends! It is a very solemn account, but it is what is presented in the history of Saul. It shows how far the flesh can act even under the direction of God, which Saul did until his own will began to act, and then he could despise even Samuel himself.

## Noah and the Things Around

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In Noah's experience, we get what God's thoughts are of the things around. Noah was to be separated from the old earth. If we look around now, is there any city in which God's children are to find rest of heart? No! Only a place from which to separate themselves. Believers have to go through the world, but are to keep themselves unspotted from it.

By our very relations, we often find ourselves hindered and interrupted, and cannot get separate for want of faith. We need the energy of faith. Noah's energy all flowed from faith, following the line traced out by God; and when the judgment came, it found Noah in the ark, at rest there with his family. God saw in it the expression of his faith as a person separated by that faith to Himself.

## Occupation With Christ in Glory

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Do you think we shall want to talk about self when we get to heaven? I am sure that when the glory shines into our hearts, we can talk of nothing but Christ. If we sorrow, and anyone comes in and talks about the world, does it cheer the heart? No; but if he talks of Christ and all His glory, the heart gets comfort directly. Why talk so much about self now? Why so vexed about self, so troubled in spirit? And why is there so little to be heard of this Christ who has brought us where we get all the mind of God and of heaven? I should like to have the thought of the living Christ in heaven to be the only object before the soul, so that when we meet one another we may be occupied only with Christ-perfectly satisfied with Him. Can there be any lack of joy? Oh, no, Christ died for me. Any lack of glory? Oh, no, I am one with Him at the right hand of God.

But often, even when a large place is given to Christ, people forget that it must be only Christ, and not self. If occupied with Christ, where are my own thoughts, my own plannings? We may give a large place to Christ and to God's plan, but forget that energies of our own run counter to Christ. If you are quickened, you must expect to die daily, to let all your own plans and energies die. What has my energy to do with Christ? Human energy connects me with things round me down here, but never drives me to Christ.

Directly you know Christ, you must follow Him. He traces out a path for us that does not allow for retreat in any way; He gets people directly, through faith, into present association with Himself. If you and I were to go forth this week full of faith in the power of the Holy Spirit, occupied with Christ really as seeing Him, what single thing of our own would stand? We would follow Him as a little vessel towed along by a large one; and not only that, but our fellowship, joy and glory would all be in Him, because we are His blest people. Oh, for grace now to serve and follow Him! Oh, for grace to openly confess Him who has enabled us to say that we are accepted in Him, that all His glory is our glory! Oh, to walk down here according to the place of blessing we are in.

There is nothing in man that can ever get to the truth of what the anointed Man is, until death and resurrection are known; the first draws men to Him; the last gathers them in association with Himself.

## Order

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"Doth not even nature itself teach you" (1 Cor. 11:14), is capable of a wide application. God has in His wisdom put great differences in the physical, mental, and emotional makeup of man and woman. He has most evidently marked them to be distinct, yet complimentary.

Man's superior height, strength, and emotional character stand in contrast to woman's natural grace, gentleness, mental nimbleness.

The very fact that woman was "taken out of man" proves her equality. She is not an inferior, but an equal, a helpmeet. Between man and man there is similarity-between man and woman there is equality, but with it diversity.

The very fact that woman was "taken out of man" proclaims the headship God has given man, as also, her privilege to accord man the place God has given him.

Man and woman are equal morally, but he is the head positionally.

Scripture distinctly states: "The man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man... Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God." 1 Cor. 11:8, 9, 11, 12. How exquisitely guarded and balanced a presentation of the truth this is!

This is all designed to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the Church. In Eph. 5 the relationship between husband and wife is unfolded. Is the wife to submit to the husband? It is on the ground that "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church" (v. 23). Are the husbands to love their wives? It is even "as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (v. 25). Is the man told to leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife as one flesh? We are reminded, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (v. 32).

From the very first the reader will see woman's place in nature is typical of her place in grace, and a picture of the Church's relation to Christ. How wonderful!

## Our Need of Dependence

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There are many "ifs" in Scripture concerning our walk. What do they mean? Surely they are meant to keep us in constant dependence upon the Lord, in the sense of our own weakness. For example, we read, "If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6, 14). An illustration may help. A mother takes her little child for a walk along a path near the edge of the cliffs, and says, "My child, if you let my hand go, you will fall over." Will that mother loosen her hold of her child's hand in such a dangerous place when she speaks thus? Ah, no; but she wants the child to be conscious of its own danger and its own weakness, and so to hold her hand as to cling entirely to her. Thus the Lord holds us by our "right hand" (Psa. 73:23), and wherever He may lead us, whether on the boisterous sea, like Peter, or where the mountains are being rent, which was too much for even faith like Elijah's (1 Kings 19:11), He still holds us, He will not let us go; but He wants us to hold fast to Him, to rely on His all-sufficiency. He may even allow us to begin to sink so that, conscious of our frailty and our nothingness, we may look to Him and carry His Word in our hearts to the end of the journey.

## Our Nothingness

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We often own our nothingness to God in strong language, but when we have done praying we are apt to forget it, and to depend entirely on ourselves.

## Our Portion in Christ

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"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1), for there is nothing there to condemn. He is glorified (Acts 3:13), and there He abides in the blessed and changeless sunshine of God's favor always. And in Him that changeless favor beams down upon me (1 John 4:17; John 17:26). I awake in the morning, and there it is in all its fullness. He would have me work on, all through the hours of the long day, with the certainty of it. I lie down tired and weary at night, it may be, but it is still there, still true. "Accepted in the Beloved" abides (Eph. 1:6). And truly, since it has pleased God to show the "kindness... of God" unto me (Titus 3:4 Sam. 9:1, 3) a poor sinner, and since all is "of Him, and through Him, and to Him" (Rom. 11:36), I must add, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." Psalm 16:6. To be now "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17), and now to be able to cry, "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6), and so to turn to Him in everything-what a portion!

It is best to think little of self and talk less. One thing satisfies the heart, to think much of God and His blessed grace, and to speak of it. We shall know this in heaven. There is little in the best of us worth thinking about, and less worth speaking about. But, oh, to be ransomed and to know it! oh, to be redeemed and going through this world in the daily and hourly communion with our own Redeemer! Then we learn what paltry little things seek to occupy us and fritter time away, and estimate them at their right value. Not to be occupied thus is to lose the blessed privilege which He has died to purchase for us, of bathing our souls all the day long in an ocean of love that is fathomless, but changeless and eternal.

## The Path of Faith

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It is written, "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird"; yet such is the folly of men that we often walk into snares when we see them plainly before us in our path. We are so infatuated that we run into our favorite snares with our eyes open, though perhaps determining not to be held, but to struggle out of them. Our present weakness is not sufficiently realized to keep us from confidence in future strength. Then our feet become entangled, our race impeded, and we discover too late that the God of strength has refused to accompany us into the snare-He has been left behind, and we stand alone against the enemy. Oh! that we were wise! Oh! that we had grace to be resolute, to turn aside from pits into which our weakness has caused us to fall again and again.

The wise man, speaking of temptation (and this is true of all temptations), says, "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." How wise not to parley with the old serpent, for its arguments are most ingenious; we should resist him "steadfast in the faith" (1 Pet. 5:9)-resist him as Christ did, by the Word of God as the sole guide for our conduct. May we examine ourselves in this. May we see to it that nothing impedes our race, weakens our faith, or prevents our obedience. Let us be honest with ourselves, and in earnest with God. Let us treasure no Babylonish garment (Josh. 7:21), however goodly. Let us sanctify ourselves; for if there be an accursed thing (Josh. 7:1) hid in our hearts, we shall not be able to stand in the day of trial. We lose much time in our progress by needing such repeated lessons on each truth. When we should have been wise, we were often found foolish.

## Patient Waiting on God

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### Meditation on Psalm 62

Waiting on God is the subject of this psalm. It implies dependence and confidence, and both in such sort that we abide God's time. We cannot do anything without Him, and ought not, because what He does is what the soul alone desires, because action without Him, even in self-defense, is only the action of our own will. Saul did not wait upon God. He waited nearly seven days; but if he had felt he was dependent, and nothing could be done without God, he would have done nothing till Samuel came. He did not; he acted for himself and lost the kingdom. See 1 Sam. 13:8-14. Deliverance from God is sweet; it is love; it is righteous, holy deliverance. It becomes the revelation of the grace and favor of God. It is perfect in time, way, and place. So where the soul waits for it, the will not being at work, it meets and enjoys the deliverance in this perfection; and we are perfect and complete in the will of God. But it implies confidence, too; for why should we wait if God would not come in? The soul is thus sustained meanwhile. And this confidence is such that we await the Lord's leisure. Patience has its perfect work, so that we should be perfect and complete in all the will of God. There is, too, an active reckoning upon God. But this leaves the soul absolutely and exclusively waiting on Him. It is not active for itself; it waits only upon God. ("Truly" in verse 1, and "only" in verses 2, 4, 5 and 6 are the same word in Hebrew.)

The two points connected with waiting show the state of soul. "From Him cometh my salvation"; "My expectation is from Him." He only is the rock and salvation; so the confiding soul waits for Him, and seeks no other refuge-looks for deliverance only from Him. Hence, in principle (in fact, in Christ), the heart is perfect in its confidence, and meets in dependence the perfection of God; it accepts nothing but that, because it is assured that God is perfect and will act perfectly in the right time. Faith corresponds thus to the perfection of God. On the other hand, there is no working of self-will at all, no acceptance or saving of self by an intervention inferior in its nature to God Himself. This makes patient waiting on God a principle of immense moment. It characterizes faith in the Psalms, and so Christ Himself.

But there are a few points yet to remark on. "Trust in Him at all times." There is constancy in this confidence, and constancy in all circumstances. If I look morally to Him, He is always competent, always the same; He does not change. I cannot act without Him, if I believe that He is only perfect in His ways. But, note, this does not suppose there is not exercise and trial of heart; or, indeed, waiting upon God would not have to be called for. But if God is faithful and awaits the time suited to the truth and His own character, so that His ways should be perfect, He is full of goodness and tender love to those who wait upon Him. He calls upon them to pour out their hearts before Him. How truly was this the case with Christ, too! How in John 12, and above all, in Gethsemane, He poured out His heart before God! God is always a refuge; He acts in the right time. He is always a refuge for the heart; and the heart realizes what He is when the deliverance is not come; and in some respects this is more precious than the deliverance itself. But it supposes integrity.

The effect of thus waiting upon God's deliverance is to make us know that it will be perfect and complete when it does come. "I shall not be moved." He had to wait, indeed, till God came in, in perfection; but then His power secured from all. Man may think there is a resource in man, or in what man possesses, or in man's strength of will; but power, faith knows, belongs to God. The last verse shows that the soul is looking to the perfect divine righteousness of God's ways, but in the sense of integrity. The final intervention of God, the judgment He executes, will be the deliverance of the righteous. He has identified himself with God's ways on earth in heart, and waited till God makes them good, perfectly good, in power. But this will be the end of evil, and mercy to those who have sought good, and waited for God to avenge them. It will be a righteous reward to the expecting righteous man; his waiting will be met, and the power of evil set aside. In this path we have to walk. God deals so now in government, though not in its final accomplishment; but we have thus to count and wait upon Him.

## Philadelphia and Laodicea

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I would observe that 1 Sam. 4 and 7 remind us of the churches of Laodicea and Philadelphia in Rev. 3. The former presents to us a condition which we should carefully avoid; the latter, a condition which we should diligently and earnestly cultivate. In Laodicea we see miserable self-complacency, and Christ left outside. In Philadelphia we see conscious weakness and nothingness, but Christ exalted, loved, and honored; His Word kept and His name prized.

And let it be remembered that these things run on to the end. It is very instructive to see that the last four of the seven churches give us four phases of the Church's history right on to the end. In Thyatira we find Romanism; in Sardis, Protestantism. In Philadelphia, as we have said, we have that condition of soul, that attitude of heart which every true believer and every assembly of believers should diligently cultivate and faithfully exhibit. Laodicea, on the contrary, presents a condition of soul and an attitude of heart from which we should shrink with ever-growing intensity. Philadelphia is as grateful as Laodicea is loathsome to the heart of Christ. The former He will make a pillar in the temple of His God; the latter He will spew out of His mouth, and Satan will take it up and make it a cage of every unclean and hateful bird-Babylon! An awful consideration for all whom it may concern. And let us never forget that for any to pretend to be Philadelphia is really the spirit of Laodicea. Wherever you find pretension, assumption, self-assertion, or self-complacency, there you have in spirit and principle, Laodicea, from which may the good Lord deliver all His people!

Beloved, let us be content to be nothing and nobody in this scene of self-exaltation. Let it be our aim to walk in the shade as far as human thoughts are concerned, yet never be out of the sunshine of our Father's countenance. In a word, let us ever bear in mind that the fullness of God ever waits on an empty vessel.

## Power in Patience

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We will not take up the subject of power in patience in a doctrinal, but rather in a practical way, as it relates to our path during the present perplexing hour.

God gave us power to become sons (John 1:12). It was His mighty power that took us out of the condition of death, and seated us together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3).

Not in exercise to make us sons (relationship) or to seat us in the heavenlies in Christ (standing), but still it is this same power which is the inner enabling that will give us to live a life and walk a path that shall agree with our relationship to God and our standing in Christ.

Let us turn to Col. 1 "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." v. 11. How far removed from our thoughts is the precious truth breathed here. "All might," and "glorious power" are coupled with the simple, unobtrusive grace of patience, that attribute of love which "suffereth long, and is kind." (1 Cor. 13:4). This is the rarest of flowers now. God is not bestowing power to make us famous and illustrious in the world or in religious circles. These a man can be in the mere energy of nature. To walk the solitary way, disreputable and small, unnoticed and unappreciated, will require more than the activity of pious flesh. This, restless man cannot endure; he demands the intoxicating whirl of foes vanquished and victories won. I would not discourage any; neither would I encourage a spirit of indolence. But the word for the present is, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev. 3:11. Alas, how few are up to this, and in grasping for more, how many have let slip what God has already made ours.

Many today miss the joy they might possess simply because they do not see it is their privilege to keep, not to conquer. Where there is conquest (as a rule), victory must come out of defeat. "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60). Doubtless this is the expression of many a zealous heart. I can only reply, Look at the cross-

"By weakness and defeat,

He won the mead and crown."

Let us look further at our path as we are on the way to His victory. I know how inspiring it is to be pressing the foe, but how few have power, "having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:13), when they are pressing us. It is very easy to shout, Victory! with the foe disabled, and ourselves possessor of the spoils; it is quite another thing to be able to say, "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter," and then be able to add, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors." But how is this? "Through Him that loved us." (See Rom. 8:36, 37.) We are conquerors, though for the present we are as sheep for the slaughter. Hallelujah! Love and praise belong to Christ.

Stephen was one "full of power," and he is the first who comes before us prominently after the ruin set in. His strength was displayed in what he endured. In the presence of the council he wears an

angel's face; and when the brutal mob makes his body a target for jagged stones, is there giving way? The poor "earthen vessel" breaks, but the "treasure"- "patience and long-suffering"-is there, for I hear him say, "lay not this sin to their charge." The Christ in glory held his heart still. (See Acts 7:55-59.)

Paul and Silas are a happy illustration of this truth. Hear them singing praises to God at midnight, not in a big meeting, no; they are in prison, feet fast in the stocks, and backs bleeding. But there is perfect tranquility, not even a cry for deliverance. The power that enabled them to endure was sweeter to them than escape (compare 2 Cor. 12:7-10). "Patience" so blessedly possessed them that when the doors did fly open, there was no hurry. Thus the grace of long-suffering had already made them free; their hearts had plenty of room even if their bodies were in a prison cell. They were in communion with One who is skilled in converting prisons into palaces, and in making rugged stones shine like rubies. Perhaps walls quite as real and formidable surround us; are we in the secret of strength?

Have we been looking for something great, and are we about to break down because we have not found it? Have we anticipated a brighter day for ourselves than this, and because it is not ours, are we getting to feel that we are out of the current of His will, and hence, where we cannot claim His support? Fear not, beloved ones; our very feebleness is our title to this. While we may not have the appearance of an army with banners, we may be seen leaving the wilderness leaning upon our Beloved. We must regard with suspicion that which is of large dimensions now. See in Philadelphia and Laodicea that which respectively characterizes the true and the false at the close (Rev. 3). It must be seen by all who are conversant with the course of time, as detailed in God's Word, that only for a little longer, at most, will there be need for the exercise of "patience." He is to be contemplated now as the Nearing One. So let us in glad anticipation sing-it may not be an earthquake song-the bolts and bars may not jostle loose, nor the prisoners hear us, but we can make melody in our hearts to the Lord (Eph. 5:19).

We may sing just for Him. Men may not hear, but the songs of heaven will not shut out this symphony from His ear. "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Jas. 5:8.

## Practical Effect of Looking for the Lord

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"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple." Matt. 24:1. For what was it now? A corpse and no more. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matt. 23:38. "And His disciples came to Him for to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

The hearts of the disciples then, as too often now, were occupied with the present appearances and the great show of grandeur in God's service;

the halo of associations was bright before their eyes. But Jesus passes sentence on all that even they admired on earth. In truth, when He left the temple, all was gone that gave it value in the sight of God. Outside Jesus, what is there in this world but vain show or worse? And how does the Lord deliver His own from the power of tradition and every other source of attraction for the heart? He opens out the communications of His own mind and casts the light of the future on the present.

How often worldliness unjudged in a Christian's heart betrays itself by a lack of appreciation for God's unfolding of what He is going to do! How can I enjoy the coming of the Lord if it is to throw down much that I am seeking to build up in the world? A man, for instance, may be trying to gain or keep a status by his ability, and hoping that his sons may outstrip himself by the superior advantages they enjoy. On some such idea is founded all human greatness; it is "the world" in fact. Christ's coming again is a truth which demolishes the whole fabric, because if we really look for His coming as that which may be from day to day-if we realize that we are set like servants at the door with the handle in hand waiting for Him to knock (we know not how soon), and desiring to open to Him immediately ("Blessed are those servants")-if such is our attitude-how can we have time or heart for that which occupies the busy Christ-forgetting world?

Moreover, we are not of the world, even as Christ is not; and as for means and agents to carry on its plans, the world will never be in lack of men to do its work. But we have a higher business, and it is beneath us to seek the honors of the world that rejects our Lord. Let our outward position be ever so menial or trying, what can be so glorious as in that position to serve our Lord Jesus Christ? And He is coming.

## Prayer and Supplication

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Sometimes the Spirit of God may lead us to pray for a certain thing, with the fullest assurance that we shall get it; and He may lead us to wait on God for days or weeks or months or years, in exercise of soul, not getting the answer, but assured that we shall get it. It is not a question of repeating in so many words our desire, but the heart is waiting on God for the answer. Then we have that lovely passage in Phil. 4 "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." And what then? You shall get what you asked for? Perhaps not. It might not be good for you. but "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep

your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." So we can lay down no rule in this matter. There is great largeness and freedom in the way of the Spirit, and great breadth and fullness in the Holy Scriptures-so unlike our poor narrow thoughts.

## A Present Hope

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To me the Lord's coming is not a question of prophecy, but my present hope. Events before His judging the quick are the subject of prophecy; His coming to receive the Church is our present, heavenly hope. There is no event between me and heaven. There are between this time and Christ's judgment of the earth. Now we are blessed with Christ; as His bride and His body, we appear with Him, reign with Him; the great peculiar, blessing of the Church is being associated with Christ Himself. The government of the world is another thing; prophecy lights up that as a candle in a dark place, but I am of the day. It is this especially Christians have to learn, that they are one with Christ, blessed with Him. And this applies to everything. "My peace I give unto you"- "That they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves"- "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them"- "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them"- "I have given them the words which Thou gavest unto Me"- "I go to My Father and your Father; My God and your God." This brings perfect love so close to our hearts that it is very precious; and thus we nourish ourselves with that love.

## The Present Love of God

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"The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of the Christ." 2 Thess. 3:5  
J.N.D. Trans.

"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." So runs the witness of Rom. 5:5. It is God's own love to us, not our love to Him-love that towers high above all earthly love, however great. The love of friend for friend may be wonderful, as was the love of Jonathan for David; and the love of a mother for her child is tender and unwearied; but the love of God to us-His own love-is incomparably greater and is all the more beautiful in that there is nothing in us to call it forth. He loved us when we were sinners, and gave His Son to die for us.

We can never doubt that love as we gaze upon the cross. Love emptied itself there. It gave its all for us, for you and me.

What an answer this is to Satan's lie in the garden of Eden! There he succeeded in persuading Eve that God withheld something that would be good for her to have. Oh, what a harvest of sorrow and tears and anguish and death, has followed that disbelief of God's love! But that love, suspected and disbelieved in Eden, has displayed itself at Calvary. How? He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all. There we learn the mighty, measureless love of God.

And this perfect love casts out fear. It must of necessity do so, for how could we be afraid of One who loves us with perfect love? Now God's love is perfect and holy; for He has taken notice of our sins, and shown His love in the very thing that has put those sins away. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:10.

We would not want God to think lightly of our sins, nor would He if such were our wish. God abhors sin, and it is our joy and rest to see that all that was due to us and to our sins has been borne by God's own Son. The cross has put our sins away forever, and in accounts solemn and yet clear and sweet it tells us God is light and God is love.

But has that love which thought of our deep spiritual need and made such ample provision for us in Christ withdrawn its eyes from us, not caring to behold us again till we are seen in glory? Oh, no! The very hairs of our head are all numbered. If not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father, are we not of more value than many sparrows?

It is into the present love of God-the love that cares for us today-that our hearts need to be directed, for it is there we may find rest, and nowhere else.

We know no yesterday but the cross, and no tomorrow but the glory; but then there is today- the wilderness and the things that surely come upon us there.

The power of God, like His love, is infinite. He is able to make the rough places smooth and never to suffer a thorn to pierce our foot. The knowledge of God's power is the very door by which Satan insinuates into the mind a doubt as to God's love. The soul reasons thus: If God loves me with a

Father's love, why does He not do this or that for me? Why do my prayers remain so long unanswered? It is not because God does not love you that the answer to prayer is slow in coming. God has lessons to teach which would never be learned if our will or our timing guided His hand. How much the beloved family at Bethany would have missed if Lazarus had not been suffered to go down to the grave!

## Proper Service

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"Martha was cumbered about much serving." Luke 10:40. There is a tendency to distraction in all service, blessed though it be in its place. All of us have some service given us to do for Christ-it would be sad indeed if we were in a position that we had nothing to do for Him-the great point is the way it is done. What is needed is the quietness of communion so as to go out from Himself, and then return to Himself. There are those who work, thinking thereby to get into communion. They can never know or enjoy it this way. All real service must flow from communion; then we are occupied with Christ, and have His thoughts.

## Psalm 73:2-17

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It is indeed a trial of faith to find ourselves in the midst of evil which we have been taught to abhor. Nothing could be easier for God than to set everything right at once by His power, to put an end to all that disturbs our peace and gives us grief. But He does not do this, because He has something better in store for us. And faith has to learn to endure, in humiliation accepting the grievous situation, though it cause the utter crushing of what is dear to the heart. "In Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalm 16:11.

## Purpose of Heart: the Great Moral Regulator

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"And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart" (Deut. 6:6)-at the very source of all the issues of life. This is peculiarly precious. Whatever is in the heart comes out through the lips and in the life. How important then to have the heart full of the Word of God, so full that we shall have no room for the vanities and follies of this present evil world. Thus shall our conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Hence we can judge of what is in the heart by what comes out of the mouth. The tongue is the organ of the heart-the organ of the man. "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." When the heart is really governed by the Word of God, the whole character reveals the blessed result. It must be so, inasmuch as the heart is the mainspring of our entire moral condition; it lies at the center of all those moral influences which govern our personal history and shape our practical career.

In every part of the divine volume we see how much importance God attaches to the attitude and state of the heart with respect to Him or to His Word, which is one and the same thing. When the heart is true to Him, all is sure to come out right; but on the other hand, we shall find that where the heart grows cold and careless as to God and His truth, there will sooner or later be open departure from the path of truth and righteousness. There is, therefore, much force and value in the exhortation addressed by Barnabas to the converts at Antioch:

"He exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."

How needful then, now and always! This "purpose of heart" is most precious to God. It is what we may venture to call the grand moral regulator. It imparts a lovely earnestness to the Christian character which is greatly to be coveted by all of us. It is a divine antidote against coldness, deadness, and formality, all of which are so hateful to God. The outward life may be very correct, and the creed may be very orthodox; but if the earnest purpose of heart be lacking-the affectionate cleaving of the whole moral being to God and His Christ-all is utterly worthless.

It is through the heart that the Holy Spirit instructs us. Hence, the Apostle prayed for the saints at Ephesus that the eyes of their hearts might be enlightened (J.N.D. Trans.). And again, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

## Rahab: Safety, Salvation, Citizenship, Union

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Josh. 2 and 6

We are told in Eph. 2:7 that in the ages to come, God is going to "show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus." The Spirit of God, however, is careful to remind believers of the fact that it is grace and nothing but grace, saying, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

I know of no case in Scripture that (in type) illustrates the riches of God's grace more forcibly and fully than Rahab's history.

Her history begins in Jericho, a type of this world. It was marked out for judgment, and so is this world. For Jesus, when about to go to the cross, said, "Now is the judgment of this world," adding, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die." The doom of the world was sealed at the cross. We are told (2 Pet. 3) that the heavens and the earth are "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" and that the present interval is the period of long-suffering on God's part, He not being willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Rahab tells us what testimony of God was used to bring faith to her soul. She says in Josh. 2:10 that they had heard what Jehovah had done at the Red Sea, which was the place where the power of God was displayed—a type of the death and resurrection of Christ. Acts 17:30, 31 informs us that "now [God] commandeth all men every where to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Many in Jericho heard it besides Rahab, and how many there are now that know of the historical fact of the resurrection of Christ. What then is the difference? Let Scripture answer: "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not." There was faith in Rahab, and "faith cometh by hearing." Whereas on the part of them that believed not, "the word... did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Heb. 4:2.

Her home, Jericho, seemed secure. To all appearances it was impregnable, just like this poor world in these days of progress and advancement in learning—vaunting itself and going on, on to judgment, heedless of what God says. But "faith is the... evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1), and so Rahab (let appearances be what they may) says, "I know that the Lord [Jehovah] hath given you the land." v. 9. What then? She wants a place of safety for herself and her father's house when the judgment falls. She wants a token (a sign) that if she acts on the word spoken (obedience of faith), their lives will be spared. She is told to "bind this line of scarlet thread in the window."

How precious her faith shows itself! She did not put it off, saying, "Oh! there is plenty of time. They have to hide for three days at least; then they have to go over to the other side of the Jordan

and get all the men of war ready; and it will take them some time before they will be ready." Instead, "she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window." v. 21. She did not lose a moment putting the scarlet line in the window. She was then safe. Let the judgment fall on Jericho-she was perfectly safe.

The "scarlet line" is a type of "the precious blood of Christ"; and God says, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7), like Israel of old in Exod. 12, where Jehovah says, "And the blood shall be to you for a token... and when I see the blood, I will pass over you."

Rahab also thought of the blessing of others: "And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters." v. 13. She is heard, but there must be a test for them. "Thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee." v. 18. What, must they come under the roof of such an one, one who had been a disgrace to the family? Yes, there is not one platform for the thief and the harlot, and another for the moral, respectable person. "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:22, 23. "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7) was said to the moral, upright, religious ruler, and not to the immoral woman of John 4, though, of course, she needed to be born again, too. How many have stumbled at this stumbling-stone, pride!

Pride in the heart, self-sufficiency and utter ignorance of the awful havoc that sin has made, have led many to reject God's way of being saved. Simon, the Pharisee in Luke 7, and the elder brother in Luke 15, are illustrations of this. If you're still in your sins, I pray you-don't, in pride, turn away and reject God's great salvation. When it is a question of your soul's salvation and where you will spend eternity, remember the words of Peter when, referring to Jesus Christ who had been crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead, he said: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Josh. 6:23 shows us that Rahab's family availed themselves of God's way of safety from the judgment about to fall. Though safe under the shelter of the "scarlet line," the power of God had not yet acted on their behalf. We are told "the gospel... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16), showing that salvation (or "deliverance") is connected with the display of power. In Exod. 12 we get the blood of the lamb as the ground of security, but when we come to Exod. 14 we find God's power displayed against the enemies of God's people and in their favor, placing them on the other side of the Red Sea. We see God's love shown in giving His own beloved Son to be the Lamb who shed His precious blood on Calvary's cross, but there the enemy's power was displayed in leading man (and every class was there-kings, ecclesiastics, religious people, educated people, soldiers, common people, and thieves, etc.) to reject the blessed Lord. God refrained from displaying His power (Matt. 26:53) to deliver His Son.

Man, blinded and led on by Satan, even went so far as to use what power and authority God had placed in his hands against His Son. First, God had given His law to the Jew. Not only did he break it himself, but actually used it to condemn God's Son. "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die." John 19:7. Second, power in connection with governmental authority was also given to man, "the minister of God... to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Rom. 13:4. This power, which had been connected with Jehovah's throne in Jerusalem, was transferred into the hands of

the Gentiles in the person of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:37, 38). Pilate, the representative in Jerusalem of this power in the hands of the Gentiles, used it against Jesus (Luke 23:24, 25; John 19:16). Thus man used the two things with which he was entrusted by God against His Son.

God displayed His power in resurrection (Rom. 1:4; 2 Cor. 13:4). Paul desired that the saints may know that they stand before God according to the display of His power which was put forth when He raised Jesus from the dead (Eph. 1:19, 20; 2:6). To study the important place that the resurrection holds, and truths connected with it, see Rom. 4:24, 5:1, 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:16, 17 and 1 Pet. 1:3-5. Only after the power of God had been displayed against the enemy on Rahab's behalf, is it said, "And Joshua saved Rahab," bringing her out of what had been judged and putting her into an entirely different place. So it is now with the believer before God. He is no longer seen as "in Adam," where death holds universal sway, but "in Christ," where there is "no condemnation." (Horn. 8:1; 1 Cor. 15:22 and Col. 3:1). Rahab was safe when "she bound the scarlet line in the window" (chap. 2:21), but she was not "saved" till the action in chapter 6:25 had taken place.

God's grace to Rahab goes beyond her salvation from Jericho's fall. We read, "and she dwelleth in Israel." Chap. 6:25. Now, instead of being a dweller in, or citizen of, Jericho, she becomes a dweller in Israel-her citizenship is entirely of a new order and a new country. When we turn to the New Testament, we find that we who were once "dead in trespasses and sins... [and] walked according to the course of this world," not only have peace and are saved (by grace), but we are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Eph. 2:19. Our relationships and responsibilities are wholly changed. We belong to an entirely new order of things, as it is written, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [or, 'it is a new creation']: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God." 2 Cor. 5:17, 18. We are "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Pet. 2:11) as to this world, and "our conversation [or rather, 'citizenship'] is in heaven." Phil. 3:20.

But Rahab's blessing does not end with her new citizenship. In 1 Chron. 2 we get the genealogical register of Judah, the royal tribe. Comparing verse 11 with Ruth 4:21 and Matt. 1:5, we find that she was married to Salma (or Salmon), the prince of the royal tribe. Now turn to Rom. 7:4 and 1 Cor. 6:17, 19, 20, and what wondrous and precious truth is brought before us, and how calculated to speak to the heart! Beloved fellow believer, you and I are not only safe and saved, but are citizens of heaven, yes, more than that, "joined unto the Lord," "married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Just think of and ponder over the contrast between the "harlot of Jericho" and the "wife of the prince of the royal tribe," and see therein a wondrous picture of what GRACE has done for you and me! Surely our hearts may well exclaim-

"What heights and depths of love divine, Will there through endless ages shine!"

What manner of person ought Rahab to be now, and how ought she to conduct herself? Not only old things were passed away and all things were become new, but she was a wife-her affections had been won. How would she prove that her heart had been won? Surely by seeking to please the one who had won it. Do you "know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich"? Has Jesus won your heart? Then He gives you and me an opportunity of proving it in this scene where He

was once rejected and cast out. He tells us, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." John 14:23. Among the "all things new" is the motive of the heart, for it says, "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto HIM which died for them,

and rose again." 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. It is thus, having

been united to the One who has been raised from the dead, and the affections of the heart being exercised, that we "bring forth fruit unto God." Rom. 7:4. How sweetly, then, to one walking in that spirit, come His precious words, "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." John 12:26.

Finally, let us remember that "no man can serve two masters."

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Col. 3:17. We shall then be able truthfully to sing-

"Oh worldly pomp and glory,

Your charms are spread in vain!

I've heard a sweeter story!

I've found a truer gain!

Where Christ a place prepareth,

There is my loved abode;

There shall I gaze on Jesus!

There shall I dwell with God!"

## The Ministry of Reconciliation

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We often hear it said that the death of Christ was necessary in order to reconcile God to man. This is a pious mistake arising from inattention to the language of the Holy Spirit, and indeed to the plain meaning of the word "reconcile." God never changed-never stepped out of His normal and true position. He abides faithful. There was, and could be, no derangement, no confusion, no alienation as far as He was concerned; and hence there could be no need of reconciling Him to us. In fact, it was exactly the contrary. Man had gone astray; he was the enemy and needed to be reconciled. But this was wholly impossible if sin were not righteously disposed of; and sin could only be disposed

of by death-even the death of the One who, as

being a man, could die, and being God, could impart all the dignity, value, and glory of His divine Person to the atoning sacrifice which He offered.

Wherefore, then, as might be expected, Scripture never speaks of reconciling God to man. There is no such expression to be found within the covers of the New Testament. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world" (in its broad aspect-men and things) "unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." 2 Cor. 5:19. And again, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." In a word, it is God in His infinite mercy and grace, through the atoning death of Christ, bringing us back to Himself and placing us not merely in the original place or on the original footing or in the original relationship, but as was due to the work of Christ, giving us back far more than we had lost, and introducing us into the marvelous relationship of sons, and setting us in His presence in divine and eternal righteousness, and in the infinite favor and acceptableness of His own Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amazing grace! Stupendous and glorious plan! What a ministry! And yet, need we wonder when we think of the death of Christ as the foundation of it all? When we remember that Christ was made sin for us, it seems but the necessary counterpart that "we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." It would have been no adequate result of such a work as Christ accomplished, to have brought man and things back to the Adamic or old creation ground. This would never have satisfied the heart of God in any way, whether as respects Christ's glory or our blessing. It would not have furnished an answer to that omnipotent appeal of John 17: "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." vv. 4,5. Who can gauge the depth and power of those accents as they fell upon the ear of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Little remains to be said as to the objects of the ministry of reconciliation, inasmuch as we have, in a measure, anticipated them by speaking of "men and things," for these are in very deed the objects, and they are included in that comprehensive word "world." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." We would merely add here that it is utterly impossible for any creature

under heaven to exclude himself from the range of this most precious ministry. Before the reader can shut himself out from the application of all this grace to himself, he must prove that he does not belong to the world. This he cannot do, and hence he must see that God is beseeching him to be reconciled.

## Thoughts on Romans 6, 7, and 8

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In chapter 6, the Apostle reasons with the believer upon the claims which sin has on him. And the Apostle tells us that sin has been disposed of. Sin was once the master or king; holding dominion, it issued its commands through all the members which were thus "instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." But sin has now, as such a master, paid his wages. Its wages was death; and we have died in or with Christ, and thus sin is disposed of, or we have done with it, for Christ had done with it when He died. "He died unto sin." It is true He had to do with sin in His death which owned the dominion of sin, His death being the wages paid. But in resurrection, Christ had to do with God and not with sin. He rose by the glory of the Father, and by resurrection lived unto God, as in His death He had died unto sin, so that the believer, now associated with Christ in His death and resurrection, has done with sin and has to do with God. Sin in its wages is disposed of, and so should it be in all its claims; for if we no longer receive its claims, so no longer are we to do its service.

It is as those who are alive from the dead that we should walk, and if that condition be rightly apprehended (alive from the dead, or risen), continuance in the doing or service of sin will be found a thing not to be at all even counted upon.

Such indeed have rather to reckon themselves "dead unto sin" and alive unto God through Jesus Christ.

Such truths their baptism sets forth to them. If indeed sin be willingly served, we own that sin is still alive and not thus disposed of, and we deny the whole of this truth and our standing in Christ; for when we died to sin-that is, when sin paid us its wages (in Christ put to death)-then the "old man" or "the body of sin" was destroyed. That is, all our members and faculties, once the sphere and instruments of sin's dominion and service, in that character were put to death also, so that all our members and faculties now should own and assert and exercise themselves in a risen character.

I judge that sin itself must be distinguished here from both the "old man" and "the body of sin." These rather signify the scene of the dominion of sin, or the strength or instruments by which and in which he ruled and exercised himself.

In Rom. 7, the Apostle considers the claims of the law upon the believer, and shows that they also have been disposed of. He does this very simply. He says that the authority of the law addresses itself only to a living man; that is, a man in the flesh. It is to the flesh, or man as born of Adam, that the law was given; but the believer has ceased in this sense to be a living man-has ceased to be of Adam-inasmuch as he has died and risen again; and consequently, being a dead and risen man, and not a living man, the law does not address its claims to him, for he is not the object for the law.

But in this, the law is not spoken of in the same relation to us as sin had been. Sin had been spoken of as a master or being; but the law is here spoken of as a husband. And the result of our being dead to sin, is life to God; but the result of our being now dead to the law, is here shown to be marriage with Christ. You will find these distinctions have their beautiful moral force and

meaning.

In the close of this chapter (having thus shown how sin and the law have been disposed of or set aside-the one as a master, the other as a husband), the Apostle tells us that they have been discharged with very different characters: sin

with as bad a character, the law with as good a character as even the inspired pen of an apostle could write for them. All evil in us comes from the one, while the other was holy, just, and good. And the moment that the real character of the law was understood by the quickened soul, this grievous state of things arose-"The commandment came, sin revived, and I died." The law was felt to urge one thing upon the conscience while sin was felt to exact another thing in the old man or the members. This state of things drew forth the sense of death in the soul, and the cry for deliverance, and the answer comes in Jesus revealed in the power of His death and resurrection.

The law being good has not been discharged in the way that sin has. It has been discharged as a husband only (as that to which the soul was debtor, and with which it was in union), because we are no longer living, but dead and risen men. Its holy and good words are still delighted in and allowed.

In Rom. 8, we get the believer thus escaped from sin as a master, and the law as a husband, in his new place in Christ. Being in Him, the believer has become a spiritual person, no longer in the flesh, and thus the flesh is discharged as well as sin and the law; that is, we are neither under the old master and with the old husband, nor in the old nature; and by the way, the Apostle shows that the flesh thus discharged could never (let God do with it what He might) have yielded any fruit or allegiance to Him, so that, as we speak, it was "bad rubbish" in itself, and to be free of it is "good riddance."

Having thus cleared the way to look at the believer in his new place in Christ, the Apostle then, with delight, traces the holy prerogatives of such an one.

He is nothing less than a son, having the spirit of adoption, not the spirit of bondage as a servant.

Being thus a son, the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, is in him as at home.

Being thus a son, he is also an heir, having coheirship of God with Christ Jesus.

And as the great principle of his coheirship, he is to shine in the same personal glory as the Lord Jesus by-and-by. Now, the whole creation waits in hope for the manifestation of this glory in us. And though all this condition of the believer may cause him to groan under the sense of his present state in the body, he is only still in hope, like the whole creation. Yet the Spirit given to him and being in him, groans also, and groans with so pure a groan that God has entire fellowship with it. And even more than this-God, in His sovereign rule of all things, constrains them all to work together for the believer's good.

And finally, the one great original purpose of conforming the believer to the model or pattern of the glorified Son is that which has been the spring, and is the everlasting and abiding spring, of all the divine procedure and action.

This is the train of glorious privileges which flows forth from the believer's union with Christ. Nothing is too excellent for God to do or to devise for such a one; all the joy that the fullest love can inspire, all the dignity that the highest glories can put on us, are ours thus according to the counsel of God in Christ Jesus. God is for us; that can easily account for all this train of joys and glories.

But if He is for us, who can be against us? Who can do anything to harm us? Is there an accuser, a judge, or an executioner, still standing out? The first may go away rebuked by this-that God has justified us.. The second may go away rebuked by this-that Christ has died, has already suffered the judgment, and His work has been accepted to the full in heaven itself. The third may go away rebuked by this-that all the malice of earth and hell together shall never drag us away from the embraces, the firm embraces, of our God in Jesus Christ our Lord. And if there be now neither accuser to charge, nor judge to condemn, nor executioner to punish, the court is cleared. We have left the scene to which, as sinners, we had been righteously dragged, to meet in other scenes altogether Him who has delivered us-not as the Judge, but as the Bridegroom.

## Romans 8:38-39

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The Apostle says, I am persuaded that neither Death,

Life,

Angels,

Principalities, Powers,

Things present, Things to come, Height,

Depth, nor

Any other creature,

shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Sanctification

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"Sanctify" means "to set apart." So, when a person believes, God sets him apart from the rest of the world by putting all the value of the precious blood of Christ upon him. Thus that person is set apart, or sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.

## The Scapegoat

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"And the (scape)goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." Lev. 16:22. This brings before us one of the most striking types of the atoning work of Christ that the Old Testament gives. It was the day of atonement, and there were two parts to it: first, that which was needed to make atonement for Aaron and his house (vv. 3, 6), then also what was needed for the congregation of Israel. For the priestly house it was a young bullock for a sin offering; for the congregation, two kids of the goats. In the latter case, lots were to be cast upon the goats—one for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat. The one upon which the Lord's lot fell was to be offered for a sin offering. If we follow what took place with it, we shall better understand the significance of the scapegoat and why there was nothing answering to it in the case of the priests. In both, the blood of the sin offering having been shed outside the tabernacle had to be brought in within the veil and sprinkled upon the mercy seat which covered the ark; that was where the glory of God abode in Israel.

Once was enough for God who could estimate the value of the blood presented to Him in type, but it was His will that there should be the sevenfold sprinkling of it before the mercy seat for Aaron to give him complete evidence that the need of God's glory having been met as to sin, he might safely draw near to God. Aaron's eye rested where God's did, and that was enough for him. But for the sins of the people generally, what went on within the holiest was not known to them. Yet all depended for them on the acceptance before the Lord of the blood of the goat upon which His lot had fallen. God had to be met for their sin according to all that He is in His own holiness and righteousness, in order that there might be the removal of their sins. The glory of God shining down upon the blood-stained golden mercy seat was the beautiful expression in type of how He would be glorified by the work of Christ in propitiation on the cross as in Romans 3:22-26. But the people knew nothing of this until the high priest came out. Then he was to bring the live goat and lay both his hands upon its head and confess over it "all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat." v. 21.

We can picture the scene to ourselves as every eye in Israel, at least of any who believed God, would be fixed on the spot where the goat stood, and as the priest's lips moved to confess their sins they would know that that goat stood representatively before God as bearing their sins. And now if they could only ascertain what was done with the goat, they would know what was done with their sins. How deeply they would be interested then in seeing the goat being led away by a responsible man into a land not inhabited so as not to be seen any more. They would know then that the sins of one year, at least for anyone who believed God, were gone from God's sight and mind.

Taken out of type, we find the accomplishment of what the scapegoat represented in another aspect of the work of the Lord Jesus in His death and resurrection. Propitiation, as in the first goat whose blood was shed and sprinkled on the throne of the Lord in Israel, was worldwide and laid the ground in divine righteousness, not only for the passing over of the sins of past ages in God's

forbearance, but for God now to be just and the justifier of any poor ungodly sinner that believes in Jesus. But now we find the antitype for the scapegoat in Christ having been delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification according to Romans 4:25. That is, as Isaiah 53 foretold, where repentant souls were brought to take the only true place for any of us before God, owning that "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way," it became also true to such that "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." And Peter, looking back on the wonderful accomplishment of the prophecy (1 Pet. 2:24, 25), can say, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." The two goats were necessary to present to Israel in type, these two aspects of the work of the Lord Jesus,. But how far does the glorious antitype exceed anything thus given them! For when the eye of faith looks back to see Christ as having borne my sins, all my sins, on the cross, it can now look up to see Him risen and glorified at God's right hand. And as it says in 1 Cor. 15:17, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins"; we know that as He is risen, the faith of the simplest believer is not in vain-we are no longer in our sins. Moreover, for Israel the atonement in type was only available for one year, as we see in the last verse of Lev. 16 But because of the infinite satisfaction found by God in the one perfect offering of Christ, our sins and iniquities are remembered no more; there is no more conscience of sins for the believer. (See Heb. 10:1-18.)

And thus is made good to us what only belonged to Aaron and his house in type in Lev. 16; that is, not only are our sins gone by the work of Christ, but we have unhindered access to God in the holiest. For verse 19 of Heb. 10 goes on, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near." Thus we need the epistle to the Hebrews as well as that to the Romans to complete for us the instruction conveyed in the type of the great day of atonement in Lev. 16 And I trust that no believer will be satisfied in merely seeing that his or her sins are gone forever by what answers to the scapegoat-Chris as the Substitute for His people-but will also realize by faith and the power of the Holy Spirit what is their portion now of access to God in the unclouded light of His own presence. This could never have been known by even Aaron when he went into the holiest made with hands with the blood of the bullock. For "the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing" (or literally "had its standing"; Heb. 9:8). Now He signifies, as in chapter 10, that no veil exists any longer nor is there any unsettled question of sin to hinder our drawing near to the very presence of God. The blow of divine judgment that fell upon Christ for our sins rent the veil that barred the way, and has removed forever from before God the sins that would have hindered our availing ourselves of the opened way.

What blessed instruction the types afford us now that we have the key to all in the Person and work of Christ.

## Scripture As a Whole

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Some people read Scripture very much as others preach it. A few words are taken and are made the motto of a discourse which perhaps has no real connection with the scope of that passage-perhaps not with any other in the Bible. The thoughts may be true enough abstractedly, but what we want is a help to understand the Word of God as a whole, as well as the details. If you were to take a letter from a friend, and were merely to fasten upon a sentence or a part of one in the middle of it, and dislocate it from the rest, how could you understand it? And yet Scripture has infinitely larger scope and compass than anything that could be written on our part; and therefore there ought to be far stronger reasons for taking Scripture in its connections than the little effusions of our own mind. This is a great key to the mistakes which many estimable people make in the interpretation of Scripture. They may be men of faith too, but still it is difficult to rise above their ordinary habits.

## Searching Question

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Have we been walking in true separation from the world today, as those who are dead and risen with Christ? Has Christ been seen in us in obedience and dependence, in meekness and lowliness, love and patience? Have we been making progress in the things which are Jesus Christ's? Have we been, in the power of the Spirit, "beholding the glory"? Have we been followers of Paul in saying, "That I may know Him," etc.? Have we been loving the saints according to the new commandment, "as I have loved you"? Do we know just where in the Scriptures we are taught as to all of these things?

## Self-Occupation and Self-Judgment

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Many confound self-occupation with self-judgment. Seeing self-judgment to be right (when we fail), they are found asking themselves where the one ends and the other begins.

Self-occupation is the bane of the soul. Man makes himself the center and chief object upon earth. This is self-occupation.

Self-judgment is the work of the Spirit of God. It is not His proper work; but often, from our want of watchfulness, it is His necessary work. Without it, there is no way of return to the joy of communion when that communion is broken through sin. Self-judgment, though right in its place, is not communion; on the contrary, it is the confession that communion is lost. But it is the only way back; it is medicine, not food.

To live daily with self ignored, is the highest Christian condition. Here the Spirit of God is free to take Christ and put Him before me as my food. Here the soul is free to be occupied by and for Christ alone. The Apostle says, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." It is the only right state for food. And food is the soul's appropriation of Christ, and feeding upon Him as ministered by the Spirit. He alone is the "bread of life which came down from heaven"; as John 6:56 says, "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him." (It is not the having done so once by faith. That is in verse 51, and is of the first importance.) Food is the daily need of the man. But how important to see that self-occupation is not food, and that self-judgment is not food; and how can I live or grow without food?

## Silent Building of Solomon's Temple

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1 Kings 6:2

When Bishop Heber read his beautiful poem, "Palestine," in manuscript to Sir Walter Scott, his friend remarked that in speaking of the temple of Solomon he had forgotten to refer to the silence which prevailed during its erection. The poet immediately retired for a few minutes and introduced the following beautiful lines:

"No workman's steel, no ponderous axes rung; Like some tall palm, the noiseless fabric sprung."

This very remarkable circumstance has been frequently noticed. It is regarded as an indication of the deep sense which Solomon had of the sacredness of the work, and it has given rise to many pious and useful meditations. Matthew Henry in his commentary says, "It was to be the temple of the God of peace, therefore no iron must be heard in it; quietness and silence both become and befriend religious exercises; God's work should be done with as much care and as little noise as may be; the temple was thrown down with axes and hammers; they that did it roared in the midst of the congregation (Psalm 74:4-6); but it was built up in silence. Clamor and violence often hinder, but never further the work of God." These thoughts are well worthy of consideration, especially of those who can never assert their own opinions without violently assailing those of others, nor do anything for God without inviting the multitude to come and see their zeal for the Lord of hosts.

The fact itself, however, has lately received a remarkable confirmation of its truth. Mr. Douglas, a Scotch gentleman, states that during a recent visit to Jerusalem he learned from a very intelligent Hebrew that there were extensive quarries beneath the city; and that there was abundant evidence that from those quarries had been obtained the stones employed in the building and re-building of the temple. He had visited them some time before, with two Englishmen, and discovered that the quarries had contained materials sufficient for building the walls and the city of Jerusalem.

We extract the following statement: "When fairly inside, we found ourselves in an immense vault, and standing upon the top of a pile which was very evidently formed by the accumulation of the minute particles from the final dressings of the blocks of stone. On descending this pile we entered through a large arch into another vault, equally vast, and separated from the first by enormous pillars. This vault, or quarry, led by a gradual descent into another and another, each separated from the other by massive stony partitions which had been left to give additional strength to the vaulted roofs. In some of the quarries the blocks of stone which had been quarried out lay partly dressed; in some the blocks were still attached to the rock; in some the workmen had just commenced chiseling; and in some the architect's line was distinct on the smooth face of the wall of the quarry. The mode in which the blocks were gotten out was similar to that used by the ancient Egyptians, as seen in the sandstone quarries at Hagar Tilsilis and in the granite quarries at Syene. The architect first drew the outline of the blocks on the face of the quarry; the workmen then chiseled them out in their whole thickness, separating them entirely from each other, and

leaving them attached by their backs only to the solid wall. They were then detached by cutting a passage behind them, which, while it separated the blocks, left them roughly dressed, and left the wall prepared for further operations. We remarked the similarity between the stones chiseled out in these quarries and the few blocks of stone built into the southeast corner of the wall of Jerusalem, which are so remarkable for their size, their weather-worn appearance, and the peculiar ornamentation of their edges.

"We spent between two and three hours in these quarries. Our examinations were, however, chiefly on the side toward the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Our guide stated that more to the westward was a quarry of the peculiar reddish marble so commonly used as pavement in the streets of Jerusalem. From the place where we entered, the descent was gradual; between some of the quarries, however, there were broad flights of steps cut out of the solid rock. I had no means of judging of the distance between the roofs of the vaults and the streets of the city, except that from the descent the thickness must be enormous. The size and extent of these excavations fully bore out the opinion that they had yielded stones enough to build not only the temple but the whole of Jerusalem.

"The situation of these quarries-the mode by which the stones were got out-and the evidence that the stones were fully prepared and dressed before being removed, may possibly throw light upon the verses of Scripture in which it is said (2 Chron. 2:18), 'And he (Solomon) set threescore and ten thousand of them to be bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand to be hewers in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people awork.' And again (1 Kings 6:7), 'And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.'

"It could scarcely have been anticipated that at a period so remote from that in which the temple was erected, any evidence should arise thus to confirm the statement concerning the silence observed in the building; yet this testimony has come forth as it were from the dead to make known the word of truth. This, however, is only one of a large and accumulating class of facts in our day, by which believers are encouraged and the clamorer's voice of infidelity silenced. At the commencement of this century (the 19th), Egypt began to pay its tribute to the truth and accuracy of the Mosaic narrative; and now from the mounds of Assyria we are constantly receiving the most overwhelming testimony to the faithfulness of that portion of the history of Israel and Judah, which stands in connection with Assyrian

history."

## The Spirit and the Word

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God has a way in the world where Satan cannot touch us. This is the path where Jesus walked. Satan is the prince of this world; but there is a divine path through it, but no other, and there God's power is. The Word is the revelation of it. So the Lord bound the strong man. He acted by the power of the Spirit, and used the Word. The Spirit and the Word cannot be separated without falling into fanaticism on the one hand, or into rationalism on the other-without putting oneself outside the place of dependence upon God, and of His guidance. Mere reason would become the master of some, imagination, of others.

## A Stranger in Jerusalem

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"Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem?" (Luke 24:18) said Cleopas to the unknown traveler by whom he and his companion were approached as they journeyed toward Emmaus on that eventful first day of the week.

It was the third day since the Lord Jesus had been crucified, and the sad disciples were mourning not only their loss, but the blighting of all their hopes as to the redemption of the nation of Israel.

On the morning of this day, however, strange things had happened. Certain women had gone early to the sepulcher of their loved Lord in order that they might embalm His body with the spices which they had prepared. But they had found the sepulcher empty. Their Lord was not there. Moreover, they had seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. Certain of the disciples had also gone to the sepulcher and found that the report of the women was correct "but Him they saw not." These were strange and startling events indeed to Cleopas and his companion who walked these sixty furlongs that lay between Jerusalem and Emmaus.

Why did they take that road? How did they come to leave the place where, of all others, this mystery would certainly be solved? Why abandon the society of their fellow disciples at such a juncture? The reason was best known to themselves; and so they moved away with perplexed and heavy hearts until "Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them." He had come up from behind, and as He was making for the same point, they did not object to His company.

"And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" He remarked upon that sadness as He asked the manner of their conversation. Sad to say, unbelief was the cause of both. Their reasoning, their sadness and their weary walk would all have been obviated had they only believed what they had so often heard. It is wisdom to believe the Word of God. If we fail to do so, we only land ourselves in vain reasonings or speculations, and fill our hearts with sadness and depression.

Cleopas could not understand how that anyone could be ignorant of the things that engrossed the minds of all, and so he said, "Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" Little did Cleopas know how deeply acquainted this "Stranger" was with these things. The unknown speaker attracted them, as by a magnet, to the Scriptures which they had unbelievably overlooked and caused their hearts to burn within them as He talked with them. At length, the disclosure came. "They knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight."

That glimpse was enough; they hurried back to the place they never should have left, in order to tell their tale of that wonderful interview and, as eyewitnesses, to corroborate the facts of Christ's resurrection. They returned and found the eleven assembled and were informed by them that "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

Thus their news was not new. Simon had preceded them. Had their walk only been shorter, they might have forestalled him; but they had to suffer the consequences of their unnecessary departure to Emmaus, and learn that they were not the only eyewitnesses of the risen Lord.

Yet the title, "Stranger in Jerusalem," applied in ignorance by Cleopas, had a new meaning now that he could not conceive. It was only too true that Jesus was a stranger in Jerusalem! He had come to His own, and His own had received Him not. He was Lord of that very temple where thieves and exchangers of money and grasping merchants found a place, while He had none.

As in the parable, He had come-the Son-seeking fruit from the husbandmen to whom the vineyard had been let out, and was encountered by the unanimous cry, "Come, let us kill him."

Verily, He was a "stranger in Jerusalem." Her rightful Lord was refused, rejected, crucified. He for whom there was no room in the inn, and who had not where to lay His head, was thrust aside for Barabbas the robber. For His love, He received hatred; and how deeply pathetic was His complaint when He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often would I have gathered thy children together... and ye would not!" He had their blessing at heart, but they would have none of Him; and so for them nothing but judgment remained, while He became morally a stranger in their city.

He who is a stranger in Jerusalem, seeks to be a resident in the hearts of His people. "If a man love Me," He declares, "he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." John 14:23. Or again, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. 3:17)-that Christ may be no stranger there-no, not even a visitor, but a dweller in the heart by that faith which makes His company more real and intelligible than sight or touch.

If He be a stranger in Jerusalem, He seeks an abiding place in the heart. If He be unknown there, He would be well known and loved and enjoyed here. If cruel unbelief prefers a robber or a Judas or a world there, faith may bid Him welcome-Him who died to save, and lives to keep, and whose love passes knowledge.

May He be no "stranger," no mere visitor, but rather a constant, welcome resident in your heart, dear fellow believer, until you and all His own are in His mansion, His abode, and like Him on high.

## This Light Bread

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It has often been noticed that the burst of song which broke forth from redeemed Israel on the banks of the Red Sea had scarcely died away before they began to murmur against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Though they had been slaves under the iron yoke of Pharaoh, they were not prepared for the hardships of the desert; as a consequence, their hearts were filled with rebellion, and their lips with murmurs.

There were three things that made up the bitterness of their daily lives, all of which are most instructive to ourselves. First, there was "no bread, neither... any water" (Numb. 21:5; Exod. 15 and 16); second, they loathed, because weary of, the bread which God had provided for them, saying, "Our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, besides this manna, before our eyes." (Numb. 11:6); and third, they longed after the food of Egypt, "the fish... the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic." (Numb. 11:5; Exod. 16:3).

These things together became so insupportable that they again and again avowed that they would far rather have remained in Egypt. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples (as types): and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Cor. 10:11.

The first thing then that troubled them, was that they found no bread and no water in the desert. As the psalmist expresses it, "a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." Brought out of Egypt-type of the world of nature, of man in his natural condition-they had lost their accustomed food; and the wilderness on which they had entered was destitute of all the sources from which they had hitherto drawn, as well as those from which they needed now to draw, their life and sustenance. They had lost their old life forever (in figure) in the Red Sea-the life which Egypt fed and nourished-and they now possessed a new life, the springs of which were far from the scene through which they were passing.

It is so with the believer now. For the new life which he possesses in a risen Christ, there is neither bread nor water in the desert. There was a time, before he was met by the grace of God and brought out of darkness into His marvelous light, when all the springs of his life were hid in the world. Now the world has become to him "a wilderness wide," and looking out upon it he has to learn that it can offer him nothing, either to stimulate or to refresh him in his pilgrim way. He is not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. As dead with Christ to it, and risen with Him out of it, how can he find his suited food in it, or slake his thirst at its polluted streams?

Those truths are as familiar as household words, but we need to challenge our hearts continually as to their practical acceptance. Do we then habitually act in the remembrance that, apart from the few and simple requirements of our bodies, the scene of our stranger ship contains nothing for us, nothing to aid or invigorate, but, on the other hand, everything calculated to blight and deaden the life we have in Christ Jesus? It is most important, especially for young believers whose feet have just entered upon the sands of the desert, to have this continually in our minds, that there is no

bread or water to be found for our souls in the wilderness, for we belong to another scene. Christ Himself at the right hand of God is our life (Col. 3:3), and it is therefore from thence, and from thence alone, that we can derive our nourishment and strength. All our springs are in Christ risen and glorified. With Him alone is the fountain of life. The believer who walks through the world in the power of this truth expecting nothing, nothing but snares and dangers, from it, will be kept in independence of it. He will be conscious of a life that has no affinities to anything round about him, and he will exhibit a life, fed from on high, which, shining as a light in the moral darkness of this scene, will be a testimony for Christ, a testimony of grace, and also, alas! of coming judgment.

The second thing that afflicted these poor pilgrims was that they became weary of the food which God had provided for them. It was in response to their murmurings (for as yet they were under grace, Sinai not having been reached) that He in His tenderness and mercy gave them the manna. "The whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: and the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full: for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger." Exod. 16:2, 3. Such conduct merited judgment; but the Lord acted in grace, and hence He said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." And this He did day by day for forty years, until they passed over the Jordan (Josh. 5).

The manna was Israel's food, suited food for the wilderness, and it was of this they tired, until at length they dared to say, "Our soul loatheth this light bread." Numb. 21:5. Now the manna, as our readers know, is a type of Christ, of a humbled Christ, of all that Christ was in His tenderness, grace, sympathy, etc., as He passed through this scene-of all that He is, therefore, as suited to us in wilderness circumstances as strangers and pilgrims. Christ, then, in this character is our only food (see John 6), the only food that can sustain and strengthen us, but Christ, it should be observed, in every respect in which He is presented to us as the Manna. We need all that He is as thus given; but we need nothing outside of Himself-nothing but Himself-for since He Himself is our life, it is He only that can sustain it.

How then is it possible for the believer to weary of it? We have two natures, the old and the new, and "these are contrary the one to the other." If therefore, we are not walking in the Spirit (see Gal. 5), the flesh will assert its desires, and the flesh never loves Christ; the mind of the flesh, indeed, is enmity against God (Rom. 8). It is the flesh, therefore, that wearies of Christ; that, desiring its own proper food, begets in us a disrelish, a distaste, for the heavenly manna. But the flesh is subtle and, when thus acting in the believer, generally loves to conceal its true character. But flesh is flesh, whatever the forms in which it is expressed; and even as Satan knows how to transform himself into an angel of light, so the flesh knows how to assume most pious forms. It is necessary, therefore, to be on our guard lest we fall into this grievous sin of loathing "this light bread."

Signs of this tendency often appear where least expected; for example, if a ministry which appeals to the intellect instead of to the heart and conscience is preferred; if the exposition of interesting principles in which even the natural man can delight is welcomed rather than a simple presentation of Christ Himself; or if we seek companionship with those who can entertain us naturally or socially, in preference to those with whom we could have spiritual fellowship, those with whom Christ alone would be the bond; if we are losing our appetite for the Scriptures and, it may be

added, if we are losing the sense of our pilgrim character and are gradually settling down into the enjoyment of things around-then there is reason to fear that we are becoming weary of "this light bread." But the test may be a positive one. Let us then boldly ask ourselves whether we are satisfied with Christ, satisfied to the full in Him as our daily food. Let us ask ourselves this question in our homes, in our daily and social life, in our leisure moments, when listening to ministry, when gathered together in the assembly of the saints. It is one thing to sing,

"Jesus, of Thee we ne'er would tire;

The new and living Food

Can satisfy our hearts' desire,

And life is in Thy blood,"

and it is another thing to know it practically. May the Lord keep us from the grievous sin of losing our appetite for Himself.

Combined with this, in the case of the Israelites, there was an intense desire for the things of Egypt. How often did they longingly recall the fleshpots, the fish, the leeks, the melons, and the cucumbers of Egypt! The two things always go together. Losing appetite for Christ is sometimes the consequence of indulgence in, and sometimes the cause of desiring Egyptian gratifications. But let us ask plainly what this means. To long after the food of Egypt, then, is for the believer to seek after the same gratifications, 'amusements, sources of enjoyment, as the man of the world. The natural man has his suited food, that in which he endeavors to find his life, as the Christian has his. If the believer turns from Christ to that on which the worldling feeds, he is in exactly the same case as the Israelites. If the Christian cultivates the world's habits and manners, if, in short, he is turning to any of the sources of earth, any of its sources of enjoyment, pride, pleasure, or exaltation, he is, in fact, longing after the fleshpots of Egypt.

What then have we to say to these things? Are we-are you, beloved reader-in this case? There is no sadder spectacle than that presented by some who once knew what it was to feed on Christ and to find their all in Him, but who are now turning back to the very things which they had gladly refused for His sake. They did run well, but they have been hindered through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life. Whatever is not Christ, and of Christ, is Egypt and of Egypt. We need therefore to be so attracted, possessed, and absorbed by Christ as to have every want satisfied in Himself. This is the effectual antidote to every fascination and allurements that Egypt can present.

"Art thou weaned from Egypt's pleasures?

God in secret thee shall keep;

There unfold His hidden treasures,

There His love's exhaustless deep."

## Together With Him

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"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." 1 Thess. 5:9, 10.

Notice the object of His death; it was that we might live together with Him. Does not that touch our hearts? Is not that much more than going to heaven and being happy forever? He sought us, desired our company, will be satisfied with nothing less; and He shall have it. Whether we wake or sleep, live or die, this shall be brought to pass. We are to be with Him as His companions; nothing will satisfy divine love but this, and this is the proper hope of the Christian.

Meanwhile, we belong to Him; He has set us free to bind us to Himself, that henceforth we live not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again.

Believer, you are, you must be-it cannot be otherwise-your Redeemer's property. Joined to Him for safety, you are joined to Him also for service. Believing, you belong. Whether you live, you live in relation to the Lord. Whether you die, you die in relation to the Lord. He died, rose, and revived for this end, "that He might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Rom. 14:9).

## Trial Proved to Be a Blessing

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When God allowed Joseph to be removed from his father Jacob, the latter said, "All these things are against me." But it turned out quite the opposite in the end; for at the time of famine, he, his children, his children's children, his flocks, his herds, and all that he had were brought near to Joseph in the land of Goshen where they were tenderly nourished all the years of famine. Gen. 45:10, 11. Jacob's greatest trial was, in the end, his greatest blessing. How often we have been made to prove that the clouds we so dreaded have been big with richest blessings. Rom. 8:28.

## True Greatness

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Learn to grapple with souls. Aim at the conscience. Exalt Christ. Use a sharp knife with yourself. Say little, serve all, pass on.

This is True Greatness,

to Serve Unnoticed and Work Unseen.

Oh the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a Living Christ in Glory, and being careful for nothing but His interests down here.

## True Motive Power

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A gentleman visiting one of the hospitals for lepers in India, and wishing to test the nurse on duty said, "You must have a great deal of enthusiasm for humanity to labor here among these awful cases of disease."

"Enthusiasm for humanity, indeed," replied the nurse, "That would not keep me here a week; but I do possess some of the compassion and enthusiasm of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the reason why I am content to live and labor amid such surroundings." It is the "love of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:14) that is the motive of all true service for God. "We love Him, because He first loved us." 1 John 4:19.

## The Two Ministries: the Gospel and the Church

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It is plain from Col. 1:23-29 that there are two ministries-the ministry of the gospel and the ministry of the Church. It is most interesting and important to ascertain the scope of each-where the first one ends, and where the other begins.

The ministry of the gospel is universal, proclaimed in the whole creation under heaven. And in Acts 17:30, the Apostle says, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." The gospel is addressed to every one; as we read, They went everywhere "announcing the glad tidings" (J.N.D. Trans.). Our Savior God desires that all should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. The more vigor of spiritual life there is in any saint, the more they, according to the leading of the Spirit, will seek to make known Christ to sinner or saint. And I suppose there could not be any reviving in the Church without a very marked energy in evangelistic work. The vitality of the Church is declared by the force and effect with which Christ's deputed messengers, gifted by Him for the purpose, carry each part of the truth suited to every ear. The blessed God is evangelistic. He so loved the world that He sent His Son.

The angels were the first evangelists; and Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, to whom was peculiarly confided the mystery of the gospel, was without question the greatest of evangelists. The prominence of this ministry then is evident enough.

Now the gospel, according to the instructions given to Paul in Acts 26:18, transfers the believer from one state to another, and the state to which he is transferred has a twofold blessing: one, the remission of sins; and the other, "inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me." The Son comes to do the will of God. He dies "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood... for the remission of sins." He comes to release us from the misery and judgment in which by nature we are plunged, and not this only, but to set us, by the Holy Spirit given to Christ on high, in heavenly joys-in the blessedness of Christ's life here. We have not to wait for those joys, but in the very spot of our former misery, we have an earnest of the inheritance which is ours now by faith in Him. The gospel sets the believer free before God from all that was against him as belonging to Adam, and as to his state in this world, as Christ is now in glory. As to standing, he is as Christ is-"Because as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). Nothing less could satisfy the Father's heart, and nothing less could the Son undertake in bringing many sons to glory, but that the believing sinner should be transferred by His work from the misery under which he lay, into a divine contrast in that very spot. He is not only rescued from misery with a perfectly assured home in heaven, but the joys of the Father's house are made known to him by the Spirit before he gets home. He has home comforts before he reaches home. This is the fatted calf in Luke 15 before we go home, while in John 14:3, we have reached home. I am, through the gospel, a child of God, saying, "Abba, Father," with the Spirit of the Son, and an heir of heaven. While still down here in the old vessel, I am tasting of its joys through the Spirit before I go there, this vile body being a temple of the Holy Ghost.

Now, as far as I know, all I have written relates to the gospel, and I believe it may be enjoyed by one who is ignorant of the other ministry-the mystery, or the ministry of the Church. I am quite sure he is acquiring untold blessing from it, even though he were ignorant of it. Though his position (for he is a son) cannot be greater, yet, when he understands the ministry of the Church, his full portion will be made known to him.

The more attentively we study the epistles, the clearer we shall see that churches or assemblies were formed before they were fully enlightened as to the ministry of the Church. It is evident that at Corinth there was an assembly, and yet the Apostle writes to them in the most elementary way respecting the body and the manner of its formation and its corporate responsibilities; while to the Ephesians, whom he commends for their faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints, he prays that their eyes may be enlightened to understand the mystery, or the ministry of the Church. And as for the Colossians, though commending them for their faith in Christ, and love to all the saints, he tells them, "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you," in his zeal of heart that they should be in rich possession of the truth of the ministry of the Church. In the other epistles it is equally evident that though they were assemblies gathered to the name of the Lord, and in communion with one another, yet they were not in full apprehension of the ministry of the Church. They had been gathered to the Lord in the power of the Spirit; and as in the first days, before the mystery had been revealed, the assembly at Jerusalem was in full corporate sentiment and service. The assemblies among the Gentiles were planted, and in godly corporate relationship before the knowledge of the mystery was doctrinally possessed.

In pattern, the Lord qualified His disciples for the assembly in John 20:19, before there was any revelation of the mystery. The presence of the Holy Spirit, and being gathered together to the name of the Lord, ensured a corporate order, though the mystery was not, as yet, known. This is very important, that the Church should be in divine order and in the unity of the Spirit before the truth was known which would have made the order still more obligatory. See Acts 2:46, 47.

In a word, the Church as the house of God on earth, was known before the body was revealed; and when discipline was necessary, the Apostle recalls the Corinthians to the ground they were on as the assembly. They were to come together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, forever"; yet he afterward, in chapter 12, enforces this responsibility by insisting on their corporate relation to one another. The knowledge of the one body, and that this body is the body of Christ, is the mystery, or the ministry of the Church.

In the ministry of the gospel we learn the immeasurable blessedness of all that Christ has done for us; but in the ministry of the Church we are taught that we are related to Him to whom we owe so much, in the closest way. It is the great mystery. He is Head of the body, the Church, and from Him, "All the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God." (Col. 2:19 J.N.D. Trans.) Christ being rejected in His humiliation while on earth, and being refused when in glory (stoning of Stephen), the great secret was then divulged, that His body was on the earth, and that this body would be the fullness, or complement, of Him that filleth all in all. With regard to the Church, it can be said paramountly-What could have been done for you that I have not done? But to this is added the closest and most intimate relationship; we are united to Christ by the Holy Spirit, and thus brought into participation with Him of His things and

glory.

It is not only now a company of Christians with Christ in the midst and the Holy Spirit leading each into his proper and appointed allegiance and service, but we are also all members of the body of Christ, each one united to Him, and to one another.

If the Holy Ghost is not recognized as being on earth, there never can be any just or true apprehension of this mystery; but if I accept the truth of the presence of the Holy Ghost, I then can apprehend the baptism by which we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body; and this surely is followed by, "And have been all made to drink into one Spirit"; that is, that the unity of the Spirit is a necessary consequence of this baptism. It could not be otherwise. There can be no leading of the Spirit in one place, but what must be the same in every other. The members have but one Head; and they are His body, united together by the Holy Spirit. Therefore the mind of the Lord is one and the same with every member of His body who is in simple concert with Him; and all who are in concert with Him are in concert with one another.

The question is, What is the mind of the Spirit? There is but one for the youngest and for the most instructed. It could not be otherwise if the Church is the body of Christ; and hence it is the first duty or work of the heavenly man-of the man invested with the power which is in consequence of his union with Christ-to rise above all the natural influences in his purpose to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Whether we meditate on the Church as the body of Christ now on the earth, or contemplate it as His fullness, we cannot but be deeply affected by the grace which has set us in so great a relationship to the very One to whom we are so attached already, on account of all He has done for us. How it consolidates everything to our hearts, blessed be His name! We belong to, we are given to, our Savior; we are His own, His body.

## Walking in the Truth

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The truth spreads, but it is another thing to take up one's cross. And I observe that when one does not act according to the truth, there is no solidity; one trifles with religious views. When one follows the truth, difficulties are there and the opposition of the world; that renders us serious. We must know how to give an account of our convictions; then this does not suit the flesh, and the truth must reign in the heart in order for the victory to be won. Grace does not lend itself to levity and license in the doctrine itself. It is not bursts of steam; the engine must move onward, and move on with a good deal to be drawn. There is responsibility with respect to oneself, to the Lord's name and His work.

We must take into account this tendency in the present day. We find not a few who like to hear new truth, but who have no idea of walking in the truth in a practical way. We must have patience, we must have a large heart, but a heart which acknowledges nothing but Christ for its end, and follows Him, or, at least, seeks to do so. There is real dignity in the truth, which demands one to respect it in a practical way.

In these last days, we need firmness and a large heart which knows how to take forth the precious seed from the vile. Obedience is firm and humble; grace, meekness, love ought to be there. But the truth needs not man; man needs the truth. Love feels the need of seeking souls; but souls should submit to Christ and acknowledge His grace.

## The Way Into Heavenly Places

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Josh. 5

We must remember that all these things which are written "happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Cor. 10:11. This expression, "ends of the world," has its importance, as also this, "once in the end of the world" (Heb. 9:26). It is what we are in as Christians, consequent on the end of all the dealings and ways of God with man as to teaching or testing him. Now man as man has been fully tried, and God has set up another Man. He is more than man, too, but still another Man, and it is in grace too, surely, for sinners, that we may find a better paradise than that which has been lost. The Lord Jesus Christ could say, when He came to the end, "Now is the judgment of this world." We find man tried in every way from innocence to the cross of Christ, and the Son Himself is cast out of the vineyard and slain. John the Baptist came after the law and the prophets, and preached repentance (Matt. 11), but they would not repent. When he mourned, they did not lament; and when the Lord came and piped, they would not dance. In that same chapter He says, "Come unto Me." Now man must come to Christ as ruined, according to His own invitation.

Man may be decently alienated from God, or indecently, but it is all the same. "The carnal mind is enmity." We must come to the second Man-to Christ. God did not set up the second while He could recognize the first. He cannot own both; and to acknowledge man in the flesh now, is to set aside the fact that God has set up another. What I would now set forth is the full deliverance we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. I need not say this is not deliverance as to our body, but blessed liberty of spirit while we are waiting for the deliverance of the body. We are not only forgiven, but we are brought into liberty of association with God in holiness.

This deliverance is shadowed in Israel's history by figures-Egypt, the wilderness, Jordan, Canaan. We are all aware that the general idea is that Jordan means death, and Canaan, heaven. But as soon as we enter Canaan, we get conflict. This is evidently not the heavenly places as a place of rest. That which characterizes Canaan is conflict, and we get a figure of what we find brought out in Eph. 6-the wrestling, not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, for which we need to have on the whole armor of God. But if we are to have conflict there, we must first be there. What I would speak of at this time then is the way we get into the heavenly places. Remember, Christ is there. We find in the history of Israel the way a soul progresses to the heavenly places. It is when they were in Canaan, and not in the wilderness, that the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. They kept the Passover as circumcised, they ate the old corn of the land, and the manna ceased.

And this is the way the soul gets into deliverance "from this present evil world," and is introduced into the heavenly places.

The children of Israel were slaves in Egypt, making bricks without straw; but God comes down to deliver them and He talks only of Canaan, and not of the wilderness. But first He appears in the

character of a judge. He must pass them through the judgment. They were as great sinners as the Egyptians (perhaps greater, for they had a greater knowledge of God); but still, wherever the blood was, there was shelter- perfect security. It was only because the blood was on their houses that God passed over. It was not a question of communion, but the blood keeping God out as a judge.

So with the believer now. It is a blessed fact that, wherever the blood is relied on, God cannot see a single sin. God would have to deny the efficacy of the blood if He did not pass over. What screened them was not their seeing the blood, but God's seeing it. Many souls are saying, I do not know whether I have accepted it aright; but what gives peace is knowing that God has accepted it. They think they must look into their hearts to see if they have accepted it aright; yet a simple soul would not think of such a thing, but would only be too happy to rest in God's value of Christ's blood. It is quite true that we ought to find the blood more precious each day, but that is not questioning my acceptance. It is a question of growing affections; but what gives peace is not growing affections, but the fact that God has accepted the blood, and He must deny the efficacy of the blood of Christ if He did not receive me. The effect of it was to arrest His hand in judgment. Not only has my sin been pardoned, but God has been glorified at the cross of Christ. That gives full value to the blood.

If God judged sin only, then He is righteous, but there is no love. If He had said of men, They are poor wretched things, and cannot help it, so I will pardon all, there might be love shown, but there would be no righteousness. It would not be holy love. But when we come to the cross, we have perfect righteousness, and perfect love. God's truth and majesty are fully brought out there, because He, the captain of our salvation, was there made "perfect through suffering." He has suffered, and now the Son of man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. He has run the race, and is now set down at the right hand of God.

"God hath highly exalted Him." In virtue of the cross, man is glorified. Stephen sees the Son of man in heaven; that is the wonderful thing. Stephen did not say, I see the glory (this was natural in heaven), but "I see... the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" in the heavens-Man in heaven. He is there not only as Son of God, but as man. He gets His place in the glory of God. We have this wonderful truth because He has finished the work God gave Him to do. None but He could sit there. God has been glorified by what Man has wrought. He was divine, of course, or He could not have done it. This becomes the basis of everything-man's having a place in the glory of God, not at His right hand, which is the place of preeminence for Christ alone. Now that He is there, He has sent down the Holy Ghost to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment-of righteousness both to the believer and to the unbeliever-to the unbeliever because he rejects Christ-to the believer because he is associated with Him. He convinces the world, not as individuals, but all in a lump. When the world cast out Christ, the Father said, I will have Him; and now He is set down as the result of His finished work. He receives it now from His Father as man. The angels desire to look into this. All God's moral attributes have been glorified in man in the Person of Christ. It is the foundation not only of the putting away of our sin, but of the glory of God in righteousness and truth.

When we have passed through the veil and entered within the holiest in the consciousness of our souls, what value do we not see in the blood! And now we apprehend what the cross is! Now we contemplate the cross for the affections of our souls. We meditate and think of the cross; then we

get growth. When we are at home with God, there can be growth. It is not there we find peace, for peace is had by learning that righteousness has accepted the blood which love gave. Now love gives it to me, but righteousness is exalted in giving it. Israel goes to the Red Sea, and here they are brought to a standstill. They found they were hemmed in on every side, and they were sore afraid. So often when a person is delivered from judgment in one sense, he meets somehow with death and finds Satan pursuing. Many a soul gets peace and comfort while looking at the cross, but is afraid when it thinks of judgment. "I am a poor sinner delighting in the cross; it just suits me." Does judgment suit you? When they came to the Red Sea, it was not judgment, but God a positive deliverer. They had known God as a judge in Egypt, and the blood had screened them. Now they learn Him at the Red Sea as a deliverer. They never see the "salvation of God" till they get to the Red Sea, and they pass out of Egypt. They are not only sheltered from judgment, but brought into a new place.

The blood screens us from judgment on account of our sins, and by that same cross and resurrection we are brought to God. Christ dead and risen is what we have in Romans, and the result is we are brought to God as our Father. Death and resurrection take me clear out of the place I was in. If I say, I am a guilty sinner, He says, You are justified. If I say, Defiled, He says, You are cleansed. If I have offended, then I am forgiven. He has met every question that could perplex the soul.

The new place of man is as perfectly redeemed and brought to God. Not only are his sins put away, but he is delivered, brought out into the wilderness. When God speaks of deliverance, He does not say a word of the wilderness. I am brought out into a new place altogether-not yet the heavenly places, but I have "redemption through His blood." So we find two conditions of the Israelites-in the wilderness, and in Canaan. And there are two distinct parts in the life of a Christian: first, what we find in Hebrews and Galatians, the place of deliverance from the present evil world (Gal. 1:4); that is, the wilderness. Second, I am in Canaan, the heavenly places, as shown in Ephesians and Colossians. The wilderness is what the world is to the Christian. What has a dead and risen man to do with the world? Now death and judgment are behind me, but I have not left conflict behind.

The blessed Lord went into death, and bore the judgment. If I am associated with Him, it is all behind Him. If I have a part in Christ, I have a part in the deliverance. (See Psalm 22.) As soon as heard "from the horns of the unicorns," He says, "I will declare," etc. The first thing the Lord does in resurrection is to declare the Father's name to His brethren. He brings them out into the same place He is in. In John 20 He says to Mary Magdalene, "Go to My brethren," and then He leads their praises as the first-born of many brethren: "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." He brings them to His God and their God, His Father and their Father. He has been all alone in His suffering and wrath. Now all is settled, and now He says, "In the midst of the congregation." He associates us with the praises-"not ashamed to call them brethren." He never said, "My brethren," nor "peace," until after He was risen.

He had said, "Fear not," and anticipatively He had said, "My peace I give unto you"; that is, you shall have it. But peace was not then made, and it is not till He had made peace by the blood of His cross that He came and preached peace to them that were "afar off" and to them that were "nigh." He passed into the new place as, man, and says, Now you are here with Me. Now we are

associated with Christ, as Israel sings, "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation." We have the promise of glory too: "Thou shalt bring them in." (Exod. 15:13, 17)

## The Way Into Heavenly Places: Part 2

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The wilderness is the path of a Christian in which he learns himself. It is the place of a soul who is really at rest before God. There may have been experiences before of slavery, etc., but they were the experiences of a soul in which God has acted, but which is not yet delivered. It is where a soul is who knows he is redeemed. If I only know the blood, I am still in Egypt; but if I have passed through the Red Sea, I know God as a deliverer. I am not in the flesh but in the Spirit (Rom. 8). The prodigal son had experiences before he returned home, but they were the experiences of one who had not yet met the father. There was a work in the man. He found he was perishing. He had repented and set out, but there still remained the question, What will he say to me when I meet him? Will he set me on his right hand, or left? He had his speech already made up, and had fixed the place he was to take in the house—that of a servant—but he had not yet met the father. He learns what his place was in the house by what the father was to him when he met him, and he says nothing about the place of a servant. He is brought in as a son. He did not, could not, say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," for his father was on his neck. It was not what he was for God, but what God was for him. He put the best robe on him, not a robe. He met him in his sins, but did not bring him in, in his sins. God met him in rags, but he is brought in, in Christ.

If I have gotten through the Red Sea, God is a deliverer and not a judge, in virtue of the full blessed work of Christ. I am not in the flesh. It is not merely that my sins are forgiven, but I am in the second Man, in Christ, before God. The first practical effect is, I am brought into the wilderness. A person has a great deal to learn after he is redeemed. I am out of the flesh, and have my place in and with Christ; but the learning of the flesh in me is a humbling process. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee," etc. "Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years." (Deut. 8.) God was thinking about their very clothes and their feet, but He gave them all the discipline and correction needed to show them themselves. And when through their unbelief they refuse to enter the land of Canaan, being unwilling to go up and fight the Amorites, He in His grace turns around in unflinching love and patience and dwells with them all the forty years of their wilderness journeyings.

What characterizes the Christian is the presence of the Holy Ghost, God dwelling in him in virtue of redemption. He does not dwell with man in innocence; He never dwelt in Eden. The dwelling of God with man was always consequent on redemption, whether in the cloud with Israel, or in the Church by the Holy Ghost. He had walked with Adam in the garden, dined with Abraham, so to speak, but He never dwelt with them. But as soon as He gets a people redeemed, He dwells with them and talks of holiness. He adapts Himself to their circumstances. When they were in bondage in Egypt, He came to them as deliverer; when they were in the wilderness dwelling in tents, He pitched His tent among them, and led them through. When they arrived at Canaan, He met them, sword in hand, as their captain, to lead them in conflict; and when at length they were all settled down, He built a beautiful house and dwelt

in their midst. So with His people now. He dwells with us by the Holy Ghost: first in us as individuals ("Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost"); second, in the Church collectively ("In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit"). It is not merely that they are born of God, but they have the blood on them, and there the Holy Ghost dwells. "After that ye believed," etc. "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." "He which stablisheth us... is God." He quickens unbelievers and dwells in believers. The presence of the Holy Ghost is what forms the distinctive character of the Christian and of the Church. The leper was washed, sprinkled, and anointed-the blood placed upon his ear, his hand, and his foot; and then the oil upon the blood. It was most holy; nothing must pass into the ear or be done by the hand, that would defile; neither must they do anything that would defile the feet in walk. The anointing-that is, the presence of the Holy Spirit in us-is the seal of the value of the blood. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 5:5.) The Holy Spirit is the earnest, not of the love of God (for we have this), but of the inheritance for which we wait.

In the wilderness God is humbling us, proving us, and making all work together for good. Circumcision is not practicable in the wilderness. Israel comes to Jordan and crosses it. Here we have a figure, not of Christ dying for me, but of my dying and rising with Him. It is not simply that Christ died for me, but I am crucified with Christ. I reckon myself dead and have received Christ as my life. I am dead, risen, and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. I am gone out of the wilderness altogether. I was dead down there in sins, and Christ came down and died for sins; and now I am quickened, raised up, and seated in Christ. That is the new place altogether. This is the doctrine taught in Eph. 1 am no longer looked at as alive in the flesh at all. I have gotten into heavenly places. And the moment I have gotten there, all is mine-"All spiritual blessings in heavenly places." But then it is only as I set my foot on my blessing, that I make it practically my own. And then I find that there is another foot there-the enemy is in possession-so that I have need of the whole armor of God. The place we have to pass through is the world as a wilderness; but, as to my position, I am in the heavenly places, and I must walk accordingly. If I am living in the world as a man in the flesh, I meet my neighbors and I may find them kind and obliging, but as soon as I begin to talk of heavenly things, I find them opposed.

Well, I have got to show forth Christ in living relationships. If it is true that I am in Christ, it is true also that Christ is in me. "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." John 14:20. The standard is not a man running on toward heaven, but it is showing out the Christ that is in me. "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)-that and nothing else. "Death worketh in us, but life in you." I hold that Paul is dead. It was Christ acting through Paul. If we fail, that is wilderness work. If Christ is in me, I must never let a bit of anything but Christ be seen. Now you have Christ in you, which is positive power and nothing else; now you see that that is seen and nothing else. Joshua says, Set your foot on it. It is yours. I have got into Canaan and I get conflict directly. I am sitting in heavenly places in Christ. It is all mine, and now I am seeking to get hold of the things that I have a right to. "As captain of the host of the LORD am I now come." We get testing in the wilderness, conflict in Canaan. When I am in Canaan, I have spiritual intelligence and activity in that which belongs to me. "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ"-how much have we each realized of the spiritual blessings which are ours?

In the stones taken out of Jordan, we find that the believer takes with him the character of death. The ark went down. We died to sin. The world and Satan's power is all gone. We belonged to death once; now death belongs to us. Now I am bound to say, Reckon yourself dead. We are never told to die to sin, but we "are dead." The first thing is, we have passed through Jordan dry, and that is our title to reckon ourselves dead. Circumcision is the practical application of this. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," etc. (Col. 3). If I see a man impatient, I do not deny he is dead, but I say, You need a little of Gilgal. If I see a man looking at nonsense in the town, I say, I do not deny you are dead, but you need to be circumcised. That is the practical application of the death of Christ to our souls, actually realizing it. Most strikingly in Joshua we get Ai taken, then conquest after conquest; but we find Gilgal, the place of circumcision, was always the place to which the camp returned after their victories. No matter what success you have, you must go back to Gilgal. The book of Joshua is the history of successful energy; the book of Judges, of failure, with God coming in and removing it from time to time.

Gilgal, the place of self-judgment, is the place of practical divine power. We find even victories dangerous unless we return to the judgment of the flesh. After preaching the gospel, the most blessed work that can be, we must go back to Gilgal. Israel began well at Jericho; what were the high walls to faith? The higher the walls, the more the tumble when they come down. But instead of returning to Gilgal, they get self-confident and send up a few to take Ai. But there we have failure. They have to return to Gilgal and judge the flesh. In Judges, the angel of the Lord goes up from Gilgal to meet them at Bochim; that is, from the place of power to the place of tears. They had left the place of power for the place of sorrow. They sacrifice there, but it is in tears.

After the passage of the Jordan, the first thing we saw was the setting up of the twelve stones; second, circumcision; third, we find the Passover. They can now look back at the foundation of everything in redemption. They keep it now, not as guilty and protected by it-that they had been in Egypt-but as celebrating the truth that the death of the blessed Son of God is the foundation of all blessing. The Lord's supper is nothing less than celebrating that which is the foundation of God's giving of everything. The more we look at it, the more we find the cross holding a place that nothing else has, except Him who died on it. "As is the heavenly," etc. "As He is, so are we," etc. The cross is even a deeper thing than the glory. The glory has been obtained by it, but the cross is where the moral nature of God, His holiness and His love, have been glorified. Here we see the circumcised believer in Canaan feeding upon the lamb, the remembrance of the death of Christ. The fourth thing seen is that they feed on the "old corn of the land," and the manna ceases. The old corn is a type of the heavenly Christ. The manna suited the wilderness-Christ come down from heaven. In the midst of all the circumstances down here,

He meets us on the journey, and we feed on Him. It is the same Christ-only in another character-that we see in the old corn of the land. We have a humbled and glorified Christ for the food of our souls-not only His life down here, but what we find in 2 Cor. 3 "We all, with open (unveiled) face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." It is the fruit of the land-a humbled Christ who is now in the Canaan to which we belong. They had not yet taken a city, but they sit down at the table which God has spread for them in the presence of their enemies. All is mine before a single victory. I sit down in the presence of my enemies. He has spread a table for me. God's delight is my delight. Before I draw my sword in conflict, I sit down and know that everything is mine.

Last, we have the man with the drawn sword come to take his place as captain of the Lord's host. In heavenly things it is all conflict. Mark the word here. It is a question of, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" There is no middle place, but a complete split. If you are for the world, you are against Christ. The moment it becomes a question of Christ, it must be either for or against. The world has crucified Christ, and He has said, "He that is not with Me is against Me"; and "He that is not against us is on our part." I know that the meaning of these two statements has been questioned and thought difficult to reconcile, but it is very simple. If we are for Christ, we must be against the world; and if we are not against Him, the opposition of the world to Him is so strong that it will not have us. "Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light," and there can be no uniting of the two. You never see the world accept faithfulness to Christ. The human heart is enmity to Christ. Satan's great object is that Christians should suit their Christianity to the world. You will never get the world to take God as its portion. "As captain of the host of the LORD am I now come." Of course, it was the Lord Himself.

We have the same words here as at the burning bush to Moses, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy." In the spiritual conflict we have to carry on, holiness is as much a question as redemption; and when we come to have conflict, we must be as holy as we shall be when we are with Him. Thank God, redemption has done this. You will have the Lord with you. The One who carries on the warfare is the Holy One who has redeemed us, and the Lord's own strength is with us.

How far have we the testimony? Can we say, I am dead, and my life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3)? Is your thought and purpose to be at Gilgal or at Bochim? Is it your thought to go on in the knowledge of perfect redemption? to have everything of the flesh judged? and to have the Lord's strength with you for successful conflict?

"Prove all things." By what standard? My own comprehension, or God's revealed Word? "Hold fast that which is good."

## Way to Be Happy

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Dear young and older Christians, keep short accounts with God. The moment you find you have failed and sinned, do not trifle with it. It is a serious matter, because it interrupts your communion, and nothing can make up for that loss. Therefore, AT ONCE own up, and confess it to your Father, and receive His forgiveness (1 John 1:9). If it has been failure towards others, then do not hesitate to confess it to them, however humbling it may be. This will keep your conscience clear and in exercise, and will promote communion and increase your joy. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Pro. 28:13.

Read the Word. One great reason for the failure of many of the Lord's dear people is they do not read their Bible. They seem to have no appetite for it. A chapter, morning or evening, seems to be all they think needful. If they treated their bodies to such scant nourishment they would soon be in a state of collapse. The great thing is to cultivate an appetite for the Word. Read it much, and mingle your reading with much prayer for light and help, and for grace to make it good in your own soul. Psalm 1:2, 3,

Carry a pocket edition or portion constantly with you. Do not be ashamed to be seen reading it. Let it be your counselor. Wisdom is there, light is there, everything you need is there. It is the voice of God, which the Holy Spirit causes to be heard in the silence of your inmost soul to guide and counsel you. It is also the FOOD of the new life, therefore "as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may GROW thereby:" 1 Pet. 2:2.

"Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" your Bible, with much fervent prayer. Be not discouraged if you do not seem to get much at a time. You will get sufficient for your NEED, and you will always find you have sufficient to give to others if you have heart to do it. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." Pro. 11:24. So the more you give, the more you will get to give, and the greater will be your joy in giving.

Pray much. All men of God are men of much prayer. They live in the spirit of prayer, and find their delight in stealing away when occasion offers to talk with God. Prayer is the expression of the Christian's dependence on God. It is human weakness clinging to Almighty strength, linked up with external and tender love. Lean hard on Him.

Treat God as your Father. Exercise unbounded confidence in Him. Do not think anything too trivial or beneath His notice. "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." 1 Pet. 5:7. Blessed words! "ALL YOUR CARE-HE CARETH-FOR YOU."

Neglect not your private prayer. The moment you find yourself becoming lax in that, you may be sure there is something wrong. Pull yourself up at once and examine yourself, and see that the hindrance is removed, or a fall will be the result. Live not before others, but live before God.

Look for answers to prayer, and turn back and give thanks. Forget not to be grateful. Let these things become a constant habit of soul with you, and your happiness is assured. Phil. 4:6, 7.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Jude 24, 25.

## Ways of God With His Earthly People

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God's purpose concerning the children of Israel was to bring them out of the land of bondage and into the glorious land of Canaan (Exod. 3:8). It was only an eleven days' journey from the border of Egypt to the threshold of Canaan (Deut. 1:2), but the journey required forty years in the ways of God with His earthly people. There were lessons for them to learn which could only be learned in the wilderness, for it was there that their faith and obedience were specially tested.

Deut. 8 gives us the secret of the trials of the way. In it, God rehearses His ways with them, as the trek was coming to an end. He said to them, Thou shalt look back and "remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no." v. 2. There they proved what was in them-unfaithfulness, murmurings, turning back in heart to Egypt, and many other sore evils. God knew beforehand what was in their hearts, but they had to prove it by bitter experience.

Then there were other things they learned by the way. He suffered them to hunger so that He might feed them. They proved His bounteous store and the goodness of His heart. Not once in all the forty years did the manna fail in its appointed time. They proved that without a human commissary, they could be supplied with food and clothing. Their raiment did not wax old in all that time. Their health was also an object of His solicitude, for even their feet did not swell with all their walking. They were also to consider that His chastenings were for their profit, as when a man corrects his son.

After God thus recounts the lessons of the wilderness to them, He tells them of the beauty and bountifulness of the land into which they were about to enter. "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass" (copper). vv. 7-9. Could they wish for more? Unbelief kept them from the enjoyment of it years before, but what lessons they learned in the delay!

Later on, after they had taken possession of that "good land," and Joshua had divided the land unto them, he said, "There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." Josh. 21:45. Then as he was about to die, he called the elders of Israel and, in retrospection, said, "And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." Chap. 23:14. This was the realization of what faith knew in advance. How could anything fail of all the good which the Lord promised?

Yet, strange as it may seem, men have called in question the accuracy and correctness of God's description of the land, while the people to whom the promise was made (and who should know if anyone would) could affirm, after making it their own, that it was true in every respect. Perhaps no statement in the description of Deut. 8 has been more challenged than that they could dig copper out of its hills, and that it also contained iron ore. For centuries it was contended that neither copper nor iron was to be found in what is generally spoken of as Palestine. And this was in the face of another account in the Word of God. In 1 Kings 7:45, 46 we read: "And the pots, and the shovels, and the basins: and all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the Lord, were of bright brass. In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan."

Now, at long last, men are ready to concede that copper and iron are to be found there. Why? Because they are now ready to believe God's unerring Word? because faith is operating more now? Sadly, NO. But rather, because men have now found the copper and iron, while the Christian who believes God never troubled himself about the matter, for he knew that if God said it was so, verily it was.

Over twenty years ago, Professor Nelson Glueck, an archeologist of the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati, found a spot in the plain of Jordan which the Arabs called "Copper Ruin," so he excavated there and found the old smelters of Solomon, with some pottery from his time. There was copper-bearing ore nearby. Israeli geologists estimated that there was perhaps enough ore there to yield 300,000 tons of copper, and not far from Beer-sheba, millions of tons of low-grade iron ore, and some excellent quality ore. Thus another charge against the unerring Word of God has been proven false, but for all that, men will still go on in unbelief. What man needs is to be brought consciously before God where he will discover that he is a guilty sinner. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." When Peter saw the immense draft of fishes, he caught a glimpse of the glory of that Person who stood before him; then he fell down at His feet, saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Luke 5:8.

We are about to enter our own promised land, and God has set before us some vivid pictures of that wondrous scene of glory. The book of Revelation closes with the Bridegroom and the bride in the grand fruition of the hope set before us, and the Lamb as the blessed center of the heavenly Jerusalem.

"The Lamb is there, my soul-

There God Himself doth rest,

In love divine diffused through all

With Him supremely blest.

"God and the Lamb-'tis well

I know that source divine

Of joy and love no tongue can tell,

Yet know that all is mine.

"God and the Lamb shall there  
The light and temple be,  
And radiant hosts forever share  
The unveiled mystery."

May the brilliant luster of the coming glory so captivate our poor hearts that the things of this world will grow strangely dim while we earnestly long to be there.

Our experiences, in many ways, parallel theirs. We have been redeemed from the power of the enemy and are just waiting to be received into the heavenly land of which Canaan is but a type for us. God could have taken us to glory the day we were saved, for we were just as fit for it then as we ever will be, but we have lessons to learn while in transit through this world. Here we discover what poor, failing creatures we are in ourselves, and here we prove a Father's love and care. As the poet has so aptly expressed it:

"At every step afresh we prove  
How sure our heavenly Guide;  
The faithful and forbearing love  
That never turns aside.

"Thou weariest not, most gracious Lord,  
Though we may weary grow;  
In season, the sustaining word  
Thou giv'st our hearts to know."

We may well ask, Why should God, after telling of the coming glory into which we soon shall enter, have said, "And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." "Write: for these words are true and faithful." "These sayings are faithful and true." Rev. 19:9; 21:5; 22:6. Is it not because of the natural incredulity of man? and because of the slowness of our hearts to lay hold of these blessed truths? May God graciously grant to us to lay hold of these blessed coming realities in the affections of our hearts, and not in mere intellectual exactness. Our Lord has said, "Surely I come quickly." May our souls respond, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

## What Is Needed

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To be convinced of the most exalted truths, and even to enjoy them sincerely as truths, is a different thing from having the heart and the walk conformed to those truths here below. What is needed is to have the flesh-self-to be dead to the world. We may sincerely enjoy the truth as taught of God, and yet not have the flesh mortified or the heart in a state which is according to that truth practically down here. A heavenly, glorified Savior, who builds the assembly, implies that we will have His cross on earth. The flesh does not understand this. It will raise its Messiah to heaven, if you will, but to take its share of the humiliation that necessarily follows is not its idea of a glorified Messiah. The flesh must be mortified to take this place.... A Christian who is not dead to the world is but a stumbling stone to everyone who seeks to follow Christ.

## What Motivates Me?

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What is the great difference between the works of man, and Christ's works? Christ's were all connected with the Father. He always looked up to the Father with a heart attuned to the mind of God. The works we want as the people of God are works that take in the mind of God. If you want to know what is not "worthy of God," you should ask, Would the Son of God, if He were in the world, do it? Are works connected in your mind with the thought, I ought to do this because I belong to God? One who has life in Christ cannot bring forth fruit without its being received by God. It is most important to judge our works-to see whether they are works that are worthy of Christ-good works, not according to man's thoughts but according to the mind and thoughts of God, of such a character that we can say, "To me to live is Christ."

## What We See and Do Not See

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"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." Heb. 2:8, 9.

Here the Apostle states two things-what we do see, and what we do not see. On earth we do not yet see all things put under Christ; in heaven we see Him in power and glory. But in the intelligence and enjoyment of Christ in resurrection, faith sees the things of earth in their proper relationship to Him. Thus, and thus only, is our estimate of earthly things correct. Christ is not in earth's fairest scenes-the eye does not see Him there. The busy, active, crowded, and, it may be, gorgeous scene is empty. The glory of all nations, tongues, and peoples may be concentrated within the limits of the eye's vision; still, He is not there-all the glory fades before the eye of faith-the thought of His absence dims its brightest luster. But, unhappily, the eye of faith is sometimes dim. Sometimes Christians get so far away from Christ in heart that they become engrossed in the affairs of this life, and some even visit and enjoy the poor, empty, tinsel shows of this world's vanity. What could be more lamentable? They forget that death's stamp is deeply graven on everything this side of resurrection. But such actions clearly prove that the heart must have been away from Christ for some time. Such points are only reached step by step.

Even the natural man himself, although he knows nothing better, will own that such things are but the mere glitter of human vanity, and all vexation of spirit. But, in faith's estimation, everything is empty which Christ does not fill; and there, it has to confess, His hand is not seen in the whole assemblage of this world's glories. They are not yet under His hand; they are not yet the reflection of His glory. Hence, important questions arise. Whose hands are they under? Of whose glory are they the reflection? Faith's ready answer is-What is not of the Father is of the world-What is not of Christ is of Satan-What is not of the Spirit is of the flesh. "We see not yet all things put under Him."

We have only to wait "a little while" and "the world to come" shall be put in subjection under the Son of man. The expression "world to come" means the dispensation to come, or the millennial age. The Lord's name will then be excellent in all the earth, and His glory above the heavens (Psalm 8). But till then, the Christian must pass through the world as a stranger and a pilgrim. Our citizenship is in heaven; we cannot be citizens of both heaven and earth at the same time; once we were citizens of this world; now we are citizens of heaven, and ought to walk as such, though still here. We no longer belong to the old world out of which the Lord has called us, but to the new world into which He is leading us. What a good report the Spirit gives of the patriarchs on this point. "And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." Heb. 11:15, 16. What a noble testimony this is! "God is not ashamed to be called their God." Happy for the believer when the Lord is not ashamed of the place he takes in this world, or rather, outside of it!

Let us now turn for a moment to the second thing-what we do see. "We see Jesus." This is more important to us than the coming Millennium. He who bore our sins on the cross and suffered death for us is on the throne. What could be more wonderful to us? And what a proof to us that our sins are gone! His finished work ought to be the complete settlement of every question about our sins and should produce perfect rest of the heart, and the living spring of joyous worship. The first glimpse of Jesus crowned with glory and honor should separate the heart forever from the world which crucified Him, and, practically, unite it to heaven. It should change completely the thoughts and feelings by transferring them all to Him who is there. All we love is there; all our interests are there. That is the only way of becoming heavenly minded. We can never become so by trying; we must be occupied with a heavenly object; we must "see Jesus... crowned with glory

and honor."

True, most true, there are many still here whom we love, and many may be the tender ties and interests that we cherish; but everything is to be viewed in the light of the risen Jesus, and loved according to our connection with Him. But there are few things that we realize so little as our resurrection life.

What, then, do we see when we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor? Most surely, we see our place and image in Him there. How simple, yet how powerful! It is the proper action and power of faith. Christ is the divine expression, the perfect definition of every Christian's position in the presence of God. Oh, what a truth this is, and what a power it has when enjoyed in communion with the mind of heaven! The more we contemplate Him, the more intensely and fixedly the eye gazes on Him there, the more will our thoughts and feelings become heavenly. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3:18. This is the only way of becoming spiritually minded, the only path to true happiness, and the only ground of heavenly worship and of continual joy in the Lord.

## The Wilderness

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### Deut. 8

This chapter is the wilderness. The wilderness was not God's purpose. His purpose was to bring Israel from Egypt into Canaan; but they were brought into the wilderness to learn God's ways and government, that they might be exercised in faith and hope.

We, too, like Israel, have to learn in the wilderness what His ways with us are. In Exod. 3:4, 5, and 6:2-8, there is not a word about the wilderness, nor in Exod. 15. But as to the actual fact, the effect of bringing them out of Egypt was to bring them into the wilderness. The result of redemption is that in the wilderness we have to learn a great deal of God, and a great deal of ourselves. God has taken the believer up, and taken him out, and brought him to Himself. It is a complete deliverance from Egypt, and Canaan comes in as the purpose of God; but the wilderness is brought in between. The Christian cannot be in a difficulty that Christ is not sufficient for, nor on a long, dark road where he cannot find Him enough.

God's rest is where He can find perfect rest. We are not there yet, for do you think that God could find rest in this world? Have you even found rest in it? Did Christ rest here? Never. Though He was perfect love above all the evil, yet He could not rest. When the Jews charged Him with breaking the sabbath, in John 5, He says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." He works in grace now. Could love rest in the midst of woe? When everything is in accordance with His mind, when all the saints are perfectly conformed to Christ in glory, when Christ is glorified, when all His purpose is accomplished, then, as it is expressed in Zephaniah, God will rest in His love; He will see of the travail of His soul, and will be satisfied. That will be our rest, too. There will be nothing there to hinder our enjoyment of the love and glory of God. The full result of redemption will be accomplished, and God will rest because His love has no more to do to satisfy itself. As regards my conscience, it is at rest now; but the effect of that is to bring me not into rest, but where I can "labor... to enter into that rest."

God wants our hearts to be in tune with His now; He wants it to be so in our everyday life; therefore we find here, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart." Now, God says, your heart and Mine want to have a little talk together. I am going to show you what is in your heart, and to show you that I know it. He has brought us to Himself, and do you think if all that is in your heart is not brought out to Him, that it will be all right between you? Do you think the Father likes to have His heart different from His child's heart? He desires that the whole spirit, tone, and mind of His child should be suited to His. God passes us through the wilderness that we may learn this. No question of imputing sin to us, but of the dealings with the soul. You often see a true Christian full of uncertainty at his deathbed, because he has not had everything out with God day by day. Paul says, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men." The exercise was whether his heart was in everything attuned with God's heart. Now, Christ's heart was. He could say, "I do always those

things that please Him." Enoch walked with God; and he had this testimony, that he pleased God. He was walking in God's presence and the effect of it was that he pleased God. Are you walking with God? You cannot walk with Him without having everything out before Him. If you have anything on your conscience, you will not be happy. Every step we take we see Him better, the light gets clearer, and we find things to judge that we had not known must be judged before.

According to that which you know of the glory of God, are your hearts up to it? And supposing they are not, what is the effect of God's presence? Why, it has to set my conscience at work in order to bring me into communion: "My son, give Me thine heart." Now, are your hearts given to God out and out? "He humbled thee," brings us to our bearings; "suffered thee to hunger," causes us to live a life of faith; and "fed thee with manna" tests what satisfies our hearts. Do not our souls sometimes loath this light food? Is it not true sometimes that Christ does not satisfy this heart? "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." Of course, if your hearts are cleaving to something else, Christ will not satisfy you-"That He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Christ quoted this to the devil in the wilderness. He had no orders from God for the stones to be made bread, and He had taken on Him the form of a servant. His mind was inert until it had God's will to make it act. The word of the Lord abides forever; it comes from God; it is heavenly; and he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

Now mark another thing, that while He kept them in dependence on the word of God to guide them, He did not allow the nap of their coats to wear out; He thought of everything for them. "He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous"; not a moment that He does not think of them. Then comes another character of it: "As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." First of all, God passes us through circumstances which exercise us, feeding us all the time, and taking unfailing care of us. But then there is the positive discipline, the breaking of the will; and so we glory when we come into trials, because they work patience. God puts us in the wilderness to break our wills. Every day one sees God doing it; and people do not know where they are, and get questioning the love that does it. Look for a moment at Rom. 5 God loves us as He loves Christ, and we rejoice in hope of the glory where Christ has entered. For the past, there is not a sin left on me; the present, perfect divine favor; the future, the glory where Christ is. "And not only so." When He has gone through the whole thing, that is not all. I am not only rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God, but I am glorying in tribulations also, because God is not withdrawing His eyes from me in them. Then "the hope" is so much the brighter; for I say, Ah! my rest is not here, that is clear. And the hope makes not ashamed, because I have the key to it all in the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. It is God's ways and work to make us know ourselves. There can be no question of the love, because it gives the key to it all. How has He proved His love? Why, it goes on to that in the next verse: "Christ died for the ungodly." Then He says again, "And not only so." What? "But we joy in God"; not merely joying in salvation, in His favor, and the like, but in God. I have learned to know myself, all my forgetfulness of God; but in this very judgment of self I have learned to joy in God. It is to bring the heart into tune with God that He has to break it down and humble it; but this being in tune (that settled consciousness of association with God) is never attained until these ways and works of His have got to the bottom of self. It is not that we shall not have to contend with it afterward, but its back is broken, and I have no trust in myself.

The natural man says, "Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" But at the end of Psalm 139 he says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart." As to the knowledge that you have of divine things, is your heart in tune with them? Could you say, "Search me, O God"? It is a painful process sometimes. What was wrong in Job was that he was getting pleased with himself. He had said, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me." He learned to say, "Now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself." As I experience self, I abhor myself; "Lead me in the way everlasting." Beloved friends, there is a way everlasting, and it is in that way everlasting that God comes and searches out the heart. Are you content to have every motive searched out? It must be so if our communion with God and joy in Him are to be full and uninterrupted.

We get these three things: the proving of our hearts, the chastening, and the conflict with Satan (Deut. 8:15, 16), "to do thee good at thy latter end." If your souls want to walk in fellowship and peace with God, you must learn it in that wilderness where you find there is no good in you, but you learn to know Him in the perfection of that love. It is present joy and fellowship with God; and if we go on with it, if self has been learned, when death comes, then it is just, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord"; and it is the brightest moment in the life. Some have to learn to abhor self upon the deathbed; hence much exercise. You have to go through all these exercises of heart, which are self-knowledge. It is not the heart going back to see whether God has redeemed me or not, but it is God getting our hearts, as redeemed ones, to joy in Him. "Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee." "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness." If you want to walk and glorify God in fellowship with the Father and the Son, then you must go through this, having the conscience exercised to be "void of offense" that you may walk with God. As to the affections of the heart, there may be Christ at the bottom, and a walk which no one can blame at the top. But between these two is another—all the thoughts and intents of the heart, what I practically am in my thoughts and inner life. You must have your soul practically exercised; you must learn God's ways with you, that you may be in tune with Him.

The Lord give us to know more of a walk with God, that we may have the kind of peace that Christ had in His walk down here—that peace of heart that the soul knows in walking with God, in fellowship with the Father and the Son. The Lord give you to know what it is to have everything in your heart open before God.

## The Word and the Spirit

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One of the greatest errors today is the practical separation of the written Word of God from the teaching of the Spirit of God. This error is so common and so serious, it is fatal to true spiritual mindedness, and demands our constant care and watchfulness.

The insubjection of the mind of man to God and his confidence in his own competency to deal with the truth have so largely set aside the habit of dependence on the divinely-given power of the Holy Spirit that these "last days" in which we live are clearly marked by "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:5).

No doubt man has natural ability for understanding the things of earth and for adapting them to his own advantage, but we are told that "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" and that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God... neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2.) These verses clearly show that only by the Spirit of God can we know, receive, discern, or we may add also communicate "the things of God."

It is easy to understand that Satan would always seek to set aside, if possible, whatever may be the present work of God on the earth. When it was a question of owning the only true God as Jehovah, then Satan brought in idolatry, for which God had to send His people into captivity. The Holy Spirit has come to bear witness to Christ and His finished work during His absence in glory, and yet man vainly asserts his ability to receive, discern, and minister the things of God without dependence on the Spirit. Therefore, the coming down from heaven of the Holy Spirit to abide with us forever consequent upon Jesus being glorified, which is the great characteristic of Christianity, is not owned but practically set aside.

It is not that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is not held in some measure, but His present offices are so little regarded that He is both grieved and quenched. It is this practical acquaintance with Him as the Teacher and Guide into all truth, the Glorifier and Testifier of the Son through the written Word, to which we now refer. Nor have we a doubt that the chief reason why His power is not more known publicly and corporately is because He is not better known by us personally and privately.

Some, however, have gone to the other extreme of professing to have the guidance of the Spirit apart from the Word and have fallen into ways of the most extravagant folly and error. But to have "an ear to hear" what God says in His Word in conscious dependence on the teaching and guidance of His Spirit is clearly what Scripture enjoins. To separate the Word and the Spirit is fatal to a true and happy apprehension of the mind and will of God.

All through Scripture, not only in type but in the plainest possible instruction, we find the two so joined together that we "hear what the Spirit saith" when we hearken to "the Word of God" (see Rev. 2 and 3).

In the very opening of the sacred writings we have the Word and the Spirit. God spoke, and the Spirit of God moved (Gen. 1). Then, for many generations the word of the Lord by Moses and the prophets was both written and spoken by the Spirit for "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21).

The tabernacle and its furniture, vessels, coverings, and priestly vestments with their precious stones so typical of Christ were made by Bezaleel when "filled... with the spirit of God," according to the word of Moses, which he had received from Jehovah who showed him the pattern in the mount (Exod. 31:3).

During the wilderness journey the manna in the morning fed them while the springing water from the rock which had been smitten satisfied their thirst (Exod. 16 and 17). All through, God dwelt among them and ministered His word to them, and neglecting to hearken to His word was soon followed by forgetting God. In the land as God's glory filled the house, the ministry of His word by prophets was given from time to time.

Nor can we fail to notice what a careful return there was to acting on the word "as it is written" when the gracious revival of faithfulness to Jehovah occurred in those who came back from the captivity while the prophet assured them that God would be faithful to His word and that His Spirit was with them as when they came out of Egypt (Hag. 2:5).

It is interesting, too, to observe that the faithful remnant in Jerusalem who looked for redemption before our Lord came were clearly occupied with the word of God and under a great power of the Holy Spirit. Their fervent utterances according to Scripture show this. And here as throughout Scripture we find that those who were occupied with the Word and in the path of the Spirit were taken up with Him of whom the Word and Spirit so abundantly testify.

In Simeon's case he not only looked for the Redeemer according to the written testimony of the prophets, but it was revealed to him by the Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. We see him led "by the Spirit into the temple" where the Savior was. He recognized Him at once, took Him up in his arms, and bowed in worship to Jehovah. The utterance of the heart of this Spirit-led servant of Jehovah was, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word" (Luke 2). We cannot contemplate such a scene or ponder the statements recorded of Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, and Anna, without noticing how frequently the written Word was on their lips, while at the same time it was the power of the Holy Spirit upon them which produced such fervent utterances.

How constantly Scripture presents the Word and Spirit in near connection! When the Holy Spirit came down as recorded in the second chapter of Acts we read that those who were filled with the Spirit not only declared with intense earnestness to those around the wonderful works of God, but also "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." Again, in the fourth chapter we are told, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness"; and often after this it is said they were led of the Spirit, the Word of the Lord was published by them.

We need scarcely remind the Christian reader that in our Lord Himself we have the perfect Exemplar of One always being led by the Spirit, walking in the truth, and contending for the divine authority of the written Word. He whom God the Father sealed, on whom the Spirit came down, and in whom He took up His abode was wont to say, "It is written," and put His adversaries to

silence by a sentence of Holy Scripture.

When speaking of the new birth, He so connected the Word and the Spirit that He said, "Except a man be born of water [the Word; see 1 Pet. 1:23], and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3).

As we have seen, the testimony of the apostles both in their oral ministry as recorded in the Acts and their written ministry in the epistles was always to the divine certainty of the Word. They often referred to the personal actings, indwelling, anointing, and operations of the Holy Spirit while they themselves were taught, led, and filled with the Spirit and they were quoting constantly from the written Word.

In the book of Revelation, John is said to be "in the Spirit," in order to enter into the divinely given lines of truth which were communicated to him. And in the last page of the inspired volume we have the Spirit and the bride saying, "Come" to the Lord Jesus while the most solemn warnings are given against adding to or taking from "the words of the book of this prophecy."

Finally, we should not overlook the precious and soul-stirring fact that there is a third truth almost always connected with those testimonies to the actings together of the Word and the Spirit. It is their ministry of Christ.

For example, the Word and the Spirit present to our hearts the first man, Adam, as figure of the Christ that was to come, His death, resurrection, and the presentation of His bride.

In the vast variety of types and shadows which God has given us by Moses, we receive through the Spirit precious instruction as to the Person, sacrifice, and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor were prophets and the writers of the Psalms failing in testifying of Christ, for our Lord after His resurrection from among the dead said, "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me." Luke 24:44.

In the Acts it is said of those who were filled with the Holy Spirit not only that "They spake the Word of God with boldness," but it is added, "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." Acts 4:31, 33. Stephen, too, full of the Holy Spirit went through the Scriptures in addressing his angry hearers and died under their wicked hands.

In all the writings of the apostles we find them unable to write many verses, whatever the subject, without referring to the personal, moral, or official glories of Christ, or the glory of His path of humiliation, or His perfections either toward God or for us.

In one way or another throughout the Word, Christ is presented to us by the Spirit. This surely is a threefold cord which cannot easily be broken. May we mark it well and hold it fast.

Now, what are we to gather from what Scripture teaches us as to the Word and the Spirit? Among other lessons we must learn that it is the power of the Spirit of God that brings the Word of God home to our hearts, and reveals and ministers to us the deep things of God. When the Spirit acts by the Word in us, it will be connected with the ministry of Christ and produce in us conduct according to Him. If we in self-sufficiency allow the intellect without the Spirit to work on the Word of God, we may be puffed up with knowledge, and manifest a low walk while professing to hold the highest doctrines. But when we are occupied with the Word as subject to its divine authority in

dependence on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, then shall we care not only for one or two particular lines of truth but for all it teaches. There will be consistency in every path in which we are called to walk. We shall heed the Lord's mind as to our relation to Him in the assembly, as to our personal conduct and private walk, and shall have a conscience as to honoring God in our family relationships and duties.

When a believer is not consistent as to general conduct, it may, we believe, be often traced to the practical separation of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. If it is our habit to pray over the Scriptures and to ponder them in dependence on the Holy Spirit, then they become food for our souls. How then is it possible that our conversation and written communications should be without the ministry of Christ?

May the scriptures which we have looked at as to the Word of God and the Spirit of God and connected as we have seen with the ministry of Christ so exercise our hearts and consciences as to give us fresh delight in turning prayerfully and humbly to the written Word and in looking for the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

## Effects of the Word

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There is a difference between getting into the light and into the spirit of the Word. Much depends on the mode of dealing with it. If I make it my study, taking either a subject in it or a portion of it, and deal with such carefully and laboriously, I shall get into the light of it. If I make it my meditation, not so much handling a given portion of it, but in a freer style letting the soul be borne onward by it, I shall get into the spirit of it. Of course I speak of secondary influences, remembering the place of the unction of the Holy Ghost.

Our perfection as disciples should be both to dwell in its light and breathe its spirit, to bear away in our hearts both the one and the other. But the disciple in whom the spirit of the Word prevails will be a happier disciple himself, and generally more grateful to others, than he in whom the light of it is principal.

Peter invites us to that word which ministers such light or knowledge as prophets searched into and angels desired. But he tells us how to pursue this high and blessed study-by laying aside moral evils-as having tasted the grace of Christ-as having fellowship with the disallowed stone-or exercising ourselves in worship of a high order. (1 Pet. 1:10-12; 2:1-10.)

## Be Ye Separate

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We come out from among the worldly in order to enter into the relationship of sons and daughters to the Almighty God; otherwise we cannot possibly realize this relationship. God will not have worldlings in relation with Himself as sons and daughters; they have not entered into this position with regard to Him.

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