

CRUMBS FOR THE LORD'S LITTLE ONES VOLUME 5

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A collection of articles and writings by H.H. Snell from Crumbs for the Lord's Little Ones Volume 5, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

56 Chapters

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Crumbs for the Lord's Little Ones Volume 5

2 Sam. 6:21

IT is a marvelous dignity to be brought to stand consciously in the presence of God, without any fear of judgment, or even of rebuke. Yet such is the standing into which the believer in Christ Jesus is brought, "according to the riches of God's grace," and "the good pleasure of His will." The thought of such a standing brings forth from the heart of the Apostle that burst of thanksgiving ■ "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." We know the infinite complacency with which the Father rested, and ever rests in His beloved Son. But He rests in complacency also in the result of that work which His Son finished on the cross. There He can contemplate what His own grace has effected, "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood.... according to the riches of His grace." We, indeed, are "slow of heart" to enter into the revealed thoughts of God respecting our own standing in and through Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has suffered once for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God; but being brought there, we stand before God in Him. If our standing be in Him, as well as through Him, how can God see us there otherwise than according to the thoughts of His heart? "And you," says the Apostle, writing to the believers at Colosse, "that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled, in the body of His flesh, through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in His sight." Of old, it was written of Christ as the Wisdom of God, "When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; when He appointed the foundations of the earth; then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." (Prov. 8:29, 30.) And has not God His delight too in that which is accepted in Him? And when the Lord Jesus comes to be glorified in His saints, then the world will know that the Father hath loved them, even as He has loved Jesus Himself. (John 17:22, 23.) It is one of the most precious blessings of the believer to know the manner of love wherewith he is loved of God. "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us;" and such is its perfection, that it has rested in nothing short of making us to be in Christ before God, even while we are in this world, as Christ is in the presence of God in heaven. This is the perfect love which casts out fear. (1 John 4:16-19.) One grand characteristic of Apostolical teaching is the anxious endeavor to maintain, in the souls of the saints, the consciousness, that, by the work of Christ they are brought into God's presence, as the object of God's delight. In the presence of God, they are in the region of love, but of light also. The Lord's presence is the large and wealthy place, the place of fullness of joy, but the place of holiness also. If the souls of the saints are kept in conscious nearness to God, then will they walk before Him; but the more they recede in spirit from that nearness, the more will their walk be before men. And the self-exercised Christian knows experimentally the difference between walking in the presence of God, and walking before men. When we are walking before men, we are scrupulously exact in answering what they expect from us, and are satisfied if we please men; but

there is a freedom when we are walking before God, because we are not seeking to please men, but God that searcheth the heart. When we are seeking to please men, we are prone to judge others, but when we are before the Lord, we can only judge ourselves. It is to the joy of the heart of the Apostle, that he could thank God on the behalf of the Thessalonians, “for their work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.”

A passage in the history of David may illustrate the importance of being practically before the Lord. When David heard that the Lord had blessed the house of Obed-edom, “because of the ark of the Lord, David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness..... And David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.” He had stript himself of his royal apparel, as unseemly for him to appear in before the Lord. There was no commandment for him to do this, but the presence of Him before whom he was, instinctively taught David, that it was not the place for him to make a show of the glory which the Lord had given him, when he was before” the ark of the Lord of the whole earth.” For David to have been prominent on such an occasion, would have been entirely out of place. “Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou, and the ark of Thy strength.” (Ps. 132.; Num. 10) So it ever must be. The sense of being in the presence of the Lord, and “beholding His glory,” will instinctively lead the saints to “cast their crowns before Him.” And even now the realized sense of being in the Lord’s presence, makes us feel the becomingness of the linen ephod, even of being “clothed with humility.” King David in the linen ephod, according to the fleshly judgment of Michel, is demeaning himself as one of “the vain fellows;” for human reasoning is entirely at fault in this respect; it cannot connect “access with confidence” into God’s presence, upon the assured ground of being accepted in the Beloved, with the greatest possible self-abasement. David, before the Lord, must needs cast away every thought of self-consequence, being lost in the admiration of that grace which had preferred the ruddy shepherd-lad before all the goodliness of Saul, and therefore could easily bear the rude taunt of Michel; true type is she of that religion which vaunteth itself, and utters hard speeches against the humiliating confession of those, who, before God, can only see their sin and vileness. “And David said unto Michal, It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel; therefore will I play before the Lord; and I will yet be more vile than this, and will be base in mine own sight.”

But David, even as others, lost in some measure the sense of the happy place of being before the Lord. “The king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies.” How natural to be occupied with all these benefits, and to look now “on the house of cedar,” in which he dwelt, and to compare his own stately dwelling, with the dwelling-place of the ark of God, “within curtains.” How ready the thought, what shall I do for the Lord? and it requires that chastened state of soul, which being before the Lord alone can maintain, not to let such a thought supersede or dim the thought of what the Lord has done for us. The state of David’s heart, when he sat in his own house, was very different from what it was when he was before the Lord. It was well that it was in David’s heart to build an house unto the name of the Lord, (1 Kings 8:18,) but God would teach His servant something more blessed than this, even that He Himself would build David an house. (2 Sam. 7:11, 16.) This was the lesson which David needed to learn, and which, indeed, we all need to learn, before our service to the Lord can be healthy to our own souls. The last words of David have respect to this (2 Sam. 23:1-5); and under the “strong hand” of God’s

teaching and instruction, we each of us have to learn how very secondary is that which has called forth our most hearty energy in the service of the Lord, (and well is it that it has been, and is in our hearts to serve Him,) to that "covenant, ordered in all things and sure," by which God secures us. But see David again before the Lord. After Nathan had rehearsed to him all God's goodness and grace, with the blessed addition, "Also the Lord telleth thee that He will make thee an house." "Then went in king David and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in Thy sight, O Lord God; but Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?"

It is not the manner of man; for man has always the idolatrous thought in his heart, that God is to be served by men's hands, as though He needed something. It requires some training in the school of Christ to keep down this thought. The saint of God is only, and always a recipient, and if he does anything for God, it is of the ability which God Himself giveth. And blessedly did David learn this truth, and enunciate it at the close of his career. "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee and of Thine own have we given Thee." (1 Chron. 29:14.)

Blessed close of an eventful career, when giving most liberally from his "affection to the house of his God," which his eyes never saw, to lose the sense of his own liberality in the more overwhelming sense of the grace of God. But ere reaching that close, David had learned a most humbling and bitter lesson under the strong hand of God. Disgrace in his own eyes, and in the sight of others, exile from his own city, and the unnatural rebellion of his own son, followed the fearful sins of adultery and murder, as the chastening of God for David's sin, when even that sin had been forgiven, in order that God might do him good in his latter end. But was not David's fall into these foul sins preceded by David's having got away from the presence of the Lord? Then it was David tarried at Jerusalem, while the host of Israel and the ark were in tents, and encamped in the open field. (2 Sam. 11:11.) David, who could not rest till the ark was brought to Jerusalem, is now content to be far from it. He had willingly lost the opportunity of being before the Lord, preferring ease to conflict. And are we ever in greater danger than when we are "at ease," ceasing to watch and to pray, as if we were secure from all temptation? "The lust of the eye" leads David first to commit adultery, then to practice deceit, and failing in that, to commit murder; and the consequence was that he was hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and gave speedy evidence of the distance into which he had departed from God, by his keen perception of the wrong of others. How often does righteous indignation burst forth from the heart which is unjudged before God. "David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." (2 Sam. 12:5, 6.) We have to watch in ourselves the motives even of apparent honest indignation, lest in passing sentence on another, we, as David did, pass sentence on ourselves. There is One who "in righteousness doth judge and make war." And how often, when before Him, do we find righteous indignation against others turned against ourselves, the effect of "godly sorrow." (2 Cor. 7:11.) David confesses his sin, and his sin is pardoned; but nothing will satisfy David short of conscious nearness to God, "the restoration of the joy of His salvation." (Psa. 51:12.) And by God's grace abounding over David's sin, he was brought into that nearness to God which he craved, or even into deeper

consciousness of being before the Lord, than ever he had known before. In the fifty-first Psalm, we find David again before the Lord, and so before Him, that David could only see Him, and himself as in His sight. He saw himself before God, and his sin before himself; and how was the sense of his sin aggravated by seeing it in the light of God's presence. "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight, that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest." It may be that David was never so truly before the Lord, as on this occasion. When he went in solemn yet joyous procession before the ark of the Lord, or when he sat before the Lord after the Lord Himself had rehearsed to him His own gracious dealings with him, there was room for the entrance in of some natural, yet allowable, elements of human joy. But now there was no room for such kind of joy; nothing could be joy to David, till he knew again the joy of God's salvation. And this could only be known under the deep and searching touch of Him before "whom all things are naked and open." And not till now had David been laid naked and bare before his own eyes. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." We accept the doctrine of original sin, but it is only before God that we learn what it really is to be born a sinner. He who will "judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ in that day," judges those secrets now, in those who are exercised before Him, and makes them learn, that God "desires truth in the inward parts;" and that there has been inward declension from Him before we have been suffered to fall grievously. It may be comparatively easy to gather sufficient wisdom by observation, and experience, and imitation, to walk in a measure blameless before men. But it is "in the hidden part that God makes us to know wisdom," and often, as in David's case, this wisdom is dearly purchased by some sad and grievous failure on our part. What depth of wisdom did David learn before the Lord, to enable him to say, "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt-offering."

All outward demonstrations of penitence, to which one at a distance from God would have recourse, are seen to be vain by him who stands before God in confession of sin. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise!" But how despicable in the eyes of men is this sacrifice of God. It is in the hidden part that this wisdom is learned of what, under special circumstances, is pleasing to God. David, before the Lord, had learned this so deeply, that he submissively bows his head under the unrighteous cursing of Shimei, and accepts it as part of God's discipline on himself. (2 Sam. 16:5-11.) And he knew how to check the indignation of Abishai, who would have resented this insult on David; for nothing, however keenly felt, and unjust in itself, at the hand of man, will be regarded by one confessing his sin before God apart from the righteous discipline of God. Happy wisdom, only to be learned in one school, to be able to overlook the unrighteousness of man, by so deeply perceiving the righteousness of God. How abject and mean would all that passed between David and God appear in the eyes of men. Man would have looked at David's outrage and injury against Uriah, and punished him accordingly; and in his honest indignation against such grievous sin, would have overlooked his own sinfulness. David, for many a long year subsequently, was made to know in his own exile, and the unnatural rebellion of his son against himself, that it was indeed an evil and bitter thing to depart from God as he had departed. But it was not this that broke his spirit and gave him the contrite heart, and taught him to know in his inward part that this was the sacrifice of God. The broken heart and contrite spirit had been produced by seeing sin in God's sight in all its hatefulness and blackness, and in seeing God's grace abounding over it. We are never Antinomians before God. To learn before Him that where sin has abounded, grace has

superabounded, is indeed wisdom. And how growingly precious is the cross of Christ to him who is consciously brought by it into God's presence. He learns his need of it to maintain him in God's presence, as well as to bring him into it. It is only under the shelter of the cross that he can have fellowship with God, who is light, and at the same time bear to see what sin is in the light of His presence. And we may lay it down as an axiom, that conscious and realized nearness to God must necessarily be accompanied with deep self-abasement. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." "Though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off." May we know in our hidden part that wisdom, that the walk answering to the high and heavenly calling wherewith we are called, must be "with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love!"

"Now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

The Queen of Sheba

THIS “elect lady” stands in that line of loved and honored women who now and again appear, from the beginning to the end, in the varied, interesting, and wonderful actions recorded in the book of God.

We shall find in what is said of her, both moral and typical or prophetic instruction, so that both our souls may be stirred and our minds instructed by this same page of history. But that is commonly, to be sure, the case in the records which God has given us.

She dwelt in the south, in the uttermost parts of the earth. She never had heard, we may presume, the voice of a prophet, nor ever saw the oracles of God. She had no advantages from education, but, in the fullest sense, we may suppose, was a stranger to the God of Israel. All, if I may so speak, which her soul had to deal with, or her heart to trade upon, was a slender stock indeed. She had heard of the fame of Solomon; in her own land she had heard of his acts and his wisdom. This was all she had. But with this slender provision, she took a long and untried journey.

There is something admirable in this. The faculty within, the sense of the soul, is always proved by a test of this kind. For she really loved wisdom, and, therefore, a slight report about it moves her. According to a common saying, “A word to the wise is sufficient”■or, as the proverb has it, “A reproof entereth more into a wise man, than a hundred stripes into a fool.” (Prow. 17:10.) And this is the admirable feature in her character which the Lord notices in Luke—a passage of great value to us, and which I desire to dwell on for a little while. (Luke 11:29-36.) The Pharisees had asked a sign. This was sad indeed, and the sure witness of a very bad state of mind. The Lord “sighed deeply in His spirit” when He listened to this. (Mark 8:12.) But He not only did that, but with this mind in the Pharisees He immediately contrasts the mind that was in the Queen of Sheba. For she was such a wise one as found sufficient in a word, while they were starving in a land of plenty, and asking for light in the presence of the very Father of lights, for signs in the midst of the wonders of the hand of Jesus.

Here was the contrast. In this the excellence of this “elect lady” eminently appears. She was using what she had, though it was but little. They were reproaching the Lord, as though He had not given them anything, while they were in the midst of great things, which they saw and heard continually in Him and from Him. Here was the mighty moral distance between the two. The candle which had been shining on her table was but a taper, but the eye of her body was so single that it gave light enough to guide her; while their table was illuminated with the most brilliant lamps, but the eye of their body being evil, the light there was darkness, and they groped though in the noon-day.

And all depends on this. There is no lack in the testimony. The candle has been set in a candlestick. It needs nothing either in size, or height, or brilliancy. Moses and the Prophets are enough, and one raised from the dead could not add value or strength to them. The signs of the times of Jesus, the witnesses of His mission, are as sure and certain as the ordinances of the skies. But the question is, In what state is the faculty of the man? In what condition is the eye of

the body? If that be single, "the whole shall be full of light," the whole region through which we move, every word of God, every doing of God, every commend He utters, every promise He makes, the whole of the region in which faith places us, will be light-some, if but the eye be single. All in Jesus, and around Jesus, will be splendid then. (Luke 11:36.) The mischief lies in ourselves, if it lie any where. The candle shines, but have we the opened and perfect eye?

The Queen of Sheba had it blessedly. And this was shown, as it always is, by her dealing with a little. Her heart was really and deeply in love with the good thing, and then she traded upon a slender stock, as I said. And this is the feature in her character which draws the admiration of the Lord, and by which she condemns the Pharisees.

In this we receive a very important lesson; for we may well desire for ourselves to have that same high and ready value for everything of God. This is the best. To have what is good is better than to know much about it. Better to desire wisdom than to have gathered a large store of knowledge or information.

This moral of the history was drawn full by the mind of Christ. And there is fitness in that. For the moral is always the deepest thing, though there may be, as in this case, the three things, ■the event or history itself, the type, and the moral. The moral lies the deepest, and it was the glory of the mind of Christ to present that feature to us, beautifully as He has.

The tale itself is in 1 Kings 10, and 2 Chron. 9 There, at the outset, she appears as one that traded in wisdom. She bartered for it gold, and incense, and precious stones: a true disciple, in the spirit of her mind, of Prov. 3:14.

And the Lord will not be her debtor. He gives her far more than she had bargained for. And in all this, she had the like spirit of faith with this very king Solomon himself, and the Lord by Solomon dealt with her as He had dealt with that king himself. (2 Chron. 1:10-12.) Solomon gives her more instruction than mere answers to the questions she brought with her, and also such a sight of his royal and priestly glories, such an inspection of all the magnificence of his palace, and his sanctuary, that her spirit is filled. She is satiated. "There was no more spirit in her." And blessed was she that thirsted and hungered, for she was filled-blessed, when, as in this case, the hunger and the thirst are such, that God can own and answer. The hunger and the thirst that can seek His presence shall surely never remain unfed.

Such was this Gentile in the days of king Solomon. As in the days of the true Solomon, the nations again shall go up to the same city with the same thirst, saying one to another, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, for He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths."

“In Thy Presence is Fullness of Joy.”

“These things write we unto you that your joy may be full.”

IT is Thy presence, O my God!

Which cheers my soul from day to day,

Helps me pursue my upward course,

And happily go on my way.

It is not place, it is not friend,

It is not pleasure sweet, nor gain,

My longing heart can satisfy,

Or mitigate its bitter pain.

Nor is it in the power of ill

To take those blessings from the heart,

To rob me of that peace within,

Which Thy blest presence doth impart.

(And yet, my God, for friendships dear,

And every kindness I receive,

I thank Thee; and in them would learn

‘Tis Thou, and Thou alone, canst give.

I thank Thee, too, when friendships fail,

That I can hear what Thou dost say,

And, by a deeper lesson learn,

‘Tis Thou alone canst take away.)

In near companionship divine,

Both with the Father and the Son,

My joy is full, my cup runs o’er,

My heaven on earth is e’en begun.

My inmost soul may then repose

In Thee, my Saviour and my God;
Who art to me, my Life, my Light,
My only source of every good.

Matt. 6:1-8

IT is enough for him who walks with God to know that God rewardeth those who diligently seek Him. To such the praise of men is of no account. It was everything to the Pharisee and hypocrite to be seen of men. They took no higher ground than this in all their religious performances, which have their miserable reward. The Lord's tempters were obliged to say that He cared for no man, nor regarded the person of men. Of Himself He could say, "I receive not honor from men." Such an One, therefore, could well say, "How can ye believe which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor which cometh from God only?" "Tell no man," was the constant word of Jesus to those whom He healed and blessed. He spoke not of Himself, nor did He desire others to do so either. But His fame could not be hid. When the people would make Him king, He withdrew to the mountain apart, that He might, in the secret of His Father's presence, enjoy all the honor He sought. When the Father glorified Him on the holy mount, still His word was, "tell no man." In a word, "He made Himself of no reputation." This was the Father's business, and not His.

His brethren did not understand such secrecy, when they thus addressed Him, "Depart hence, and go into Judea, that Thy disciples also may see the works that Thou doest. For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, show Thyself to the world."

Jesus did go up, but not with His vain-counseling brethren, nor yet openly, but "as it were in secret;" and only then when His time of service came. How important it is before any service is entered upon, that the soul should first find the refreshing of the Father's presence, then would service be with power and unction. How important to come out of one's sacred hiding-place before we have to do with others. Moses came down full of glory, though "he wist it not," but others felt the power.

The earliest ministry of Christ was to expose the vain glory, and trumpet-sounding publicity of the Pharisee. So strictly private would the Lord have our alms to be, that He warns us against letting the left, hand know what the right hand doeth. Prayer is to be in the secret of the closet; fasting is to be with anointed head and washed face, so as not to appear to men to fast.

All this is hard work for the vanity of our hearts, that, butterfly-like, would ever float upon the sunbeam of human admiration.

He who walks with God has the constant sunshine of His presence; to him gifts shall flow in their needed measure. No work that is done to God shall be in vain. True love seeks not its own praise, but the weal of its object. It condescends not to make its gift a tribute to self. "Ye have done it unto Me" is its motive, and with such sacrifices God is well pleased. The widow's mite and Nathaniel's prayer, are those precious fruits of the Spirit, which are as incense before the Father; whilst all these noisy and ostentatious exhibitions of self are as though we had offered strange incense in His courts.

Much of the weakness attending on the saints in these days may be traced to the spirit of the Pharisee, through lack of private self-examination, and faithful dealing with one's self in secret, beneath the eye of God. Much more might be said, but I desire briefly to suggest these few thoughts to the attention of brethren, and conclude with this beautiful and appropriate scripture, which opens out what God delights in (Is. 58:7, 8, 10): "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.... Then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day."

No. 1

“Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3.)

IT is most blessed to consider that we are not only, by grace, delivered from the wrath to come, but called unto the fellowship of the Son of God. To have forgiveness of sins is amazing grace, but to be empowered, by the quickening, regeneration, and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, to walk with God now, is an unutterably gracious privilege.

In our unregenerate state, our thoughts, and ways are unlike God’s thoughts and ways. (Isa. 55:8.) “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” “The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” When, however, by the grace of God, we are born again, sealed, anointed, and enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and our consciences purged by the blood of Christ, according to the eternal purpose and choice of God the Father, we are made “partakers of the Divine nature,” and have an understanding given us, whereby we are able to think and act, in measure, according to the wisdom and grace of the only wise God.

Blessed be God, “the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.” God is light. God is love. God was manifested in the flesh. The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father hath declared Him. The One glorious, self-existent, incomprehensible Jehovah—the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy—is now known as three in Persons, yet but One in Godhead. “There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are One. (1 John 5:7.) God hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. By the ministry of the Holy Ghost, we see the Father in Christ, and know that Christ is the image of the invisible God; and, in the Lord’s sufferings and death, when it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him, when the sword of the Lord of Hosts smote the Man that was His fellow, when His soul was made an offering for sin, we learn the wonderful secrets of the heart of Him who is “a just God and a Saviour.” The blood of Immanuel’s cross speaks peace; the Holy Ghost sheds abroad the wondrous love of God in our hearts, by testifying to our souls, that the Son glorified the Father, in dying for our sins.

Oh! such love, my soul still ponder,—

Love so great, so rich, so free;

Say, whilst lost in holy wonder,

Why, O Lord, such love to me?

Hallelujah!

Grace shall reign eternally!

Dwelling thus in the knowledge of the living and true God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—our souls are happy, for we find everything to inspire us with confidence. We dwell in love, because we dwell

in God; for God is love.

The Priests and Levites, the Leper and the Nazarite

THE believer, in a certain sense, finds in himself the antitype of Priest, Levite, Leper, and Nazarite; consequently, he may gain much profit in the consideration of the rites and ceremonies observed in the consecration, cleansing, and separation of these.

First, in the consecration of the Priests, (Ex. 29; Lev. 8, 9) this ceremony occupied a period of eight days, i.e. of seven and one. Seven days they dwelled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, preparatory to the glories of the eighth day. This tells us of the seven days of time, and of the eighth, or resurrection day. In the former we now are; the latter, we look for. Peculiar privileges (Num. 18), and the best of everything, were the Priests. Their dress and food, as well as their duties were different from those of the congregation. The seven days of time are now going on. As during that period which typified them, the Priests, the Sons of Aaron, were washed, clothed, anointed, and sprinkled with blood and oil, and thus sanctified; so, now, the children of God are washed by the washing of regeneration, clothed with the righteousness of God, anointed by the Spirit of God, sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and sanctified.

These are the great and all-important concerns of time—matters worthy of our deepest interest; but the eighth day is nigh at hand, when the glory will appear. (Lev. 9:23.) And yet, inasmuch as we are at present in the region of faith, and have “boldness to enter into the holiest,” we may say that glory is already begun. (John 17:22.) By faith, risen with Christ, we may say that we are in the eighth day. Many very important details of the order of ceremonies will be seen in Lev. 8, such as the consecration of Aaron first, then that of Aaron and his sons, thus pointing out to us the work of the Lord Jesus, the “Great High Priest,” and the union of His people with Him as Priests. Aaron and his sons were washed; Aaron was clothed, and anointed with oil, himself first; afterward, his sons were clothed, and the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the ram of consecration offered; then Aaron first, and afterward his sons, were sprinkled with some of the blood of the ram of consecration, part of it being put upon their right ears, thumbs, and toes; then were they sprinkled with the anointing oil, themselves and their garments. Thus sanctified, they fed upon the flesh and the bread of consecrations, (1 Cor. 9:13,) at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation; and, as Priests, were fitted for the services of the sanctuary.

On each of the seven days, a bullock for a sin offering for atonement was offered (Ex. 29:36); and on the eighth day, special and multiplied offerings were slain: first, for Aaron and his sons, and then for the people. (Lev. 9) By faith we may offer the antitype to these sacrifices daily, but on the eighth day we must expect that a full display of the virtues of the atonement, and of the sacrifice of Christ, will burst upon our wondering view. Then shall we truly be able to appreciate the inestimable value of the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offering.

The Ep. to the Hebrews opens to us much concerning our “Great High Priest,” and those things connected with the subject before us: Revelation 1:6, verse 10, and 1 Peter 2:5, 9. tell us of our title and of our dignity, as “Kings and Priests,” unto Him.

Passing to the Levites (Num. 8); these had water of purification sprinkled upon them; their flesh was shaven; their clothes washed; a burnt offering and sin offering, with a meat offering, offered: and then they were offered before the Lord, and given as a gift to Aaron (Num. 8:13), "to do the service of the Tabernacle of the congregation." These also fed on peculiar food; the tithes of the children of Israel were theirs. (Num. 18) The children of God have been presented as a gift unto Christ (John 10:29, 17:2); they have been sprinkled and washed by better water of purification; and a sacrifice, all-sufficient, both for sin and satisfaction to God, has been offered; and, thus consecrated, they are not only to serve God, as Priests, but also to engage in the more humble service represented by that of Levites.

The Leper is a familiar and favorite type of the sinner cleansed and reconciled. (Lev. 13-14.) The Priest goes "forth out of the camp" to look upon him, and gives commandment concerning his cleansing.

Death and resurrection are typified by the two birds, which show forth in lively figures the work of the Lord Jesus: blood is sprinkled seven times upon the Leper, his clothes are washed, all his hair shaven for seven days; on the eighth day a trespass offering is offered: the tip of the right ear, and the thumb of the right hand, as well as the great toe of the right foot, are tipped with the blood of this sacrifice; these then are tipped with oil "upon the blood," the rest of the oil being poured upon the head of the Leper. The sin offering, the burnt offering, and the meat offering, are offered; and the cleansed Leper enters into the camp.

What a tale does all this tell of the wondrous grace of God to sinners! The Priest was not tipped with both the blood and the oil; the Leper was!

The living bird let loose shadows the great fact of sin forgiven—sin put away forever, and remembered no more; and reminds us of Him, who, by "His own blood, entered in once into the Holy Place." Again, the poorest has respect paid to his poverty, and, if he cannot offer much, God accepts his little. All believers have not the same amount of faith; some can, as it were, offer the lamb, others, but the dove; yet faith in the sacrifice of Christ, (not faith in degree, but) faith in reality, which looks only to Him, will meet its great reward.

These seven days, as in the consecration of the Priests, brings before us something of our present condition as sinners sprinkled and cleansed, (14:7; see also Col. 1:21, &c.) though not yet admitted to full enjoyment of blessing. The word of God again says, "Now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." But, as before observed, the eighth day is ours, by faith. When we come to enter into it actually, then shall we fully enter into all our rich blessing; then shall we know the wonders of Divine grace, and understand the love of God, in sending His Son from heaven to redeem, and to cleanse such vile and unclean sinners as we know ourselves to be, and finally to bring us into His very presence. "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." Then shall we "see Him as He is," and praise Him as we ought.

The Nazarite, (Num. 6) separated from wine and strong drink, allowed to eat nothing made from the vine tree, from the kernel to the husk, and all his hair shaven, presents in type to us the Christian who is called especially into a position of separation to God, from the world, its pleasures, and its sins.

He renounces his own natural strength and glory; his pleasures, and his joys are in God, for he is taught to “love not the world, neither the things which are in the world.”

The Nazarite may contract defilement, and as there is remedy for Jewish defilement, so is there for the defilement of the Christian. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” “The blood of Jesus Christ....cleanseth us from all sin.” “The heavenly things...with better sacrifices.” (Heb. 9:23.)

These are the days of separation, days in which we have to fear defilement, which is on every side around us. But, as in the previous instance, the eighth day is at hand, the eighth day of sacrifices and offerings, of entire devotion to God, of the drinking of wine, and of the fullness of joy, and of “pleasures for evermore.”

“Then shall we see His face,

And never, never sin;

Then from the rivers of His grace

Drink endless pleasures in.

And now, before we rise

To that immortal state,

The thoughts of such amazing bliss

Should constant joy create.”

Remarks on the Cross of Christ

THE Old Testament types, as well as the visions in the Revelation, most prominently set before us the death of the Son of God. In the tabernacle service, sacrifices were continually being offered; and blood was so frequently sprinkled, and in so many places, that a spectator could hardly fail of perceiving it at almost every turn. And in the visions of glory, beheld by the beloved disciple, how strikingly the blood of the Lamb seems to light up the eternal scene, and fill the hearts of all with a never-ending song of joy and praise!

When we think that the death of the Lord Jesus is the great manifestation of God's love, the fountain that hath been opened for sin and for uncleanness, and that it is the ground of our access with confidence unto the Father, surely we cannot too often exhort one another to meditate upon Him, and His finished work.

To know forgiveness of sins, and peace with God through faith in the Lord Jesus, is very blessed. Most gracious it is of God to bring any soul to rest in the all-prevailing efficacy of that blood which was shed for sinners; but it is only the first lesson of the Cross of Christ—the beginning of the knowledge of the grace of God. The Scriptures present to the spiritual eye other lessons of most important truth, in connection with the death of Christ, of a deeply practical kind. Those who have grown in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, find a remedy in the Cross for every soul-disease—a cordial for all soul-trouble—a continual admonition to walk in the Spirit, and enough to warrant their having the largest expectations from the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. They know there is virtue in one tree alone to sweeten all their bitter waters; and a savor in the agonies and groans of the slain Lamb to temper all their joys. They prove the “broken body” of Jesus to be “meat indeed,” and His blood to be “drink indeed”; to be substantial realities, to satisfy the daily craving of their hungry and thirsty souls. It was that Cross that was the first meeting-place between God and their souls; and they know that it is, and ever will be, the sole ground of their abiding in the presence of God. They know also, that in time of trial and temptation, that Cross speaks of unfathomable resources, and of an unfailling refuge in God, while it withers up fleshly expectations and confidences, and enables them most heartily to subscribe to the declaration of the Holy Ghost, “That no flesh should glory in His presence,” but that he that glorieth should glory in the Lord.

The Scriptures testify of Christ, and it is well to be diligently, earnestly, prayerfully occupied, in dependence on the Holy Ghost, who testifies of Christ, in searching for Him. “Search the Scriptures,” said Jesus, “for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me;” and I am persuaded that the death of Jesus is there presented to us in a great variety of ways, for reproof, correction, and instruction, as well as for comfort and practical separation unto God. Let us, as God may help, consider a few portions.

In the epistle to the saints at Colosse, we are taught, that it is through the death of Christ that the believer is presented without spot to God. “And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to

present you holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in His sight." (Col. 1:21, 22.) In the epistle to the Hebrews, the same doctrine is expressed. "By one offering, He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14); and in the fifth of Revelation, the song of the glorified saints expresses the same truth: "Thou art worthy.... for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.... and hast made us unto our God kings and priests," &c.; and in the seventh chapter, when the question is asked, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" the answer is, "They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, therefore are they before the throne of God," &c. (See also 2 Corinthians 5:21.)

In Ephesians 2 we have the double action of the Cross of Christ. First, reconciling to God; secondly, bringing the members, both Jews and Gentiles, nigh to one another. "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished, in His flesh, the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

In Hebrews 10 we find the death of Christ presented to us as our ground of access into God's presence. "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," &c.

In Galatians 6 the Cross of Christ is set before us as the power of separation from the world. How can a Christian love the world, when he sees all its elements, moral and intellectual, civil and religious, among great and small, bond and free, united in crucifying the Lord of glory? And will the world (for it is made up of the same elements as ever it was,) love any one whose single purpose is to honor and exalt the earth-rejected, crucified Son of God? "God forbid," said Paul, "that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

In Galatians 3 the death of Jesus is used to show us that we have full deliverance from the law. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Romans 7 teaches us the same truth. "Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.... Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (vss. 4, 6.) Eph. 2 also asserts, that Christ "abolished, in His flesh, the law of commandments contained in ordinances;" and in Gal. 5:1, saints are exhorted to stand fast in this liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

In Rom. 6 the spiritual contemplation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is set before us, as the power of practical holiness, sheaving us the judgment, death, and putting out of sight of "our old man," and that we have a new life as risen with Christ. When the question is asked, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" The answer is, "God forbid. How shall we that are dead [have died] to sin live any longer therein? Our old man is crucified with Him.... Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead [to have died] indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In Rom. 8:32, the wonderful grace of God, in delivering up His own Son to unsparing wrath for our offenses, is used by the apostle to show the willingness of His heart to freely give us all things; thus making the sufferings and death of Jesus the warrant for our having the largest expectations from God. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

We thus see how the Spirit of God uses the Cross of Christ to give liberty and happiness of soul, to enable us to rise above the flesh, to live in practical separation unto God, and to trust in Him at all times. Now, let us look at the first epistle to the Corinthians for a few examples of the deep practical value of the Cross of Christ.

In ch. 1:11, when a spirit of contention and division was so working as to induce some to say, "I am of Paul;" the apostle proposed this most touching and searching question, "Was Paul crucified for you?" How is it possible that there can be contentions and divisions among the Lord's people, so long as each knows and realizes Christ to be the great object of the soul, and touchstone of the conscience and affections? "Only by pride cometh contention." (Prov. 13:10.)

In vs. 17 of the same chapter, the folly of "wisdom of words" is exposed, as calculated to make "the Cross of Christ of none effect." A true knowledge of the Cross would keep from confidence in man's wisdom: for "the world by wisdom knew not God." (vs. 21.)

In ch. 2, determining not to know anything among men, but "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," is connected with preaching in "demonstration of the Spirit and of power," although with felt "weakness, and fear, and much trembling." This is used to show the evil of preaching with "enticing words of man's wisdom," which might only lead the hearers to glory in men, and cause their faith to "stand in the wisdom of men," instead of in "the power of God."

In ch. 5. the death of Christ is presented to the saints as the great motive for purging out evil from the church of God. Leading their minds back to the celebration of the Passover in Egypt, Paul shows them that God is a sin-hating God, as well as a sin-pardoning God, and that then, as well as now, eating the Passover was connected with putting away leaven out of their houses. The Cross of Christ shows God's holiness as well as grace. "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

In ch. 6, when the matter of saints going to law with one another, and brother defrauding brother are noticed, the work of Christ is again remarkably introduced. The apostle reminded them that they were once unrighteous; but now, said he, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

In the latter part of the same chapter, when fornication is treated of, the saints are again instructed by the Cross of Christ; they are reminded that they are the purchase of Christ's blood, that the members of their body are not their own, but that they belong to God; and that therefore they cannot justly use that which legitimately belongs to another without His permission. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?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; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

In chs. 7:20-23, the Cross of Christ is again introduced in reference to calling and position in things concerning the present life. The Christian servant is the Lord's freeman; the freeman is Christ's servant. Both are alike redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. They are not their own. There is no room for the dominion of another master. They are put; chased by the blood of the Son of God. Hence, says the apostle, "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."

In chapter 10 idolatry also is met by the Cross of Christ. The crucified Son of God being an object worthy of all the heart's affection and confidence, those who have partaken of Him should have no fellowship with devils. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."

In chs. 11, when we again find contentions, and the Lord's Supper so abused, that the apostle could only write to them as coming together "for the worse," and that it was not really the "Lord's Supper" they came together to eat, the Cross of Christ is again set before them as the great substantial of the Lord's Supper. Do this in remembrance of ME is the great point. It was not the Lord's Supper, unless they discerned the Lord's body, and then it should be with self-examination. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

Lastly, in ch. 15. of this epistle, when the apostle meets the grievous error that had been introduced among them touching the resurrection, he commences his argument by planting afresh before them the Cross of the Son of God. "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures."

These are only a few of the many examples that might be given of the variety of ways in which the Holy Ghost presents the Cross of Christ to us in the Scriptures, with a practical bearing on the conscience. All the parts of the Christian's armor, whether it be the' girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes, the shield of faith, helmet of salvation, or sword of the Spirit, are all connected, more or less, with the Cross of the Son of God. And, if brotherly love is enjoined, it is still in keeping with the same; for, said Jesus, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; AS I have loved you, that ye also love one another." And if the Apostle, by the Holy Ghost, refers to the same subject, in exhorting saints to minister to each other's necessities, it is, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. 8:9.) In short, the subject is summed up, in principle, in the closing book of the New Testament by the emphatic statement, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 12:11.)

May we know more, beloved, of the power and value of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The Patriarchs, and the Divine Family

IN the history of the Patriarchs (Gen. 35- Ex.), we have, as it regards themselves, much that is humiliating, but much that is deeply interesting to us, as it regards the purposes and counsels of God.

That faith in God, which Abraham had so blessedly manifested, had declined, and self-will had grown and increased; besides these, other circumstances may account for the sad and evil condition of Jacob's sons; Such as the bad examples around them, the imperfect training they had received from their father during his eventful wandering life, &c. Every sin seems to have grown up with these children, and their evil ways are manifested toward their father, toward each other, and toward the world without. Instead of faith in God like Abraham, they seem to think but little of God; instead of submission to their father, we see insubjection, and insubordination; instead of love and care for him, they manifested a very opposite spirit, and were regardless of his feelings, or his trials; in place of brethren living together in unity, division, strife, and envy prevailed; their only union was in wickedness and deceit. Instead of acknowledging the purpose and counsels of God, they rebel against His will, and incur upon themselves sad trouble for years and years; and instead of a mild and godly deportment before the world, they exhibit cruelty and vice. They seem to have grown up deliberately in evil; hence they needed so much and such repeated discipline when brought before Joseph: their hearts were hardened by long continuance in sin, and yet were they "all one man's sons." (Gen. 42:11, 32.)

Joseph, in parting with them, well knowing their unbrotherly tendencies, says to them, "See that ye fall not out by the way." (45:24.)

But God's mercy is manifested to them in rescuing them from famine, and in raising up a saviour in the one they had despised and rejected. Wondrous mercy and grace was this, which not only overruled all their former vices, but forgot them and passed them by, setting these guilty brethren, as it were, on an entirely new footing. He unites them all together, and manifests to them peculiar grace in regard to their dwelling and their circumstances. Still they do not seem to have profited much, and fresh trials, after Joseph's death, were used by God to humble them, and to bring them to cry to Him for deliverance.

Varied have been the circumstances, and long has been the history of these brethren; the end of it has not yet come, but when it does arrive, it will display the purpose, the grace, the wisdom, and the power of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—the Jehovah of Israel. He will make of them a people, who, instead of bringing dishonor upon His name, shall be a praise throughout all the earth—a people whom He has formed for Himself, who shall show forth all His praise, and who themselves shall be praised where they have been put to shame. Then they shall dwell together in holy and happy union and concord. (Zeph. 3; Isa. 62; Jer. 33)

Does not this history of the Patriarchs tell us of a history, more solemn still, of those who are more closely allied than one man's sons, who are truly of one family, the family of God, who are also

“one body”? If we look at them as they are in the world, what do we see? We see them as Israel’s family (with some exceptions), weak in faith, and often exhibiting self-will, insubjection, and insubordination, in no small degree; some going one way, others choosing another. Do we see the characteristics of one family, and of unity? Grace and charity, with discerning eye, may see individually much of this; but the strict and impartial eye of justice would pronounce against their having kept their Lord and Master’s last command. They are not united together, but separated one from another. Is this the distinguishing mark, or is it not? If, in some sort, found together, how are they united? Some under one form, some under another, the bond of one party being often the means of separating others. In these human-formed unions or societies, not only are there many rules of human invention, but many persons, in some instances the majority, not converted at all, not of the family of God, and who do not personally profess real faith in Christ. If there be not literally murder, or selling one another, as with the ten brethren at Dothan, the spirituality of the law would discern the very same principles in envy, strife, contention, evil speaking, division, want of love, &c. (Matt. 5)

As the dispensation is spiritual, so the worst sins and offenses are spiritual also; hence we must not content ourselves that there is no breach of morality or law, but see that we fulfill the law of Christ.

Blessed be God! as Israel’s history has a bright ending, and is connected with the purpose and power of God, much more is this true of the Divine family. If for our humiliation we regard it here below, we may, for our joy and consolation, look at it with the eye of faith, and behold it as “one body;” one in Christ. Through that glass of faith, we may discern a unity of the very same nature as the unity of the Father and the Son (John 17), and say assuredly, from God’s sacred word, that soon that body of Christ shall brightly shine above the mists and darkness of a benighted world, brighter far than Israel gathered to the land of Judea in peace and glory. Israel shall surely manifest Jehovah’s grace, but the church will show forth “the exceeding riches of His grace,” and “be to the praise of His glory;” for she is “the fullness of Him who filleth all in all.” (Eph. 1:12, 23.) As to the issue, then, all will be well; God will be glorified, and we shall be blessed. All shall be gathered in who are to make up this family; every member of the body, however feeble, shall be fitted in living power; every stone in the temple shall find its proper place. Of this there is, happily, no doubt; but as to the present, what becomes us? What should be our position? That which few think of, or are occupied with, even humiliation deep and abasing; and, so far as is in us, to walk in the ways and according to the rules of the Divine family, set forth in the Scriptures of truth, whatever others may say or do.

If we want joy, and this we should have, let us look at the pattern above; if we want to humble ourselves and this is likewise our special business, need we more than to regard the untrue, dislocated, and broken condition here below, making confession thereof before God, and being “very sorry.” (Matt. 18:31.) As want of faith causes decline, so should we seek from God an increase and growth in faith, and grace for the subduing of our wills, checking all that would mar the unity of the Spirit, or create or promote strife and division, overcoming evil with good, walking in the Spirit, holding truth and love, and bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.

Joseph's words, "See that ye fall not out by the way," may be remembered by us, as well as the words of the brethren, "We are all one man's sons," "All ye are brethren." (Matt. 23:8.)

Phil. 2:25-30

THIS is a peculiarly beautiful witness of deep and fresh affection. There is a varied and exquisite play of the heart in it, and one so longs for more of the affectionate nature, that it strikes me as being a passage of great attraction.

Look at it with me, beloved, for a moment. It tells us that Epaphroditus had visited Paul while a prisoner at Rome, as the messenger of the saints at Philippi. He had brought the apostle supplies for his necessities. (ch. 4:18.)

During that time he had been visited with sickness, and the sickness brought him nigh unto death. The fatigue and anxiety he had undergone, perhaps, or the long journey, and then waiting on Paul in prison, had been the occasion of this. But the Lord restored him, and he was now about to return to Philippi.

The first beautiful exercise of affection here is in the heart of Epaphroditus himself. He longed after his dear Philippian brethren, because he knew they heard he had been sick, and he was fully sure how grieved they would be at the thought of his sickness in a distant place, where, perhaps, there was no one who knew him to care for him. He therefore longed after them, had many anxious exercises of heart about them, knowing that they would be grieved on his behalf. This was a very deep affectionate yearning in his heart.

Thus again see Paul's heart. He was sending Epaphroditus back to Philippi, though his presence must have been so pleasant and profitable to him, and his joy was this, that the dear Philippian saints would rejoice in seeing Epaphroditus again.

Thus we find a beautiful and deep variety of affection stirring, because of this brother's illness. The saints at Philippi were sorrowing because of it. Epaphroditus sorrowed because of this their sorrow, for he knew they would feel it. Paul sorrowed, but was willing to forget himself, that the Philippians might rejoice in seeing Epaphroditus again.

But still further. God Himself seems to enter this beautiful scene of affection. He has mercy, i.e. pity or compassion, and restores this loved and sick brother, just that this tide of sorrow might be stayed.

Very full and perfect this is. The heart is all alive here, and all about the sickness of a brother. But surely it tells us something of that goodly land whereto we are tending. There will be no sorrow there to cause the affections to flow; but there will be affections there, to flow at whatever bidding they may receive, and all such bidding will be in the hands, may I say, of purity, and love, and joy. At the touch of such precious things, heaven will be full of affection forever.

Consider One Another

NEVER look down upon a brother in Christ. Look up for him; and if he be, in your esteem, lower than you in anything, go down, and if it may be lift him up, but, by grace, look up. We see in the midst of the throne Him who bore our sins on the cross, and wears the crown in glory. In wondrous grace and pity, He came where we were, and lifted us up. Looking then to Jesus, we shall, by the Holy Spirit, who brings Him to our remembrance, be taught the best way to honor Him. He glorifies God who seeks to deliver rather than expose a brother, whom he believes to be unknown perhaps to himself—dishonoring God. May we more than ever consider the words, “In remembrance of ME.” “My meditation of Him” (and of his ways of peace, and love, and faithfulness) “shall be sweet. I will be glad in the Lord.”

Groaning for Redemption

WE groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body, looking for Jesus to come to change this vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.

'This is the joy we seek to know,
For this with patience we would wait,
Till call'd from earth, and all below,
We rise our gracious Lord to meet;
To wear our crowns, our palms to bear,
And praise the love that brought us there.'

I feel often, that, if the Lord tarry, this earthly house must soon fall; but to be with Christ, clothed or unclothed, will be sweet. Jesus is the source and fountain of all bliss. Oh, that while we sojourn here, we may seek to glorify Him in all we say or do! that we may henceforth live unto Him who died for us, and rose again; so that all we do we may do unto Him, ■ His honor, His glory, our object; that self may sink, and Jesus, only Jesus be present to the eye of faith ■ Jesus crucified, Jesus risen, Jesus at the right hand of God! There is peace in Him, and only in Him. Everything, compared with Jesus, is tasteless, dry, and unsavory. He is the only One to be depended on. We may safely trust Him. We may lean our whole weight on Him. He is the Rock firm and strong, able to bear us up. Oh, there is such beauty in all He ever said or did, that we long to see such a wonderful Saviour! Well, He will fulfill our desire, for the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven; it is the Lord Himself we shall meet in the air; it is the Lord Himself with whom we shall ever be. This is our blessed hope, and

It shines upon the way,
That leads us to the Lamb.

Ex. 16

THERE were certain blessings which God gave to Israel, that continued all through their wanderings in the wilderness. Though their sins often called down God's severe judicial interference, still there were some special blessings which, without any change, remained among them till they entered the promised land. The pillar of cloud and fire was an instance of this, as also was the daily supply of manna. With regard to the former, we read, "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light; to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people." (Ex. 13:21, 22.) As regards the manna, we are told, "The manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." (Josh. 5:11, 12.)

These blessings were set up in grace, hence their continuance. Man always fails in everything that depends in any way upon himself. The Law of Moses was not given when the pillar of cloud and fire, and the manna were granted. The mercy and goodness of Jehovah, who had redeemed the children of Israel from Egypt by the blood of the Lamb, abounded toward them in the gift and continuance of these blessings. No merit on the part of the people either procured or retained them. God, who is rich in mercy, gave and continued these mercies all through the wilderness journey. And so now, we have many unchangeable blessings continued to us all through our pilgrimage, the free gift of the God of all grace. We fail, we faint, we sin, we doubt; nevertheless, these blessings perpetually abide. The eternal storehouse of grace is as full as ever. The river of Divine love is as deep and pure, and flows as freely as ever, only appearing clearer, deeper, and broader, as we trace its various windings, and mark its wonderful out-flowings, always telling us of Him who is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is given to abide with us "forever." The word of the Lord also endureth "forever;" and will not pass away, though heaven and earth will. The eternal purposes and counsels of God stand "forever," and each must have its accomplishment in God's "due time." All the exceeding great and precious promises of God are unalterably sure, for they are in Christ yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. The priesthood of the Lord Jesus is likewise everlasting, for it is written, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedec." And another link in the chain of our unchangeable blessedness, is the Lord's abiding presence with His people ■ "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Is it not most pleasant, beloved, in a day of failure like the present, to reckon up these never-failing mercies of our faithful God? and do we not find, in so doing, an unceasing cause for thanksgiving and worship? Surely, at such a moment, we exultingly cry out with the apostle, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

We are not only, like Israel, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, but our God having made us His people, He provides for us by the way. We do not go a war fare at our own charges. He never leaves nor forsakes us. All through our journey, our necessity is God's opportunity for doing us good. Because He careth for us, He bids us cast all our care upon Him,—to be careful for nothing. Unworthy as we often prove ourselves, of the least of His mercies, still He loads us with benefits, He leads us about, He instructs us, He keeps us as the apple of His eye.

We see a sample of the Lord's gracious ways with His people in Ex. 16. The children of Israel were in great need. They had no bread. Their necessity was very great. Then they sinned against God, for they murmured, and said, "Would to God that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt." But what was God's answer? Did He, in righteous judgment, cut them off? Did He upbraid? Did He threaten them? No. The people were not then under the Law. According to God's promise to Abram, they had been brought out of Egypt. The answer of the God of Abraham therefore was, "Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you. Ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God." How blessed this is! What a heart-cheering manifestation of the abounding grace of God! When the people were under Law, the "murmurers" were "destroyed of the destroyer;" but when not under Law, whether we see them at Marsh, or in the wilderness of Sin, or at Rephidim, we see the reign and triumph of grace; for "where sin abounded grace did much more abound." How happy, dear brethren, should we be in the knowledge of the testimony of the Holy Ghost, "Ye are not under the Law, but under grace!"

To whatever part of the history of God's people we turn, we perceive that the way of God is always to bring them into a position of dependence on Himself; and we can easily understand that such a relation is alone becoming to us, or worthy of the Most High. The flesh, however, is always opposed to this; to be "as gods," is more congenial to the natural man than obedience; because "the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." But the regenerated soul readily acquiesces in the reasonableness of acknowledging its dependence upon Him who hath redeemed us by the blood of His beloved Son, and who is above all, through all, and in all. The new-born soul instinctively takes this ground, for he is born of God; and, however contrary to human thought it may be, he finds that the more he walks with God, the more he experiences that all his springs are in Him; hence he subscribes to that wonderful paradox of the apostle's, "having nothing, and yet possessing all things." He who lives most dependent on the living God, finds himself most independent of men; for he knows that the Lord is his helper, and he will not fear what man shall do unto him. Our blessed Lord taught this life of faith, or entire dependence of His people upon Himself, when He said, "Without Me ye can do nothing;" and again, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

We find the same principle set forth in the daily supply of manna, which God gave the people in the wilderness; which gave them an opportunity of learning deep and precious lessons of the faithfulness and power of Jehovah, and that it was not a vain thing to rest on His promises, as He so touchingly said, "Ye shall know that I am the Lord your God." It was also a test of their allegiance to their Redeemer: "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or no." (See also Deut. 8) And so now, the life of unfeigned reliance on God marks the obedient heart, as well as proves the faithful love of Him "in whom is no variableness, neither

shadow of turning.” What a glorious example of this we have in Jesus, who “took upon Him the form of a Servant... and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God hath highly exalted Him.”

We are instructed, that when our Lord Jesus, in His preaching at Capernaum, referred to the manna in the desert, He spoke of Himself as the “True Bread”■ the life-giving, soul-sustaining Bread from heaven. “I am the living Bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever; and the Bread which I will give is My flesh....he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.” (John 6:51-57.) Hence it is plain, that we not only have redemption through the death of Christ, but that He Himself is the daily Bread, the continual strength and sustaining power of our souls; and that while we are saved it Him with an everlasting salvation, still we need daily personal communion with the Lord, both for inward joy and strength, as well as for outward service.

The people were commanded to gather manna■ not ashes, but manna■ “bread from heaven.” They had nothing to supply its place. God always sent it down, and they were to “gather it.” He never failed. And so with us; Christ is our Bread from heaven. Nothing can strengthen our souls but communion with Christ Himself. Nothing can make up for the lack of this. It is not ordinances, but Christ. Not the letter of the word, but Christ. Not religious services, however needful or scriptural, but Christ. Not dry doctrines, but Christ. He alone is the “True Bread.”

The manna must be gathered up. It did not come into their tents, but round about the camp upon the sand of the desert. Time and patience (and most likely bended knees, and stretched out hands,) were needful for gathering it up. Every man also was to gather, not only for his own necessity, but for them that were in his tent. But it was what God gave that he gathered. If he failed to gather, others suffered as well as himself. Oh, the vast importance of leaving our tents and circumstances, to gather up blessing for ourselves and others, out of Christ’s fullness! The Spirit of God testifies of Christ, the written Word testifies of Christ; we must then search the Scriptures, in dependence on the Spirit’s teaching, if we would gather up “True Bread.”

The Israelites were to gather it every morning; the seventh day, or day of rest, was the only exception; and our rest is at hand, when we shall no longer know wilderness fare, but the Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and lead us unto living fountains of water. Now, however, “the inward man is renewed day by day.” Like our Lord, we should “meditate” in that law which testifies of Him “day and night.” We are leaky vessels, and need constant renewing. And if we would “seek first the kingdom of God,” or be “thoroughly furnished” for daily walk with God in service and trial, what time can be more appropriate for gathering up heavenly supplies than “the morning?” It is remarkable, that if there was much delay in this respect, they could not succeed in gathering manna, for “when the sun waxed hot it melted;” and have not God’s children often proved in their experience, that if they failed in secret intercourse with God, through Christ, in the morning, they have felt the withering effect of the privation all through the day. (Read prayerfully, Mark 1:35, and Psa. 63:1.)

The manna was to be gathered only for eating. This I believe reads us an important lesson. There was such a thing in those days as an Israelite gathering manna, and not eating it, and “it bred worms, and stank.” It is feeding upon Christ, eating His flesh and blood, holding personal intercourse and fellowship with Him, getting soul supplies from His fullness, living upon Him, that

we have in this instruction concerning the manna. All in the tents, fathers, young men, and children, needed food to eat, and manna was sent from heaven for their "eating." All the children of God need food. "Feed my sheep," "feed my lambs," said our blessed Lord; and to this end we need not only to find the words of Jesus, but, like the prophet, to "eat them;" and then we shall find them sweeter than honey or the honeycomb, to the sustainment and joy of our hearts. The priests of old were not only called to serve in their exalted office, but were commanded to "eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them" (Ex. 29:33); and the prodigal son was not only welcomed back to the father's bosom, but he was to "eat and be merry." This is no vain philosophical reasoning, nor poetical imagery, but it is the deeply solemn and momentous subject of soul-sustainment, through living, personal fellowship with God. We are called to eat bread at the king's table continually. (2 Sam. 9) There is no lower ground provided for a believer than this, no other food for our souls to eat, than the flesh and blood of Jesus. The formal professor feedeth on ashes, the wandering prodigal on husks at the swine trough, but let us remember that there is Bread enough in our Father's house, and to spare. It is not the knowledge of the letter of Scripture, nor interpretations of difficult passages merely, nor intellectual gratification at the discovery of mysteries that will meet our necessities, or satisfy our hungry souls, but food; not that knowledge which puffeth up, but nourishment for our inward man. Have not many of us sadly failed in this respect? And, if so, can it be wondered at that we are all so weak and poor? Oh, for more power in the Spirit to live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us!

'Compaer'd with Christ, in all beside
No comeliness I see;
My heart's desire, all-gracious Lord,
Is to be one with Thee:
Lov'd of my Lord, for Him again,
With love intense I burn;
Chosen of Thee ere time began,
I choose Thee in return.
Less than Thyself will not suffice,
But Thou art ample store;
More than Thyself I cannot crave,
Nor canst Thou give me more.
Whate'er consists not with Thy will,
O teach me to resign;
I'm rich to all the intents of bliss,
Since Thou, O God, art mine.'

“My Cup Runneth Over.”

MY Saviour drank, when here below,
A cup of sorrow and of woe;
But mine with blessings doth o'erflow!
My Saviour's head with thorn was crown'd,
His honor trampled on the ground;
But I a priestly crown have found!
My Saviour's face■that face divine■
Was marl and spit upon by man,
That mine with joy and peace might shine!
His hands and feet were pierced through,
And, with the spear, his body too;
But mine are free His work to do!
My Saviour's griefs and stripes, how great!
His sufferings who can e'er relate?
But I need bear no heavy weight.

* * * * *

Oh, let me, then, with joy pursue
My happy path, and keep in view
The prize my Lord to faith doth show.
Abound, my soul, in faith and love;
The doings of thy God approve
Which fit thee for thy home above.
Shun not the Saviour's cross and shame;
But spread the virtues of His name
And tell His everlasting fame.
'Tis but a little season here,

To walk and serve in godly fear;
But 'tis eternal ages there!
Spend, then, thy "little while" below,
The praises of thy God to show,
And day by day in grace to grow.
With Christ already thou art one,
And life eternal is begun!
Which shall endure when time is done.

Time Is Short

WE should consider it a very high privilege to be truly testifying for Christ down here, where everything is against us and against Him. It is glorifying to our God, that we walk by faith, and endure as seeing Him who is invisible. Those who have slept in Jesus can no longer do so; they have left opportunities of serving Him which yet remain to us; let us not fail, then, to take them as they offer. "The time is short." Short for suffering, and that is comfort to the wearied; short for serving, and that is a stimulus to the faithful loving heart. That word, "As ye have opportunity," is very blessed. Are we not conscious of missing many opportunities? I have often thought of the sad and bitter feeling that Peter, James, and John must have had, when they looked back upon the opportunity their gracious Lord afforded them, of watching with Him, and soothing Him in His hour of deep distress. Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" (Ps. 69:20; 63:4.)

"Sleep on now, and take your rest," says that meek and lowly One. What a time for a servant to be resting—while the Master was in an agony; but they had missed their opportunity, such an opportunity as was never given before to man, and never can be again. And are we not often like them? Christ is not here personally; but He has yet left us an opportunity of serving Him.

May we His name confess,

Midst suffering, shame, and loss;

Stand forth His faithful witnesses,

And glory in the Cross!

Fellowship.

No. 2

IF it is only by “the communion of the Holy Ghost” that we can truly have “fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;” and if it is only by the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost, through the Scriptures, that we can have any tame knowledge of the Godhead, how important that we should “search” the inspired pages of truth, in humble dependence upon Him who searcheth “the deep things of God,” particularly when we remember that blessed saying of our adorable Lord, “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou had sent;” and also that when the beloved disciple, by the Spirit, touched on the same glorious subject, he added, “These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.” (1 John 1:3, 4.)

In meditating upon a subject so amazingly profound and sublime, we may well take our shoes from off our feet; for it is holy ground. The psalmist said, “Who can utter the mighty acts of Jehovah?” “Who can show forth all His praise?” Surely it is not by our “searching” that we can find out God, that we can find out the Almighty to perfection (Job 11:7); but, taught by that same Spirit, who indited the Scriptures of truth, who “searcheth all things,” teaches all things, and guides into all truth, we find that the “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come,” is revealed to us (though in measure now,) in the glorious perfections of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Taking, then, the Holy Scriptures as our only sure guide, we find very early in the sacred records some blessed intimations of a plurality of persons in the Eternal Godhead. “God said, let us make man in our image. So God created man in His own image. (Gen. 1:26, 27.) “Behold the man is become as one of us.” “So He drove out the man.” (Gen. 3:22, 28.) “Let us go down and confound their language. So the Lord scattered them abroad.” (Gen. 11:7, 8.) In Isa. 6 we see the same truth brought out; “I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I: send me. And He said, Go.” The Spirit of God also strikingly intimates, in Prov. 8, that there was One lying in the bosom of the Father before all worlds, in the sweet repose of ineffable delight and affection. “Jehovah possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as One brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delights were with the sons of men.” Surely this is none other than the beloved Son, who, in the days of His flesh, said, “Now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was. (John 17:5.) And is not this view of the subject greatly confirmed by the words of Agur, in the same book? “Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in

His fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell?" Other Old Testament Scriptures speak of the "Spirit of God" (Gen. 1:2; 41:88. Ex. 31:8); and also of Emmanuel, the virgin's Child; the Son given, the mighty God; and Nebuchadnezzar declares that he saw in the fiery furnace one "like the Son of God." (Isa. 7:14; 9:6. Dan. 3:25.) These Scriptures unquestionably teach us about plurality of persons in the eternal Godhead; at the same time, the Spirit of God continually preserves the doctrine of the One living and true God. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." (Deut. 6:4.) "Is there a God beside Me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any." (Isa. 44:8.) "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." (Jer. 23:24, 24.) "The Lord of Hosts is Ilia name, the Holy One of Israel." (Isa. 47:4.)

But with all these various ways, in which it pleased Jehovah, at different times, to reveal Himself to His people, by the prophets, it remained for God to speak to us by His Son, by whom He made the worlds, in order that the true light might more fully shine forth. "No man," said He, "hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (John 1:18.) And blessed be His name, He could say with emphatic truthfulness, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." (John 14:9.)

In the New Testament, God is everywhere set before us as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; yet "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God." And most blessed it is that in reference to the work of eternal redemption, we find the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, continually presented to us, as acting in the unity of divine wisdom, power, and grace. We know full well that it must be so, but how blessed to find it so repeatedly set before us in the Scriptures for our comfort and blessing. Let us, beloved, with reverence and godly fear, approach the oracles of truth, to see, as the Spirit may graciously anoint our eyes, this great sight!

In the incarnation of the Son, that Eternal Life which was with the FATHER, was manifested unto us—the FATHER sent the SON to be the Saviour of the world. (1 John 1:2; 4:14.) He said, "I came forth from the FATHER," &c. We read also that the angel said unto Mary, "that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the SON of God." (Luke 1:35.) And further, that which is conceived in her is of the HOLY GHOST. (Matt. 1:20.)

At the Lord's baptism, also, we find that, when Jesus came up out of the water, the SPIRIT OF GOD descended upon Him like a dove, while a voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:16, 17.) Then we find Him who was in the form of God, and who emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, returning from Jordan, full of the HOLY GHOST, without measure, (John 3:34,) tempted and overcoming, preaching and teaching, doing good and working miracles, and yet declaring, "The FATHER that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." (John 14:10.)

Again, look at the cross. The FATHER, not sparing, but delivering up His own Sox. (Rom. 8:32.) The FATHER, giving the bitter cup. The SON freely drinking the cup. (John 18:11.) The Son willingly laying down His own life for the sheep. (John 10:11.) The SON delivering Himself up—knowing all things that should come upon Him, "He went forth" (John 18:3-8); and we are also taught that it was by the ETERNAL SPIRIT that He offered Himself. (Heb. 9:14.) Look further, at the resurrection of the Lord. Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the FATHER (Rom. 6:4), also the Sox triumphed over principalities and powers; like Sampson, he arose in the

darkness of midnight, and took the doors and posts of the city, and carried them up to the top of the hill (Judg. 16:3), for He rose again the third day. (1 Cor. 15:4.) He had power to lay down his life, and power to take it again. (John 10:18.) Yet, we are also taught that He was quickened by the SPIRIT. And yet still further, does not the same gracious instruction meet us in reference to the ascension and glorification of Christ? When the Son had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. 1:3.) Eph. 1:20 teaches us that the FATHER not only raised Him from the dead, but" set Him at His own right hand." And we are elsewhere instructed, that" THE HOLY GHOST was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified; and in another place we read, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the HOLY GHOST, He hath shed forth this which we now see and hear...therefore God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." (John 7:39; Acts 2:33, 36.)

Our hearts might still go onward in the contemplation of Him that sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne, and the seven Spirits before the throne; but we may well pause, beloved, and adoringly worship, while we linger over the wonderful revelation of God in Christ crucified. Great, indeed, is the mystery of God manifest in the flesh; and great, beyond all conception, was the love that led Him to give His life a ransom for many. It is dwelling here that our souls increase in the knowledge of God; it is here we learn the deceitful and unsatisfying character of every other science; it is here we behold with ever new and varying beauty that God is for us; it is here we find ourselves launched on an ocean of everlasting love; it is here we realize that peace which passeth all understanding, and it is here we see written in indelible characters, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

May we, beloved, enjoy closer and more abiding fellowship, in the Spirit, with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ!

The Three Passovers

THE Passover was preeminently the feast of the Jews. From it commenced a new era. The beginning of the year was changed on the occasion of its institution; and from its institution the other solemn feasts are reckoned. The first Passover was kept in Egypt, and memorable indeed must have been the night of its observance. "It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord, for bringing them out of the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations." (Ex. 12:42.) Every true mother in Israel must necessarily have rehearsed to her child what the ordinance meant; and thus the truly instructed Israelite must ever have connected the Passover with their deliverance from Egypt, and subsequent introduction into the land of Canaan, and their national glory. Well might they say, "God hath not dealt so with any nation." The actual experience of Israel in the first Passover, was the blessed sense of safety in the midst of danger. They did not yet know deliverance out of the place of judgment into the place of safety, so as to be able to look back and shout the song of deliverance and victory. But they felt peacefully secure in the very place of judgment. Let us mark the circumstances of the first Passover. Israel was in Egypt, and judgment was about to fall on the Egyptians from the hand of God. Israel was to be in the posture of pilgrims ready to start on their journey at a moment's notice. The paschal lamb was slain, and with the blood they were to strike the two side-posts and the upper door-post of the houses, wherein the lamb itself was to be eaten. The destroying angel began his work of destruction, and the cry of death was heard all around; but the only thing that could assure the Israelites that destruction should not come on them, was the blood on the lintel and on the doorposts, according to the word of the Lord: "The blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." (Ex. 12:13.) "Through faith, he [Moses] kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." There must have been a very holy solemnity pervading the household where they were eating the paschal lamb in perfect security, with the din of judgment all around them. How repeatedly, as they heard the cry of death, must their eyes have been turned to the blood-stricken lintel and door-posts. It must have been a night never to be forgotten; an experience they must ever have carried with them. Other and happier experiences might come in as they kept the feast in after time, but surely not to disturb this first experience. It is just so with the cross of Christ. When first the sinner is awakened by the gracious acting of the Spirit of God, to a sense of sin, it is the thought of safety which is foremost. "What must I do to be saved?" The thought is very vague and indefinite; but the danger at least is felt, and relief from distress and anxiety is found in "the blood of the cross," for it is the shelter of God's own appointment. The blood of the cross is ever before God, and He points the sinner to it, as his sure safeguard from the "wrath to come." Whatever may be the after experience of the soul, that which is first can never be forgotten—the blessed sense of security in the midst of danger. To be a sinner saved, may probably be a very vague thought, and certainly very far below the thoughts of God in His saving work; for God sees the end from the beginning. But there is a reality in the thought, which, although it may be deepened, cannot be forgotten. It must be under the shelter of the cross that the sinner, saved by

the blood of the Lamb, feeds on Christ Himself. He is secure; and in security he feeds on Christ his Passover, and is able to keep a feast before God; whereas all his previous thoughts of God had been more or less associated with slavish fear. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The second Passover was kept "in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt." (Num. 9:1.) Israel must surely have eaten this Passover with an increasing experience of the value of the blood; for that blood now not only spoke to them of security in the midst of judgment, but of actual deliverance from the place of judgment. They had now learned not only that God intended by the blood of the paschal lamb to give them the sense of security, but actual deliverance out of Egypt, their house of bondage. The Red Sea now rolled between them and Egypt, and where they had passed through in safety, "like a horse in the wilderness," "the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned." Israel was delivered, and their enemies and oppressors were destroyed; and all this was done for them "by the arm of the Lord." They "stood still, and saw the salvation of God." Surely Israel would have recalled to mind that memorable night in Egypt, when first to their senses the blood of the paschal lamb proclaimed safety. They would connect that blood with a deeper sense of the deliverance wrought for them. Their further experience of actual deliverance would not do away with their former experience, but only be graciously added to it, so as to make them estimate at a greater price the blood of the paschal lamb.

Just so is it with the sinner led by the Spirit to the cross of Christ. His first experience is that of safety; but as he goes on his way, he learns that the cross has done more than secure him, blessed as it is to be assured of that. He can look at the cross according to the apostolic teaching concerning "our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." The poor sinner who has come to the cross of Christ, is brought thereby to stand in grace before God, answerable to Israel being delivered out of Egypt, to stand on the other side of the Red Sea, and sing the song of triumph and victory. How greatly is the preciousness of the blood of the cross enhanced in our estimation, when we are thus led to enter into the thoughts of God, not only as to the securing, but as to the delivering power of that blood. What mercy, what grace, to have been met by God, and quickened when dead in trespasses and sins, and to have had the eyes opened to behold the Lamb of God! And do we not learn in Israel's passing through the Red Sea as on dry land, the blessed lesson of the cross, as leading us safe through death and judgment? which, had we assayed to meet in our own strength and righteousness, would have proved destruction to us, even as the waters of the Red Sea were to the Egyptians. But being delivered out of the world by the cross, we are brought, even as Israel was, into the wilderness—the same world now becomes in faith's estimate a wilderness; and the believer has his wants, and trials, and need of Divine guidance. But the faithful care of God is proved in providing for the new-felt wants, even sustenance in Jesus as the manna; and His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed. The second Passover is especially connected with the gracious provision of God, for the guidance of Israel in the wilderness, by the pillar of the cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night, so that with the eye fixed steadily on that, Israel might "rest in their tents." This must have been a difficult lesson for Israel to have learned, and so it is for ourselves. To be "strangers and pilgrims with God," with nothing certain, fixed, and settled before us, not knowing what shall be on the morrow,

is to nature very irksome. To be able to look to God who has not spared His own Son, but given Him up for us all, as freely giving us all things we need here, can alone make us pursue our path without restlessness or murmuring, and thus cause us to “rest in our tents.” Perfect love has left us an important word in this respect: “Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” How blessed would it be for our souls, so to cleave to the cross of Christ, as to make it our warrant of expectation for “all things pertaining to life and godliness.”

The third Passover recorded in Scripture, was eaten in the land of Canaan, at Gilgal. (Josh. 5:10.) But there were only two survivors, Caleb and Joshua, who had eaten the Passover in Egypt, then in the wilderness, and now in the land. What must have been their estimate of the blood of the lamb, which they had seen in that memorable night, forty years before, stricken on the lintel and door-posts of their houses, now telling out its full power, not only of safety in the midst of judgment, not only of deliverance in bringing them out of Egypt, with the destruction of their enemies, but of introduction into the land itself, which God had promised to their fathers, and a part of which the feet of Caleb and Joshua had trodden forty years before. What holy solemn joy must Caleb and Joshua have had in looking back to that memorable night in Egypt. How deepened must have been their sense of the blood of the Passover! With what thoughts of gratitude must they have fed on the Paschal Lamb! What monuments of grace and of God’s faithful care must they have been in their own estimation, the surviving remnant of a generation which had passed away in the wilderness! But the circumstances attending this Passover were very marked. “The Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.” The reproach of Egypt was not rolled away by Israel’s being brought out of Egypt into the wilderness. It was their introduction into Canaan that rolled away from them the reproach of Egypt—this second circumcision—not only separating them from Egypt by passing through the Red Sea on dry land, but by passing through Jordan dry shod also, under the gracious charge of priestly ministry. But if there were wants and difficulties in the wilderness, and they were all supplied, if enchantment had been tried against them and could not prevail; there were enemies in the land in these fenced and walled cities, against whom Israel dare not measure themselves in their own strength. In what a gracious and suitable manner does the Lord present Himself, in connection with this third Passover, as “Captain of the Lord’s host.” (Josh. 5:14.)

Blessed is it for us when we regard the cross in this aspect, and know it as the power of God, not only for security and deliverance, but for present introduction into His presence. Being far off, we are made nigh by the blood of the cross. Looking thus at the cross, we “give thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” This is our Gilgal. The reproach of the flesh and the world rolled away. In spirit, as well as in our standing in heaven before God, well we may say, in looking at the cross, “What hath God wrought?” In this also is our circumcision—that which has separated us from earth to heaven, from self to Christ. “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him,

having forgiven you all trespasses.” Such is Christian circumcision, separated from the flesh and the world, by reason of union with Christ risen and glorified. There is our reproach as men and as of the world “rolled away;” and, feeding on Christ our Passover, we eat, at the same time, the manna, and “the old corn of the land.” What a depth of meaning are we now able to attach to the cross of Christ: surely “to us, who are saved, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” To take our place in Spirit as already “seated in heavenly places in Christ,” and there to survey the cross of Christ as our only ground of safety, deliverance, and introduction into the presence of God, is blessed indeed. And when the Lord Jesus shall come and receive us unto Himself, that where He is we may be also—then, in undisturbed repose, we shall be able to look back on the cross, and eat, as it were, the Passover, in a new manner, in the kingdom of God; and sing the untiring new song. “Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.”

But there were enemies to Israel in the land, and the Captain of the Lord's host goes before Israel, to lead them on in a victorious career from Gilgal. So also new enemies, and a new character of conflict are experienced, when the believer is led to see whereunto he is brought by the blood of the cross, even to take his place now “in Christ” in heaven. He has now, as it were, to fight for heaven. He has now to wrestle “against wicked spirits in heavenly places.” They only consult to cast down the believer from his excellency (Pa. 62:4), to make him take lower ground than that which God has given to him in Christ. And it is a hard thing for the believer “to stand,” to maintain his ground as one who has died to the world and is risen with Christ, so as to have his interests in things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. How needful is it, therefore, for the believer to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Captain of his salvation; the one who hath broken through all the host of the enemy, yea, led them captive, and triumphed over them in the cross. Surely, if the first Passover which Israel ate was necessarily connected with the thought of their deliverance out of Egypt, and they had seen how “the Lord fought for them” (Ex. 14:14), and destroyed their enemies the Egyptians, they would, on eating the third Passover in the land, look to the same God to drive out the Canaanites from before them, and to give them “houses which they builded not, vineyards which they planted not, and wells which they digged not.” Even so the believer, learning, as he goes on his way, the value of the blood of the cross, is led to connect the cross with “the arm of the Lord,” and to see not only his introduction into heaven under its blessed shelter, but that notwithstanding every “creature” may dispute his title to heaven, he is more than conqueror through Him that loved him. God is for him, who or whatever may be against him; and He is for him in the cross. And just as he learns that lesson more deeply, he is able to use the argument of faith: “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him; for if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

Forgiveness of Sins

IT is strengthening to ponder the various expressions our gracious God and Father uses to assure us of His entire forgiveness of sin. It would seem as if He delighted to vary the terms He employs to meet every variety of state of soul, and that all the sin of doubt and unbelief in this matter might be put away from the heart; that we might be without excuse. I subjoin a list of the greater part of the terms so used by our blessed God in His Scriptures of truth; I also add some of the references to the passages where they occur.

Blotted out. |Is. 43:25, 44:22; Acts 3:19.

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Covered. |Psalms 32:1, 85:2; Romans 4:7.

|

Not imputed or reckoned. |Psalms 32:2; Romans 4:8.

|

Removed. |Psalms 103:3, 12.

|

Taken away. |Isaiah 6:7.

|

Put away. |Hebrews 9:26.

|

Passed away. |Zechariah 3:4.

|

Passed by. |Micah 7:19.

|

Cast behind thy back. |Isaiah 38:17.

|

Cast into the sea. |Micah 7:10.

|

God's face hidden from.

|Psalms 51:9.|

Not beheld. |Numbers 23:21.

|

Sought for, and none. |Jeremiah 1. 20.

|

Sought for, and not found.

|Jeremiah 1:20.|

Made an end of. |Daniel 9:24.

|

Finished. |Daniel 9:24.

|

Subdued. |Micah 7:19.

|

Pardoned. |Isaiah 55:7; Jeremiah 33:8; Micah 7:18.

|

Forgiven. |Ps. 103:3; Romans 4:7.; Ephesians 4:32.

|

Not remembered. |Jeremiah 31:34.

|

Remitted. |Matthew 26:28; Acts 10:43; Hebrews 10:18.

|

Purged. |Psalms 65:3; Hebrews 1:3, 9:14.

|

Borne. |Isaiah 53:11; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24.

|

Carried. |Is. 53:14.|

Remarks on 1 Chronicles 12

IT would wrong the early chapters of this book to pass them over hastily as chapters of genealogies, of repetitions, and of names.

Among many valuable subjects of instruction from the beginning, which might seem to come in incidentally, this chapter arrests the mind.

David is the great subject, the gathering together unto him; his kingdom, his honor, and his glory; a type surely of Christ, the Son of David, and the greater than he.

At Ziklag, he was probably in his greatest weakness and rejection; but there (vs. 1), chosen, valiant, and skillful ones came unto him. There were “even of Saul’s brethren of Benjamin.”

Verse 8. Into the hold in the wilderness, men of might separated themselves to him, and men of war fit for the battle; and to them, as they came, whether from Gad or Judah, or even Benjamin, David’s heart was knit.

One and another discerned that God was with David, and that the place of honor and of blessing was there too (vs. 18), and even at times of the greatest danger (vs. 19), some were found willing to hazard their lives for this anointed, though rejected king.

And those that came were not followers of David only, they defended his name and person. (vss. 20,21.) By and bye these made up a great multitude, “a great host, like the host of God.” (vs. 22.)

Still further on in David’s history, when he dwelt at Hebron, armed bands came to him, “to turn the kingdom of Saul to him according to the word of the Lord.”

These came to him out of every tribe, but each company had its own character, its own place.

Some were ready armed for the war; some were mighty men of valor; some famous in their father’s house; while some “had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do;” to such their brethren submitted. (vs. 32.) All need not be leaders; it was the business of some to keep rank, and not to be of double heart. (vs. 33.)

And they made David king; they were of one heart to do this; yet each one could find a service to do, and if nothing else, they could bring bread on asses, and camels, and mules: ■and there was joy in Israel.

Spiritually, we may here read of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, God’s anointed King, whom it is our privilege to join, and our honor to serve. Each has his distinct place and service, but only so long as His glory and His person are acknowledged and cared for, as the chiefest things, shall we have blessing and joy.

The meanest service, as well as the most honored, will be accepted and noticed.

What we want, then, is the single heart, the single eye, to exalt and to glorify our Lord, God's well-beloved Son, who, though rejected of men, is now seated "on the right hand of the Majesty on high"!

It is the Truth That Sanctifies

THERE is one thing absolutely certain: no truth can be known to any sanctifying purpose that is taken up as a mere dogma. Christ Himself is the Truth. The truth, therefore, can only be learned to purpose as He is known. The word reveals Him; but the word is only understood through the Spirit, while in the new man only can that be received by faith which the Spirit opens up.

The truth, in fact, is life; for Christ is life as well as truth; and in the harmony in which truth is presented to us in the word, it is intimately connected and interwoven with our daily life and walk in Christ.

The truth is sanctifying only as it is thus known; and thus known, it will be sanctifying. What the Spirit teaches is received in the channel of experience: the heart is prepared to receive it. Nothing is put there by God (who only can put it there) that does not make manifest its Divine origin, and lead to communion with Him from whom it came. The heart, however, is not simply prepared to receive it, but needs the truth for which it is prepared. Nothing can satisfy, nothing still the conscience that is awakened to a sense of shortcoming and need, but the fitted truth, known in power, about which it is exercised before God.

When the matter of forgiveness of sin through the blood of the cross is settled, the Holy Spirit having demonstrated in the conscience the present and eternal efficacy thereof, the craving of the new man is after conformity to Christ. Like water, it never can be still till it has found its level; hence, in the healthy action of the new man there is a continual growth, continual growing up into Christ, though struggling with the flesh notwithstanding. There is satisfaction, indeed, with the measure attained, so far as that which is reached is truth, and, therefore, real gain; yet what we know through the unction received, only seems to show us how little we do know. Hence there is a forgetting of the things which are behind, and a reaching forth to the things which are before. But in the day in which we live, and that is the day, practically, which we have to do with it is well to consider what a vast amount of that which is really the truth of God, and which we talk of "holding," is only picked up on the authority of some teacher (I object not, surely, to human instrumentality; "Feed my sheep" was the chief Shepherd's charge to his servants), and not being carried to God, and weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and then fed upon in the inner man, it is held in the head apart from living communion with Him whose truth it really may be; the consequence of which is, that it puffs up, and devours with spiritual pride, those who make their boast in it; and thee, with lowly words on the lip, practical lawlessness in the life is the wretched result.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." (3 John 4.)

Fellowship.

No. 3

STILL holding fast the great truth, that the Lord our God is ONE Lord, that the FATHER is God (Eph. 1:3), the Son is God (Rom. 9:5), and the HOLY GHOST is God (Acts 5:3, 4), yet not three Gods, but ONE God, let us now, with deep reverence of soul, consider the work of God─Father, Son, and Holy Ghost─in calling, instructing, disciplining and preserving us, from the first moment of the workings of Divine grace in us, until the actual redemption of the body, when we shall be like Christ, and with Him forever.

It was the FATHER that revealed His Son to us, and led us to Him for salvation. When Peter confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus answered and said unto Him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my FATHER which is in heaven." (Matt. 16:17.) Not only is it the purpose of the FATHER that all whom He gave to Jesus should come to Him, but we are further instructed that every man that hath heard, and hath learned of the FATHER, cometh to Christ. (John 6:37, 45.) This is our heavenly Father's love. How precious! He brings us to Himself, by revealing Christ to us.

The SON also draws to Himself. He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." (John 12:32.) The Son of God, who by Himself purged our sins, calls His own sheep, they hear the Shepherd's voice, and He draws them to His own loving heart. He shelters them in His bleeding side, and assures them that He was wounded for their transgressions, that He was bruised for their iniquities...and that with His stripes they are healed. How blessed! Jesus dies for us, and then draws us to Himself.

'Look to Me─thou art forgiv'n,

I have paid the countless sum!

Now my death has open'd heaven,

Thither thou shalt shortly come.'

Further: "It is the SPIRIT that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." It is by the gracious operation of the HOLY SPIRIT in our souls, that we have been made to feel the ungodliness and depravity of our hearts, and to find righteousness and peace in a crucified and risen Saviour. "When the COMFORTER is come, He shall convince (margin) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father." (John 16:8-10.) How sweet to know that it is by the HOLY GHOST we have been brought to rest our guilty souls upon the blood of CHRIST, and thus find liberty and blessing in the presence of God our FATHER. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the SPIRIT OF ADOPTION, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

'Praise the Holy Spirit's love!

With our stubborn hearts He strove;

He reveal'd the Son of God,

And the value of His blood.'

Again we are taught that God's people are the special objects of the care and ministry of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all through their earthly pilgrimage.

The FATHER'S care is manifested toward us both spiritually and temporally. As the husbandman watches over, cultures, purges and prunes the vine, in order that it may be fruitful, so our heavenly FATHER exercises care and discipline over our souls; and He is glorified when we bear much fruit. The FATHER of spirits chastens and rebukes us for our profit, but with a heart of perfect love, as well as infinite wisdom. "Like as a father pitieth His children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." It is our blessed privilege thus to know God as our kind, gracious, tenderhearted FATHER. Even in temporal things He would have us thus deal with Him, and reckon upon His never-failing care. "Behold," said our Lord, "the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly FATHER feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to His stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow? they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek,) for your heavenly FATHER knoweth that ye have need of all these things." And to encourage our confidence in asking and expecting blessing from the hand of our FATHER, our blessed Lord not only said, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your FATHER'S good pleasure to give you the kingdom," but He also said, "Ask, and it shall be given you...for if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your FATHER which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him." Our Father, beloved, is "The Father of mercies," "the Father of lights," "the Father of glory," the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Father and our Father, His God and our God. May we be more quick to discern the gracious hand of the FATHER, that we may lie more passive in His loving arms! May we, beloved, experimentally know more of "fellowship with the FATHER!"

The SON of God, also, ministers continually on our behalf. He appears in the presence of God for us. As our Advocate, He meets all the accusations of the enemy. He is our High Priest forever. He continually makes intercession for us. His presence cheers us. His sympathy comforts us. His finished work upon the cross establishes our souls in grace and peace. He is not a hard Master, yet He craves our grateful service. We know He is now preparing a place for us. We prove His shepherdly care, He loves us to lean upon His Almighty arm. We feel His absence, and look for His appearing; and we know full well that His fervent desire is that we may be with Him, to behold His glory. (John 17:24.) O for more felt fellowship with the Son of God!

The HOLY GHOST also dwells in us, and will abide with us forever. It is by Him alone that we can truly call Jesus LORD; by Him the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. He testifies of Christ to our souls, brings the word of Christ to our remembrance, guides us into all truth, chews us things to come. He leads our souls back into a knowledge of God's eternal counsels in Christ, and the fulfillment of God's promises in Christ crucified. He leads us up now into the Father's presence,

through the blood of the Lamb; and carries our hearts and minds onward to the return of Christ, to take us unto Himself. May the communion of the Holy Ghost be known in our hearts with more living practical power!

An intelligent apprehension of the work of God for us and in us, establishes our souls, and cheers our hearts; and blessed, indeed, it is to know that the Father's love never alters, the Son's matchless grace never declines, and the Holy Spirit, having quickened our souls, will carry on His work till our bodies are changed and fashioned like the glorious body of Jesus. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:10, 11.) For this we now wait. "We," said the apostle, "which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." "Blessed and glorious prospect! Jesus shall come in His own glory, and in the FATHER'S glory, the voice of the Sox OF GOD shall awake the saints in their graves, and the bodies of the living saints, as well as the dead in Christ, shall be quickened by the HOLY GHOST, and all shall be caught up to meet Christ in the air, and so be with Him, and like Him forever. (1 Thess. 4:16, 17.)

“The Lord’s Passover.”

“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 Cor. 5: 7, 8.)

THOU paschal Lamb, appointed

By God the Father’s love;

That we, through His anointed,

Might all His mercy prove: ■

Through Thee we have salvation,

Life, pardon, peace, obtain;

And praise with adoration,

The Lamb for sinners slain.

Freedom from condemnation,

Could only come by Thee;

Through Thy humiliation,

And suff’rings on the tree.

Thy weight of sorrow bearing,

From Satan, man, and God;

And love to us declaring,

Through Thy atoning blood.

We praise Thee, Holy Saviour!

That Thou didst suffer thus:

And in Thy loving favor,

Endure the curse for us.

Through everlasting ages,

All glory be to Thee;

While this, each heart engages

Thy love on Calvary.
We, Thy command obeying,
Now meet around the sign;
The emblems here surveying,
Of Living Bread and Wine.
And while each living member,
Rejoices in Thy name;
We also would remember,
The sorrows of the Lamb.
We wait for Thine appearing,
To chase the night away;
The welcome summons hearing,
To call us hence away.
Thy saints will then in glory,
Redeeming love proclaim;
While they rejoice before Thee,
That "Worthy is the Lamb."

Christ's Cup and Our Cup

"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" John 18:11

THIS was a deeply solemn moment. We have here precious lessons of Divine grace set before us. We can only look on, and worship. Jesus was drawing very near the cross. The great testimony of all the prophets was about to be accomplished. The Son of the Highest was about to enter into the lowest depths of humiliation. An eternal victory was to be achieved, and captivity itself led captive. The gate of heaven was to be thrown open by the bleeding hands of the Son of God. The Lord of Glory was drawing near to the shameful tree; and to show His disciples how willing He was thus to lay down His life, He said, "The cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

We are reminded here of the Father's love. The Father gave us to Christ, and chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. The Father sent forth His Son to redeem His people. The Father gave commandment to Jesus what He should say, and what He should speak. The Father was always with Him; and now the Father presents to Him the bitter cup to drink, that we might not drink it, but be brought into blessed and unchanging nearness to Himself. Well might the apostle John exclaim, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." (1 John 3:1.) We had no claim whatever upon God. We were by nature dead in sins, whilst practically we were only sinners and ungodly: but the Father's eternal purpose of blessing us in Christ must be carried out, and though it could only be accomplished by the blood-shedding of His beloved Son, yet He spared not even Him. He gave Him the cup of woe to drink. He laid upon Him our iniquities, and bruised Him; and

"He bowed His willing head,

He drank the bitter gall."

The Lord Jesus must have felt that the eternal welfare of unnumbered multitudes was connected with His drinking that cup, as well as the glory of the Father of mercies; and however deep and bitter the cup might be, the intensity of Christ's love knew no reluctance. "Shall I not drink it?" What breadths, and lengths, and depths, and heights of love are here! What unsearchable riches! What abounding grace! When He knew that the time was near that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.

"His love to the utmost was tried,

And immovable stood as a rock."

Long had He anticipated the drinking of that dreadful draught, and now the moment was at hand. "He had repeatedly said to His disciples, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the chief priests, and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day;" and though He "knew all things that should come upon Him," He willingly went forth. "The cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

“When the blood of a victim must flow,
The Shepherd by kindness was led
To stand between us and the foe;
And willingly died in our stead.”

But what was the cup? Who can tell but He who mixed and drank it? What angel or seraphim can tell the contents, or measure the depths of that cup? No mortal mind can grasp its infinite realities. The most spiritual of us know but little about it. There is, however, much instruction in the Scriptures on the subject; and sure we are that it was connected with deepest and unutterable anguish and sorrow to Him who drank it, and called forth from His pure and holy soul such bitter cries as, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me!” “I sink in deep mire where there is no standing. I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow Me. I am weary of My crying, My throat is dried; Mine eyes fail while I wait for My God.... Thou hast known My reproach, and My shame, and My dishonor; Mine adversaries are all before Thee. Reproach hath broken My heart, and I am full of heaviness.... They gave Me also gall for My meat, and, in My thirst, they gave Me vinegar to drink.” (Psa. 69) “Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over Me.” (Psa. 42) “My soul is full of troubles, and My life draweth nigh unto the grave.... Thou hast laid Me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.... I am shut up, I cannot come forth.... Thy fierce wrath goeth over Me, and Thy terrors have cut Me off.” (Psa. 88)

Our consciences acknowledge that our sins caused that cup to be mixed and drank, while we recognize in Him our Surety, and Substitute; One standing in our room and stead, One made sin and a curse for us, One bearing our sins, and suffering all the wrath and judgment they merited at the holy hands of Divine justice. Neither man nor angel could drink that cup. None but Jesus. One who was equal with God could alone satisfy Divine justice. For this cause it was that Jesus exchanged His Father’s bosom for this unparalleled scene of sorrow, that He might be the Daysman to lay His hand both upon the just God and the unjust sinner, and by the willing sacrifice of Himself, thus open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. What love!

Though Jesus had been long anticipating the drinking of this cup, it appears that Gethsemane was the place where it was presented to Him; for there we hear Him saying in the sore amazement of His spirit, “Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done,” and so terrible was the anguish at this moment, that “His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” But it is clear that the cup was not drunk then, however much the depths of sorrow and pain connected with it might have been anticipated, for it was after this we find that Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant, when our Lord commanded him to put it again into its sheath, adding, “The cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?”

But the cup has been drunk even to the dregs. The spotless Sufferer drained it to the last drop, saying, “It is finished.” That bitter cup which would have been to us an eternity of unmitigated woe He freely drank. The sword of justice which so long cried for vengeance for our sins was sheathed in His own heart. Our unnumbered transgressions were laid upon Him; He answered for all our sins; the cup of fierce and righteous anger that they justly merited Jesus drank, thus accomplishing our eternal redemption, setting us free from all condemnation, that we might receive the adoption

of sons.

We also have a cup to drink; but there is not one ingredient of wrath in it. It overflows with love, peace, salvation, and victory. "Jesus took the cup; and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank of it; and He said unto them, This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many." (Mark 14:23, 24.) This is the cup Jesus has left us to drink, the cup of blessing which we bless indeed, which we never could have tasted had not Jesus drunk that cup which the Father gave Him. He drank the bitter, and has left us only sweets. He tasted death, that we might live forever. He endured the wrath and curse connected with the cross, that we might have all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. It is because of this that we have passed from death unto life, that we are made nigh to God, that there is now no condemnation, that we have the Holy Spirit, and that blessing has been, is, and will, and must be our portion. Surely we can say, "I have a goodly heritage." Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name."

"Take Thou my heart, and let it be

Forever clos'd to all but Thee."

May we, beloved, often take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord, remembering Him who said, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

On the Spirit

THE teaching of the New Testament on this subject is perhaps more simple than we are generally aware of. We become “Spiritual,” or “Spirit,” by faith in Jesus risen, then we are born of the Spirit, and become Spirit, or with the seed of God in us. Then, joined to the Lord, we are one Spirit with Him; we derive a life from the second Adam, for He is a quickening Spirit. “The Lord is that Spirit.” The Spirit is received by the hearing of faith. The ministration of the word of the New Testament is the ministration of the Spirit. We serve in newness of Spirit, when we believe in Jesus risen, and thus we become spiritual by faith in the Lord. (See Rom. 8:6; 1 Cor. 6:17, 15:45; 2 Cor. 3 Gal. 3 &c.) This is matter of revelation; the Scripture thus tells us that faith in the risen Jesus makes us spiritual, and our first duty is to believe this faith; when revelation is made, experience may, and will follow, but faith is the first duty. God as a Revealer is honored by faith, and then He will honor the faith, giving it a seal which is called experience; but the moment we are thus spiritual, or “one with the Lord” by faith, we become such as the Holy Ghost can and will own. For it is the Lord in us whom He thus owns, and Him He can of course own anywhere. He could never own or adopt the flesh, but the word of grace unites us as one Spirit to the Lord; nay, the Holy Ghost did not acknowledge flesh even in unfallen Adam, for Adam was not a temple of the Holy Ghost, but He can own even a poor sinner who by faith is one with the Son. Our individual bodies He owns, just because He finds the Lord there (1 Cor. 6:17, 19); our collective bodies, or the church, He owns, because in like manner He finds the Lord there. (Eph. 2:20, 21.) He makes both of these His temples, dwelling in them, because the Lord is there. And thus the believer is not only spiritual, as being by faith one with the Lord, but he becomes a temple of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost enters, and dwells in him; then the Spirit bears witness, with the believer’s spirit. (Rom. 8:16.) His own spirit tells him that he is a child, because by faith he is one with the Son of God’s love, and the Holy Ghost joins in this testimony because He has entered us, as owning the Son in us, and then in us raises the cry, or draws out the breathing, “Abba, Father.” But even this indwelling of the Holy Ghost is matter of revelation, as well as our oneness with the Son, or our being Spirit; therefore it is to be neither prayed for, nor experienced, but believed. Sweet, and refreshing, and purifying fruit of this indwelling will surely be known and enjoyed, and that more or less, as we walk in holy diligent cultivation of the spiritual mind, and in communion with God, and that will be our experience. But at first we are not to put the soul to any effort to experience the indwelling of the Spirit, but to believe the revelation that he does in-dwell; the happy way to reach experience, is simply to have faith in the revelation, and it is, moreover, on this very ground, that our responsibilities arise. We are all debtors under this dispensation to walk in the Spirit: believers in old time were not thus spiritual. A prophet, or the like, may have been called spiritual, while the Spirit was in Him to prophecy, but that was far different from being spiritual in the sense of being joined to the Lord; that is the glory of this dispensation.

From all this, we gather that the Spirit is imparted by the word of the gospel, that “word” is the seed of new or spiritual life in us, and is received by faith, and then the Holy Ghost comes and dwells in us, as spiritual, or one with the Lord: and this shows us that there is connection, but not identity,

between the word of grace and the Holy Ghost. The word of grace gives liberty to the sinner, purifies the conscience by faith in the blood, makes us one with the Son, and thus prepares us for the entrance and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. And, in connection with this, I might observe, that the Lord had been born of the Holy Ghost before He was anointed; as the Holy Thing in the virgin's womb, He was of the Holy Ghost, and afterward the Holy Ghost descended, and rested on Him, and He was then full of the Spirit; and so in their way and measure with the saints. They are born of God, and children by faith in Christ Jesus, for then they are united to Christ, and have put Him on, and He is the Son. (Gal. 3:27.) But afterward they become the temples of the Spirit, are sealed with the Spirit of adoption, the earnest of the inheritance, "for if children, then heirs." (See Eph. 1:13, 14.) And this seems to have been expressed to us in this, when the Lord rose from the dead He breathed on His disciples, imparting the life; when afterward He ascended, He gave the Holy Ghost in power.

The love that is to continue forever, is "Love in the Spirit," the affections which are to live, and have their exercise through eternity, are spiritual not natural. The springs which are in the heart, will be dried up at the resurrection, or when the present body which carries the heart, or human affections is laid down, and then we are not to know each other at all after the flesh any more forever. We shall survive in our own identity of course, but it will not be to know either ourselves or others in human or natural relationship. For the Spirit alone will be the ever living fountain of all our faculties and affections. So that there will be no effort to lay aside the human recollections and feelings, because the heart, the root of them will have been withered, and be gone, nor will there be human regrets. It is at times asked, shall we not with pain miss some from the glorified hosts? but that inquiry can arise only from the thought that we shall carry our heart of nature with us into the midst of these hosts: but that will not be; it is the Spirit that will rule there, and be the source and order of all our affections.

For the present life to be without natural affection is the sign of a reprobate mind; a mind not found according to God; and that because we have still the heart of human nature, the affections of the human family in us, and are debtors to its claims. But in the church we are learning the character, the power, and the claims of the Spirit, and know no man after the flesh. For our conversion is entrance on a new life, on a new creation, where new relations are owned, and new affections accordingly felt, and this itself is a new thing. In Israel it was not exactly this, human affections were to have their play there, and the scene of their full and holy exercise, for their citizenship was on earth. (See accordingly Mal. 4:6.) But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is not the heart as the spring of well regulated human affections, but it is the Spirit as the eternal source of new and living streams. For that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. A distinct principle of life in us having its proper acting's, its due faculties and affections. Thus St. Paul speaks of serving in the Spirit (Rom. 1:9), living and walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16), having strength, or faculty to comprehend in the Spirit (Eph. 3:17), having a conscience in the Spirit (Rom. 9:1), loving in the Spirit (Col. 1:8), having bowels in the Spirit (Phil. 1:8). These are a few instances wherein the Spirit is owned, as the principle of a distinct life, the spring of its own peculiar faculties and affections; as it will by and bye be also the life of its own peculiar and suited body (1 Cor. 15), for then the spirit, that which has already been detached from the corruptible body, and gone to Jesus, will take up, and seat itself in the glorious body.

2 Kings 4:8-37

THERE are certain sympathies of the renewed mind which we quickly recognize in each other, The Shunamite was of the distant tribe of Issachar, and not acquainted with Elisha. There were, nevertheless, links of union and understanding between them. "I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually." She understood not only that this was an holy man of God; but she understood his tastes and habits. She received him, a prophet, in the name of a prophet. She does not propose a great thing to her husband, for that would not have suited the "man of God." This was real hospitality—entertaining a prophet according to the taste of a prophet's mind. He was a pilgrim in the earth. How blessed it is, in a cold forbidding world like this, to see two together of one mind and understanding according to Christ. This is the communion of saints. Just so the Lord, in the house of Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus. It is not the feast that forms the atmosphere of the room, but the love. It was the mind and heart of the woman that entertained Elisha; and, oh, how little we get of it in this world!

We are, then, like this woman, to provide according to the tastes and desires of the renewed mind. Elisha found himself at home (vs. 11); and it is blessed when the saints find themselves at home in each other's company. We are not careful enough to be imitators of such blessed samples given by the Spirit of God. The question is, have the sympathies of love spread the feast? Thus it was with the family at Bethany. "The house was filled with the odor of the ointment."

The woman stands before Him (vs. 12). Though she was the mistress, she takes the place of the inferior. Yes, beloved, we want to cultivate the little touches of the Spirit given to us in such a scene as this, where so much of heaven shines forth.

The prophet acknowledges all her hospitality (vs. 13), and desires to recompense her; but as he had not used his interest at court for himself, to be a great one in the earth, so, in like manner, the woman would not be a great one: she says, "I dwell among my own people." What union is here? Are you, and am I willing thus to occupy ourselves till Jesus come, in that lowly place where we are set, and not desirous to advance one step higher in this world's ranks; content that the king's ear, and the captain's ear, should be closed upon our names?

She never forgets herself (vs. 14). Familiarity may lead to liberty; but here was close intimacy of two hearts that understood each other. It was not an intimacy that allowed nature to take the advantage; nor was it a liberty that would degenerate into anything common or coarse. It is blessed to see Elisha like his Master, of whom he was the shadow, having nothing, depending on the woman for a lodging. Thus was it with Jesus; yet if leprosy, or blindness, or deafness, came before Him, he had power to meet it; so also Elisha. He travels in the greatness of the strength of the Spirit, but he does nothing for himself. He can feed the armies of kings; he can restore the dead; he can heal the leper; he can make the oil to flow;—all this time he reminds us of Jesus, who has women to minister to Him of their substance.

He now speaks to this daughter of Abraham as God did to Abraham, "Thou shalt have a son." (vss. 14-21.) Here we get into sympathy with the faith of this woman, who was a child of Abraham. When death enters her house, she is prepared. There is no surprise, no amazement; but the calmness of one who knew there was a power and grace that could meet her every necessity, the calmness and the certainty that marks the way of this dear believing child of Abraham. (vs. 21.) Here is no disturbance. She does not deal with the necessity as though there was no power or remedy above it. Beloved, when our faith brings us into the presence of God, this same calmness is ours.

Shall I look at the work of Satan, and take the sentence of death into me, and shall I not look at the work and doing of the Lord Jesus for me? The woman's conduct was calm; so was that of Abraham in offering up Isaac; he also gets the young man and the ass, and tells them to abide, and he and the lad will go and worship. There was no doubt in his mind as to the certainty of death, but he was calmly talking of life. It is this same spirit which we observe so sweetly in the woman who knew there was relief in the prophet for her. We should cultivate this calmness and composure of soul. We should know that life in Christ is as certain to one who believes, as death through sin is certain. We know that the power of God was enough, and nothing but that power would do.

What a blessed thing, she can say, (vs. 26,) "It is well." The moment we apply to the power and grace in Jesus, that moment we can talk of life in the midst of death. It is not well if we look to the circumstances, but it is well if we look to the power of God. She presses through ordinances, through new moons and sabbaths, through Gehazi; they will not do, she must come to the feet of the prophet of God. (vs. 27, so again in vs. 30.) Oh, beloved, I do invite every one to linger here a little moment. What a temptation, "take my staff;" but nothing will satisfy the woman short of the presence of the prophet himself. It is this that the Spirit of God desires in us. It is Jesus; Jesus Himself, and nothing else will satisfy the conscience of a renewed soul. It is a precious moment when we are brought to know that,

"None but Jesus,

Can do helpless sinners good."

The soul rightly convicted by the Spirit of God can never rest in any ordinance. Though the prophet's own lips propose that the staff should be taken, the woman refuses it, just as before she had refused to listen to her husband when he talks of the new moon and sabbaths. This is what Jesus wants. He came that He should Himself be used, and not another. It is HIMSELF. He has not entrusted His power to any delegate, or vicar, or representative. He wants the conscience to say, 'none but Thou, none but Thou canst do me any good.'

(Ver. 30.) And he arose, and followed her. Jesus only waits, in the history of our conscience, for a moment like this. Ask what you will. Jesus is at the disposal of our necessity, let us tell Him we cannot do without Him, and the Son of God is at our bidding.

(Ver. 31.) I like to see the prophet's staff no better than a piece of wood. This ordinance is rebuked, it is laughed at. If we stop short of Jesus there is no life. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.

Verses 33, 34 present a blessed picture, the soul of Elisha breathing life into a dead child.

(Ver. 37.) Mark the calmness and the certainty of the woman. She fell at his feet, and bowed. She has no more doubt that the child is living, than she had before, that it was dead. She does not examine it, or question it. Yes, beloved, the work of Christ is a certain work! She is not amazed with any amazement; her faith is more like Abraham's than Sarah's. Amazement does not belong to faith. We shall have forever the wonder of adoration, but not the wonder of amazement. She was a happy mother, it is true, but happier as a child of faith who could carry her necessities up to God, and in calmness and certainty have those necessities met.

Encouragement

“But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.” ■ 1 Sam. 30:6.

TRIALS and perplexities of no ordinary kind pressed at this moment on the anointed successor of Saul. He was an exile from his country, driven hither and thither in search of that safety which the jealousy of the king denied; and now, in addition to all the sources of disquiet which had distressed him so long, that city which had been given by Achish for an abode for himself and his companions had been treacherously burnt with fire, and all the inhabitants thereof, with their substance, carried away captive. We need not marvel much, that at such a discovery “David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.” But all this was not sufficient; yet deeper woe and fear were to be meted out to him, who, by his more exalted position, was exposed to the fiercest blasts of adversity. Let us read the next verse. “And David was greatly distressed; for all the people spake of atoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.”

Well was it for him that he had such a refuge to fly to in this day of sore calamity. When earthly help and consolation failed, when those devoted followers who had shared his wanderings and dangers, in so many a perilous hour, rose up in the bitterness of their wounded affections, and “spake of stoning” their leader, whither should he turn for aid if not to the Lord his God? But while we rejoice that the chosen monarch had it thus in his power to draw help and courage from a source of infinite supply, would it not be wise for us to search out and learn the lesson which this narrative is assuredly fitted to impart? “All things were written for our learning,” we are told in the Scriptures; shall we not, then, endeavor to extract from the passage before us some of its treasure of instruction?

Are we not all of us, wherever we may be placed, and whatever may be our individual circumstances subject to many a trial ■ some arising from outward events, some from inward causes; some, perhaps, brought upon us by the failings of others, while some owe their sole origin to the perverse inclinations of our own rebellious hearts? The life of the Christian whatsoever may be the aspect it assumes in the eyes of his surrounding companions, is always, and of necessity must always continue to be, a continual warfare; and as such it will ever be fraught with occasions of trial, of fear, perchance of danger. Then who would not welcome with thankfulness aught that could bestow calmness and faith to pursue the path unflinchingly, whatever may betide? And how can we gain this aid otherwise than by following the example set us by the psalmist king?

The sorrows of this probationary scene are very varied, they differ in their nature as do the individuals who undergo them; but whatever they may be, it is no easy, no pleasant task to endure their proving's. Sometimes they are permitted to arise so thickly, and to press so heavily, that the sufferer is well nigh ready to exclaim, “Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me.” Then is the time for the exercise of faith; then is the season for the poor tried one to place his sole dependence on his heavenly Friend; to feel and know that amidst all these assaults, the hand of almighty power is underneath. Then may the believer encourage himself in the Lord his God!

Perchance, hope may be inclined to droop and fold her wings, to refuse to buffet any longer with the storm; still let the oppressed spirit draw comfort from the remembrance that “whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”

There is something inexpressibly cheering in the remembrance, that the eye of omniscient love is watching over us, wherever we may be; that even the very hairs of our “head are all numbered.” Forgetfulness of this is very productive of discouragement. If we could but realize livingly that the Almighty is ceaselessly regarding us for good, that that blessed Saviour, whose sacrifice purchased our redemption, is still our never-slumbering Advocate with the Father, how hopefully, how confidingly should we pass along our daily walk! how calmly should we say, “The Lord is on my side: I will not fear”! how constantly and entirely should we encourage ourselves in the Lord our God!

Faith and Experience

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God’ that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God: ■1 John 5:13.

“The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, smith the Lord of Hosts, and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

WHEN first the gospel of Thy grace,
O Lord, my God, my heart receiv'd,
I felt a calm, a heavenly peace,
For on the Saviour I believ'd.
But now, as years have rolled by,
How far more rich that gospel seems,
How vast its breadth, how deep, how high,
How with eternal love it beams!
And so the Saviour's precious blood
At first I view'd with thankful praise,
But since I've learn'd its deeper good,
A higher strain I'm call'd to raise.
I thought a little of the cross,
And of the sorrows of my Lord,
Gladly for Him I suffer'd loss,
And shame I willingly endur'd.
But, oh, His sufferings and His pain,
His sorrows and His agony,
I prove them now my greatest gain,
And to His stripes for healing fly.
His word, like honey to my taste,
I sipp'd its comforts day by day,

Drank at its streams with eager haste,
And joyfully went on my way.
But now that word is like a mine
Of wealth, yet richer far than gold;
Where God's eternal Counsels shine,
Which His own Spirit doth unfold.
I read afresh its "line" on "line,"
I praise, I worship, I adore;
For all the promises are mine,
A heavenly, everlasting store!
The love which Christ has shown for me,
The great salvation He hath wrought,
Pardon for guilt so full and free,
And life eternal which He brought.
These fill'd with holy joy my heart,
And made me feel how I was blest,
How I in things above had part,
How great the treasures I possess'd!
But now, to Him who gave them all,
E'en from His gifts I gladly turn,
Before Himself delight to fall,
And His perfections love to learn.
Oh, may that word Himself a chord
Awake within my grateful breast;
Himself! my Saviour! Shepherd! Lord!
Himself, my place of deepest rest!

Union with Christ

IT is a wonderful mystery that we should now be one with Christ in the heavenlies. But so it is. We have passed from death unto life. We are in Him, and He is in us. Our life is hid with Him. He dwelleth in us by the Spirit. He made our sins His own, and was made a curse for us upon the tree; consequently our old man was crucified with Him—we died unto sin in Him our Substitute. But now He is alive again. He is risen from the dead. The One who was made sin for us, and bore the sentence of death in our stead, has been raised again from the dead by the glory of the Father. Our Head is raised far above all principality and power. “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.” I believe we should always think of Christ seated in heavenly places, as our Head—as One who now appears in the presence of God for us.

We have no lower standing than union with Christ. It is not a work of attainment on our part; no, it is what Christ has done. He has redeemed us to Himself—to be His bride. It is unbelief to take any lower ground, and should be confessed as sin to God. This great truth received into the heart by faith takes us in spirit clean out of the world. The reason why so many, whom we hope after all are Christians, are so cold and carnal, is because they do not believe this exceeding rich grace of God: they do not reckon themselves to have died unto sin in Christ crucified, and to be alive unto God as one with Christ risen. (Rom. 6) They are not abiding in Christ. When Adam said to Eve, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,” they were distinct persons as to identity, yet the husband could speak of the wife as one with him; and though Christ personally is in the heavenlies, and we are not, He speaks of us as “members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” Faith receives this truth, because God declares it. The apostle Paul, speaking of husband and wife being “one flesh,” says, “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” (Eph. 5:30, 32.) This is what grace has done. Nothing can alter it. It is forever. “Because I live, ye shall live also,” said Jesus. This is our present rest. A little while, and the Head and members will be together in eternal bliss; for “when Christ who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory.” Come, Lord Jesus. O come quickly!

The Mind of Christ

THE first thing that strikes me is the wonderful dignity of this mind; it carries us up to the mind that indited the word, and we get this faculty, through grace, as poor sinners; and if we do not keep this in mind we shall exalt ourselves. We see this in Nicodemus coming to Jesus, saying, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God," &c. Was Jesus flattered? No: but He sends him back, and tells him that he had come in the wrong way; that he had not the faculty to understand; that he must go back to be "born again."

We have been taken into wonderful blessedness and privileges, but God would only take us there as poor sinners. We see the same thing in the 4th of John. The Lord meets none in this Gospel but as poor sinners. He talks to the woman of Samaria about her sins, before He does about His Messiahship.

We must ever come to the word, "as new-born babes," simply as saved sinners. The fault with the Corinthians was, that they had become Grecians, or Critics.

Our having the mind of Christ is in character with all our endowments, We have the life, righteousness, and glory of Christ, and, therefore, the mind of Christ. May we be kept thinking how we get this mind; it is just as we get everything else—by the Brazen Serpent.

The written word is the only thing that this faculty has to do with; just in proportion as we possess this mind, we shall value the word. The word of God will not submit itself to anything else; but in the possession of the mind of Christ, we shall get Christ, as it were, peeping out all through the Scriptures.

This mind has an infinite range. Brethren may have different measures of it, but there is nothing alarming in that: the alarming thing is to sit together as Grecians, and not as sinners saved by grace.

Bethel

No. 1.

THERE is no place in its early history of deeper interest than Bethel, whilst its later history serves to show the powerful tendency in man to corrupt the blessings of God; so that his "table becomes his snare."

Jacob starts a fugitive from his father's house, justly fearing the resentment of his brother Esau, whom he had supplanted by falsehood and deceit, in obtaining the blessing from their father Isaac.

"And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set, and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth...and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And he called the name of that place Bethel." Hallowed place indeed! Never was Jacob more truly honored of God, than on this occasion, when, a homeless, houseless pilgrim, he sees open intercourse between heaven and earth, as though it were for his sole protection and blessing. He had but a staff in his hand, and no companion, yet was he not to journey alone. Without flocks or herds, he was rich in heaven being opened over him. Nor was this all—his eyes were not only strengthened for the vision, but his ears were opened to take in "exceeding great and precious promises;" and of these while some reached into the remote future, and one took up and made over to him the promise made to Abraham, then to Isaac, that grand comprehensive promise, the sure ground of all promises, "In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed," there was another of direct present application to the homeless pilgrim—"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest...for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Well might Jacob feel amazement at having heaven brought so near to him, even as the disciples did on the Mount of transfiguration. Blessed as it is, there is, nevertheless, something solemn and fearful in first coming in contact with heaven. It makes us feel what it is to be of the earth earthy, and that were not heaven the region of pure grace, as well as of unsullied holiness, it could not be the place for us. "How dreadful is this place." Jacob must learn under God's own hand the blessedness of the house of God, and return to Bethel in quiet repose of soul, without "being afraid with any amazement," either at having heaven brought so near to him, or at "the exceeding great and precious promises" made to him. (Gen. 28:10-22.)

But how does Jacob start from Bethel after such a vision of the glory of God watching over him, and such unconditional and specific promises made unto him? The answer of Jacob to all these gracious promises of God, is but the answer of us all, even “an evil heart of unbelief;” and it required twenty years of severe discipline to teach Jacob that what God promised, He was able also to perform. God had absolutely said, “Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest.” But Jacob must needs vow a vow, and put God on His trial, and not accept Him as his God till after he had fully proved Him. What losers we are by not receiving God in the gracious way in which he presents himself to us. “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go * * so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God’s house; and of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.”

Jacob started from Bethel without the consciousness of his highest blessing, even the presence of the Lord. We, like him, are ready to take less than God gives, and seek to be satisfied with some blessing short of the Lord Himself, “in whose presence is fullness of joy, at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.”

But God “cannot deny Himself;” He was with Jacob every step of his way, however unconscious Jacob was of His presence. In all Jacob’s servitude with Laban, whom God used to correct the subtlety of Jacob, by making him feel what it was to be imposed on by another, the Lord was with him. When Laban would have overreached Jacob in his hire, God overruled it for Jacob’s increase; for “I” (said the Lord,) “have seen all that Laban doth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me; now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.” But with this special warrant of his return, “Jacob steals away unawares to Laban the Syrian,” so slow are we to act in confession of obedience to God. Laban pursues and overtakes Jacob, but God is with Jacob to prevent Laban doing him harm. “It is,” said Laban, “in the power of my hand to do you hurt; but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.” Surely God could have inclined Laban to dismiss Jacob in peace, had Jacob boldly avowed that he was about to return into the land of his father in obedience to God, but Jacob trusted in “fleshy wisdom,” instead of “the grace of God.” But God was with Jacob the way he went, and gave him a visible token of His presence. “And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him; and when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God’s host; and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.” But this was not sufficient to quell Jacob’s fear of his brother Esau. A guilty conscience needs not only the sense of God’s power to protect, but of His grace to pardon and abound over all our sins. Distress leads Jacob to plead with God, to put Him in remembrance of His promises made to him both in Syria and Bethel. (Gen. 32:9-12.) He pleads with Him as the God of his father Abraham, and the God of his father Isaac, but he had not yet received Him as his God, although he had the warrant from God Himself at Bethel to do so. Blessed indeed is it to say with the Apostle, “my God,” but this we shall hardly truthfully do until we have been somewhat tutored in the same school as that in which Jacob was now about to be tutored. Instead of looking to God to dispose the heart of Esau kindly towards him, he thought to “appease Esau with a present.” After all his prudential arrangements, Jacob is left alone. When a solitary wanderer from his father’s house, he had the vision and promises of God at Bethel; but now in his return to Bethel, he has to learn what it is to be alone with God after another fashion. “And Jacob was left

alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day, and when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh." Visions, and promises, and mercies by the way, had not availed to work in Jacob dependence on God, any more than threatening's and severity subsequently availed to bring Pharaoh into obedience to God. The flesh, whether in its wisdom, strength, or goodness must be thoroughly crushed, ere we really depend on God, or give to Him His rightful place, as "the Almighty." When Jacob's thigh was put out of joint, he must needs hang upon God or fall. He must cleave to Him, and get a blessing from Him, or be lost forever. Never had Jacob prevailed with God or man till "he halted on his thigh." With God he prevailed, got the blessing, saw His face and lived, and then he prevails with man, finding kindness instead of hostility in Esau. Jacob had never known the full blessing of Bethel, had he not learned the painful lesson of Peniel. And so with ourselves. When first brought to God through faith in the blood of Jesus, we start as Jacob did from Bethel with heaven opened over us, and more than even Bethel promises, for the name of the Father was not then revealed; but how little do we apprehend either our dignity or our blessings, and still less that the cross of Christ is "the wisdom and power of God." We must be beaten out of self-confidence in its varied phases, to learn truthfully that "the flesh profiteth nothing," and that "Christ is all." Our many disappointments in ourselves, our many failures, the constant struggle within, under the blessed teaching of the Spirit, lead us to acquiesce in the true doctrine of the cross, "Our old man is crucified with Him." The history of man in relation to God tells most plainly that man is irreclaimable. God may strive with him, yet he "prevails" not. The oracle given before the flood, "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that He also is flesh," has only been receiving proof upon proof for four thousand years. Whether God deals with the flesh in judgment or in mercy, its incorrigibility is made manifest. The judgment of the flood improved it not, the giving of the law abundantly manifested its evil, the ministry of prophets reclaimed it not. "There was no remedy." Yes, God's only Son shall come, He shall win them back by persuasion and affection, as well as astonish them by divine power and wisdom—they will surely reverence Him. No; they murder Him. The Cross is the full witness to man's incorrigibility; but it bears another and a different witness. It tells of God not striving with man, but executing the judgment due to him on Jesus. God delivered Him for our offenses, and raised Him again for our justification. The Cross is to us Peniel. God has there broken and judged the flesh; we can see God, and live. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." "We are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

After Esau had parted from Jacob in brotherly kindness, Jacob, glad to get rest by the way, buys a parcel of a field from the Shechemites, and tarries there, and builds an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel. He stops short of Bethel; but it was not to his honor. His daughter Dinah is defiled, and Simeon and Levi dishonor themselves by cruelty and perfidy. Jacob had not earned the name of Israel either to choogie the place of his own sojourning, or the place of God's altar. But how graciously does God rebuke the lingering pilgrim! "And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from Esau thy brother." God is a "faithful God," and at Bethel will prove to Jacob, that what He hath said He does, what He hath promised He fulfills. Jacob may forget his vow, and linger on the way, but the mercy and truth of God must be shown in their enduring character. Jacob is aroused to holy jealousy. All the Bethel promises flash upon him, as he is about to draw nigh to "the gate of heaven." If the Lord had not been with me, now may Jacob say, when I served with Laban, and

when I fled from him, when I met with Esau, and when I dwelt at Shalem, surely I had perished. Such is the way of our unbelieving hearts, that we have not the happy consciousness of God's being with us according to His promise. But there are seasons when He allows us to look back on the past, and see that He "abideth faithful," even when we have refused to see His hand. "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean." Every false confidence must be given up; the God of Bethel will endure no rival. Strange gods had hitherto been housed, even in the family of Jacob. (Gen. 31:34.) "Arise, and let us go up to Bethel, and I will there make an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." Halting on his thigh, stript of every refuge of lies, how strong is Jacob now, how truly is he Israel, with what conscious safety does he go on his way! "And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob."

"So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel * * * and he built there an altar, and called the place El-Bethel, because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother."

There was no terror in the place now, although the place was the same. Twenty years had passed over Jacob's head since he first visited Bethel, and Jacob had learned to know the God of Bethel. He had built no altar there at first, for God was in much measure unknown to him. He had had thoughts indeed of the house of God, but now he has to do with the God of the house of God. This lesson is an important one. Men, for the most part, stop short of God Himself, busied though they may be about places, and other accidents of worship. But when God is our Teacher, He teaches us what He Himself is, and that it is with Him we have to do. His ways are various, grappling with us to break down self-confidence, as with Jacob at Peniel, or letting us prove the folly of our own ways, as Jacob did at Shalem; but He is always merciful, gracious, and faithful "Christ suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Here is our Bethel. But how little do we know of the blessedness of being there, and how needed God's tuition and discipline to teach us that "in His presence is fullness of joy." It is "eternal life to know the Father, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent."

"And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-Aram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob; thy name shall not be called Jacob any more, but Israel shall be thy name." That name God had given him in the memorable night of Peniel, before he met Esau. Never was Jacob stronger than he was then in conscious weakness. But Jacob knew not the strength he had in the Lord. He met with Esau, and prevailed; he journeyed, and the terror of God was in all the cities round about him. After this experience of what God was to him, and the strength he had in the Lord, God graciously repeats the new name, which He had given him. The trembling sinner, broken down before God, with every plea silenced, so that he only clings to the cross of Christ for remission of sins, righteousness, and life, has the name and privilege of the Israel of God. But he little knows the dignity he possesses. He is filled with a sense of his own worthlessness, and goes halting on his way. He is surprised to find what a strength there is in the knowledge of the cross, till one enemy and another is overcome by it. God speaks again to the sinner who has, by faith, laid hold on the cross of Christ: "Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."

Jacob also again gave the name of Bethel to Luz, with a meaning he little knew when he had given the same name to the same place twenty years before.

“And God went up from him in the place where He talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel.”

It was the place where God spake with him, the place where God had proved His faithfulness to Jacob, the place where grace had abounded over all Jacob's sin and folly.

Such is Bethel, the house of God, to Jacob then, and to ourselves, who are brought nigh by the blood of the cross.

“Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help.” (Psa. 146:5)

(Notes Taken of Lectures.) Chap. 1

THE Epistle to the Romans and the Epistle to the Galatians both treat of the same great subject. The Epistle to the Galatians was written before the Epistle to the Romans, and the Apostle most strongly asserts his authority, and uses stern language which is not found in the Epistle to the Romans; and the reason is this; he had not been instrumental in the conversion of the saints in Rome, they were not the fruit of his ministry, but the Galatians were. He bears them record, that the time was, when they would have plucked out their eyes, and have given them to him, neither did they despise his infirmity in the flesh; but almost immediately after their conversion they became the prey of false Judaizing teachers whom he reprehends so severely. They were turned aside from grace, by seeking to add to it the deeds of the law. Almost all the Lord's people, at some time or other of their experience, have been guilty of the same thing; they have been just in the Galatian state. That modification of the Gospel which teaches persons that they are now placed in a salvable state, and if they take care, they shall perhaps be saved by-and-bye, Paul condemns here. Persons naturally prefer this self-dependence, to the feeling that they have had nothing to do with their salvation, but that it is of God, from the beginning to the end. Let us test ourselves by this Epistle, and see whether we are holding fast grace, or whether like these bewitched (fascinated) Galatians, we are getting off the ground of grace, by the addition of something else.

Another thing I would desire to mention. This is the only instance in which several congregations in a large province were written to by Paul. He addressed "the saints that be at Rome," "the saints at Ephesus," "the saints at Corinth," &c., but Galatia was not a city, but a province, a part now of Asiatic Turkey.

In Acts 16:6, the first mention is made of Paul's visiting Galatia. In ch. 18, we find him going through Galatia "strengthening all the disciples." Peter also addresses "the strangers (the elect remnant) scattered throughout Galatia." There were several congregations in the province of Galatia. They were formerly from Gaul, and like the French, their peculiar characteristic was fickleness. He took therefore their national character into account. I believe most nations have their characteristic failings. "The Cretians were always liars," &c. The Spirit of God skews how national peculiarities manifest themselves in God's dear people.

There is no place in the Scriptures in which Paul so strongly asserts his Apostleship, and rests everything on having received the gospel immediately from Christ Himself, and not from man, as in this Epistle. They spoke of him as having been sent by man, and this assertion he had to contradict. God seems to have anticipated the fiction of the present day, by breaking any semblance of Apostolic succession, in choosing the Apostle Paul. Paul did not go up to Jerusalem to those that were Apostles before him, until some years after his conversion. He insists on it that his gift for ministry was directly from the Lord Jesus Christ; he did not receive it from man, neither was he taught it by man. But as the Lord Himself said, "He is a chosen vessel unto Me," &c. (Acts 9:15.)

“Paul an Apostle....by Jesus Christ, and God the Father.” He here insists on the speciality of his Apostleship. None of the twelve were made Apostles in this same way. His commission was direct from the risen Jesus. It came fresh from heaven after Jesus had finished His work, as the Apostle himself states to the elders of Ephesus ■ “That I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

Ver. 2. “All the brethren which are with me unto the churches of Galatia.” Fellowship in labor was very precious to Paul; he delighted to associate persons with him as co-workers, thus sheaving their perfect sympathy and concurrence with him in what he states here. “Grace be to you,” &c.

In the first few verses of the Apostolic Epistles the subject is first introduced, and afterward amplified. Ver. 4. “That He might deliver (rescue) us from this present evil world.” What then has the law to do with us, if Jesus has given Himself to get us out of this present evil world? A person needs quite as much to be rescued out of professing Christianity, as to be rescued from idolatry ■ he needs to be redeemed from the religion, which he has received by tradition from his fathers. It has struck me in my own experience that I have received many things from tradition, and not from God’s word. If any say, “I hold to the Scriptures, and to tradition also,” do not deceive yourselves. Tradition will swamp the Scriptures. “He gave Himself for us.” The moment I believe in substitution, and see that the Lord Jesus has stood in my place, I am “delivered (or rescued)” out of this present evil world, according to the will of God, and our Father.”

Ver. 6. The apostle had to minister the gospel of the grace of God. It is a most difficult thing to keep one’s standing in grace. Natural men always say, “If I were to know that I was to stand still and see His salvation, I should be happy.” Ah! but those who do, continually find a tendency in them to be turned aside from the grace of God unto “another gospel.” I may put devotedness, or the best of’ my good works, in the place of Christ, and it is no gospel at all. The Christian’s Magna Charts is Acts 15. There we see that false teachers said, “Except ye be circumcised, after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” The gospel is independent of all “ifs.” Where there is an “if,” I immediately stand on another ground. We often hear it said, “I know what the Lord has done for me, if I,” &c. James, in this chapter of the Acts, teaches the same truth as Paul, that this thought subverts the soul. If I say to any, “Except you do so and so,” &c., I put him off the ground of grace. There are no glad tidings of great joy for man as a sinner, unless it be a finished work on which the soul can repose. It is God who tells us how precious the work of Christ is; and He knows its value as we know it not. He sets it forth as meeting all that God Himself knows concerning the sinner; for if the omniscient God searches the heart, and trieth the reins, the omniscient God knows also the preciousness of the blood of Christ, and testifies of it to us. The religion of Christendom, like the Galatian error, perverts the gospel of the grace of God, and substitutes in its place a modified covenant of works.

Ver. 8. It is a solemn thought, that the apostle Paul should thus speak of an angel. Angels heralded the birth of Jesus, beautifully tracked His footsteps, were at His grave, followed Him into heaven, but they never tasted of His grace. They do say, “Worthy is the Lamb,” &c., but cannot add, for “Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.” The experience of such grace brings us in a greater nearness to God than they. A poor lost redeemed sinner is thus brought nearer to God than an angel. Paul the Apostle adds, (5:13,) “I persecuted the church of God,” &c.; and, to show what grace was, “He revealed His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen.” God’s

ordained ministry is, that His ministers must be first reconciled to Himself, and then they can go and tell others, and show them that the grace that met their need can also meet the same need in others, even as Paul could speak to blasphemers, &c., having been himself a blasphemer. But he adds, "If an angel," &c., "let him be accursed." Is there such a sense now of the value of the gospel? Is there such a jealousy for the gospel in our day? The jealousy of the apostle for the gospel was not, that he could say, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Will this gospel, this faithfulness, be pleasing to meat No; "Do I now persuade men?" The gospel oats from under man every possible assumption. The denial of self must be the denial of bad self, good self, and religious self; and this is impossible with men, though it is possible with God to save sinners. But, in order to be put into a place where the grace of God can reach the sinner, everything must be taken from under himself as self.

"If I seek to please men," &c. In preaching, there is no occasion to attempt singularity. The gospel will not please the carnal mind when preached simply, and all refuges of lies are taken away.

"The gospel which was preached of me is not after man," &c. No; God's thoughts are higher than man's thoughts. The most experienced Christians find a constant battle, and struggle to beat down their carnal thoughts, and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. His thoughts towards us are thoughts of grace, of love, and peace; but we often think Him a hard master, and an austere man. You must not expect that the gospel will flow according to the current of your thoughts, you must expect conflict, the casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself, &c.

"I was not taught but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Go, He says, and tell them "what thou hast seen and heard," with a promise of future revelations. (See Acts 26:16-18.) We never get anything but by revelation, and we need to pray for the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus. Paul then shows himself to have been a most unlikely person to receive the gospel of the grace of God. He says "I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it." This shows how everything is entirely of God's grace. The most religious man of the day, and the chief of sinners, received the gospel on the same ground. Paul was both. He profited beyond many of his equals in the Jews' religion. Persons are apt to say, "Look at this zealous person; must he not be sincere?" Certainly, and so was Paul, when, in persecuting the church, he thought he did God service. The greatest opposers of the doctrines of grace are those who receive their religion from tradition, and not from the Word of God.

"Called me by His grace," &c. There is an allusion here to Jeremiah. He was the prophet of the nations. Paul was the Apostle of the nations. Of Jeremiah, God says, "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee," &c. (ch. 2:5.) Paul alludes to this in vs. 15, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, &c., to reveal His Son in me." Remember the outward revelation was of such an astounding character, that his companions were struck down as he was, but there was only one to whom He was revealed inwardly. This was accomplished by an inward revelation, by the Spirit, of the glory of the person of the Son. It was inward: "The world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me." Christ's manifestation to the world is future, and will be "in flaming fire;" but to believers He is at present manifested inwardly. All Paul's old traditional religion fell to the ground whoa he received this inward revelation. The Lord takes the sinner apart, and makes him

feel as if he were the only sinner in the whole world, and he wants not to go to others for evidences, ■he has them. Paul says, “He commended himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” It is just suited to the poor sinner to have such a manifestation revealed to the soul. The moment I confer with my intellect I get darkness. It is a dangerous thing to confer with flesh and blood. Neither did he go to Jerusalem, nor to Rome, he got it from the Lord Jesus, and needed no other credentials.

Here is a remarkable thing mentioned. He “went into Arabia”■into the desert. It is a good thing when a young convert is driven into privacy. Paul needed the Arabian desert in order to digest all that had been given to him. Young Christians need privacy. Do not, young friends, think you are called here and there, but seek what you can do in your own houses. It has been my experience to see young people running here and there, and forgetting to show piety at home. Paul returns to Damascus three years after he went to Jerusalem. We find the roaring lion, by the revelation of the Lord Jesus, changed into a lamb. The bitterest persecutor preaches the faith which once he destroyed. The more we study the conversion of Paul, the more shall we understand the gospel which he preached.

Green Pastures

“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters.”

THOUGH in a world of sin,

With pain and sorrow round,

The Shepherd’s fold I stand within■

■Blessings abound!

And in His pastures green

He maketh me to lie,

His countenance by me is seen,

His watchful eye!

Yes, and by waters still,

He gently leadeth me,

My heart with heavenly draughts doth fill,

So plenteously!

Jesus my Shepherd is,

The eternal Son of God!

How great the cost to make me His,■

His precious blood!

The word of God is where

I feed from day to day;

(Anoint mine ear, O God, to hear

What Thou dost say!

And from that book divine

Refresh my thirsting soul:

Thy words, like old and choicest wine,

Do make me whole!)

Oft am I faint and weak,

And often lose my way,
But when that wondrous word doth speak
I cease to stray!
What heights and depths are there,
What wisdom is declar'd,
What cordials strong for every care,
By God prepar'd!
Of Christ it testifies
And of the accursed tree,
Records His stripes and agonies
So dear to me!
His glories and reward,
His kingdom and renown,
Are written in that holy word,
And there alone!
Sweeter than honey far,
More choice than finest gold,
Those Scriptures which to me declare
Secrets untold!
My soul, then be thou found
A frequent joyful guest,
Where wine and milk and oil abound;
How rich a feast!
He who that word hath penn'd
Must thy sole Teacher be,
Upon His help alone depend,
The Spirit He!

The Religious Hypocrite

THE hypocrite knows that he is only pretending to love Jesus. It is the knowledge that he only affects to be a lover of Christ that constitutes him a hypocrite. He puts a beautiful mask on an ugly face. With his own hand he puts it on, and he never takes it off so long as he remains a hypocrite. If he say, "I was a hypocrite, I had the thoughts of a hypocrite, did the deeds of a hypocrite, I have sinned!" Then God is faithful and just to forgive. He is no longer a hypocrite. He is a pardoned sinner; and going to God, saying, "I have sinned," God receives him as a son—his sin is blotted out.

A man may think he has been a hypocrite. The best thing for him is to tell the Lord Jesus what his thoughts are. Jesus died on the Cross for hypocrites who have found themselves out, and are weary of being hypocrites, who say, "We are miserable sinners, and without Christ undone." Jesus died for such hypocrites.

If a hypocrite do another any good, he blows a trumpet. He tries to hide his sins by publishing his deeds; and backbites his neighbor to preserve his own character. Hypocrites make long prayers, but they never desire the fellowship of those who really pray. They seek after ceremonies, but avoid the company of true worshippers, lest, coming to the light, they should be discovered and exposed. The hypocrite never contemplates the word of God, unless to deceive others by pretensions to the knowledge of Christ. The moment he contemplates the word, to know God and Christ, and himself, he ceases to be a hypocrite.

Let the vilest hypocrite, or the sinner who has sinned ever so much, look to Jesus and His cross — not to himself, but to Jesus crucified—and all is well. Then he may say,

"I the chief of sinners am,

But Jesus died for me."

Satan in malice would persuade a real child of God that he is a hypocrite, just as in his guile he would persuade a hypocrite to attempt to pass for a Christian. Satan has many masks for many faces. He would put the mask of the hypocrite on the weak in faith, and persuade such that they were hypocrites, and he would put the mask of religion on the hypocrite. Satan attains his end, when in any way God is dishonored. The Spirit of God, by the cross and resurrection of Christ—through the word of truth—convinces and comforts the believer, sheaving him that Christ his Portion was his Substitute, and is his High Priest, and that his desire to be like Christ springs from above. With respect to the hypocrite who never confesses his hypocrisy, God in due season will make him manifest to all. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Augustine said, Good works (as they are called) in sinners are nothing but splendid sins.

One of the devil's temptations is so to occupy our minds with the past and future, as to weaken us for the present.

The flesh profiteth nothing either morally, intellectually, or religiously.

The Epistle to the Galatians.

Chap. 2

THE apostle still refers to his own personal history, and brings evidence that he did not look back to the law for righteousness. He says he went up to Jerusalem fourteen years after his conversion, when he was accompanied by Barnabas and Titus. Titus is not mentioned in the Acts. The apostle says he went up by revelation; the time was now come for him to do so. Had he gone at the instant of his conversion, persons might say he went there to receive his authority for apostleship. We find Paul, Barnabas, Peter, James, John, and all the apostles, meeting together, and this is the only one general council that the scriptural Christian can acknowledge. There have been many general councils, but not such as the scriptures recognize. He went up at the instance of Christians being disturbed by judaizing teachers; but he says, (5:2,) "I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach," &c. When a person has received something direct from the Holy Ghost he wants no confirmation from others. A soul taught that he is ruined, lost, and undone, has the witness in himself, and does not want to ask others, "Is it so?" He finds the suitability of the truth of Christ's work to his actual condition as a sinner. So Paul wanted not to be told what the gospel was, but he communicated it to those chief in authority, and privately to them which were of reputation, lest he should run, or had run, in vain. He got nothing from them, but he had the greatest possible comfort in finding them his fellow-laborers. The apostles were sent forth two and two, and the testimony of two men is a blessed confirmation. The apostle had the comfort of the other apostles throwing themselves into his work by giving to him the right hand of fellowship, though their commission was not to go to the Gentiles as his was. Titus was a Greek, but was not compelled to be circumcised. We find the apostle acting in quite a different way in the case of Timothy. He circumcised him, though he said, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing," &c. If you insist on it, I resist it; but he would not give needless offense. The cross of Christ is sufficiently offensive; but the moment it is said, "You must do so and so, the answer is," No, Titus must not be circumcised, and I will prove Gentile liberty in not circumcising him, though I did Timothy. "It would be the same with the observance of certain days. Do you insist on my observing them? I resist it; but if by doing so I remove needless prejudice, I take it out of the way.

"Because of false brethren," There were such in Paul's time, and in the days of John there were "many Antichrists." What must it be now? Then it was the exception to find among the guests a man without a wedding garment on. So the tares and wheat grow together, and they are so alike, that, until the harvest, it would require an experienced eye to discern the difference. The world has become one great tare field; so here false brethren predominate, persons not true to the Lord Jesus, though bearing His name. These teachers allowed that Jesus was the Messiah, but took Him up in a carnal way, and made Him sanction all their Judaism; and so now in the last days, the professing body around us, have their buildings, their temples, their priests, their offerings, their sacrifices. But we must remember one thing, ■that worldly religion tends to undermine our liberty, and to take us off the sense of our security as believers in Jesus, which all the powers of hell cannot prevail against. This blessed doctrine is also unpalatable to our natural hearts, ■because if

our salvation is certain, it must be independent of man, and wholly of God. Assurance is the property of a believer in the Lord Jesus; it is God's certainty, not ours.

Ver. 4. "To spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage." Most people are kept in bondage by their religion, which binds them down to certain obligations. As a people the English are very religious, but is their religion liberty in Christ? No: they are bowed down by their religious obligations to do certain things which are required of them, which they are glad to get over. Worldly religion is entirely unscriptural. Paul says, "To whom I gave place by subjection, no lot for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." This expression is used with regard to one, by whom we should have little expected the truth to be undermined. So that we see a real disciple of the Lord Jesus, yes, even an apostle, he who first opened the kingdom of heaven to the Gentiles, for a moment undermining the truth of the gospel by his conduct. "Those who seemed to be somewhat," i.e. persons in authority, "in conference added nothing to me." Peter, James, and John, could add nothing to the revelation which the Lord Jesus had made directly from heaven to His chosen vessel, to bear His name to you and to me. He said on the contrary, "When they perceived the grace which was given to me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship," &c.; they who were counted pillars gave, &c. Sometimes the word "heathen" might deceive or mislead us. It is the same word in the original as the Gentiles of whom we are.

Ver. 10. The apostle Paul was forward in remembering the poor. He took a long journey to bring about a good understanding between the Jewish and the Gentile believers. We see from Peter's visit to Antioch that he retained his natural character: there is a contrary principle, yet the natural character comes out. Peter was a frank, open-hearted man, not using his tongue to conceal the thoughts of his heart. I would rather have to do with such, than with a cautious man, who takes care not to commit himself at all. See Peter, sword in hand, cutting off the ear of a servant of the High Priest He wanted to please every one, and that desire might lead him to do many things contrary to the truth of the gospel. If Christians were to try themselves by this test, they would find themselves doing many things which, if analyzed, would be found contrary to the truth of the gospel. All of us have done many things contrary to it from a desire to please religionists. The most important principles often hang on a most simple act. Peter withdrew himself from dining with the Gentile converts to please the Jews. Paul knew that the gospel was a mighty leveler, bringing down Jew and Gentile to one common ruin. That truth was invalidated the moment Peter said he must not eat with the Gentiles, lest he should offend the Jews. So the Jews who believed did not confess Jesus, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Do we love our own party because it is ours, or do we love all Christians because they belong to Christ? To be a simple Christian, and nothing else, is to have no praise of men, because men generally want something besides the Lord Jesus to ornament and dignify them. If we go and ask for communion, it is not enough that we are Christians, something else must be attached to us, or we are not received. Peter did this in the very face of the revelation made to him that he was to call nothing common nor unclean. Peter now is calling the Gentiles "common." If the blood of Jesus has not cleansed, and the robe of His righteousness has not covered all Christians, so as to make them fit company for one another, what can? "He withdrew, fearing them of the circumcision." To this day the same bondage works very strongly in the hearts and consciences of real Christians. There are many persons who groan in miserable bondage,

fearing them of the circumcision. Even the eon of consolation, Barnabas, was carried away with their dissimulation. Dissembling, ■ a kind of hypocrisy, holding back the confession of what we are. Barnabas and Peter knew that only the blood of Christ cleansed from sin, yet they pretended to believe there was something to be had of the Jews. But when we are laid on a bed of sickness, what have we then? All that we have been contending for here falls away, like so many weights, and only Christ is left.

Ver. 14. "I said unto Peter before them all," &c. It is a happy thing for us that Peter so failed; and do we not see the same Peter here? It is the same in us. When off our guard, nature is uppermost. "We who are Jews by nature," &c. Is anyone a Christian by nature? No. This is a most important point. One born of Jewish parents, was a Jew; but none are bora Christians. We only become Christians by being born again. A Gentile by nature is an alien from the commonwealth of Israel. The Jews had great privileges by nature, ■ hereditary rights. They were children of the kingdom ■ children of the prophets, and of the covenant ■ yet cast out. What a hard thing it is to take our proper standing ■ to know that our only hereditary character is sinners of the Gentiles. We have got into such confusion, that it is very hard to come to God's truth, and take our place as sinners of the Gentiles. Our knowledge, as Jews by nature, says Paul, is, that "a man is not justified by the works of the law," &c. We, the children of the prophets, even we have been obliged to cast ourselves on Christ. The Jews had been put by God under law, ■ Gentiles never; as the apostle says, "To them who are without law, as without law," &c.; yet the professing body of Gentiles, and even real Christians, put themselves there. We Jews, says the Apostle, have been obliged to come to Christ by faith. If I build up law again, I make Christ the minister of sin. I have no right, if I come to Him, to build my hopes on the law. I thus should constitute myself a transgressor, and make Christ & minister of sin. One of the phases of the deceitfulness of our hearts, is the legal tendency to which we are all inclined. Christ has brought in everlasting righteousness. It is not only a question of forgiveness of sin, but of righteousness. The Christian has a righteousness which fits him to appear before God. "I, through the law, am dead to the law," &c. The law killed me, and that very law has been the means of my giving up all expectation from it; and so it will be with every heart and conscience that is rightly exercised. None can live man God unless the law is put out of the way; and until it is seen that the law has received its death blow in Christ, we do not see the "living way" opened up for us. There was the Most Holy Place, into which Israel could never enter.

Legality keeps us away from God, so also did the law. The question of the day is about altars, communion tables, &c. It is a real attempt to cut off Christians from God, by assuming that some, to the exclusion of others, have a right to go near to God. The law said, "Set bounds round about the Mount, charge the people, lest they come near," &c; but now Gentile sinners are brought nearer to God than the priesthood under the law.

"I am crucified with Christ," &c. I see here the judicial act fully recognized. The apostle Paul so fully entered into the doctrine of the cross, that he said, "I am crucified." The doctrine of Peter was the same. "Forasmuch as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind," &c. I may see myself under law, and that is miserable bondage. I see myself crucified with Christ, and that is happy liberty.

Paul says, "I live!" Is Saul, the Pharisee, dead, and risen up again? No, he says, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." It is a life which is death-proof, and comes out of death. After Christ is risen, I get a life communicated to my soul which death cannot touch. "The life which I now live." It will be the same life, in heaven, but not in the flesh, having another life to contradict it, as it does now; but it will have all its tendencies upward, ■a life full of living water, springing up into everlasting life. This life can only eat heavenly food, it can only drink heavenly drink, its tendencies are ever upward, while the other life is beneath, with its temple, its worldly sanctuary, &c. Nothing so much hinders the tendencies of this life as the Jewish ritual. "I live by the faith of the Son of God." and when it comes to living this life, it is as when one eats, he eats not for another but for himself, he feeds on Christ and says, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." How blessedly the apostle brings us back to the great doctrine of the cross of Christ, and then if He has loved me, it is not to mix up law with the gospel. I know not a stronger expression than, "I do not frustrate the grace of God." Meat Christians will agree in this, that their thoughts have only dwelt on the fact of remission of sins. I find life and righteousness inseparably connected. Righteousness is imputed. The gospel is not a system of negation, but of positive blessing. Why do Christians go to the law? because they want to get righteousness as an attainment. If such is the case, what need is there of the cross of Christ? How constantly persons pervert the gospel. They say, "Oh, I know I can do nothing of myself." That is to say, I can do much, God helping me. The Lord Jesus puts the believer into a position of having a perfect righteousness; and "if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Is not the prevailing tendency of our hearts to self-righteousness hindering our intercourse with God? May we remember this point of the argument, and that by the works of the law no man shall be justified in God's sight.

The Members of the Body

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” ■ Rom. 12:3-5.

IN the human body, every member has its special office, and has a peculiar fitness for performing its part. Each member contributes something for the general good of the body, and it never changes its office. Its fitness and suitability for performing it remain as long as it is in the body, unless it be disabled; nor does one member ever exchange its office with another. The eye never takes the place of the ear, nor the ear of the eye. The foot does not usurp the place of the hand, nor the hand of the foot. Each member remains, as at its creation; its office is never exchanged, though it may by exercise grow in strength. My right hand, from constant use, has a greater aptness for performing many acts than it had in childhood, but it is still a hand. So in the members of the body of Christ, there may be a spiritual growth; but they never change their office. It is of momentous import ante that this doctrine have influence on our hearts and spirits. We can picture to ourselves nothing more hideous than a natural body with all its members misplaced. A foot, where there should be a hand; an eye taking the place of an ear; and the like. We as imagine nothing more hideous than this, except the like things in the spiritual body ■ a disordered church; each member doing a part which does not belong to him. The members, instead of filling their respective places, parted, displaced, transposed; can we conceive a greater monster? We should admire the peculiar fitness, in the figures which the Holy Ghost employs. It is particularly striking in the one we are now considering, comparing the church to the members of the body. Let us imagine that only the eye and the ear should change places; the eye could not hear, nor could the ear see. So in the church, each member is fitted for its place. The Holy Ghost has not given to the foot power to perform that which should rather be done by the hand. We see also in the natural body the union and sympathy of the members, especially if anyone be disabled or injured. In like manner, the whole church is affected by the sin of an individual; one member out of its place disturbs the profit of all. De not imagine that I am alluding to anything, or any member in particular: this is far, very far, from ray mind; but I would press on all the solemn obligation binding on each member, to find out his proper office in the body. This is especially pointed out to us is these verses; but it can only be discerned by the single and spiritual eye. A question will arise in the minds of many, What office can I possibly have in the body? In order rightly to apprehend what is our place, we must ever remember, that there are some offices in the church which are special, such as pastors, teachers, &c. But though only a few, comparatively, are called to fill these, yet no member is excluded from holding some office; and if any desire to know what that is, if he ask wisdom of the Lord to discern it, the Holy Ghost will teach such an one. He shall hear a voice behind him, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it. We are ignorant, but the Spirit of God will instruct us. So much sin and corruption is lodging in our flesh, and too often nourished there, that it is

difficult to attain to the knowledge of ourselves, and none but the Spirit of God can teach us. When He is our instructor we shall be delivered from many of the snares of Satan, which so often entangle us. But how does he work? In what way does He instruct His people? By prayerfully studying the written word, and by a better acquaintance with Christ, His person, work, character, offices, &c. "In Thy light shall we see light." In walking with God we learn more of His mind, His character, and His dealings. There is one service to which every child of God is, in a measure, called; we find it in 1 Cor. 13. In the 31st verse of the preceding chapter the apostle says, "But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way;" and this is the way of love. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Greatest in regard of the edification of the body, not as it respects our justification. Faith is the greatest, so far as our acceptance with God is concerned. Faith brings sin to God, and sees it laid upon Christ.

All are called to the exercise of love, though all do not exercise an equal measure of it. Our trials are suited to what we are able to bear. The rough wind is stayed in the day of the east wind. But we have also something to bear in love. "Love thinketh no evil." Have we none of us, at times, judged hardly of a brother, without first having gone to him and asked, Did you mean to offend me? Some are more tried than others, and then how lovely it is to see this fruit of the Spirit called forth in them.

May we all seek faithfully to fill up our places in the body, according to the will of God!

Fellowship.

No. 4

A SPIRITUAL knowledge of the FATHER and His SON Jesus Christ is nothing less than eternal life. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." It is impossible to have the Son without having the Father also, for one is necessarily connected with the other ■ "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." The sonship of Christ is therefore a vital question ■ "He that hath the Son, hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hash not life." (1 John 5:12.) What think ye of Christ? Whose Sox is He?" were the heart searching inquiries which our Lord put to the caviling Pharisees; and when, on another occasion, He said to Peter, Whom say ye that I am? and he replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Sox of the living God, Jesus answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my FATHER which is in heaven." (Matt. 16:16, 18.) There cannot be true knowledge of God, or real fellowship with God, where the FATHER and the SON are not known "The time cometh," said our Lord, speaking of the persecutors of His people, "that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service; and these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the FATHER, nor ME." "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son....by whom He made the worlds....the brightness of glory;" and hath given all things into His hands. The divine decree, therefore, is that all should honor the SON, even as they honor the FATHER," and that" he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the FATHER which hath sent Him." How, then, can any know communion with God, whose hearts and consciences are unacquainted with the FATHER, and with His Son Jesus Christ? It is the gracious office of the HOLY Ghost to tell us of the wondrous love of the FATHER and the SON: ■ "All that the FATHER hath are MINE," said Jesus, "therefore said I, He (the SPIRIT) shall take of MINE, and shall show unto you." It is thus that we are often constrained to sing,

"The FATHER bruis'd His only SON

For us upon the tree;

His death is our eternal life,

Our glorious liberty.

Love mov'd the FATHER'S hand to smite,

Love mov'd the SON to bear;

How sweet on Calvary to stand!

The God of Love is there.

Our access unto the FATHER is by the SPIRIT through the Sox; thus we have peace in the presence of God, and worship, having "fellowship with the FATHER, and with His Son Jesus Christ." But I ask, how is it that we do not enjoy more of this blessed fellowship? Is it not because

we have such a vast amount of carnal confidence and self-righteousness, that we do not feel the need of the guidance and operations of the Holy Ghost, who alone can keep us in God's presence, and fill us with joy and peace? Our tendency is to set up some notional standard of Christianity, and thus walk in the miserable light of our own fire, and sparks which we have kindled, instead of judging ourselves according to God's thoughts, and thinking of Him according to His own blessed revelation of Himself in the scriptures. God cannot meet us on any lower ground than His own perfect holiness, for "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Hence, poor ruined sinners can never come into God's presence, or happily abide there, but as in Christ, and having redemption through His blood. And, blessed be His name, the believer in Christ need not be afraid to draw nigh to God, for the cross of our Lord Jesus not only shows us how Divine holiness has been met for us, but it also bears witness to the deep love of God's heart to us, even when sinners, and of His abounding grace in blotting out all our sins, and giving us a holy standing of completeness and acceptance before Him in love. We have also a never-failing High Priest appearing in the presence of God, ever presenting us there as perfected forever by the one offering which He once offered for us; so that we need not attempt to excuse ourselves, or to conceal any of our sin, but to come, confessing all, into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." There is, therefore, every encouragement to walk in the light, God having graciously made every provision for us in Christ, to enable us peacefully to stand before Him. Sin, however, is always connected with darkness and defilement; and Satan, acting upon our flesh, would persuade us, when conscious of failure, to tarry in some bypath, instead of coming at once into the light of God's presence with heartfelt confession; here to have fellowship restored, by realizing afresh the FATHER'S unchanging love, and the all-cleansing power of the blood of His beloved Son. Here we learn to hate sin, and get power over it.

It is impossible to "walk in the light as He is in the light" without detecting in ourselves what is contrary to the mind of the Lord. The closer we walk with God the more we shall feel our own weakness, and learn to loathe ourselves. As long as Job was not very near to God he spoke of himself only in a self-justifying strain, but when he could exclaim "now mine eye seeth Thee," he said that he abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes. Again, when the faithful and greatly beloved Daniel had a vision of the glory of the Lord, he tells us, "there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength....and when I heard the voice of His words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground." (Dan. 10:8, 9.) Habakkuk also, who was evidently a man of no ordinary faith, says, "O Lord, I have heard Thy speech, and was afraid.... when I heard my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones," &c. (Hab. 3:2, 16); and when the prophet Isaiah saw the Lord's glory he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of hosts." (Isa. 6:5.) And so with us, when we are walking with God we detect depths of depravity, deceitfulness, and folly, that we never suspected ourselves capable of. It is blessed therefore to find that when the Holy Ghost, by John, writes on the subject of fellowship, he connects together the gracious work of atonement and the perfect light of Divine holiness. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7.) It is, then, not by excusing and concealing our sin, but by exposing it before the all-scrutinizing eye of God, and confessing everything that we know to be

contrary to Divine holiness; being assured that the Lamb as it had been slain, in the all-prevailing efficacy of His redemption work, is in the presence of God for us, that fellowship with the Father and with His Son is maintained. Love is the root and essence of fellowship. We love Him because He first loved us. Fellowship consists of the communings of the Father with child, child with Father, and brother with brother. No thoughts of banishment or separation find a place here, because it is based on everlasting and unchanging affection. In the true spirit of fellowship we think, and speak, and act according to God. We look back on the past, and trace the various outflowings of the counsels and purposes of God; we think of the present, both in its heavenly and earthly associations, and connections, according to the revealed mind of God, and, with anointed eyes, survey the future, both in its light and dark aspects, in our measure, according to the eye of Him who inhabiteth eternity. Ours is indeed a high vocation, a standing of wondrous privilege and blessing. We need, however, continual watchfulness, lest our thoughts and affections go contrary to this, or the principalities and powers of darkness overcome us, and we “depart from the living God.” Our very endeavor, therefore, to abide in heavenly places is connected with conflict, hence the need of putting on the whole armor of God, of “casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and of bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

Fullness of joy is connected with fellowship with our God. Sin always grieves the Holy Spirit, and we are often sensible of it. We also know Him as the Reprover of sin, as well as the Testifier of Christ, and of the healing virtues of His blood. In our Lord’s farewell address to His disciples, He repeatedly spoke of the FATHER, and the COMFORTER, and HIMSELF, and added, “These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” (John 15:11.) The apostle John, also referring to fellowship, said, “These things write we unto you that your joy may be full.” (1 John 1:4.) Most of us want more the habit of taking our daily, hourly matters into the presence of our God and Father, with an exercised heart and conscience, in order to have fellowship with Him in them. This is a high privilege indeed, but it is our privilege, and, when realized, will give a tone of firmness, and decision of character, which is according to God. These are days of great carelessness, when the form of godliness often usurps the place of real fellowship with God. Let us, then, be watchful, lest we be found speaking of redemption while forgetting the Redeemer; of the family, without considering the Father; of comfort, without reference to the Holy Ghost the Comforter; of the body, the Church, apart from the Head; of reward, without an eye to the Rewarder; of precious promises, without our minds being occupied with the Promisor; and of truth, apart from “The Truth.” Such a state plainly shows that the soul is not in fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

If our eye look much upward, and much inward, wisdom will be given, with a heart of compassion, to look outward.

The beam that binds a man to his own faults is a microscope to the mote of his neighbor.

Never look back except to say Hallelujah, and then press on in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.

Bethel.

No. 2.

THERE was of old a sanctity attached to places by God Himself. "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy." The presence of the Lord, before whom Joshua stood, rendered it holy ground. Place was an essential element in Israel's worship of the true God. "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou seest; but in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of thy tribes; there thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee." (Deut. 12:13, 14.)

But history has shown that man is willing to honor a place, above the God who hallowed it by His presence, and strenuously to contend for the sanctity of a place, whilst living in open sin, and ignorance of God. Sanctity of place was the essence of the religion of the woman of Samaria, when the Lord Jesus so graciously taught her the connection between salvation and worship, and that the name of the Father being revealed, place was no longer an element in the true worship of God.

The early history of Bethel, so connected with the grace and faithfulness of God, has been considered in a former paper. Its latter history is sorrowful, yet instructive. In the days of Samuel, Bethel was an honored place. "Samuel went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places." But Bethel follows the path of Israel's declension; and its history proves how the policy of man has ever used even the sacred things of God to elevate himself, and to corrupt the truth of God. In the declension which began in the latter years of Solomon, and which speedily issued in rending the kingdom of Israel into two parts, Jeroboam acted on the true principle of political expediency—making the things of God subservient to his own interest. "And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord.... Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.....So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel." (1 Kings 12:26-33.)

There was much "fleshly wisdom" in Jeroboam fixing on Bethel as the chief place of his State-religion. Bethel was indeed hallowed in its tradition. The ten tribes who revolted from the house of David, would look back to their common father, Jacob, with veneration, and gladly recognize the visions and the promises of Bethel. So in after-time, the woman of Samaria held the tradition of Jacob's well, and spoke of "our father Jacob," when she was in utter ignorance of Jacob's God. Again later, the zeal of Christendom was called forth to rescue "the holy places" hallowed by the footsteps, ministry, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, from the pollution of Mahomedanism; when, with the largest stretch of charity, we are forced to conclude, that the vast majority of those engaged in this so-called holy warfare were as ignorant of the person, the grace, and the work of the Lord Jesus, as the woman of Samaria. Sanctity of place, and traditions of history, they maintained, but of a present salvation, as the ground-work of true holiness, they were alike ignorant. Bethel, from the days of Jeroboam, became the fountain of corruption to Israel. Thus, though Jehu "destroyed Baal out of Israel, howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan." (2 Kings 1:28, 29.) The positive worship of another god, as that of Baal, might be overthrown; but the corruption of the truth of God still remained. And this

corruption issued in the judgment of God on Israel.

The contemporary prophets to Hosea and Amos alike raised their testimony against Bethel. Gilgal, an honored place indeed, where the Lord had rolled away from Israel the reproach of Egypt, is coupled by both these prophets with Bethel, significantly changed by Hosea from Bethel, the house of God, to Bethaven, the house of wickedness. (Hos. 4:15.) And Amos thus taunts those to whom he speaks: "Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years: and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven.... for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God." (Amos 4:4, 5.) Yes, man liketh to make religion subservient to his own interests and lusts. What are baptismal and wedding festivities, for the most part, but the transgressions of Bethel and Gilgal? ■God only thought of to sanction human convenience. But Bethel had a strong hold on the mind of Israel; it was intimately connected with state policy, and with priestly influence; and the testimony of Amos against the idolatry of Bethel was mixed up with his testimony against the sin of the king and of the people. "Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led captive out of their own land. Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court." (Amos 7:10-13.)

The history of Bethel is, in fact, the history of the tendency of man to turn the blessing of God into corruption■a fearful principle■but one to be more fully and fearfully illustrated in the corruption and judgment of Christendom. Take another place, Shiloh; and hear the Lord's testimony by the mouth of Jeremiah: "But go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel." But was it better when the Lord set His name at Jerusalem, and so solemnly took possession of the Temple which Solomon had raised for His house? Let the prophet be heard: "Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by My name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh." (Jer. 7:12, 14.) The Lord Jesus, the Prophet so long expected, found that the house of God had become a den of thieves, and leaves it as their house under the curse of desolation. All this is solemnly instructive, and should lead to much searching of heart. Is it God Himself we have to do with? or are we content to take up with a place and persons, accrediting them, and in return being accredited by them? It is easy to see the principles of corruption at work in the great professing body, but it is profitable to detect the working of them in our own hearts. The sin which does so easily beset us is unbelief. We are solemnly warned to take heed lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. This tendency shows itself in various ways. Our wily adversary will take advantage of anything to make us depart from the living God. It is into nearness with God that we are brought by the blood of Jesus, and we do well to see that this nearness be realized by us. One Christian may be occupied with his gifts, another with his graces, another with his zeal and devotedness, so that these things come in between him and the living God. It is whilst we realize the power of the cross in bringing us to God that we are kept in our right place■a place of entire dependence on God. Such is the deceitfulness of our hearts, that things, truly valuable in themselves, become our object, instead of God Himself. Bethel displaces the God of Bethel; the Temple, the Lord of the Temple; and an object, laudable in

itself, displaces Christ from His rightful supremacy. How much do we need the eye-salve from Him who can anoint us, that we may see dearly. O Lord, give to us a single eye, that our whole body may be full of light!

Fellowship.

1 John 1

THE true and happy state in which the saints of God ought consciously to stand, is the holy, peaceful confidence of what God has given. If all were in a true state, there would not be a doubt about our portion is Christ. I would make a marked distinction between the true standing of a Christian, and what constitutes a Christian. The true state of a saint is to be in the most perfect, unwavering consciousness of what God is to him, though there are thousands of saints who have not this, and yet are saints. That consciousness is the particular thing of this dispensation, for it is the dispensation of the Spirit, and it is by the Spirit's witness to our souls that we know it. What enables us to cry, Abba, Father? The Spirit of God, the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from the dead, the Spirit of adoption, is what leads us to cry, "Abba, Father!"

If strong in the Spirit, we shall be strong in this confidence; and then, what can hurt us? This is a day when there ought to be much self-examination. When John wrote this epistle there were many antichrists. Apostasy had come in. As the Church had multiplied, evil had multiplied, and he leads them to examine themselves, which is a most important Christian duty, though often neglected, and sometimes spoken against. I do not say we should examine ourselves for the purpose of getting peace; this we have through the blood of Christ; never let us look into ourselves for that. But we should examine ourselves to see if Satan is hindering our blessing, and God's testimony in us, or to see that no unbelief, no evil of any kind is allowed, that we are not tolerating anything contrary to God's mind; and to see that we are going forward with God, and not turning away from God. If we do not deal honestly with our souls on these points, Satan may come in as an angel of light. God's love to us knows no change: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love;" He has made Jesus to us everything we want. We have no trials, no cares, no wants, no sorrows for which God has not made provision in Jesus; and we are to draw out day by day as we want.

We cannot be happy while in doubt. Even in worldly things, it is only as a man gets what he feels he wants that he can be happy. If a man is left a large sum of money, his right and title may be secure, but he is no better for it, if he knows nothing of it; and I often think that many saints are like this, they are given great things, but have no joy because they do not know it.

What is it that ministers to this confidence? It is manifestation; and this manifestation we have in this epistle more than in the others. Every blessing is in God, but what good is it if His heart be not open to me? God is not merely contented with having blessing for us, but He has manifested what He is to us. The Eternal Life which was with the Father was manifested. How? In the person of the Son of God. (vs. 2.) So in ch. 4:8, it is written, "God is love;" but what is that if it be merely what God is in Himself? Observe, however, the love is manifested unto us, that we might know it without the shadow of a doubt. If a poor soul is cast down and in deadness, consider that "the Life was manifested," and the contemplation of this manifestation feeds holy confidence in God. Again: We all know what sorrow, what trouble, what care is, and why? Because of the power our sins have given Satan. Well, here is the blessed Jesus meeting us ■ "He was manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil." (ch. 3:8.)

God, then, has manifested Himself in Christ, and love in perfection is seen in the cross; there we see that God hath set forth His beloved Son to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (4:9, 10.) The apostle's heart was filled with this love. See its unselfish character; he will not lock the blessing up in his own heart, but says, We have good news, and come and tell you, that you may have fellowship with us. But was his object that we might merely have fellowship with one another? No; if you go no further than that it is good for nothing. It was to draw them into that which he and others were so enjoying; and truly, said he, "our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." (vs. 3.) This, then, was the object, and it is the highest thing a saint can have. The Spirit of God brings us into this fellowship through the blood of Jesus. God has called us into fellowship with Himself. Every believer knows something of this, though some may not be able to explain it or speak of it as others do. Satan seeks to hinder us in this fellowship, and when self is the object, instead of Christ, there must be feebleness, and this accounts for the weakness of the present day; but all our meetings, visiting's, social intercourse, are worthless, nay, worse than worthless, if they do not tend to lead us into this blessed fellowship. This, I say, Satan will seek to keep us from. Dear brethren, Are you in the enjoyment of this fellowship? If you are, it gives you power over the world, the devil, self, yea, victory over everything; but, beloved, in this day, when profession so much abounds, I pray you look to it, and in the Lord's name I beseech you do not rest, and do not give God rest, till in blessed confidence you can say. "My fellowship is with the Father and with the Son—my Father, my Jesus; my Beloved is mine, and I am His."

There are many degrees of fellowship; but let us never forget that the very truth we possess may be made an instrument to hinder it, by making us satisfied with that instead of fellowship. Many go on smoothly in easy circumstances, but when anything goes against them they are thrown out, showing plainly that they were not in fellowship. Ah! see where God has called us, up above this world, far away; and what are we often doing but trying to come down to earth out of this fellowship. Why is it? We should search ourselves. "These things write we unto you that your joy may be full." What joy? Fullness of joy; that which we have in fellowship, sorrow cannot drag us out of it, nor can earthly joy lift us into it, for it is of God. We only get out of the scene of misery and death around by getting into fellowship with God. When we sit around the Lord's table, we ought to see that we do not call to that feast those whom God has not called; not one should be brought in without much prayer; because if you call those who have not been called of God you cannot have fellowship, and sooner or later they will be a drag, a trouble that will break out to your dismay and God's dishonor.

"The joy of the Lord is your strength." (Neh. 8:10.) Where do I get strength to serve the Lord? In fellowship; and then it is not merely doing things from a sense of duty, though that is good. Paul acted from a higher motive. Love carried him through all. His fellowship was above, his citizenship was in heaven, his joy was full, and what a blessed service was his! He was released from all doubting, and it is when I am in happy liberty that I am free to serve. It would be happy to see every saint, in every relationship of life, doing all that they put their hand to "unto the Lord;" but self is the horrible thing that puts down Christ, and puts up something else. If we have the joy of the Lord, we have strength for anything, and we serve One who will accept every little thing. The Devil

and the World may say it is presumption to say that our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, but we ought to say it, and not rest till we can say it. We are partners with Jesus. He has taken our sins, and given us His righteousness, yea, given us Himself. He is a Son, and we are sons; He says Father, and we say Father. It is lamentable to think how self blinds people.

Dear Reader! If you are a saint, and not in fellowship, there is something wrong, some cursed thing in the camp. What is it? Do search, that you may not lose but enjoy the great thing which God has given you, and that God may not be dishonored. You bear the name of Jesus, then do not walk as a worldly man. Let each be able truly to say, "My fellowship is with the Father and the Son," and then if we meet together we can say, "Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son;" but if we meet together and have not this fellowship, it is putting off our souls with the husks, when God would give us great things.

The Epistle to the Galatians.

(Notes Taken of Lectures.)

Chap. 3:1-20

THERE is scarcely a more interesting portion in St. Paul's writings, than this, because it shows the peculiar fascination of the law on real believers. One form of the corruption of the gospel of the grace of God is the reducing it to a system of ordinances; this tendency showed itself in the Galatian churches, and the correction of it forms the subject of this part of the Epistle. The apostle addresses the Galatians, as "foolish," just as our Lord did His disciples, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe."

Ver. 1. There was folly in looking to the law for righteousness after they had known the grace of the gospel. The grace of the gospel had been presented to them most conspicuously in the doctrine of the cross of Christ, but there was a "bewitching" power which drew them off from the cross, and made them turn to the law for righteousness. It was as though the law had set its eyes on them like the snake on its victims so that they were utterly powerless to get away from it. No language can more forcibly present to us what the law really is; whether moral or ceremonial, we need not inquire, for the Scripture regards the law as a whole. Some would fain add their own moral righteousness as a make-weight in the scale of their justification; others have recourse to a system of ordinances, to make up for the defect of moral righteousness; but, in either case, it is the fascinating power of law which prevents them from looking to Jesus Christ., as the object which God proposes for righteousness to everyone that believeth. Again; how strong is the expression, "before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you." The publicity and prominence which the apostle gave to the doctrine of the Cross, was that of a proclamation set up by authority in the most frequented parts of the city. Such appears to be the force of "set forth." Had the eye of the Galatians been fixed on the Cross of Christ, they would not have turned to law for righteousness. When the doctrine of the cross is set forth in all its stern truth, it is God's verdict against man's pretensions to wisdom, or righteousness, or strength; and it is this which makes that doctrine still offensive. But at the same time the doctrine is full of comfort to those who know it, for it is the "making an end of sin, and bringing in everlasting righteousness."

Ver. 2-4. Did you, says the apostle, receive the Spirit, because you had kept the law? No, but because you believed the testimony to the finished work of Christ. The Holy Ghost is the seal of God set on that perfectly finished work, that we may know the value which God has set on it. God will not set such a seal on any imperfect work or righteousness. But if He gave the Holy Ghost to them, it was in consequence of their complete cleansing by the blood of Jesus, and the perfect righteousness in which they stood before God in Him. Beginning in such a blessed standing in the Spirit, they were now so foolish as to think to better their standing by some works of their own. This is very instructive because it so often characterizes a stage in the career of a believer. Ignorantly and unconsciously it may be, after his first joy in the knowledge of Christ has been blunted, and he has lapsed into worldliness or carelessness, he seeks to recover the sense of security by some energies of his own, instead of seeing that the sense of security can only be had by standing in grace. He begins in the Spirit, acknowledges the true doctrine of the Cross, not only as that in which he finds remission of sins, but as that which has also taught him his own worthlessness;

nevertheless, such is the fascinating power of law, he would fain be made perfect by the flesh, as the Galatians were attempting to do.

Again, they had been sufferers; but had they suffered because of their attempts to keep the law? No, but on account of their confession of Christ. Their heathen friends and relatives did not persecute them because they asserted that duties were to be regarded, but because of the exclusiveness of the doctrine of Christ, which would allow no goodness, strength, righteousness, or wisdom, but in His name.

Ver. 5. As to the Apostle himself, had he been putting them under the law? did he minister the Spirit to them upon the ground of legal obedience, or of faith in Christ? He then refers to Abraham.

Ver. 6-9. In the Epistle to the Romans, as well as in this Epistle, the Apostle refers to the history of Abraham. His history is given us at large in the Scriptures, as God's portrait of a believer. If the history of all believers were written by the Spirit of truth, we should find the same general outline as in the history of Abraham. "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Abraham stood before God not as a doer, but as a recipient of blessings, and depository of promises. And thus Abraham becomes the head and pattern of the family of faith. The language which the Apostle uses is very remarkable, ■ "the Scripture foreseeing." He here invests the Scriptures of the Old Testament as with an attribute of God; and this shows the place which these Scriptures have in unfolding the counsels of God. "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." A sinner of the Gentiles is justified before God, just is the same way as Abraham was, undertaking nothing, doing nothing, but receiving the testimony of God, to what God Himself has done. It was indeed in the ease of Abraham as to what God would do, but "the promise which God made to the fathers, He has fulfilled the same, in that He has raised up Christ from the dead." Abraham believed God, and we believe the same God, who now testifies to what He has done in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The more simply we take God at His word, the more we resemble Abraham. "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful (that is, with believing) Abraham."

Ver. 10-14. But if, instead of taking God at His word, by believing on His Son, and thus setting to our seal that God is true, we have recourse to legal works or legal ordinances for our justification, we immediately get off the ground of blessing as being recipients of what God gives to us in Christ, as freely as He gave promises to Abraham, and we bring ourselves under the curse. This is a solemn thought; that after hearing of the grace of Christ, any should be so fascinated by law as to bring themselves in so terrible a position. But so it is. That same Scripture which so blessedly preached the gospel to Abraham, as sternly says to all who put themselves under the law, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." This Scripture cannot be broken. But the great professing body have so modified the grace of the gospel of God, so fettered it with conditions, and at the same time so pared down God's law to the level of human convenience, that they have become almost identified with the Galatian error, and therefore under the sentence of these solemn words. The law knows nothing of mercy. It takes its course. It is of no use to say, I believe that God gave the law, or even to approve of it ■ have you continued in it? if not, you are under the curse. But the gospel pronounces this great oracle, "The just shall live by faith." As the Apostle himself had said, "I live by the faith of the Son of God."

Those who live on their own graces get into an unhealthy state of soul. Neither our good works nor our graces are Christ. We cannot have faith in them. They may be evidences to others, but not to ourselves, who have the certain evidence of God's testimony to Christ. "The law is not of faith;" it is not answered by believing, but by doing. But you do answer God's testimony to the finished work of His Son; and rest your soul upon it by faith. It is well to attend to the pronouns in this epistle, "we," "ye," "us." It was not Gentiles, but Israel who were brought under law at Mount Sinai; and those who were under it, needed Christ's work on the Cross to redeem them from under it; and yet these Gentiles were virtually putting themselves under the law. Paul knew what it was to be under the law, and knew the blessedness of deliverance from it. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Those who were under the law must needs be rescued from such a position, or they never could have confidence in God. Christ magnified the law and made it honorable, not to impose it on sinners of the Gentiles, to bar their access to God; but to make a clear way for the outflowing of the riches of God's grace to them, "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." God now meets sinners not in the way of requirement, as under the law, but in the way of setting forth Christ "as a propitiation through faith in His blood." God Himself is preaching peace by Jesus Christ; so that the blessing comes as freely to those who believe, as it did to Abraham. There was no promise of the Spirit to those who were under the law; that promise was connected with faith, and was made good in consequence of Christ having glorified the Father, and finished the work He had given Him to do; for the Holy Spirit came down in consequence of the exaltation of Jesus. It was not because they had kept the law, that Paul and other believing Jews received the Spirit, but because they believed in Jesus; they received "the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Ver. 15-18. The apostle proceeds to illustrate his doctrine by reference to an ordinary practice among men. If a man makes a will, and bequeaths certain legacies absolutely and unconditionally, no one would allow an executor afterward to impose conditions. "Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto." We usually attach a legal sense to the word covenant, but it was no legal covenant that God made with Abraham; but absolute, unconditional promises, which God Himself covenanted to perform. But God's covenant had respect to Christ, Abraham's special Seed, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen, unto the glory of God by those who believe. Receiving Christ by faith, therefore, we receive all the promises as absolutely and unconditionally as they were made to Abraham. Now, says the apostle, the law which was given so long a time after the promises made to Abraham cannot invalidate these promises; such a thing would not be allowed in a parallel case among men. The legacy bequeathed absolutely and unconditionally cannot be disturbed by any thoughts of the executor as to the fitness of the person to receive it. Just so, the New Testament may be regarded as the Will of the Lord Jesus. He gives a legacy, and is the Executor of His own Will. "Peace be unto you; and He spewed the disciples His hands and His feet." He will not allow that which He has freely given to be disturbed by conditions afterward imposed; because it would nullify promise altogether. "For if the inheritance be of law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." The word "gave" in the original implies the idea of grace. The blessing therefore depends not on the competence of man, but on the faithfulness of God. Will He who has promised revoke His promise? No; that is impossible. Abraham believed God, and so we, through Christ, believing on God, our faith and hope are in God.

Ver. 19, 20. The question necessarily suggests itself, "Wherefore then the law?" "It was added because of transgressions;" literally, for the sake of transgressions, that is, to make manifest to man himself what the Man was which God knew to be in him; (see Rom. 5:20;) and to show man if he had not a faithful Promiser, to undertake for him, and to fulfill all that was needed, he never could attain to blessing. The law itself proved that man could not stand under it, and was necessary in order to vindicate the wisdom of God in promising blessing in Abraham's Seed; and was to continue till that "Seed should come to whom the promise was made." Thus the law, instead of invalidating or superseding, tended to confirm the way of promise made known to Abraham, as the only possible way in which a sinner was or is capable of being blessed by God. The Apostle adds "It was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one." This is a passage of confessed difficulty, yet I think the leading thought may be gathered from it, and a blessed thought it is. God used the ministry of angels in giving the law, putting them between Himself and Israel, as Stephen testified, "who have received the law by the disposition of angels." This was a kind of mediation of distance; and distance from God characterized the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai. All the circumstances were those of terror, and the people were alarmed, and dared not hear the voice of God, but would have Moses receive the words from God and rehearse them to them. There was Moses the mediator, as he tells them: "I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you the word of the Lord: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the Mount." (Deut. 5:5.) The mediation of Moses was to keep the Lord and the people apart—a mediator of one. The people were one party at Mount Sinai, and the Lord the other, and Moses stood between them. Such was the mediator of the law, the very opposite to the Mediator of the New Testament, which is to bring near and bring together instead of keeping apart. Corrupt Christendom has followed the pattern of Moses, and, by a system of false mediation, whether the Virgin Mary, or angels, or an earthly priesthood, bars nearness of access to God; setting God and man in the same relative distance in which the law set them. Mediation connected with law, and mediation resulting from grace, are as opposite as possible, distance characterizing the one, and reconciliation the other. There was no terror when the word of the Lord came to Abraham, no terror in the gracious words which proceeded from the lips of Jesus, no terror when the apostles went forth on the ministry of reconciliation, based on the mediation and finished work of Jesus. God is one. It is no longer two parties to be kept at a distance one from the other, lest destruction should ensue; but God preaching peace, God testifying to what He has done in the death and resurrection of Jesus, God Himself in the New Testament writing His laws in the heart, putting them in the mind, saying, "They shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me, from the least to the greatest; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." God is one; and there is in the new covenant no people undertaking to answer the requirements of God, so that to turn from the gospel back to the law, is to undertake on our own responsibility that which God promises to perform according to His own grace and faithfulness. Distance from God must be the necessary consequence. If you look for salvation to anything yet to be done on your part, instead of rejoicing in Christ Jesus and His finished work, you will become as these "foolish" and "bewitched" Galatians. In the old covenant the people undertook, in the new covenant God Himself hath undertaken. "God is one;" and therefore these can be no failure.

Fellowship.

No. 6

1 John 1.

WHEN a man is taken out of nature's misery and nakedness, by the power of Divine grace, he is brought to do with God, he is called to fellowship with the Father and the Son. Love will always be true to its object, and the saint will think little of any blessing without the person of Jesus. We have everything in Him. There it is I see the exceeding grace of God in manifestation, not only giving blessing, but giving His beloved Son, and so much in Him, that if I have Jesus I have all. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." This is not peculiar to the advanced saint, but every saint is privileged with this high calling, and he ought to know it. This, then, is what God has called us to, not merely pardon and peace, but to fellowship with His Son; and in the same chapter we find that He is "made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. 1)

I would say, in passing, that there are two things we need in order to get practically into these things, ■the Word and the Spirit. The Word is the lamp, and the Spirit is the power. We get the power in faith and prayer, the light in reading. If you read much, you will get light and little power; if you pray much, without reading, you will get power and little light; but God has put both together, and we should not separate them. If any are so made up in doctrine as to say, I am so one with Christ that I do not feel that I need to pray for more power of the Spirit, they are under a great mistake. We are not to pray for the Spirit as something we have not, but to wait on Him for power■for the supply of what we have in union with the Son.

To return to the subject of fellowship, what we are called to is partnership with Christ. He has made our sins His, and has given us Himself and all that He has■all belong to the believer, become his property, for he is in partnership with Christ. The believer sometimes is very weak, not strong enough to say that all things are his, and appropriate them; but this will ever be the language of faith. To lay one's hand on everything Christ has purchased, nay, even on Christ Himself, and say "He is mine," what else do we want? This is the way to view our blessings as in Christ; but we are so selfish, so apt to look at the blessing, instead of looking at Him who blesses; but let us look more to Him, touch Him with the hand of faith, for we never touch Jesus without getting blessing. It is God's mind, His will, that His own dear children should be in the consciousness of this fellowship, that they should know the wonderful treasure that is given them in Jesus, and that is the reason He has manifested Himself. Faith says, I know the Father loves me, and I go and serve Him. Dear brethren, can you gather up a little of what this fellowship is; namely, the happy consciousness in the soul that Jesus is ours? God gave the Church to Jesus, and Jesus to the Church; there is the blessedness, and all we want is to know more and more of it.

Nominal profession had come in when this epistle was written. God had brought in fellowship, and the devil had taught some to have fellowship on their lips, while their hearts were in darkness; and the Spirit of God directed the Apostle to write, to clear away the mist, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." (Ver. 6.) God says so.

“God is light;” and if we walk in the light we prove the cleansing power of the blood. (Ver. 7.) There are many uses of the blood; the remission of sins is through the blood—life through the blood—but here it is its cleansing power, and it is only as we are in fellowship that we prove this. I do believe that if a man is really converted, it is his privilege to see that his sins are forever buried in the sepulcher of Jesus; always to know this, because it depends on God’s testimony to the value of the Lord’s death, not on fellowship. He may know it if not in fellowship, but then sin and corruption have power over him; while in fellowship he has power over it—he is one with the Father and the Son. Do not start back and say, Is it possible that a person can be in a state in which there is no conscience of sin? Yes, it is the state in which all ought to be; having no conscience of sin, though consciousness of sin. A carnal unregenerate man can do nothing but sin; every thought, word, and act, are sin; but the conscience of a believer may be blessedly clean through the blood of Christ, though the moment you look at self you are conscious of indwelling sin. If you say, I have not experienced the purged conscience, we answer, God has provided for it in the shed blood of His beloved Son, and faith in God’s thoughts concerning that blood will enable you to realize this wondrous blessing. Seek and ye shall find. (Heb. 10:2.)

I would not for a moment direct any one to look into himself who is walking in fellowship; but if not, look and see what temper, what lust, what worldliness, what Babylonish garment hinders fellowship, and put it away.

If we confess our sins, God is just to forgive and faithful to cleanse. (vs. 9.) The great mystery of the gospel is, how God can be just, and yet forgive sin. He is just in forgiving, for the sin was laid on Christ, and judged on Him.

The Apostle says in the first chapter, “These things write we unto you that your joy may be full;” but in the second chapter, “These things write I unto you that ye sin not.” It is impossible to be in communion and in sin. Willfulness is sin. Only follow self-will, and that is sin. All unrighteousness is sin. It is the teaching of the great Liar that you can have fellowship with God, and sin too; but God’s object is to raise us above it, and you never can be in fellowship but when you are above sin. When sin comes in, what are we to do? To lie down helpless and hopeless and say, “Where is the blessedness I knew?” All my fellowship is gone! No. Blessed be God He has made provision, not only to bring us into fellowship, but to restore it when lost. It is the desire of God’s heart that we should be in fellowship with Him; sin interrupts it, and shall we hang down our heads in despair? No. “We have an Advocate with the Father.” When any of us sin, Satan stands ready to accuse us, to tell God of it, and to desire that He will punish us. What then is our consolation? “We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” This word righteous shows His fitness, that His advocacy is not hindered by anything, that He is qualified for the office. Satan cannot say that He failed in one point, and he watched Him most narrowly; but He stood immovably, and now He is our Advocate. But when Satan accuses, how can our Advocate benefit us? He cannot deny my sin. He cannot palliate it. He cannot draw a veil over it. He cannot make light of it. What then is to be done? Well, “He is the propitiation for our sins.” The advocacy of the blessed Jesus is connected with this propitiation, for there must be something more than advocacy, there must be blood. There is the Beloved One in the presence of God not to palliate my sin, not to make light of it, but to show the value of His own blood, His own work on the Cross. He can stand and meet every insinuation of the wily serpent against us, and say, “It is true they have transgressed, but there is My blood.” I know nothing to silence Satan but the blood; there is the power of the

advocacy, there is the ransom, the price that Jesus has paid. Satan may war against us, but the blood answers all. What is the conclusion we may draw from this? You say, I am out of communion. Well then, come in again; there is the blood before God, it answers Satan, and keeps the way open until the last of God's little ones is brought in. So if you are out of communion, come in; if pride, temper, anything, I do not care how horrible, has hindered it, there is the High Priest at God's right hand, and I say, Come to God; do not suffer yourself to be hindered, do not look at self, but look at God, believe Him, that we have an Advocate with the Father. You say, I am such an unclean creature, I have been rolled by the Devil in the filth of sin, till I am loathsome in the extreme; well, that may be, but look at the blood, and Christ is honored. Come at once, the worst way that Satan can hinder is breaking down confidence in God. Oh, poor unclean ones that have been doing deeds of darkness, look at the provision God has made, confess your sin. It may have been the power of the world leading you to do what you know is wrong, or some evil temper, or lust, but look at the rent veil, the High Priest, the blood, and what is to hinder? It is nothing but an evil heart of unbelief that keeps us from God. Oh, ye backsliders, could you but look up and see what God has done, what provision He has made, meeting us in every way suited to our varied necessities! Oh, consider that Christ crucified is the sin-offering. Days, months, or years may have passed since you tasted this fellowship, but come now; whatever be the amount of your sin, it cannot be greater than God's estimate of the blood of His dear Son.

May God make us to know more of the cleansing power of the blood, and to live daily in fellowship with Him through its power; to walk above this evil world, its ways, follies, sins, in His presence where our joy is. May we be enabled by faith to continually look up and see Christ at the right hand of God! May He be brought so near, and become so precious, that all else may be easily given up for Him, and that we be strengthened to bear the cross for the "little while," looking at the eternal weight of glory.

One word more. If, beloved, you have been allowing any evil, look at the blood, and renew your fellowship with God.

A Thought on Daniel 2

DANIEL is called into the presence of a Gentile. He sees him from head to foot. One power in the earth after another passes before him. From the day of the Chaldean to the day of the Little Horn, he follows the man of the earth. I ask, is there a single moment in the history which gives his soul relief? Is there one touch in the varied picture which detains his eye with desire? Observe him as he traces the image from head to foot, or as he inspects the four Beasts, or any of them, and you will not find a moment or a feature that gives him anything like satisfaction.

There is a long season of forbearance on God's part, but there is no delight for the Spirit in Daniel. God does not smite the head of gold, or the breast of silver. There is a succession of powers, but throughout all long-suffering on God's part, but no delight for the Spirit in Daniel. The Judge is silent. As the Psalmist speaks, the right hand is not plucked out of the bosom, neither is the heel lifted up to the perpetual desolations. (Psa. 74:3.) But the divine long-suffering works no change in the thoughts of the prophet of God, about the moral of the thing, from first to last.

Nothing does for the heart, or for the hope, of Daniel, but that judgment which removes the Gentile altogether, smiting the image from head to foot.

Matt. 8:22-26, tells us first, that the disciples obediently followed the Lord; next, that they found themselves in a storm; and then, that their Lord made "a great calm," to the praise of His name.

Christ and the Church

WHEN first, in counsel deep, Eph. 1:4.
The Church was brought to view
In God's eternal mind, Eph. 3:11
Though none His purpose knew,
The Father gave her to the Son, John 17:2, 5
And He betrothed her for His own.
But when, in after days,
She brake His holy word, Rom. 5:12
And treacherously untrue,
Departed from the Lord;
He brought her back, though hell withstood, Rev. 1:5.
Wash'd from her sins in His own blood.
Part of that Church are we, 1 John 5:50
Whom He did thus redeem, Eph. 1:7
Learning by daily proof, 1 John 1:7, 9.
Our daily need of Him; 1 Pet. 2:4.
Taught by the Spirit to confess
Jesus our only Righteousness. 1 Cor. 1:30.
Yea more, to crown the whole,
His gracious plan to prove,
Our union 's found in Christ,
Nor earth nor hell can move; Rom. 8:39.
One Spirit with the Lord this proves,
In loving us, Himself He loves. 1 Cor. 7:12.
Nor can He cease to love, John 13:1
For His own precept is,

“Ye husbands, love your wives;”

And will not Christ love His? Rev. 22:9.

Will He not cherish and refresh Eph. 5:29.

Bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh?

O yes! Christ loves the Church, Eph. 5:25

‘Tis her He lives to bless; Heb. 8:25

He cannot love her more, John 15:13

Nor will He love her less; Heb. 8:8

Fair in His sight, cleans’d by His word, Eph. 5:26, 27.

A Bride adorn’d meet for her Lord. Rev. 19:7

The Epistle to the Galatians.

(Notes Taken of Lectures.)

Chap. 3:21-29; 4:1-20

WE left off the last time at an important point, showing that there was no second party to the covenant into which God entered with Abraham. It was a covenant of promise, of the same character as that which God had established with Noah and “his seed, and every living creature;” a covenant absolute and unconditional, and under which we now sow and reap. The question then arises, “Is the law against the promises of God?” No, says the Apostle, “for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” Righteousness and life are inseparably connected, both in the law and in the gospel. The law pointed to righteousness as the way to life, but it could not give life. Such was man, that the law, instead of being to him the ministry of righteousness, became the ministry of condemnation; instead of the ministry of life, it was the ministry of death. All that the law could do was to show man his impotence, and to force him out of the position of a doer into that of a receiver. “The law was given by Moses,” but it could not give; “but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” It is a hard lesson to learn that from beginning to end we are only receivers. We become Christians by what we receive, not by anything that we do. We receive righteousness, eternal life, forgiveness of sins, Christ Himself. Let the uppermost thought in the heart of one Christian be, what have I received? and in that of another, what must I do? surely the one with his heart set at liberty will run the way of God’s commandments, and have more true and blessed thoughts of God than the other.

How strong is the language of the Apostle as to the hopeless misery of man had he been left under the law, “the Scripture hath concluded all under sin,” shut up as it were in hopelessness, “that the promise faithwise in Christ Jesus, might be given to them that believe.” The blessing comes in the way of faith, not in the way of works. The law might serve to make a man conscious of his need, but the gospel meets his actual need in the way of deliverance from it. There is all the difference between being “shut up” and set at liberty.

Ver. 23. “But before faith came we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed.” This verse remarkably shows the necessary spirit of one quickened by the Spirit, yet in his conscience under the law; his spirit was the spirit of bondage. He was a “prisoner of hope,” craving liberty, yet knowing not how to get it. “Before faith came,” is evidently that new and wondrous way of righteousness in the way of faith, and not in the way of works, now so clearly and fully manifested. The law kept the saints who were under it as it were in jail. Look at Hezekiah. He was in bondage under fear, of death, shut up in prison unto the faith that was afterward to be revealed. With regard to him and to others, the Lord says to His disciples, “Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”

Ver. 24-26. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

The Apostle had before regarded the law in the light of a jailer, imprisoning those who were under it; he now changes the figure and presents the law as a schoolmaster, or rather as the confidential servant of the house, who conducted the youths to and from school, and watched over them in their games; and this too till they were emancipated from school, and were able themselves to take the place of men. This place the law had till Christ. It so strictly controlled those who were real saints, that they had no more liberty than the youth under the vigilant and strict care of a tutor. Just in proportion as saints under the law rose above the law looking to the faith, or the Object of faith to be revealed, did they know liberty. Such there were even in the worst times: those who "fearing the Lord spake often one to another, and thought upon His name." Such there were, a faithful remnant, when "the fullness of time was come, and God sent forth His Son"■a Simeon or Anna, waiting for the consolation of Israel, looking for redemption in Jerusalem. But we find in the Lord's own personal disciples, that they never stood in conscious liberty till fully emancipated from the law. How different the state of the same disciples before and after Pentecost. When the Holy Ghost came down from heaven as the witness of Jesus in glory, and of the preciousness of His blood as known in heaven, then they were free, they acted as those who were not servants but sons. Then were they justified by faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus; and were no longer under the rigid or even suspecting care of the tutor. They were grown up, come to man's estate, had attained their majority, and could enter into the enjoyment of their rich heritage. It would have been more forcible, and in keeping with the illustration, had the word rendered "children" (ver. 26) been rendered sons; not infants but sons, those who had come into possession, and not merely into the title of all their privileges. Now, after attaining to this standing and condition, to turn to the law, would it be to turn from the liberty of sons who have access to the Father through Jesus, to be under the rigorous and irritating control of a tutor. How clearly does this illustration apply to the condition of many real Christians; still in their conscience they are under law, they are not standing and acting in the liberty of the sons of God. They make salvation a future object, instead of enjoying it at present. And while this is the case there will ever be the tendency to serve God and Mammon, instead of walking in the happy consciousness of an emancipated people.

Verses 27-29. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise." How important is the, true doctrine of baptism, and how little understood. It is only those taught of the Spirit who can regard baptism as God regards it, even that the believer in Christ is regarded by God to have died in Christ, to have been buried with Christ, to be raised up with Christ, and to have put on Christ. Surely, if we have put on Christ, we need neither our works nor service to commend us to God. The believer appears before God in that which he has put on, even Christ. All differences between one believer and another are merged in this one essential difference between all believers and all others, that they have put on Christ, and therefore are all one in Christ Jesus. This doctrine is full of comfort, the weak believer appears before God as the strong, the one who tremblingly touched the hem of the garment of Jesus, as the Apostle Paul himself. They have alike put on Christ.

But there is a difficulty to be met; the promises were to Abraham and his seed, how then shall a sinner of the Gentiles get connected with Abraham? Here the Judaizer was on strong ground, and might use it to teach the disciples, "except ye be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved." It is very natural to insist on any hereditary title to which we can lay claim. On this the Jews insisted in their controversy with the Lord. (John 8) The Lord allows they were the seed of Abraham, but He denied them the title of children of Abraham, because unlike Abraham, they had no faith. The Lord struck at the root of their confidence, not denying anything they truthfully claimed, but chewing them the state of their own hearts in the rejection of Him. The Lord allowed that they were the children of the kingdom, but only to be cast out. (See Matthew 8:12.) Peter addresses them as "the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with Abraham." (Acts 3:25.) Paul gave the Jews the place of hereditary title. "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." They rested in their hereditary privileges ■ "much every way" ■ and despised and rejected Him who was Abraham's Seed, the sum and substance of all promises; the Gentile, sinner of the Gentiles, who had no hereditary claim on God, received Christ, Abraham's Seed, and thus became connected, through his Seed, with Abraham himself. He had the faith of Abraham, by having put on Christ, and thus he became, not through proselytism and the law connected with Abraham, but through Christ. He did not reach Christ through Abraham, but Abraham through Christ; and thus became Abraham's seed, not in the legal but in the promise order ■ "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise."

Chap. 4:1-5. "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Having mentioned "heirs according to promise," he contrasts that condition with that of heirs under the law. The heir under the law is like an infant under guardians, until either, according to the law of the country, or the arbitrary will of his father, he is of age and competent to act himself. Now all this while he differs nothing from a servant, though he is in title possessor of all the estate, he cannot act even on his own property without the permission of his guardians. This, says the Apostle, aptly represents the condition of those who were heirs under the law. The elements of the world, their much boasted ritual and ordinances, acted the same part towards them as the guardian towards the minor. The ordinances of the law kept the very heirs of God in a state of pupilage and bondage, until God's set time came for sending forth His Son, the promised Seed of the woman, to which the eye of faith had been directed from the moment of the fall; yet, "made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." "Fullness of time" is a remarkable expression, many preparatory steps were needed, to show to man that he could only stand in blessing in redemption. Redemption, so to speak, was the original thought of God; but it did not come forth in strong relief till Pentecost. Man stood not in innocence; highly favored, he stood not under law, and those who being under law were quickened by the Spirit were waiting for redemption. At last the time came, and God sent forth His Son, made under the law, magnifying it by implicit obedience, He magnified it further by bearing its curse, and thus redeeming from under it even the very heirs, that they might come into their proper place as sons, which they could not do so long as they were under the law, for the law kept them in the position of servants, and they could only have the spirit of

servants.

Ver. 6, 7. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." The Apostle here contrasts the state of the Gentile believer standing in the full liberty of the gospel, with that of the saint under the law; and thus points out to the Gentile believer the folly of putting himself into the state of the saint of old by going back to the law, when that very saint needed the work of Christ on the Cross to redeem him from under the law, in order to take the place and have the spirit of a son. They were sons, not servants, heirs, they had attained their majority, and had liberty of access, with all confidence, to the Father; would they again go back to a state of pupilage, and only think and act as a child in that state? The argument is very cogent; there is an intended contrast between, "that we might receive the adoption of sons," (Ver. 5,) and "because ye are sons." (Ver. 6.) The Spirit of adoption was not the portion of Old Testament saints, it is the blessed fruit of accomplished redemption, for which even the disciples of the Lord Jesus had to wait till after His ascension. (See Acts 1:4, 8.) The Gentile had never been under law, but had received the promise of the spirit of faith. The Spirit of adoption may not be realized by Gentile Christians, because of their Galatian state; but when realized, it makes the believe say, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage." And this is the portion of him who knows the Father, and has the Spirit of adoption. Little cares, little trials, little perplexities, make up the sum and substance of our little lives; to meet these we need the Spirit of adoption, for we need a parent's care and a parent's heart, and it sufficeth us to be shown "the Father." We lose much holy joy, because we so little know the Father. How would the thought, My heavenly Father knoweth what things I have need of, deliver us from being cumbered with many things! Rarely do we find Christians going as children to their Father, telling Him the little things that try and vex them, sure of a Father's heart. Many are strict and busy in public acts of worship, but it is in the closet where we specially have to do with the Father, and to tell Him our own private necessities in secret. Legality obscures the sense of the relationship of God, as the Father. It makes us think of legal adoption, instead of real relationship. Legal adoption must needs be accompanied with the spirit of a servant, such was Israel, and yet turned out; but if the Son makes free, then are we free indeed. It is well to dwell on the confidential nearness to the Father into which grace brings us through Jesus. Through Jesus we have access by the Sprit unto the Father. Legalism effectually bars this access. No wonder, therefore, at the strength of the Apostle's language, when he saw God's own children debasing themselves as the Galatians were, by putting themselves under law.

Ver. 8-11. "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." I delight in that turn here, "or rather are known of God." At the best, our knowledge of God is imperfect, but He thoroughly knows us, and He who knows the worst of us is the very God who has "justified us freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." What strong language! God's own legal ordinances are here said to be "weak and beggarly elements;" beautiful and excellent in their time and place, but they sink into weakness and beggary before Jesus Christ and Him crucified, the one grand ordinance of God. They are not only profitless, they are

hindrances; yea, says the Apostle to these bewitched Galatians, you are going back again to your old idolatrous ways, and dealing with the living God as you did with your dumb idols, by observing days, months, and years. And all my labor in preaching to you the gospel of the grace of God appears to be thrown away. How applicable is all this to the Christianity of the present day. How painful to see many, who once seemed to love evangelical truth, bowed down under a system of ordinances, observing days and months, to the obscuring of their own vision of the one Object which God sets before us, even His blessed Son, in the glory of His humiliation and the glory of His exaltation.

Ver. 12-20. "Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are; ye have not injured me at all. Ye know how through the infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you."

The Apostle here, as at the beginning, argues from his own case. "I am as ye are." I take no vantage ground over you, because I was, "touching the righteousness in the law, blameless;" no, I come down from that to your level, and take the same ground, as a sinner of the Gentiles. So does Peter. "We (Jews) believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they." It is not for Gentiles to come on our ground, but for us Jews to take yours. The Apostle reminds them that he held out no attractions to them, but the attractiveness of the Cross of Christ to the really awakened sinner. (See John 12:32.) They had overlooked his personal infirmity, in receiving the blessed message of which he was the bearer; and as the bearer of such a message they had received him as "an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." But what was the blessedness they spake of? Did it make them happy to hear Paul propound to them the words of law as the ground of their acceptance with God, or a system of ordinances as the ground of their approach to God? No; he had set forth before them the Cross of Christ, and through that the law abolished, "sin made an end of," and "everlasting righteousness brought in;" and, in consequence, such nearness to God as may be faintly known in the confidence of a child in the love of his father. Other teachers tried to set them against the Apostle and his doctrine; and all their love for the Apostle, and zeal for the truth he had preached, vanished away when the Apostle left them.

Let us not be surprised at seeing a return to ordinances. We may trace it up to that legality which is in all our hearts. The reason that real Christians know so little happiness is that they are legal; and when they are so, they try to make others as miserable as themselves; for legal Christians always try to measure other Christians by themselves; judging alike those who are above and those who are below their standard. The only antidote to legality is to have "Christ formed in us." This is the special office of the Holy Ghost, who glorifies Christ, taking us away from the law unto its real end and object, even righteousness, ■and "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."

'The more spiritual our occupation is, so much the greater is our danger of resting in it, and stopping short of God Himself.'

The Epistle to the Galatians.

(Notes Taken of Lectures.)

Ch. 4:21; 5:1-5

THE passage ch. 4:21, to the end, is a very remarkable illustration of the point the Apostle is handling. He refers to the law as being, in principle, in existence four hundred years before the law was given. An early incident in the history of Abraham illustrates that on which the Apostle is insisting, namely, that the entrance of law into the family of faith, issued in such disturbance, that there was no peace in the house till the law was got rid of. In the fifteenth chapter of Genesis Abraham says to the Lord, "Behold to me thou hast given no seed, and lo, one born in mine house is mine heir. And behold the word of the Lord came unto him saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them, and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness." Abraham believed that God could do that which Abraham could not do. It is this which the gospel presents to us, that which is impossible with men is possible with God. It is possible for God to make a sinner perfectly righteous, and the way in which He does this, and the ground of His doing it, is the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that no question ought to agitate our minds as to complete justification. But there is an hereditary disease in the family of faith, even the disease of unbelief; and we see in the history of Abraham before us, an early exhibition of it. He had left his country and kindred at the call of God, but he must needs attempt to get by his own strength that blessing which God promised to bestow by His power and grace; hence, the giving of Hagar to Abraham by Sarah, and Abraham and Sarah endeavoring to obtain the promised seed through Hagar. (Gen. 16:2, 3, 4.) This was, in fact, attempting to get the promised blessing in the way of law. The immediate result was, that Sarah was despised by Hagar; the moment we turn to the law we have contemptuous thoughts of grace. Sarah deals hardly with Hagar, and she flies from her presence; but God comes in and commands her to return and submit herself to her mistress. Yes; law must submit as it were to grace, even to that "grace which reigneth through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." The father of the faithful tried to get the promised heir by his own power, instead of leaving it to God; and he brought trouble into his house, for in reality he was acting on the principle of law—**for law and grace can no more exist peaceably together, than Hagar and Sarah could dwell happily together in the same house.** When we rest our souls on the work of Christ already accomplished, there is joy and peace; but when we bring in law, there is no peace; the two things cannot stand together. It is a believing legalist, or legal believer, which is regarded here. The moment we say, "except" we do this or that, we cannot be saved, we mar our own blessing. The new covenant is without any "if;" it runs thus, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins, and iniquities will I remember no more."

Ver. 22, 23. "Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman; but he who was of the bond-woman was born after the flesh; but he of the free-woman was by promise." The word "flesh" here is used to denote man's power. If you bring in man's power and attempt to add it to God's, there is confusion and trouble. "Flesh," the power of man, is here contrasted with "promise," with that which God Himself had undertaken to do. "Which things are an allegory."

These facts in the history of Abraham present to us great principles. We shall do well to study Genesis as a book of principles. We shall there find the germ of that which is fully manifested in the New Testament. Look even back to the garden of Eden, and see what a deeper truth was shadowed, when Adam said, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." "We are members of Christ's body, we are of His flesh and of His bones."

"These are the two covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar, for this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

The law in its spirit must always gender to bondage. Agar, in the presence of Sarah, could never forget that she was a bond-woman. The law could never lead any under it, to cry, "Abba, Father." This is the result of accomplished redemption, and one of the richest gifts that comes down from above. True, we take our place as servants now; but it is as sons, even as the Son of God Himself took His place as a Servant here; and hence our very service is liberty. The whole Jewish system was necessarily one of bondage. Jerusalem which now is. Jerusalem not knowing redemption. But, through redemption, we are connected with another Jerusalem, the Jerusalem above, and which is free. "we are come to the Mount Zion, and to the heavenly Jerusalem" and, therefore, have "the garment of praise instead of the spirit of heaviness."

The Apostle quotes Isa. 54:1, as an illustration of the Jerusalem above, being the happy mother of free-born children. "Rejoice thou barren that bearest not (Sarah nor Agar); break forth and cry, thou that travailest not, for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband." How blessedly does this follow immediately on the description of the sufferings of Christ, so graphically depicted in ch. 53! We should read the chapters together, to see even the present glory following those sufferings, in enabling "the barren woman to keep house and to be a joyful mother of children." This is a true type of grace. The law knew nothing of praise. Sarah's child was the child which God gave. So it was with Hannah subsequently. The barren woman bearing, can only find utterance in praise. The greatness was with Ishmael, while Isaac was in obscurity; so it was with Esau, while Jacob was serving; but grace must be tasted ere praise can burst forth. When the work of Christ was finished on the cross, and presented as the object of faith; to those who saw it, and believed in it, nothing remained but praise." Rejoice, O barren, that bearest not."

Ver. 28, 29. "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But, as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." There is nothing that man has more instinctive dislike of than grace; in his own thoughts man hates the grace more than the holiness of God. When Isaac, the child of promise, is weaned, Agar's son is mocking at him, as despicable in himself. "Even so it is now." Grace is despicable in the eyes of men. The more man glories in the development of his own powers, the greater will be the antagonism of man to the grace of the gospel. That which man esteems most in himself frets and kicks against grace. The unrelenting word comes to Abraham, "Cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." "Grievous," indeed, was it to Abraham to cast them out; it went against his feelings and affections to do so; but it was not more "grievous" to Abraham to do so, than it is for us to turn the law out of doors; it cleaves to us, it seems so grievous to give up the works of our own hands, and renounce that in

which we have most prided ourselves. But until Agar is gone, there is no peace in Abraham's house; until the law, and all expectation from it, is thoroughly renounced, there is no peace in the soul. "Being justified by faith, we have peace."

Neither does the thought of the dignity of being heirs of God possess the soul, till all expectation from the law is entirely abandoned. The son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman. "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free." No man has ever earned an inheritance from God. If we are heirs, it is because we are sons of the free-woman. But it is hard at all times to maintain the place of a son and an heir of God. The spirit of the age, which is the boastful spirit of the mighty resources of man, is peculiarly opposed to this. The character of profane Esau is remarkably stamped on the present age, ready to get present blessing, but despising the highest present blessing, even the birthright, the most precious privilege to those who are born of God, sons and heirs of God; but it carries with it nothing to satisfy the present craving; and therefore men say, "What good shall the birthright do me?"

Chap. 5:1. "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." "If," says the Lord Himself, "the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." It is into the liberty of sons that Christ has brought us; although the glorious liberty of sons be that for which we wait, even to be manifested with Christ, the Son in glory; yet, even now, it is a glorious liberty to have access unto the Father with confidence by the Spirit of adoption, instead of having such a yoke of bondage as Peter complained of (Acts 15) imposed on us by those who would tempt God, by forcing the law upon us. The only one who is free from law, is he who can look at it, in all its condemning power, and knows deliverance from it by the Cross of Christ. (Rom. 7:4, 6.) And he alone who is thus delivered from it, upholds the law in all its integrity, as "holy, just, and good."

Ver. 2. "Behold I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Christ will not take the place of a helper, to the detriment of His place as a Saviour; any dependence on legal righteousness, whether moral or ceremonial, renders Christ profitless to us. The common phrase, "I can do nothing by myself," means that I can save myself by Christ's help. No; if you are looking partly to yourself and partly to Christ, "Christ shall profit you nothing."

Ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."

"He that is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law." The holy majesty of the law, the rich grace of the gospel, and the glory of Christ, alike forbid the vain and senseless attempt to make our own partial obedience, together with Christ, the ground of our salvation. Such an attempt—and oh, how common it is!—is to "fall from grace," in the scriptural sense of the phrase; it is to abandon the firm rock of God's grace in Christ Jesus for the sandy foundation of our own righteousness. Such an attempt makes Christ of no effect to the one who makes it; it nullifies the work of Christ on the cross, as though it were a needless work, and it bars from all the benefits of Christ's propitiation. This language of the Apostle, strong as it is, is peculiarly applicable to the lax and erroneous doctrine, that by the work of Christ all are placed in a salvable position, and that by means of a

certain measure of obedience, and certain observances, they may hope to be saved. But those who thus “fall from grace,” not only abandon the truth of the Gospel as to present justification before God by faith in Christ, but they surrender also the true Christian hope, by making the attainment of righteousness their hope, instead of making present righteousness, through faith in Jesus, the sure warrant for expecting glory. “We,” says the Apostle, in the name of all believers, wait not for righteousness, but the hope to which righteousness is entitled. If we tamper with the truth of present acceptance in the Beloved, we undermine the blessed hope for which, through the Spirit, we are entitled to wait—even glory. We see many real Christians looking to justification, as something in prospect, instead of seeing that they possess it now, and therefore rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. The Lord Jesus is our righteousness, and our hope is grounded on that righteousness; and what a glorious hope it is, even that those who are thus “righteous shall shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father.” “Faith,” the law knows not such a principle; it cannot command love; but faith is a living energetic principle, and worketh by love to God and to man.

Ver. 7-9. “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leavened) the whole lump.” It is “obedience to the truth,” as set forth by God, which is the great point: many make their very partial obedience to the law a positive hindrance to obeying the Gospel. It might appear a little matter but the Apostle discerned in this legal tendency that leaven which would corrupt the whole Gospel, and deprive it of its glory. When the truth of the Gospel is at stake the Apostle speaks with stern decision. It is a bad sign when there is not stern contention for the truth of the Gospel when there is more sensitiveness about our own honor than the honor of Christ the honor of His Cross and spotless righteousness.

Ver. 10-12. “I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offense of the cross ceased. I would they were even cut off which trouble you.”

The Apostle knew that “the truth” he set forth would be responded to by the heart and conscience of those who had been quickened by the grace of God, however for a moment that truth had been overlaid by legalism. This was his confidence in them through the Lord. How little do legalists regard themselves as troublers of others, (Acts 15:24) troublers by means of “words,” or doctrine and equally little do real Christians know that they are self-tormentors by indulging in legalism. But the Apostle will not spare the legalist teacher, be he who he may, he shall bear his judgment. Yea, hard as it may appear, uncharitable as men in our days would say, he hesitates not to say, I would that such were even cut off. The glory of God and His Christ are in question, as well as the salvation of a sinner; and such being the case soft words are not in season. The Apostle knew that the preaching of modified legalism, and modified grace, so as to mingle the two, would take away the offense of the Cross; but had it ceased? No; His Gospel was offensive to human righteousness, and to human wisdom and it is still the same in the wide-spread Christianity of our day, which is but a copy of the Galatian error. The offense of the Cross still exists, when the Cross is set forth as the verdict of God against man’s righteousness, wisdom, and goodness, and the introduction of a new order of these things, even Christ and Him crucified, the wisdom and righteousness of God to those who believe. This is still the offense of the Cross.

Verses 13-15. "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

When men hear us speak of freedom from condemnation, and our happy liberty, the thought rises in their minds, If I believed that, I should do just as I liked. The flesh would take advantage of God's grace to go its own way. The flesh may even whisper to the believer, "You are safe, therefore take your ease." But no; if set at liberty by Christ, we are made free in order to serve. Many Christians connect their worship and their service with their salvation. But the truth is, they are made free by Christ in order to worship, to serve God and to serve their brethren, yea, and to serve all men so far as they can. It is the law of liberty, the law of love. Real practical godliness is associated with the principle of liberty. Until the question of our individual acceptance is settled, we are not free to serve God. Legality leads us to speak of one another's faults. A legal spirit is ever a faultfinding spirit; but when we see the grace in which we live and move, instead of judging we shall intercede for others. If we were more in the region of grace we should be less in the region of judgment; but the moment we become legal, we bite and devour one another, instead of ministering grace one to another, cheering one another onward, so as to enable us to tread with a lighter step the weary wilderness.

Decision

No. 1.

NOTHING is more contrary to the Divine mind than carelessness or indifference in the things of Christ. Decision has always marked the Spirit's teaching. In the days of Moses, the Lord spake, saying, "I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy... for I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44, 45): and in the Lord's last letter to the churches, He plainly shows His abhorrence of a lukewarm spirit, and an undecided state of heart. "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." (Rev. 3:16.) This solemn sentence should awaken in our souls deep concern, as to whether His all-seeing eye discerns luke-warmness or indifference in us, and also stimulate us afresh to ponder those Scriptures which open up the state of heart, and character of walk, that become us as children of God. May we be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to deal faithfully and unsparingly with ourselves under the keen edge of the word of God!

First of all, it is of the deepest importance that we begin within. The self-righteous spirit is generally occupied with thoughts of what we are outwardly in the sight of those around; but, in the presence of God, we feel that the Lord seeth not as man seeth for man looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart, yea, that He searcheth the heart and says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," (Prov. 4:23,) and "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word." (Is. 66:2.) David seems to have felt this, when he said, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Psa. 51:17.) Paul also, by the Spirit, says to us, "Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Col. 3:2-4) It is this matter of self-consecration to God that is of the first importance; outward things will readily fall into their proper places when the heart is fresh, and fervent, and unreservedly dedicated to its rightful Owner. But, perhaps, some poor trembling child of God says, How can I be brought into this state? By what power can this heart of mine be brought into such happy subjection, and willing obedience to God? Certainly not by our own efforts. Self can never rise above the earth; fleshly energy has no power in spiritual things. The power of the Spirit, by commending the love of God to us, and shedding abroad this love in our hearts, alone can accomplish it; for "we love Him, because He first loved us." God alone then, by the power of His wondrous grace, can melt our hearts, call our affections upward, and set them on things above. Hence we sometimes sing,

"Take Thou my heart, and let it be,

Forever clos'd to all but Thee;

Thy willing servant—let me wear

The seal of love forever there.”

It is in Christ alone that our hearts really find a satisfying portion; and, dwelling in His love, we each can truly say, “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage.” Self has no place in pure and undefiled religion. “Christ pleased not Himself.” We are not brought into blessing and privilege by works of righteousness that we have done. We were slaves to sin and Satan, but we have been made free, and have become the property of another; whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light. We are the Lord’s; our spirits, and our bodies are His, for He has purchased us with His own blood. This, realized in our souls, is the spring of all decision and steadfastness in the ways of God. To halt here will make us lukewarm indeed; we shall neither stand out boldly for Christ, nor for the world. Let us beware of unbelief, as to what God has done for us in Christ. The word of God stands forever. How tenderly He speaks: “When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, in thy blood, Live... Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I aware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord, and thou becamest Mine.” (Ezek. 16.) Yes, beloved, we are His, and He is a jealous God. We are not our own, but bought with a price, therefore, says the Apostle, glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirits, which are His. We are not to seek our own things, but Christ’s; not to please men, but God; not to glory in the flesh, but to glory in the Lord.

Ah, beloved, let us remember that all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do, that he weigheth the spirits, and understandeth our thoughts afar off. Have we thought enough of this? Do we sufficiently consider that our spirits are not our own? How is it with us now, beloved? What has occupied our spirits the last hour? Have our thoughts been about the Lamb of God, His sufferings, death, and glory? Have our affections been where Christ sitteth? Hath our purpose of heart been more than ever to cleave unto the Lord? Has our single object been to exalt Christ? Have we been desiring to know Him and the power of His resurrection? Have we been aiming to please God? Have we been serving the Lord Christ? Our spirits are not our own but His, and He hath, in wondrous grace, made us a spiritual priesthood, that we should offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Dear brethren, let us search and try our hearts, and turn again to the Lord! Let us be real! Let us deal honestly with ourselves before the Lord! No thought can be withholden from Him. He may call us to cut off a right arm, or to pluck out a right eye, if for our real good, and His own glory. Oh, do not let us flatter ourselves in our own eyes, as if God did not fully see every unsubdued working of pride, lust, love of money, covetousness, revenge, dishonesty, or “an evil eye.” If these weeds, which war against the soul, are allowed to grow, they will choke the word of God, and hinder fruit-bearing. All their evil roots are still within, for sin dwelleth in us; but by communion with the Lord, and feeding on His flesh and blood, we shall have dominion over these fleshly lusts, we shall be able to cast down imaginations, and the thoughts which exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, we shall be able to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and feel that we have not in vain cried,

“Lord! let thy grace, with sweet control,

Bind every feeling of my soul;

Bid all its vanities depart,

And ever sway my wayward heart.”

Jesus Among Little Children

Matthew 19:13-15. How often this passage has been dwelt on! What a lesson in the ways of Jesus have it, and its parallel passages in Mark and Luke, been for His people! Parents and teachers have resorted to them again and again; and children have through them received some of their earliest ideas of Him, “whom to know is life eternal.”

But the passage, as it stands in Matthew, is still more instructive when considered with its context. Let us look at it in this way. The Pharisees, in verse 3, would fain hinder Him in His path of “going about doing good,” by entangling Him with the religious questions of the day, on the subject of marriage. Their minds were wandering in the darkness of their own reasonings and traditions, and they were even wishing to try Him by the ever-changing standard of their own opinion.

But Jesus, whose delight was in the law of the Lord, and whose constant meditation was there, was at no loss. He mentions both the work of God in the garden of forming only one man and one woman, and His accompanying word, quoted in verse 5. In vain do they urge Moses’s subsequent permission to put the wife away if a writing of divorcement were given; they were told that this, like other things of the law, was not what God had “pleasure” in, but was only temporary and for their sakes. Jesus still holds forth the relationship as it stood in the mind and will of God, as one perpetually binding on those who stood in it. Thus the word of God was a “lamp to the feet” of Jesus, and a “light to His path;” and His obedience of mind was seen in contrast with their self-will and free thinking. Well might He say, (John 14:10,) “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself.”

The timid disciples next touch the subject. They refer to the burden the relationship might be, if this were the doctrine concerning it: they speak of its not being “good to marry.” Jesus’ answer admits that the ability to receive His teaching was not in nature—it must be “given.” Those who stood aloof from it “eunuchs” are then mentioned; compulsion making some to be such, and devotion to Christ’s service others; as Paul, for instance. (1 Cor. 7) Thus was the entering on the relationship seen to be voluntary; but when entered on, the nature of it to be learned from God, and God to be looked to for grace to walk in it.

How instructive is all this! “Order my steps in Thy word,” is the prayer in the Psalm; and here we surely see the doctrines and authority of that word brought to bear on life’s every day footsteps and relationships. Thus only will the rest of the verse be realized—“and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.” Thus was the mind of Jesus on all topics fashioned from the word. Human opinion, which is only mental self-will, originates or adopts, in matters of daily life, what maxims it pleases. God is not bowed to, nor His pure word loved. How different with Him whose ear was “wakened morning by morning to hear as the learned.” The “opening of” Wisdom’s “lips” on this occasion, as always, were indeed “right things.”

Such were His doctrines in contrast with men’s self-pleasing opinions. We next see His conduct, while still amidst life’s daily relationships. Children—“little children”—were brought to Him, and it

was instantly seen that He who drew His doctrine from the word of God walked in the ways of God. His doctrine was light, for "God is light;" His ways were love, for "God is love." He had taught the truth of God as to marriage; He now walked amidst the demands which the feebleness of "little children," (Luke says, "infants,") made on Him in divine love and patience.

His disciples were not prepared for this. Had their Master's steps been hindered by some more showy matter, such as the inquiry of the wealthy and fair-spoken young ruler, of whom we next read, they might perhaps have raised no objection. They might then, like Samuel, (1 Sam. 16:6, 7) have too easily concluded, that the man of stature and outward attractions was the Lord's anointed. But "little children" they could pass by; such "weak things of the world" were beneath their notice, still more, they judged, were they beneath their Master's.

These same disciples had thought His doctrine as to marriage irksomely strict, and now they could not bear being called on to tarry for "little children."

How true, then, it is that self-will soon leads to impatience, and pride in conduct; while He, whose very mind was habitually subject to God, glorified God also in the meekness and purity of His ways. In both passages He speaks of "the kingdom." He refers to some, in vs. 12, who deliberately avoid the marriage tie, not because they resist the life-long character of its obligations, but Jesus says, "they make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." "Kingdom of heaven" is again on His lips when these "little children" are brought. Wisdom's delights were ever with the "sons of men" (Prov. 8:31); and not less so now that in humiliation for their sakes He stood among them. The feeblest ones of that race were precious in His sight, for it was from among them, not angels, that the kingdom was formed.

Further: "the calling" was not mainly among the mighty, or the noble of the race; but "God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty." What wonder, then, that Jesus said, as the group of little ones stood around Him, "forbid them not to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Does not this passage, taken with its context, teach us the secret of a Christ-like care for children? In order to it, must we not be, with reference to all life's relationships, diligent students of The Word. Must we not be ready to say to all who confront us in our path, "Have ye not read?" Surely, if thus with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," we fight against "the desires of the flesh and of the mind," we shall also have our "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," among the feeblest and tenderest of "little children." Fathers will then not "provoke their children to wrath," nor teachers their scholars.

The strength for it is to abide in Christ; to feed on Him by faith; we shall then be like Him, not by fancied ability to imitate Him, which would be as though the thistle could produce figs, but they that eat Him live by Him, (John 6:57,) and so they obey "the example" left "that they should follow His steps."

Thus "they overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony."

A man may give up the world, and yet not give up himself. He will then surround himself with what is of himself, his own world.

“Enoch Walked With God.”

WASHED from my sins, redeemed and justified,
I peace with God enjoy through Jesus' blood,
That precious, precious blood which speaketh peace,
And is to me the source of every good!
My business now is with my God to walk,
And guided by His holy eye to go,
Sweet fellowship with Him to cultivate,
And His unclouded countenance to know.
To “search the Scriptures” often, and inquire
His holy perfect will yet more and more,
To have “this testimony” bright and clear,
That Him I please, that Him I “walk before.”
Oh! sweet employ; oh, heaven below begun!
Oh! deep and softly flowing peaceful stream!
Oh! holy friendship, better far than life!
These, as thy needful things, my soul, esteem.
‘Twill heighten every pleasure I possess;
‘Twill sweeten every pang I may endure;
‘Twill not depart, though life itself may fail;
‘Twill prove a portion, wealthy, safe, and sure.
And whilst I keep this “fellowship” divine,
I best may serve my Mends and brethren dear,
I best may testify to men around,
And e’en to angels high shall it appear.
Thus as I press my onward path of joy,
From strength to strength with certain step I move,

“Abundant entrance” I shall surely have,

Into my everlasting home above.

Let me then walk with God like him of old;

The single eye, the steadfast heart be mine;

From grace to grace advance, till glory come,

Where I among the ransomed ones shall shine.

The Epistle to the Galatians.

(Notes Taken of Lectures.)

Chap. 5:16 to the end

IT is very important to have the thoughts of God with respect to “the Spirit” as contrasted with “the flesh,” In the Apostle’s teaching, we find the doctrine of the Cross and life in the Spirit intimately connected. We cannot truthfully hold the one without the other. The Cross of Christ entirely sets the flesh aside. God’s judgment has been passed upon the flesh, by making “Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;” and then life in the Spirit, flowing from the risen and glorified Jesus, comes out in the proper place. The spiritual man is a new order of man, coming forth after death and judgment have passed on the old man. (See ch. 2:21.)

Ver. 16. “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

Walk according to the new principle which those who are quickened by the Spirit of God have received from Him. The Spirit makes us alive to new thoughts, new affections, new interests. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.” The spiritual man finds everything here antagonistic to him. He cannot be at home in the world. All his interests are in another sphere. He worships in an unseen temple, and has an unseen altar and priesthood—all is spiritual—and only if we walk according to this order shall we be kept from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. It is a very intelligible principle that the best way to keep out of bad company is to keep good company. And it requires but a small amount of Christian experience to trace our most grievous faults and failures to walking in the flesh; we forget what we have been redeemed from, and at what a price. If we walk not in the Spirit, having our desires, thoughts, and interests in heaven, we shall often fall even below the world’s standard of righteousness; because we have not the restraints which the world is forced to put on the flesh, to conceal its real character. When Israel ceased to regard their peculiar privilege of having God for their King, and desired to be as the nations among whom they were not to be reckoned, they speedily became worse than the nations. If Christians settle down into a conventional righteousness, they make the Cross only a safeguard from punishment, and know it not as a mighty separating power, as that which separates between oneself and oneself, and as that which delivers from the world. Hence their low walk; for the only real safeguard against fulfilling the lusts of the flesh is to walk in the Spirit.

Ver. 17-26. Another great truth is here brought out in strong relief. There is hardly a Christian who has not practically attempted to contradict the Apostle’s assertion, that the flesh and the Spirit are contrary the one to the other. If the doctrine of “progressive sanctification” were true, then would the flesh become gradually annihilated, and the contrariety would necessarily cease, because there would be no flesh to lust against the Spirit. But the Apostle’s doctrine is not so. It sets forth the judgment of the flesh in the Cross of Christ, and leads the Christian very experimentally to know that the flesh is enmity against God, by its constant lusting against the Spirit. We find ourselves constantly disappointed in ourselves and in others; but this only tends to teach us the unchangeable character of the flesh, whether regarded morally, intellectually, or religiously. Christendom is full of religious flesh; the worst kind of flesh, because it uses the name of Christ to sanction itself. But the Apostle does not make a one-sided statement, as if the flesh only lusted

against the Spirit—that would be Antinomianism. But the flesh is hindered by a counter lusting of the Spirit, so that it cannot carry out its own enormities. The flesh is still the flesh; and we can never put off our armor as though it would not rise up against us. There is nothing which is our safeguard so much as keeping our eye fixed on the Cross of Christ, and regarding ourselves as crucified with Christ; and then, however, the flesh would say, “Spare thyself,” we shall give it no quarter, but take up our cross. It is an important thing to be led of the Spirit. Where did the Spirit lead Jesus? Into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. The Spirit leads, and leads, too, into conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil; but the Spirit ever leads unto Jesus, and guides into all truth, and shows us where our strength is, not in legal endeavors, but in receiving out of the fullness of Jesus. “If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under law.”

Ver. 19-26. Here we have a catalog of the works of the flesh; while some are morally offensive to us, others are not so, but are equally offensive to God. “Emulation” is a work of the flesh; but it is the principle on which most of us have been educated, and in its spirit the most opposite to Him “who did not strive, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.” “Emulation,” as rivalry, or competition, is the life of the world—it is honored and respected, but it is but “the potsherd striving with the potsherd of the earth,” to the utter forgetfulness of the real condition of man before God, as a lost and ruined sinner. “Envyings and murders” are grouped together, even as they came into the world together in Cain. “Drunkenness and reveling’s” are grouped together, and are very often found together. “Reveling’s and such like” comprise all the exciting amusements, for which men are wont to pay so extravagantly, stage-plays, operas, &c. The world is glad to restrain some of the more gross works of the flesh for its own sake—drunkenness, for example; but would any associate together to reclaim men from “emulations, reveling’s, and such like.” By no means. Herod heard John gladly, and did many things; but when he touched his conscience, by saying, “It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother’s wife,” he put John in prison. “Sedition and heresies” go together, party spirit sacrificing the good of the State to support or benefit a few; and party spirit, for such is heresy, preferring one’s own will to the good of the Church. How many of the works of the flesh are unholily sanctioned by the name of Christ! But in this Epistle, while the Apostle presents us with the richest exhibition of the grace of God, he also comes in with a most unsparing hand against the flesh, its lusts, its affections, and its works. “The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teaches us to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

There is a happy contrast between “the works of the flesh” and “the fruit of the Spirit.” Where the Holy Spirit is, it works and produces not a single fruit, but a rich cluster of fruits—“love, joy, peace, &c.” Against such there is no law. The law restrained the works of the flesh, the Spirit produces fruit. Here, again, we find the fruit of the Spirit in close connection with the doctrine of the Cross. “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

How little of present spiritual joy do even real Christians know. They look forward to happiness to be enjoyed in heaven at some future time. But, says the Apostle, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit;” and not attempt the impossibility of serving God and Mammon. This is the root of the misery of so many Christians; they desire to know present safety and security; but they “walk as men,” and think of eternal life only in the dim and distant future. But if “we live in the Spirit,” we enter on “eternal life” now, and taste of its joys.

“Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” This is legalism. The moment I become legal, I say in my heart, “Thank God, I am not like that Christian.” He who lives in the Spirit lives near unto God, and being severe in judging himself, has little heart to judge another. He sees the beam in his own eye, and therefore is not quick to discern the mote in the eye of his brother. A legal spirit is a judging spirit.

Chap. 6:1-5. There is a restoring power in the grace of the gospel, of which the law was incapable. The law—the law of the land, for example—can find one guilty and condemn, but it has no power to restore. How legality comes out! A Christian has gone wrong, and brought dishonor on the name of Christ, and on the name of other Christians, and how often do we judge without any thought of restoration. The spiritual man knows how to restore, a power of which the natural man is ignorant; he can convict, but not restore. And in nothing do real Christians walk more as men than in judging others, instead of considering themselves lest they also be tempted. How wonderfully consistent is the doctrine of Scripture. “Considering thyself.” Let no Christian consider himself as proof against a fall, however faithful he may be. It is dangerous to presume on our faithfulness, but safe, in a sense of the unchanging evil of the flesh, to rest humbly, yet confidently on the faithfulness of God. Every Christian must know his own personal need of restoring grace, and to that should we look for the restoration of a fallen brother.

Christ has borne our burdens, even our sins; and His law is, “That ye love one another even as I have loved you.” We should go before God and make our brother’s sins our own, just as Daniel did, identifying himself with the sin of all Israel. “We have sinned, we have committed iniquity.” It is in this way we come into the apprehension of the restoring grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The very fall of another, which would naturally lead us to thank God that we are not as other men are, leads us into the place of confession, and thus we bear one another’s burdens.

How common and easy it is to glory with respect to another, by drawing a comparison between ourselves and another, to our own advantage; but we are not called to give an account of others to God, but of ourselves. “Every man shall bear his own burden;” and therefore “let him prove his own work,” and not his neighbors.

Men of the world pay highly for their pleasures; but, says the Apostle, “Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things.” Let him show that he appreciates the value of the truth of the gospel, and that he has as much delight in it, as the men of the world appreciate and value their pleasures.

Ver. 7, 8. This is a solemn word to Christians, both as connected with that which immediately precedes it, and as recognizing the solemn truth that “the flesh,” although it has received its judgment on the Cross, still puts forth its claims in the Christian, and craves to be satisfied. It is “the flesh” in the Christian. “He that soweth to his (his own) flesh.” It is easy to see that those who are in the flesh sow to the flesh, and as they sow so they reap. The Scriptures do not draw artificial distinctions, as we are wont to do; and turn the keen edge of the sword of the living God from off our own conscience, by making it apply only to the unconverted. But if the Christian sow to his flesh, he, a Christian, shall of the flesh reap corruption. “God is not mocked”—the flesh in the Christian is as bad as the flesh in an unconverted person. It is sad when the doctrine of the Cross is attempted to be used selfishly, making us only desirous to know that we are safe, and then to sow to the flesh. It does not require any very lengthened experience to prove to the Christian how

every attempt to sow to the flesh has issued in disappointment, if not in disaster and corruption. But there is a peculiar form of “the flesh” to which the Christian is liable to sow, and that is to religious flesh in some shape or other. There is the tendency in us all, as in the Galatians, to get off from the true doctrine of the Cross, to turn to ordinances, or to try to please the imagination, or to puff up the intellect; and when this kind of sowing takes place, what a harvest of corruption do Christians reap. And, oh! what a mercy, however smart the discipline, if all their works are now burnt up, and they, stripped of everything, are led to the Cross only to be saved by that, and nothing else. But there is an everlastingness in all that is sown in the Spirit. Where the Gospel is received it is everlasting in its effects; and there is an everlastingness in the cup of cold water given in the name of Christ. It is well for us to look to this our sowing time, for whatsoever we sow, that shall we assuredly reap.

Ver. 9, 10. The Lord’s ministry seemed to be in vain; but only seemed—it was His sowing time, and what an abundant harvest shall be gathered in from His death—that one corn of wheat fallen into the earth. The ministry of Paul seemed to end in failure, but his labor in the Lord was not in vain, as we are witnesses this day, getting strength, comfort, and refreshment from his instruction. “Let us then not be weary in well doing.” This is our time of “opportunity.” There are no such “opportunities” in heaven as we have here; no sick to visit, no fatherless, no widows no ignorant to instruct, no vicious to reclaim. Alas! on a retrospect, how many lost opportunities present themselves to our view.

Ver. 11-13. This appears to be the only Epistle which the Apostle wrote with his own hand. In others we find, another wrote at his dictation, as Tertius the Epistle to the Romans, and the Apostle closed with his benediction and signature. The Apostle’s spirit was stirred. Everything seemed to be at stake, by the tendency to fleshly religion which might distinguish man from man, without at all bringing his conscience into contact with God; but all fleshly religion, whether it consists in ordinances, or sentiment, or philanthropy, has one object, and that is to nullify the Cross of Christ. The true doctrine of the Cross can never become fashionable or palatable to the tastes of men, because it is unsparing in its declaration of not only the worthlessness of the flesh, but also of its hatred to God. Hence our danger of turning aside from the Cross to other things, which makes ourselves prominent rather than the Cross. The offense of the Cross has not ceased. Various are the devices to supersede or overlay the true doctrine of the Cross; and as it was in the Apostle’s day, so is it in our own, a busy activity in social improvement is used to conceal the glory of the gospel, which sets man as a sinner in a new and happy relation to God, the only basis of practical godliness. The prominent spirit of the age is glorying in the flesh.

Ver. 14-17. But the Apostle would only glory in the Cross of Christ. At the close of the second chapter, the Apostle propounds the doctrine of the Cross as separating between himself and himself—“I yet not I.”

In the fifth chapter he propounds the doctrine of the Cross in its great practical bearing. “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

But in closing, the Apostle presents to us the doctrine of the Cross in its mighty moral power of separating from the world, its religion, its glory, and its judgment. The world crucified the Lord of Glory; and the place maintained by the early Christians, in relation to the world, was as a crucified thing. And the real power of the doctrine of the Cross is to show the world in its true light as a

judged world, out of which the believer has, in God's amazing grace, been rescued (see ch. 1:4), so that if he be true to the doctrine of the Cross, he must be crucified unto the world; not only one who cannot help on its interests and objects, but one who stands in the way of its interests and objects. It may be said, "Christians are not so, the world both accepts their help, and gives them help in return." And, why? because Christians are not true to the Cross of Christ. They do not look at the world through the medium of the Cross. They do not see the world, and all that is in it, to be not of the Father," and consequently as much arrayed against Jesus as Judas when he betrayed him with a kiss. The experiment is easy. What place has Jesus and His Cross in the busy interests of men? But better to make the experiment closer. Is the world to ourselves a crucified thing, because we glory in the Cross of Christ, and from the Cross see into a glory, which makes all the glory of this world fall into the shade?

A new creation bursts upon us when we take our stand by the Cross, and see in it the judgment of God on the old creation, and we in Christ Jesus are of the new creation; and this is the rule of our walk. They alone who see the end of the old creation in the Cross, and Jesus as Head of the new creation in resurrection, can take the place of the Israel of God. They have power with God and man, because the flesh is broken and set aside, and life in the Spirit meeting its supplies out of the fullness which is in Christ Jesus. They walk after the Spirit-peace and mercy be on them.

The false teachers insisted on the outward mark of circumcision; but, says the Apostle, I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Scourgings, imprisonments, cold and nakedness, sufferings in preaching the gospel of the grace of God to sinners, have left their marks on my body. Let no man, therefore, trouble me with things indifferent in themselves.

Colossians 3

IN the fifth verse, “therefore” is connected with what goes before; because risen with Christ, because we are dead with Him, and our life hid with Christ in God, and because we shall appear with Him in glory when He appears, therefore mortify your members. In verses 12, 13, the very infirmities of our brethren are the means of bringing out our patience and long suffering—we should not be irritated by them, but act as the elect of God; neither should we irritate our brethren, but be patient. In verse 18, it is needful that the wife should be subject, otherwise the family will not go on well; and it is equally needful that the husband should walk in that love toward the wife, that the subjection be one of love, like that of the heavenly Bridegroom, who is never bitter toward the Church, His Bride; and so in proper order the children are addressed. Supposing the husband and wife to be walking in the fear of the Lord they are to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord. In this case the will of the parent is supreme, for it would be God’s will. The child is to be obedient: the parent should seek this from the very first; not yielding to the self-will of the child—indulging it at one time, and then being severe—and so provoking it to wrath; but at all times making obedience the rule.

And in verse 22, the servant may not get the affection of the wife, or the kiss of the parent; but he is taught to look for reward from the Lord. There is much which servants do which is not noticed; let them look for reward from the Lord, and let them learn the privilege of having communion with the Lord in their service, for He was a servant in this world.

Truth

“Sanctify them through Thy truth. Thy word is truth.

TRUTH is valuable only as it is practical. All truth is practical; let us beware of playing with God’s truth with the intellect; may we rather submit ourselves to the teaching of the Spirit through it.

Every truth has its antagonist error. One great door of error is to attempt to reconcile difficulties; this is to exalt our own understandings, and try to explain what God has not explained. Every crucifixion and denial of the flesh opens a door to the Spirit of God, and to the application of truth to our souls.

We have in God’s word a rich store of truth, but we need to get it into our hearts. It is a poor thing to have much light and knowledge, and yet to be weak and lagging behind. The obedience of faith opens the shutters to let in the light, disobedience closes them.

Let us fearlessly walk onward in the path of obedience, and our souls will then know and realize the power of the truth.

John 10

THE Shepherd who died,
For His flock will provide;
The Shepherd who leads,
Is the Shepherd that feeds.
He calls them His own,
And He now on God's throne
Doth carefully keep,
Both His lambs and His sheep.
Ere long He will come,
And take them all home,
To glory above,
There to sing of His love.
Then God will behold
In the heavenly fold,
The Shepherd who bled,
And the flock He hath led.
Decision.
No. 2.

THEN, again, as to our bodies; they also are not our own, but the Lord's. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" This was remarkably shown in the consecration of the priests of the last dispensation. The tip of their right ear, the thumb of their right hand, and the great toe of their right foot being sprinkled with blood, sheaved that they were wholly the Lord's. The redemption-price has been paid for our bodies in the blood of Christ, as well as for our souls; and we know that the Spirit of God will yet quicken these mortal bodies, and that Christ at His coming "will change our vile body, and fashion it like unto His glorious body." Our bodies then are the Lord's. Hence we are commanded to yield ourselves unto God, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. We have, therefore, no more right as Christians to use our bodies as we like, than to allow our affections and imaginations to revel in an un-unholy atmosphere. "The body is for the Lord;" and the Lord claims it too, for He addresses Himself to the various members

of our body. He commands the ear to hearken to Him, the eye to look to Him, the lip to praise Him, the tongue to be slow to speak, the hand to work in the thing that is good; yea, whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, to do all to the glory of God. And yet more, for we are exhorted "by the mercies of God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1.) Yes, it is but reasonable, if Christ gave Himself for us, that we should yield ourselves unto Him; that as He bare our sins in His own body on the tree, to save us from hell and bring us to God, our bodies should be entirely devoted in acceptable service to Him. Again, our body being the temple of the Holy Ghost, it is but reasonable that we should honor Him by implicit obedience to His leading and guidance. The person who walks with God, will be able to say with the Apostle, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." All real decision for Christ begins with ourselves. Let our hearts be abiding in His love; let us not grieve that Holy Spirit whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption; let us heartily and gratefully confess that we are not our own, but bought with a price; let our aim be to glorify Him in our bodies and spirits, which are His; then we shall not be barren and lukewarm, but our walk and testimony will be characterized by decision and power.

But further. We are still in a world which lieth in the wicked one. What is our position in reference to it? Here also the word of God is very clear and decided. Our Lord said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." And again, "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." (John 17:16, 18.) This at once marks out for us a very plain path. The only question is, what position did Jesus the Son of God take while in the world? Did He seek its honors, its wealth, or its offices? No; His path was diametrically opposite; for He always pleased God, and the world was without God. He made Himself of no reputation; His meat and drink was to do the will of Him that sent Him. The world not only knew Him not, but despised, rejected, hated, and crucified Him. Is the world any better now? No; the Lord has in grace called out of the Gentiles many for His name, but the world, and all its elements, and its relation to God, are unchanged. Still Satan is its god and prince; still it is under condemnation for the rejection of the Beloved Son; still its character is Christ-despising, and its course hastening onward to judgment.

Again. Christ gave Himself for our sins, not only to save us from eternal condemnation, but that He might deliver us from this present evil world; and the redemption-work of Christ, known in power on our souls, does practically and decidedly separate us from the world, its wisdom, its false religion, and its pleasures, as well as from its ungodliness. The more we realize the value of the Cross of Christ, the less attraction will the world have upon our hearts, and the more power we shall have over it, because we shall be increasingly assured that "we have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." By the electing love of the Father, the precious blood of the Son, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, our God has drawn an everlasting line of demarcation between the Church and the world. Oh! beloved,

"We're not of the world, that Meth away,

We're not of the night, but children of day;

The chains that once bound us by Jesus are riv'n,

We're strangers on earth, our home is in heaven."

Nothing, beloved brethren, will enable us to take a decided path for Christ while in the world, if we forget the suffering, death, and triumph of our blessed Saviour; but, abiding near His Cross, we shall be able to say like one of old, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14.) The grace of God teaches us to deny worldly lust. Satan's boastful temptation to the Lord was, that all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them were at his disposal. How plain then our path is; and, seeing what a heavenly calling and standing we have in Christ, what decision should characterize us! There is no room left for any question on the subject. "Be not conformed to this world," is the teaching of the Holy Ghost by Paul; while another Apostle, with equal plainness, says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (1 John 2:15-17.)

One word more. Not only are our bodies and spirits the Lord's, and are we called to hold forth the word of life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, and to shine as lights in the world, but what we possess is His also. David exclaimed with gratitude of heart, "Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee. For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers; our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thine holy name, cometh of Thine hand, and is all Thine own." (1 Chron. 29:14-16.) This was David's language: he felt that all he had was God's, came from His hand, and should be used for His glory; although he could also say, "I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God, gold, silver, &c., in abundance. Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of my own proper good of gold and silver which I have given to the house of my God," &c. He who has been so "rich in mercy" to us, knows that it is for our real good, as well as for His glory, that we should have an eye to His honor in the use of all temporal supplies, be they little or much. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." (Prov. 3:9, 10.) "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom," &c. (Luke 6:38.) When "great grace" was upon all the saints, we find that they so honored the Lord with their substance, that those who had houses and lands sold them for the benefit of their brethren; and so fully and decidedly did the grace of God operate in their souls, that none said that aught of the things that he possessed was his own. How unselfish is the working of the love of God in the heart!

Let us pause, dear reader, and consider these things before the Lord. What can give us a firm, even, decided step in the ways of God, but abiding in the sense of the eternal, immutable love of our God and Father in Christ! Realizing by the Spirit's teaching, that we are given to Christ, chosen in Christ, blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, redeemed by Christ, made accepted in Christ; that we are complete in Him, sons of God, and that we shall not come into condemnation, will give such steadfastness and stability of character and purpose, that, as to the world and circumstances around, we shall fall instinctively, as it were, into that path which is according to the mind of God. When it is otherwise, is it not owing to forgetfulness of what the depths, and heights,

and lengths, and breadths of the love of Christ are? “He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.” (John 15:5.)

We tremble to see Israel so soon connecting Mount Sinai and the Golden Calf; but how much worse is it to connect Mount Calvary and The World.

The Holy Ghost is the Witness of all that we have, and the Producer of all we should be.

If we take delight in the things God has judged, we shall also in those He is going to judge. Rather let us walk in the light of His judgments, drawn by the cords of His love!

Never occupy a young Christian with the faults of others. It is dangerous for the most humble and prayerful, but ruinous for the novice and the weakly.

Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 19:7-9, 21:2

BEHOLD, what a glorious nuptial day
Awaits the redeemed of God,
Whose sins and defilements are washed away
By Christ, in His own precious blood!
“The Lamb” is the Bridegroom,” and sinners “the Bride;”
O great marvel and wonder of love!
That brands “from the burning” should sit by His side,
And dwell in His presence above.
My soul, be thou “ready” to it at the feast,
“Arrayed” in the “fine linen” dress,
Prepared for the greatest as well as the least,
Of those who the Saviour confess.
Not a cloud in thy sky that morning shall see,
When the heavenly “trumpet shall sound,”
Each trace of disquieting sorrow shall flee,
And all shall be peaceful around.
And not for a time shall these blessings endure;
Thy sun shall eternally shine:
Every promise fulfilled, each privilege sure,
Thy Jesus forever is thine!
Whilst He the “exalted” and “chiefest” shall be,
“In Him” “without spot” thou shall stand;
That thou art His “fullness,” creation shall see,
And admire this work of His hand.
The world thou shalt leave with its sorrows and woes,
And gaze on thy Lord “face to face.”

“With Him” thou shalt have an eternal repose,
And feel His transporting embrace.
“The Bridegroom” is nigh, and He bids thee prepare,
To feast on His ravishing love,
To shine in His glory when He shall appear,
And dwell “with Him” ever above.

Our Calling

“Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.” ■Heb. 3:1.

“The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus.”■1 Pet. 5:10.

OUR calling is not from Egypt to Canaan, but from this present evil world to the presence of God and the Lamb in heavenly places. We are “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” We are purchased, made nigh to God, sanctified by the blood of the Son of God. He died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Our promised inheritance, therefore, is not “a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates....a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass,” (Deut. 8:8, 9) but “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”■ “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven.” (2 Cor. 4:1 Pet. 1:4.)

The SACRIFICE by which we approach God is not that of bulls and goats, which can never put away sin, but the sacrifice of Christ, which is so everlastingly efficacious as to purge our conscience, and to give us boldness with confidence in coming into the presence of God. We enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus. It was the Lord from heaven, the Lord of Glory, Jehovah’s Shepherd, the Fellow of the Lord of hosts, the Son of man, the man Christ Jesus who alone could and did put away sin; and this He did by the sacrifice of Himself.

Our HIGH PRIEST also, is not like Aaron, made after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. He, therefore, continueth forever, having an unchangeable priesthood. He is consecrated for evermore by the oath of God, a Minister of the Sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man; He is a Mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises. He hath entered into heaven itself by His own blood, now to appear in the presence of God for us; thus He perpetually presents to God that one offering by which He hath perfected us forever. Hence “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by HIM, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” No other priest could sit down; for he never finished the work, but was offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which could never take away sins. But so perfectly finished was the redemption-work of Christ, so eternal in its efficacy, that after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, He sat down on the right hand of God.

God’s testimony to the finished work of Christ was not only in raising Him from the dead, but when Jesus offered Himself and died upon the tree, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Prior to this, no one could enter into the Holiest (the place of nearness to God), under penalty of death (except the High Priest once a year with blood and incense); but the finished work of Christ so purged our sins, and satisfied divine justice, that the rent veil sheaved that the believer could now come at once into God’s holy presence, on the ground of what Christ had done. The Holy Spirit now bears witness, in the heart and conscience of believers, to God’s estimate of Christ’s work, declaring, “their sins and iniquities will I remember no more,” and, by

Christ, gives us access unto the Father.

“By Him, our Sacrifice and Priest,

We enter through the veil.”

Further: we were quickened, when dead in trespasses and sins, and have passed from death unto life. We have been delivered from the power of darkness, and have been translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. So that we are not now viewed as standing in the first Adam, but God, who is rich in mercy, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, to the praise of the glory of His own grace. It is in Christ, who is at the right hand of God, then, that we now stand. “God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” We may not always realize and enjoy this, nevertheless, the fact remains unaltered, that “our old man is crucified with Christ,” and that we “are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power.” God has already accomplished this for us in a crucified and risen Saviour. “We are members of His body, His flesh, and His bones.” Careless walk will grieve the Holy Spirit, and hinder our joyful apprehension of this wondrous grace; still, Christ is the Righteousness, Life, Forerunner, and Great High Priest, now in the heavenlies, for “all that come unto God by Him.” “As He is, so are we in this world.” “As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” So that the believer may well sing,

“Jesus hath lov’d me,

I cannot tell why;

But this I can find,

We two are so join’d,

He’ll not be in glory

And leave me behind.”

Our dwelling-place, therefore, through faith, is in heaven. We now know Christ in God’s presence for us; as the Apostle says, “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.” Our true riches, honor, life, treasure, and fullness of blessing, are in heaven, and there our affections should be. “We are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,” and “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory.” In reference to the world, we look for its terrible and just judgments, but our hope, our blessed hope is, that Christ will come from heaven, and take us unto Himself. All our obligations are heavenward; we are not debtors to the flesh; neither have we life, or peace, or righteousness from the world; but Christ gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus known in power upon our souls, will alone enable us to abide in heavenly places, to show forth heavenly-mindedness, and to know that all our resources of wisdom, honor, joy, and blessing, are in Christ. Thus realizing that we have died unto sin, and are crucified to the world, that our life is hid with Christ in God, we shall be able to say, “Our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven, from

whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, and fashion it like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." (Phil. 3:20, 21.)

Notes on 1 Peter 2:9

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” ■ 1 Pet. 2:9.

ISRAEL was a chosen people ■ “the seed of Abraham, Thy servant.” The children of God now are likewise a chosen generation ■ brought out of darkness into marvelous light. The Israelites were never Egyptians. They were in Egypt in the midst of those opposed to God; but this has not been the case with us. “Among whom we all had our conversation, and were the children of wrath.” “Ye were sometimes darkness.” There is a marvelous difference: external darkness surrounded them, they were maintained a peculiar people in the midst of Egypt, but we have formed part of the darkness which surrounds us. “They might have been spiritual when in Egypt, and many were carnal when out of it; but it cannot be so with us, our affections have been set on wrong objects ■ on ourselves. Self is the spring which has dictated our feelings, but we have been brought out of a condition of darkness into exactly the opposite; and the marvelous light spoken of here is no other than the life of Christ. We are a chosen generation, children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, a peculiar people. God has distinguished us. He distinguished Israel from the surrounding nations, but our peculiarity is a very different one from that of Israel. They had customs and habits to distinguish them from surrounding nations ■ a fringe of blue to remind them that they were the people of God. The Lord Jesus when on earth was alone, singular; His ways and habits differed from others. He was a man strangely alone ■ one; and so ought we to be ■ different from others, but united in our peculiarity. What distinguishes one, distinguishes all. The character which attaches to the Lord Jesus Christ is theirs; not only reckoned to them, but His very nature is theirs, though it is often marred and obscured. A believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is essentially different from all that exists on the face of the earth. God permits us to have intimacy with Himself in the secrets of His love. The royalty spoken of will be exhibited by and bye, and a marvelous honor and dignity it is which speaks of Christ being glorified and admired in all them that believe, not by them. Still there is a sense in which the royalty of priesthood is attached to the children of God now. “God who hath caused the light to shine out of darkness,” &c. We are called to show forth God; and this, through communion with Him, and acquaintance with things which are hidden from others, that as from a mirror God may shine forth in us. What a wonderful thought that we are made what is described here, (1 Peter 2) and that too for a purpose. When we think of what it really implies, it is almost overwhelming. And how is this purpose attained? All sends us to Jesus ■ to whom coming, &c. The more our souls learn our responsibility, the more we see what is expected from us; viz., to show forth the character of God, not merely to talk of it.

The way in which the heart is most comforted and strengthened when conscious of great failure, having become cold, formal, lifeless, is seeing the high position in which God has set us. It is never by lowering the standard that we can comfort ourselves; quite the contrary. If we lower the standard of what God calls us to be, we put ourselves on a par with what? Israel, angels, not children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. To speak of ourselves as being children of God, is to

speak of ourselves as being followers of Jesus. Every man by calling himself a Christian is saying, "Look at me, and I will show you what Christ is." A man who says, "I am a Christian," says, "I am a member of Christ, a partaker of the divine nature; I exhibit God." God has put us in a place of dignity. We are sent into the world as the Lord Jesus was. "As the Father hath sent me into the world, even so send I you;" and they were not sent until united to Himself, and made partakers of the same Spirit. When we call ourselves Christians, what do we not say? You hear people talk of others making a high profession, but what does that mean? I know of no higher profession than that of a man professing to be a Christian. Nothing can be higher, it is everything that a creature can be; higher than angels, and all Christians make this high profession. What did the Lord Jesus Christ profess before Pontius Pilate? What every sinner called by grace is bound to profess; viz., that he is in the world, apart and separate from all that belongs to it. The Lord tells His disciples they are the light of the world. He has given us life, and it is the exercise of that life which is to skew forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

If I think of myself for one moment as under responsibility to be these things of myself, I shall have no moment of peace. I must see that I am wholly dependent from first to last on Him who works in us to will and to do. The more we think of ourselves as in the highest place, the more complete our rest and joy may be. Some may say, if you tell me how great my privileges are, you give me joy; but to hear of responsibility, casts me down. This is want of grace, for the only means of doing that which we are responsible for doing, and being that which we are responsible for being, is the blood of Jesus Christ. It is only as we are chewing forth the virtues of Him that we are living. There is not the action of life without this. A man may be asleep, and that is the next thing to death; it is a cessation from all activity. The joy of the saint is when he is occupied with God, and God only called to eat of the hidden manna, and have the enjoyment of those who go no more out. The real enjoyment of the saint is in the exercise of that life, which, when exercised, spews forth "the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light."

Change and decay within, around, I see,

THYSELF, O Lord, make manifest to me;

Thou changest not, else all consumed were we!

O Thou, who changest not, our dwelling be!

The Blood

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”■Leviticus 17:11.

“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”■Heb. 9:22.

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”■1 John 1:7.

WE should think much of the blood, it is our way of approach to God; a way is now open every moment into the Holiest of all. The guilty heart cannot approach God, it willingly sets up a fence. What removes it? The blood. Look at all the expenditure of His grace from first to last to bring us nigh. When the blood is rightly used and applied, what is the result? Nearness to God. Are you living in this nearness to God? If there be a question concerning guilt, there is a remedy■the blood; thus the heart gets confidence, and fear and disinclination are removed. People talk of knowing its power, but no man knows it aright who does not feel in the embrace of God. Whose blood is it? The blood of the Lord Jesus. He presents His own blood; He takes, as it were, the death which is past, and holds it up before God. He is the living Mediator, presenting the blood which He shed to redeem us to God. He knows our hearts, our sins, our weakness, our fearfulness, and He presents the blood to give us confidence and assurance.

Job 29

THE evil in Job was want of submission to the will of God, an evil which we, beloved, often fall into. Instead of simply leaving his case with God, he justifies himself. This is brought out through the false accusations of others: they said he was a hypocrite, and they accused him falsely. He seems at one time to be willing to leave his cause with God; "days shall speak," &c.; but he is provoked to self-justification. Are we content to leave all with God, and leave him to justify us? Are we willing, in the midst of present trial, more severe, perhaps, than we have ever before gone through, to say, "Thy will be done?" We often say, "Any other trial than this, Lord," instead of simply saying, "Lord, Thou knowest best." We are even disposed to look at things through our own vision, rather than by faith, to judge of them. We are here reminded of Jacob, who said, "All these things are against me." He should have rather said, "Lord, I see the coat that it is covered with blood; I hear the report of the death of Joseph; but, Lord, I believe Thy word concerning Joseph, and leave it with Thee." He had heard God's truth as to the glory of Joseph. So let us, beloved, seek submission to the will of our heavenly Father, under whatever trial we may be, and say, The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

GOD in His wisdom has ordered our trials, and it is our folly that causes us not to welcome them. God sends us such trials as are exactly fitted for us. Who would reject a garment that every way suited him?

Our Heavenly Father knows best what will best serve us. He serves us by trials and by comforts. He says to one, come, and it cometh; to another go, and it goeth; to another do this, and he doeth it. Who would refuse servants of the best kind, when there is much work to be done? "To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." Let us remember that our trials are few, our evil ways many; our worthiness nothing, our comforts great. When God tries us let us consider how we have been trying Him. By grace we will not murmur, but humble ourselves under His mighty hand, and He will exalt us in due time.

The bud, bitter as it is, if examined into will be found beautiful; it comes from the hand of a divine workman; it has its pleasant odor. Wait a little, it will expand, and "sweet shall be the flower."

THE sad and sorrowful heart has a special claim upon Jesus. Take it into His presence, He will bind up the broken-hearted. He knows how to succor those who are tried. He did not first appear to the strong, so to speak, not to him who had begged His body, but to the poor broken-hearted Mary.

If I live for myself, I shall please the world.

If I live for the world, I shall please myself.

These two are one.

If I live for Christ, it should please His body, the Church.

If I live for the Church, I shall please Christ, the Head.

These two are one.

If we receive Truth notionally, we shall receive error also; there is no guard. The Divine guard against error is the Spirit of Truth, reading the truth in the written word, to the lowly, prayerful soul.

IMITATION AND POWER. ■ To imitate the early Church, to set things in the order once established, is not faith. Faith in God leads us to cast ourselves upon Him. We want power, and imitation is not power, nor will it give power; power comes from God alone. We cannot imitate power. We are guilty in regard to what we have lost, but God has infinite resources in Himself. We may discover our sin by comparing ourselves with the early Church, but we must find the joy of the Lord to be our strength. We may find many things at the close of the dispensation which were not known or realized at the commencement. Humiliation and sorrow, casting ourselves upon God in earnest prayer, is our best remedy for the evil of the Church. This is but little recognized, practiced, or valued; but, we may be assured it is well pleasing to God, and will have its sure reward.

Remarks on 2 Corinthians 4

Ver. 1. "Seeing we have this ministry." The previous chapter shows us what this ministry is. (vss. 7, 8.) "The ministration of the Spirit" means the grace, and light, and life of the Gospel, as opposed to the law. (3:12.) The more plainly he told it out, the better; not as Moses, who put a veil over his face. The law said do, and live; but it gave no power. Could the Son minister as Moses? No; and the moment the Son finds a ministry fit for His hand, the Holy Ghost finds a ministry fit for His power. (vs. 18.) "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord;" it is a glory that gladdens, not like Moses. This glory shines in the face of Jesus, and is indeed a gladdening glory; and the more widely it spreads its beams, the more the whole scene around is full of the temper and mind of heaven. But it is not merely the thing that is committed to his lips, rehearsed in the ears of sinners, and then have done with it, but he goes on to show how the soul may deeply enter into the power of it. And don't let us be satisfied; no; I will not assume that we could be satisfied with the intellect touching it.

Ch. 4:1. "Seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not." He had got the mercy, and it made him so happy to catch the smile of his gracious God, that he could not faint. There was plenty to try him, on the right and on the left, but there was nothing in God to try him; and he went through the scene around him without fainting; but if the gospel had been a sentiment with him, it could not have been so. Do we travel forth in all the exigencies of life, and find this sustaining us? Do we know the mercy of this truth, "Jesus loved me, and gave Himself for me?" But it was not merely that he fainted not, but he never took a crooked way to get out of a difficulty.

Ver. 2. Is it possible to read such a picture without panting after this image? What can be equal to that; to walk with a spirit lifted above the temptation to descend to the wretched tricks and dishonesty of the world? Do not let circumstances for a moment dare to measure the balance as to present happiness with such a mind as this. What is the way of the world? To make yourself happy in circumstances; to force some contribution towards happiness out of circumstances; but the Spirit of God takes you into another region.

Ver. 3. "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." If this Gospel be hid, it is hid in consequence of some depravity in the heart, or it would be received in an instant. But something of our own comes in; one says, I have bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it; another, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them.

We speak of weakness, and it is well; but if I am obliged to confess that my faith is weak, I confess an evil which has power over me. Unbelief is all chargeable on sin; so, when we confess, as we have reason to do, that we are weak, let us make the confession in the knowledge of what we are, saying it is a proof that the things of this world have not been driven out of the heart, in the energy with which they ought to have been.

Ver. 4. Does that increase your happiness? It does mine. Oh, let there be a thousand witnesses against self, rather than a suspicion of Jesus. No; this Gospel is so blessed, that if it had not to

struggle with the darkness with which the god of this world occupies the heart, it must prevail.

Ver. 5. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." No; we know his heart too well to think he preached himself. "And ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." How full his heart!

Ver. 6, 7. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." These vessels do not intimate what is morally wrong, but rather weakness, exposed to buffeting; and he goes on to describe the vessels. Verses 8, 9. It is in such vessels that God has committed this treasure. vss. 10, 11, 12. He is willing to pass through all this, that he may convey the water of life to others—that he may carry abroad that precious truth, to know which is life eternal. (vs. 12.) Death in him, but life in them. How little does one know of that. Are you accustomed to look at your own individual trouble as a secondary thing, or as a principal thing? With this dear, devoted man, his own trouble was secondary. What a wonderful lifting up of the Holy Spirit there must be, to land and plant us in such an experience as that! Who can write down, "My own personal history is but an item, if I am able to scatter a drop of the water of life, or distribute a crumb of the bread of life, be it through trouble, sorrow, or perplexity." But if you and I take the scales in our own hands, how prone are we to try everything by our own standard, and not in the balance of eternity. If you and I had such a mind as Paul, you would find yourself in company with Jesus. You are in company with Him, everlastingly joined to Him; but you would find yourself in company with Him in detail.

Ver. 14. Dear, devoted man! He looked beyond any honor that could be attached to earthen vessels, to the morning when they should be presented faultless before the throne of God with exceeding joy. The thought of the brightness of that morning lit up the night; and in another place he could say, "the night is far spent, and the day is at hand." The world looks to circumstances, to this or that scene, to make them happy; but Paul looked to no such thing. He looked through this night scene to the dawn of the morning without clouds, "unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Yes. His joy, His delight, the joy of Jesus, will be to introduce you to that glory. Oh! if my soul could grasp that as I would grasp some expected pleasure tomorrow! O that we may indeed grasp the expectation of that morning in the same way!

Ver. 15. This is another thought that filled his soul; he wanted to swell the chorus of heaven in that day. It was to be a time when all the company were to be presented faultless before the throne; but it was also to be a time when the harpers should begin their chorus, and it was his business to get more harpers in to swell it. Oh! if we could go and lay hold of a poor sinner in the street and tell him of this mercy, and the next moment to be able to say, "I have added a harper to the company that shall praise my Jesus through eternity." Yes; he looked beyond all here, to that time when the poor ransomed sinner should get his golden harp to sing glory to the Lamb that was slain. O may this not be the sentiment of the tasteful mind, nor the intelligence of the intellectual mind; but may it be a reality, a substance, and then we shall go through the scenes here, waiting for the joyful morning, when Jesus shall take to Him His power, and reign.

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