

GIRDLE OF TRUTH MAGAZINE (10 VOLUMES) - VOLUME 1

by Various

Volume 1 of the 10-volume Girdle of Truth magazine, drawing its name from Ephesians 6:14. The periodical provided articles and studies equipping believers with sound doctrine and spiritual truth.

100 Chapters

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Vol 01 - 1Pe_4:7

1 Peter 4:7

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." Pray always, and faint not because of the difficulties by the way; for it has been said, "that all in the way is a mere circumstance; but God is above it all, and faith knows Him to be a very present help." "Be sober," and cast off the "works of darkness," for we are "children of the light," and "in his light we shall see light." "Be sober, and watch unto prayer," for the master is coming, and looks for faithfulness in service. "Be sober," for "the night is far spent, and the day is at hand." Remember the words of Jesus, "Behold, I come quickly." May our hearts reply, "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Vol 01 - A Word to the Reader

A Word to the Reader

Dear reader, let me ask you to read the scriptures referred to in the various passages that come before you in this little publication, whether referred to in the way of illustration or of proof. With this, (and prayer for God's wisdom,) what you read will be plain; without it there is but little hope of your understanding it. Whatever can be understood without attention will be read without profit; but what may seem difficult on a first reading, will ordinarily be easy on the second.: and be assured that what is presented to you in these pages was never intended to be read as a newspaper, and then thrown aside. It only remains for me to commend you and this little volume to the blessing of God, who has permitted it to be brought to that measure of completeness, in the first year of its publication, of which such a work is susceptible.

EDITOR.

Vol 01 - Address

Address The first requisition in connection with the Christian's call to "put on the whole armor of God," is to stand, having his loins girt about with truth; and few Christians, who think at all, will deny that in the character of the present times there is a special reason to heed the exhortation. But it must not be supposed, from the title adopted, that those who have commenced this little work, think, for a moment, that they can, through its pages, supply this part- of the armor. The whole of the revelations of God, in His word, come under the comprehensiveness of this title; and according to his exigency will the Christian, who studies that word with the simple intent to do God's will, be furnished from its various parts with this girdle. But since it is proposed, as God may give ability, to present, in the following pages, truth drawn directly from the divine word, and truth that may advance believers practically in the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is hoped that the title, thus modified, may be allowed, and not be misunderstood, The necessity for such a publication has from various quarters been pressed upon those who have undertaken it, and, in attempting to supply the need, they may state, that whilst truth suited to help believers in "building up themselves on their most holy faith," may form the chief part of that which is communicated, it is not intended to exclude the presentation of the " grace and truth " of the gospel of salvation, nor prophetic subjects, so far as they bear upon the Church's hopes, and Christ's glory, and the world's solemn prospects.

It is intended to publish a number monthly, if the Lord will, and sometimes, if need be, a double number; and the desire of those concerned in its publication is that the poor and the simple, especially, may find such instruction to their souls as God may own, and may result, through His Messing, in a better knowledge of Christ's worth, and that thus His name may be more set by. To say more at the present moment is unnecessary, as the character of the work must be gathered from a knowledge of its succeeding numbers.

Vol 01 - As the Truth Is in Jesus

As the Truth Is in Jesus

Ephesians 4:21 The truth in Jesus is not a mere theory before our mind, but that we put off the old man, and put on the new. I cannot, however, do this in detail, except as I reckon that in Him I have put of the old man, and put on the new.

Vol 01 - Believers the Epistle of Christ

Believers the Epistle of Christ 2 Corinthians 3:2

It is good for our souls to dwell on what it is to be an epistle of Christ, though I am sure none of us can express the greatness of the calling. Any gathering of the saints is the epistle of Christ, "to be read of men." They are His letter of recommendation to the world. The world needs to ascertain what Christ is from the lives of the saints; although they might learn it, it is true, from the word. And the great importance of this place of witness is brought out by the tacit contrast with the law, "written in tables of stone." Just as the ten commandments were the declaration of the mind of God, under the dispensation of the law, so now the Church is the engraving of Christ, "written, not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart," to show forth the virtues of Him "who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light."

I would refer to one great thing in the life of Christ, namely, that He never, in one simple act, word, or movement of His heart, did a single thing to please Himself. "Christ pleased not himself;" and so "we ought not to please ourselves;" for "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Jesus said, "that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." This was obedience flowing out of love, and manifesting love. Nothing ever moved Him from that. The temptation to move from obedience to a commandment might come in a very subtle form, with all the ardor of affection; as when Peter said, in answer to the Lord's word about His sufferings and death, "This be far from thee, Lord." This was affectionate in Peter; but the Lord would not own it, for that would have been to turn from the Father's commandment. And what does He answer? "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Another thing I would remark. Not only was Jesus heavenly in His nature, but, as Son of man, He lived in heaven - as He said, "the Son of man which is in heaven." The whole spirit of His mind, the tone of all His feelings and thoughts, was heavenly. So if there is any motive in my heart which I could not have if I were in heaven, I am not like Christ.

Again, all the grace that was in Him was brought out to meet man's sorrow and misery, and to bear on every earthly circumstance. In this we often find our failure. Even when the motive is right, the manner is wanting in graciousness. But it was never so with Christ. He was always seeking to promote the glory of God; but never did He, in manner, on any occasion, depart from the spirit of grace. We often are not close enough in our communion with God to have confidence in Him. We become impatient, and resort to means that are not of God, as Jacob did, who had not confidence enough in God to say, "He will secure the blessing." Would not God have made Isaac give the right answer? Surely He would. So we often fail by not waiting upon God, who will bring the thing to pass, most surely, though we know not how. So it was in the sorrowful case of Saul. He would not wait; yet Samuel came at the end of seven days, and Saul lost the kingdom. And those who really are the children of God always sustain loss when they depart from confidence in Him. Christ was always trusting in God, and always waiting upon Him; and so He was ever ready for every

sorrow and misery; ever ready to bring out the resources of God to meet every necessity. It is touching to read the 5th chapter of Matthew. Every beatitude is a lively portrait of Christ. Who so poor in spirit as Christ? who mourned as Christ? who so meek? so hungering and thirsting after righteousness? His whole life was hungering and thirsting after righteousness. "The life was the light of men."

But, further, Jesus was the victorious man over all opposition, even though it were death itself. There is a great difference between good desires and power. The quickened soul may say, "O wretched man that I am;" but we cannot be the full epistle of Christ, unless we exhibit power over all obstacles - even over death. Death is given us. The believer, living in the power of Christ's life, has entire power over death.

Again, the Lord Jesus, amidst all His zeal, never failed in love. Strictly speaking, there is no motive in love, though there may be joy in its exercise; and this is our triumph. If I look for a motive, it is not love. Therefore love enables a man to meet all trials. Should one spit in his face, this makes no difference, for love abides; because it never draws its strength from circumstances, but rides above all circumstances. Nothing can be presented to a saint which can separate him from the love of God. The love which he enjoys triumphs over all circumstances. If we do not show this heavenly-mindedness of the love which is of God, doing nothing from any motive but obedience, we are not a true epistle of Christ. I might be walking lowly, but if I did not show out Christ, I should be nothing. So Christ. He gave no answer when God gave no word. And we, in passing through the world, should stand still and wait if we cannot see how we may so walk as to please God. In the latter part of the chapter, the apostle tells us how we may be acting as the epistles of Christ-ministers, not of the letter, but of the spirit. The letter refers to the requirements of God from man, which necessarily was a ministration of death. But the gospel is the manifestation of God, not from Sinai, requiring righteousness; but from His own throne revealing the accomplishment of His own righteousness, and sending a message concerning it to draw our hearts to Himself. To those who submit themselves to this righteousness, the Holy Ghost is given on the foundation of the righteousness, and He is in them a Spirit of power. So now we can use great plainness of speech, because we are speaking of grace. We can tell men that they are wicked, wretched, and helpless. We can speak all things plainly, because we are not expecting anything from them, but telling them of God's grace to just such as they are. We can speak plainly of God, for it is of the God of all grace. Israel could not look at the reflection of the glory in the face of Moses, poor though it was; but now man can look plainly - wonderful to say - at the full glory of God, because it is now in the face of Jesus. It is this very glory that tells me of the putting away of my sin. I see the glory of God, not dimly, but as of one who put Himself in my place as a sinner, and who could not be in that glory if He had not put away all my sin; for my sin is enough to dim any glory. What a glorious thing, not only to see God visiting my soul in grace, but that, so to speak, the glory has taken the place of my sin! The transition from the cross has left nothing between them! Thus we get righteousness in our Head, and the Spirit goes with the message, so that there is power, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The soul that submits to the righteousness of God becomes the epistle of Christ, because he is looking at Christ in the glory. This cannot be while only looking at Him down here; but when the eye is fixed on the Lord Jesus in glory, we get changed into the same image. The heart living in the glory counts all things else but dross and dung in comparison. This is the real victory - when all of this world surrounds me, to say, I do count

them but dross and dung. This is being like Christ. We soon learn the weakness of the flesh in this, but the faith that thus looks to Christ is the true victory. The apostle said, " I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." We sometimes say this too lightly, for we have not proved it. We may say a believer can do all things, but he could say, I can do all things through Christ, for he had proved it by deep experience and arduous conflict. The Lord give us so to recognize the power there is in Christ, as that we may heartily walk in the strength of it - though it humble us in the dust.

Vol 01 - Chastening

Chastening

If I am proud in my spirit, and lose the place of humility before God, and some lust breaks out; God may use this particular failure, and even continuance in it, to get at and chasten me for this root of pride, or of self-will, which seemed to have no connection with it. So it was with Peter; only in his case there was not continuance in the sin. Peter had confidence in himself, and this led to his fall. The Lord, in His grace, had provided for it beforehand; so He looks upon Peter, and breaks his heart. After this, He does not say one word about the particular failure; but He does deal with Peter in the closest way to bring out, and to root out, this confidence in himself. " Simon, son of Jonas," He says, "lovest thou Me more than these?" A second and a third time He says, "lovest thou Me?" So that at last Peter had to take refuge in the Lord's omniscience. He who knew all things could see the love which was in Peter's heart, though it might be no one else could.

Vol 01 - Comparison of Psa_63:1-11; Psa_84:1-12

Comparison of Psalms 63:1-11; Psalms 84:1-12 The difference between delighting in God "when the rain fills the pools," and delighting in Him where "there is no water."

These two Psalms are brought together with the view of showing the difference there is in the character of the blessing, and enjoyment of God expressed in them. Both are most blessed, and, in one way, each is complete in itself. But there is a marked distinction between them. The former expresses perfect enjoyment in God Himself, and in Him alone; the latter, the enjoyment of Him in the midst of blessings with which He, in His mercy, surrounds us, and in fellowship with them. As saints we must realize God in both these ways; though, in His mercy, His general way of dealing with us is rather that of the 84th Psalm; that is, granting us the assistance, the help, and the comfort of outward blessings, and communion with fellow-Christians. The 23rd Psalm is another example of this. It opens with what one may call the natural condition of a saint, the quiet, peaceful enjoyment of the green pastures, and still waters of the Good Shepherd. But that does not continue always; it is not the experience we get. Sorrow, and trial, and failure come in, and then we learn that He restoreth the soul. And by His strength made perfect in weakness, and the table spread in the presence of our enemies, we gain the knowledge of God, which says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." And our hearts need this sort of discipline, that we may not merely, as in the first moments of our salvation, rejoice in the love that has redeemed us; but that we may know with what a God we have to do, and learn, apart from all extraneous helps, what our portion is in Himself. In examining a little more closely the Psalms before us, we may notice the opening of the 63rd. It begins with the address: "Oh, God," not "Oh, Lord of hosts," as in the 84th Psalm. It is not His title in covenant with Israel that is before the soul, but the individual apprehension of what He is in Himself. "Oh God, thou art my God. My soul longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." Such is the land in which God is learned as our God - where there are no springs of refreshment by the way, no outward comforts, perhaps even no sources of spiritual help and strength, no "courts of the Lord," no "tabernacles." True, we may have seen and rejoiced in God's power and glory in these at other times; and so we ought, for they are divinely-appointed means of grace and help for us; but the psalmist, in verse 2, longs to see these "as I have seen them in the sanctuary." To see them in the dry and thirsty land is by no means so easy. They are not so evident there, and the heart sometimes finds it hard to say, "Thy loving-kindness is better than life" - better than all that ministers to life, than all the blessings and enjoyments in which life consists, and which are (whether spiritual or temporal) the offspring of the very same love and kindness of God. But we must realize the loving-kindness itself to be better than all the blessings it gives, and find it our joy when they are all withdrawn, If we have once really tasted it, we never enjoy it so much as when we have nothing else to enjoy. The Lord Jesus was, of course, the perfect illustration of this trusting in God, and finding joy in Him, too, in a dry and thirsty land. We know in what sanctuary He had seen God's power and glory; and His life proves He saw them equally in this land, which was to Him, how far more dry and thirsty, than to us! He could say, "I have meat

to eat that ye know not of;" and pray that His joy might be fulfilled in His disciples. " My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness," - this, too, in the same circumstances of barrenness and death. What a contrast between the actual position of a faithful saint and the joy which he derives from the presence of God. The 6th verse is but another expression of the loneliness and absence of all external sources of help and support. The light of day, even of the presence of others, all gone. Still the experience of what God has been gives confidence, and joy, and peace in the shadow of His wings; and the dry and thirsty land - the place of death to the natural man - becomes a place of blessing, and of proving the Lord's right hand upholding us. The 84th Psalm is quite another thing, as to circumstances; though, of course, all the joy and blessing of it spring from the same source. It is the full confidence in God, and desire after Him as a God that has been known and loved; expressed in Jewish language, as the tabernacles, courts, and Zion show, and having an application to Israel, of course; though I take it now in its spiritual bearing. The tabernacle is to us the heavenly places, where we enjoy God's presence, and which are the home of our heart; just as the nest is the home of the swallow, and the place where she finds rest and joy.

It is, perhaps, as especially assembled together, and privileged for a while to shut out all, save our heavenly home, that this Psalm regards us in this sense. " They that dwell in thy house shall be still praising thee." Praise is here the one legitimate object of our souls, and employment of our lips. In secret with God, conflict and petition, and the like, have all their place. In His house, our one occupation is to be still praising Him, who is our strength here, and the object of all our desires. These desires will never be satisfied until we are forever in His house, until we get to our God in glory; and therefore till then, the way thither must be the thing that fills our hearts. " Blessed is the man in whose heart are the ways." These ways may be rough, for they lead through the valley of Baca, the place of tears; but what matters this, if they lead home? If my heart is set on the end of my journey, the roughness of the way matters but little. It brings me where I want to be; and a smoother, pleasanter path, in another direction, will not even have an attraction for me - it does not lead home. It gives great decision and firmness to the christian character, to keep this simply before the mind. And after all, the valley of Baca is turned into a well to us; and we often find a deep source of spiritual blessing in the things that cause the trials. They are not pleasant, of course, but they are the means of breaking down these miserable fleshly hearts, and of making them fit to receive the blessing our God designs to bestow. Then " the rain also filleth the pools." Streams of heavenly blessing come pouring in upon us, making our path a continuance of refreshment and help. Thus a rough road, and His strength and help along it, is our portion. Then we are led from " strength to strength." The strength is ever tried by the needs of the way, but ever renewed by the grace of our God, " till we appear before Him in Zion." The only thing for a Christian in this world is the path towards glory, which leads out of the world. In that path he can never fall; the causes of tears become means to him of grace, and of the powerful refreshings of the Spirit. Living waters from above divinely reanimate his courage, and all this because the anointed is there: God looks on His face, and so all is secure to us. Nothing shall separate us from His love. "Neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall ever separate us from the love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord," prone as our poor hearts are to let any creature do it now.

Well, beloved friends, we must all learn God in these ways; learn Him in the midst of His blessings, and in a measure by them, perhaps, first; but sometime or other we must have our hearts tested,

by being cast over on Himself, and nothing else - being brought into a position where nothing helps God to make us happy, if I may use such an expression, and where we must find in Him alone our all, - our joy, our strength, our peace, our hope; find Him such too "in a dry and thirsty land where no water is." Still, blessed be His name, He has given grace, and will give glory, and withhold no good thing from us. Well may we say, " Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

Vol 01 - Conflict With Sin

Conflict With Sin

" If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:9.

We hear of nothing in this place but confession for forgiveness of sin; because God is faithful and just. I would commend the faith of the power of confession for bringing the power of God to cleanse from the practice of sin; - sin as embracing everything adverse to the new nature in Christ.

However slow, or by whatever number of stages, we come to the truth that except or besides Christ there is, and can be, nothing accepted in the presence of God, yet is many a sin and a full variety of evil excused, undiscovered, and slumbered over; and this in many who have come to the full knowledge of the ways of God, and have their portion therein. It is, however, a position of peculiar danger to know, and yet to remain stationary; it morally hardens the soul; for it habituates to evil in the light of God. Evil is permitted by habit, and hypocrisy is not far off.

Again, how sad it is that many a soul dear to God is deeply troubled at sin as it rises to the surface. It struggles, resists, and prays, and is uninformed of the provision of God to meet the desires He has implanted there - a thirsting after the image of Christ - blessed be His name forever! Let us suppose peace - unquestionable peace and acceptance in the risen Jesus - being in the light. Now if the Christian keep to the faith of life, and so in the consciousness of it, and of his calling, I doubt not hitherto undetected sin will often be revealed to him, and it is in God that it should be met, and before God; and confession is the way; and in God's presence will the light make it manifest, and abiding in it complete the circle of the image of Christ in the soul of the believer. To abide until we receive what we look for is faith. It will come, and come effectually, even in the power of God. It is here the conflict is to be carried on - here the heart is broken and blessing in new affections received. The previous question will only be - will he that has the conscience of sin consent to pass by his affections that are in the world, and enter there where he is to lose them? Has the Christian been contending with sin without the precincts of the presence of God? Then he has been contending where the enemy has the vantage ground; where habits may be altered, but where affections are never really relinquished; for the heart bargains for the sight, or thought, at least, of what is forbidden; but all must be swept away in the presence and power of God in the new creature. It is contest enough to pass by the affections that detain him, into the presence of God, which he now knows, and knows they are there to be relinquished. A sense of sin, if we have been awakened, would send us naturally to struggle in ourselves against it, and with calling on the help of God, while we do not discover that it is, in this case, under the law that we do it. How sincerely is this often done! Prayer - vexation with self - shame (but as if from our sense of sin we had a right to be free) possess the souls of such; and the love that God has to them for their mind towards Him, in their thoughts of sin, and the partial success even they may gain, keep them in the path of weakness, and frustrate them of their desires. They must come lower yet. If they really examined their souls, or rather let God examine their souls, they would find that they hay not really

such a sense of sin as they suppose. They have a sense of the dishonor of it, but not of the character of it in the light of God; and that is the reason why the taste of judgments alone really alienates them from it. But these they accept, because they are content, at all cost, to be brought nearer to God; increasing with the increase of God. They learn the judgment against sin in the presence of God; and what they learn in communion is what will be revealed. But the most important of all is the ground on which judgment is given, and to what the evil is in contrast, while he that confesses his fault is shielded from the burning rays of God's glory by God's love in Christ. That ground is that the believer, by grace attracted by that love, has received Christ; Christ has become his life, whether in capacity of object, which God now is; or in actual condition, developed or undeveloped. So little is commonly known of the calling of a child of God, or of the Church, Christ's body, in heavenly places, and of the grace the member of Christ receives in confession of Christ, and as witness in the kingdom into which he has been called, yet walking here below where Christ, as Lord, is nowhere acknowledged, that conscience is continually at fault for any resolution of its difficulties. It is often engaged in regulating that from which it should be wholly separate and free. Conscience in such a case vacillates, and its guidance is not to be relied on, because it can alone receive firmness by waiting on God; and, (I may say, without being misunderstood,) waiting for God, that having His mind, on however isolated a point, I should be in the way of a more enlarged understanding of His ways. If I had not my place with God in grace, I should be still incapable of coming to any resolution; but having that place, and knowing I have it, but not what it is, I enjoy His safeguard, as well as all that is needful to life and godliness, as part of His gift. I say this independent of any use of the word, for there may be great incapacity to use it, and yet the conscience is not to be neglected. Doubts therefore as to the world and relationships in it, and as to those arising out of it, can be well held, though God's presence be sought. As soon as I know that I am not of the world, but of Christ's kingdom, and chosen in Him, it settles a host of questions; but I have a conscience in Christ which brings many things in doubt, it may be, long before I know that; for His life is the light of men. I have received in Christ the capacity of receiving God, as an object; but Christ known in glory, becomes necessarily the veiled Christ of the world; so known to him that is a stranger here. Whenever I receive this intelligence (the gospel of the glory of Christ) I find my way with much less fear and trembling. A definite direction to obedience in the confession of Christ's disacknowledged rights, and the fulfillment of all headships,* will be found in the word, and as regulated by the Head of the body. Without this, and the faith of what we have in Christ, indwelling in our hearts by faith, (and one may say here, too, without faith it is impossible to please - Him,) all the Christian will present is a moderated world and a moral man. But when I do know Christ in me as the hope of glory, the presence of God is sought for the putting off the old man, and the putting on the new. This brings in quite another order; and the greater obstacle to a conscience, being thus clear in its judgment, is put away. Sin lives in the mind by neglect. The flesh, in very incipient, voluntary action is contrary to the new nature in Christ; and if these have found no home in us, be the occasion what it may, blessed be God. But if they have: the sense of their evil is perfected in the presence of God, and by confession there, yield to His grace. The power also that would regulate what is still to be acted in the flesh is found there, for the presence of God is the place where moral failings, which affect our duties, and their sources, are discovered and remedied. God in Christ is there. The new man in Christ is the eighth day of the cleansing of the leper, and we know the exceeding greatness of the power of God to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He

raised Him from the dead, and set him at His own right hand, &c.

(*"Works foreordained that we should walk in them," (Ephesians 2:10) does not, I apprehend, imply that we are ordained to them, though that also is true; but that the works are fore-ordained what they should be.)

There is a peculiar conjunction, and yet a difference, between the death of Christ and the blood of Christ, blessed and holy is His name. The spilling of the blood is the death, for the blood is the life. I am not cleansed by the death, though pardoned by His bearing sin and its penalty for me. It is by the blood that has been drawn forth to the death that I am cleansed. My heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience by the application of the Spirit of the blood-shedding unto death - I am washed by the blood. Nor is the dead lamb left without its use. It is the moral power of the cross on the old man. And I observe that the intent is that the dead lamb roast with fire should be wholly eaten, and what remains uneaten be burnt with fire; and in the same way in the sacrifice of the peace offering, the intent is that none should remain till the morning; and if it be a vow or voluntary offering all that is left on the third day shall be burnt with fire.

It is surprising how the slightest matter defiles - unguarded intercourse - the eye - the ear; and what wretchedness to a tender conscience (in the new creature) which has not escaped from under the law and has not its laver in heaven! But where habit has been contracted, before the soul is regenerate, how humbling, how painful, but how cleansing the work of the Lord in confession. How much worse if engendered after! - what labor in watchfulness to be free, and how sad its condition if not laboring under grace and in the presence of God. In whatever remains of the old man one fault hides a deeper, and the mass would terrify, if seen at once. But oh! the blessing of unpalliating confession! God would not have provided Christ had He not been a pure God, or had not the body of sin been to be destroyed. The character of the law carries trespass - the character of grace a new creature in power possessing the soul, becoming its life and movement. Man by it knowing his Father in heaven, and his Master at the right hand of glory; with a conscience formed by the Spirit. Where else than to the presence of God will the Spirit lead us about our soul? It is here, therefore, the soul is to be laid open to God, for Him to tell it of itself, of the judgment of sin, and of the fullness of His grace; here to become acquainted with God; and here to receive the white robe at His hands.

Vol 01 - Faith and Works

Faith and Works

James 2:1-26

It is a simple and general, but safe, answer, to any question arising on this chapter, i.e., as to that part of it relating to this subject, that God could not accept hypocritical faith. We are told by the truth that God cannot be mocked, and the conscience receives a safe direction on the matter by such an answer. But if the inquiry be pressed farther, it comes to a question of truth, of confession, and of glory; and the place requires a farther elucidation. The God of glory is presented to us from the first. The God (not the Father) of our Lord Jesus Christ. To us, indeed, He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; but God as the God of glory is the pivot of the truth revealed. The God of glory appeared to Abraham, and called him, in the power of glory, (κράτος δόξης) from home and kindred and father's house to a place that God did not, but would, show him. The sight of the God of glory was the secret spring of Abraham's path; for when he had come into the land which God had in mind for him, when He called him, which he was not then to possess, he refused to take possession of so much as a foot of that which he was to receive, in his posterity, at the hand of God, in God's own time. Abraham, individually, waited for and gets a city whose builder and maker is God. This was the faith of Abraham. The word of God is his perfect reliance, his dependence is on God; and he looks for all subsidiary things at His hand, and is chastised when he fails. He is invited to walk before God and to be perfect, in the hope the God of glory showed him. To do the reverse, that is, to distrust God, was Adam's sin, and to trust Him is faith. In this view all the difficulty of this chapter is dissolved.

We must now recur a little to the habitual - we trust habitual - thoughts of the believer, of the well-instructed believer at least, full of the joy of privilege and of his nearness to God, by the faith of the Son of God. Such a one knows and has believed the wonders of the grace of God in Christ, the sonship he has received in Christ, his union with Him, his place in the heavenlies, the hope of his calling, the love of the Father, and his worship of Him in praise and thanksgiving. If son then also heir, saith the scripture. Of what is he heir? That of which Abraham is heir - that of which Christ is heir - heir of the world, as joint heir with Christ, - but this linked, in pure grace, now to the child of God in grace. The sinner, the rebel in heart, corrupt, under judgment to return to the dust and not to die there, is sought and found of God in grace: his confession, as convinced by God of sin and of incompetency to good, leading in the path of God's mercies. To him then, so found, that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted unto righteousness; and now, not only to forgiveness and the non-imputation of sin, but unto imputation of life also by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Now faith was the special characteristic of Abraham which makes him the father of all that believe; and therefore it is said, if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed; for they have believed unto righteousness, and so heirs. Now here follows this great principle, that that characteristic must be carried into every relation to God. The apostle Paul is at great pains, so to speak, in the 4th

chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, to prove that it was by faith and not by law that we became heirs; for Abraham believed, and his faith was counted unto righteousness when he was in uncircumcision, (of which we are,) and the promise that he should be heir of the world was not to Abraham and his seed through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

Now the effect of the appearance of the God of glory was to bring Abraham out from the world in which he was, and to keep him out of the world into which he came in Canaan, while looking for the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, even the heavenly kingdom. This is different from the position of the Church, though linked to the Church. It is linked with the Church as its heirship, which is attached to it in Christ, - if sons then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, which shall be manifested in the dispensation of the fullness of times, but pregnant with present duty. No one ever trusted God and was confounded. Christ was the head and leader in this trust, and found resurrection. Abraham found all, too, in God. Christ was the author (so translated, but perhaps likely to give misdirection to the mind) and finisher of our faith, who endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. The obedience of Christ to all the thoughts of God about the world, - in His love to it, and in the full knowledge of its enmity and evil, and desperate condition; (He came because its condition was desperate;) His separation from it unto God in the midst of it; His obedience unto death - gave Jesus Christ His place, as Son of man, in glory. Abraham was also separate unto God. The God of glory was before both in their spheres. Christ came from the bosom of the Father. The appearance of the God of glory to Abraham made every word a sure ground and substance on which his soul rested and questioned not. Christ is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

Under such an aspect of truth no difficulty can occur as to the 2nd of James. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that bath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and bath not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (James 2:12-26.) With moderate examination it will be seen that the work of love (mentioned at verse 14) is but an illustration which would simply stand thus - You will allow, without question, that if a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not the things that are needful to the body; where is your love? What reward have you? Have you loved Christ?

Have you lent to the Lord? Surely not: you have mocked Him in such a feeble pretense to love. How shall you argue about faith otherwise than you would about love? Now Abraham's work of faith, in reliance on the word of the God of glory, was to leave his home, his kindred, and his father's house, - made him yield up his son, though all the promises of a land of earthly inheritance and universal blessing depended on this his only son. The more, in fact, that depended on that son, the more it was (in reliance on God's word) the occasion of a more ready yielding of him up, and he accordingly received him back again in a figure. The wisdom of the Holy Ghost in selecting this as the example of the work of faith in Abraham is most precious, inasmuch as it shows the depth of Abraham's faith above all other examples. It is more than abnegation. It was, together with a renunciation of hopes, the crucifixion of the affections, so concentrated we are told here; and he receives him back the new and risen man, the indefeasible surety of the promises. He refused to accept a foot of land, though using a portion as a purchase to bury his dead. The effect, therefore, of the appearance of the God of glory, as we have seen, was to bring him out of the world, to keep him out, and to cause him to yield up all to God. Rahab's work of faith was in preferring the people of God to her own nation, receiving the spies from their camp, and was saved by the type of the cross.

Now these are marvelous types of the works of faith in heirs of the kingdom. Of the extent of the faith of Rahab we do not so distinctly read as in the case of Abraham, but it was enough to bring her into the genealogy of Christ as her reward. Of Abraham's we hear plainly in Genesis, and in the with of Hebrews; and Abraham and others, as this chapter tells us, confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth. The works of faith, then, as heirs of the world, are characterized by the works of Abraham and Rahab. Where shall the saint understand them better than in the place where grace has placed him above in Christ. He finds there Mesopotamia and Canaan all alike to him. He leaves one - he dwells a stranger with his own in the other. The world has so absolutely departed from God, and is not only not subject to Christ, a condition to which sin had reduced it; but has driven Him out of it, and become guilty to final condemnation. He would have become the Savior of the world, and He will, when, as heir to it, He takes possession with all His saints and they shall be destroyed who destroy the earth. No thought that earth forms about Christ, no attempt to fit Him to it, does anything but falsify Him altogether and all the thoughts of God. This it is that makes it so difficult for those, to whom the grace of God in Christ has become known through the Spirit, to find their way in the midst of a false Christianity. But can the heir of the world, i.e., the saint, for he is joint-heir with Christ his Head, have any rule for himself but subjection to Christ as LORD, waiting for his inheritance. Show me your faith by your works. To me, therefore, the setting forth Christianity as blessing the world in its own course, and as being compatible with the claims of the world, its organization, direction (at least) of its services, its application of judgment, its ambition, its contests, its alliances, and its policy, is a denial of Christ as LORD, into obedience to whom no Christianity as it is can reduce them: nay, these have a course to which Christianity must submit, or rule in giving way and becoming more corrupt than itself.

It is quite true (and blessed is the case of such a one) that the affections I have above may form a taste and a conscience too, which, if waited upon, would repudiate the world, and its ways, and its acknowledged pursuits; but the line of demarcation, which the faith of Abraham and Rahab gives me, has not yet helped me, though the yearnings of the Spirit of promise has; while God surely

intended that the heavenly kingdom and its glory should have made the path plain, so that the wayfaring man should not stumble therein. The work of faith of Abraham was leaving Mesopotamia, and remaining a stranger in Canaan. The deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt, and the passover, and the redemption through the Red Sea into the wilderness, was a closer type to the Church. The wilderness was the place of instruction. They had been baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. Many saints die in the wilderness. Caleb and Joshua, alone of the stock that left Egypt at the age of intelligence, inherit in Canaan-God can bring in. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." (Revelation 21:7) It is a sad thing for a saint to die in the wilderness. This may not grieve, as it should, an indolent saint, who likes not the pain of confession unto reproach, and to be thought worthy of that kingdom for which he would suffer. Let them, however, consider that joining themselves to the world they must be scathed in its judgments. The saint who knoweth these things, or only feels them, laments the madness of those who shelter themselves, or rather think to shelter themselves, in the place to be judged. They are only safe if out of it. And when God finds His saints there, He, in grace, touches and reproveth - He breaks them to deliver them ere the day of visitation come. If they deny Christ as Lord, He cannot deny Himself. He, for His part, will deny them before the Father. A failure of understanding in the truth of faith and works, as exhibited in this chapter, and in the truth on which it is built here, brought the same confusion as the mixing of the dispensations has in other cases. The word "if," so often puzzling to the saint, generally applies to the judgment and reward of obedience in the heirship. We see the promise plainly conditional in Romans 4:12 TO THOSE WHO WALK IN THE STEPS OF THE FAITH OF OUR FATHER ABRAHAM. So absolutely is the walk connected with the heirship of the world and the glory of Christ. The hope of the Church is the being taken away to be with the Lord. The hope of the glory is the manifestation of the Son of God at His kingdom. There is a special application of "if," just in a contrary direction. "I tell you, if ye be circumcised, ye are debtors to do the whole law. Whosoever is justified by the law is fallen from grace." Here the condition is that you shall not work; if you work, you break the condition of grace. You can offer nothing. What is given in grace to the believer is beyond work. The Church does not purchase its place by works. The righteousness of God by faith, the possession of Christ as that righteousness, who was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, does this.

I am sure true-hearted souls will feel the value of the distinction made through this paper. In a concurrent publication, and with the same ends, in Vol. vii. page 284, (without, indeed, due clearness and development,) it was shown that the declension of the seven churches was from the confession of the kingdom having failed in Christendom. The cognizance of heavenly things alone lets a Christian pass through the world on easy terms, and a slight sneer or charge of peculiarity is all that will be suffered. It is true of him that is born of the Spirit, (as of the Spirit,) that the world knoweth not whence he cometh and whither he goeth; but he is so far comparatively little heeded; but the steps of the faith of our father Abraham bring about another aspect of treatment. Christ, the leader and fulfiller of confession, though full of all unfailing grace and virtue, is sure to meet the contradiction of sinners, and we are all of one, and therefore He is not ashamed to call us brethren. If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together.

There is another difficulty which the distinction solves, which is the question of judgment. The Church, as the body of Christ, the persons being His members, is past the judgment: there can, therefore, be no condemnation. Her judgment was in Christ - she shall not come into it; but all that

is not of Christ, and all that is done in the kingdom, does come into judgment; and our path on earth is there, and His reward is with Him when He comes. But how needful it is to be occupied with the blessings of the Church where faith of the gift and grace of God brings experience of God. From the place of the Church even His presence in the heavenlies is strength brought for confession, and the joy of the Lord is her strength. It is here wisdom and guidance is sought and found. In the midst is worship and the praise of God the Father and of the Son, for the place of her worship is there too. Here, therefore, the sight of the God of glory is granted, by whom in us the WORK OF FAITH is fulfilled in power.

Vol 01 - Fellowship With the Father and the Son

Fellowship With the Father and the Son

1 John 1:1-10 The great purpose of God, in all His dealings in grace is to bring us - and to bring us individually too - into fellowship with Himself. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father." - Thus we have the full knowledge of God, as far as it can be known out of Him, and that in full communion with Himself: not in the way of creation - that is, not merely as creatures, but in "union;" and we are made partakers of the Holy Ghost that there may be power; " we dwell in Him and He in us." There cannot be anything more intimate.

It is not knowledge or science that has anything to do with this; for if it be but the human mind working on the things of God, it is but that " high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." Babes in Christ have possession of these things, they have not to seek for them, they are in possession of them, though of course they have to ripen in acquaintance with them. Knowledge itself, mere knowledge, puffs up; but being brought low, the Spirit of God can act upon the soul and give knowledge in communion and in fellowship with God.

Although the Epistle of John is very abstract, yet it is abstract about things that the very feeblest saint knows in Christ. God is brought down to our nature, for God can come down to us in our weakness, in Christ. The difference between the writings of Paul and John is this, that Paul unfolds to us the counsels of God in creation - the counsels of God towards the Jews; (there are various developments of Christ's person, as in Hebrews and Colossians;) but John may be called more abstract, because he speaks of the nature of God Himself. The purpose and object of God is to bring us into full fellowship with Himself.

There are three things, I would here notice. First, the work of God by which we can stand in His presence perfectly free from any question of sin, so that we can enjoy all that God is. Second, justification by faith and acceptance in the Beloved - the perfect cleansing of the conscience, knowing we are accepted so as to be able to be before Him in perfect peace. Third, the new birth, commonly called regeneration. There must be a new nature capable of affections towards God. An orphan who never knew a father, has the affections of a child, is capable of loving a father, and is often very unhappy because without the object towards whom those affections would naturally flow. So the capacity to love God is that which we get by being partakers of the divine nature. The Holy Ghost is that which gives us competency to enjoy these things. We have an unction from the Holy One given to us, to enable us to enjoy what God has given to us. There must be our standing in the presence of God without our conscience being at work at all; a nature capable of enjoying God-a new nature; and power to walk in that new nature, which is by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. The thing brought especially before us is what that is we are to enjoy: the nature of the things brought down to the understanding of a poor sinner; and that tries the conscience, just as it moves the affections. God is light, and if I am brought into the blessedness of what God is, it must put the conscience to the test; and I ask, am I standing in it? If I am capable of it, then I enjoy all the blessedness of standing in the light, and am in a position to test all that pretends to possess this

character. " God is light." He is bringing this home to the hearts of the saints. And this must be by presenting Christ Himself. There was, at the time this Epistle was written, a great deal made of development, and He wants to bring them back to the truth. Science, so called, had got in. The character of apostolic teaching was to bring them back, "earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." " But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned." "That which was from the beginning." My soul ought to know Christ better every day. The moment I get "God manifest in the flesh," I cannot know anything out of that, but that which is false. The question of knowledge is to give place to Christ. If I get there nothing can shake me. I am in Christ. " These things write we unto you that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." Do you believe on the Son? then rest there.

1st verse. - First, it was from the beginning; second, it was a real, substantial person they had known familiarly, not a doctrine; that is the blessed secret of all. If they have Christ, then they have all that the Father has, all that is revealed of Him: and they cannot go from that without being wrong. They have got eternal life, the perfect revelation of God - the power of life in Christ. This is what is presented to us as the full enjoyment and the safeguard of the saint. It is ours, though that which was with the Father, yet was so near to us; (not union;) but so near to us that nothing could be so near as Christ Himself. Instead of wanting anything between myself and Christ, it is revealed to me, so that nothing could be so near to me as Christ Himself. This is the eternal life that was with the Father. And it is as we study the Lord Jesus Christ that we shall have affections established towards Him, which nothing can break. The poor woman who was a sinner had that confidence in Him that she had come to Him, and loved Him; but the secret of our joy is to know the love of Christ to us; and then we have confidence in Him, understanding that God has come so near as to reveal Himself, and inspire confidence. The more we go out and study Christ-the more we penetrate into His ways-the more we learn the depth of all these riches in Him, the more is His divine fullness revealed to us. If it is His taking little children up in His arms, I see in it what God's character is. " He that has seen me, has seen the Father." Having truth thus revealed in a person, I get it for the humblest, lowest, poorest sinner, because it is a personal act of our Lord Jesus Christ. " That which was from the beginning." And now mark this "word of life," while it shows what God was in Christ, shows it communicated to us; and everything, true or false, is tested by this. So he asks, "Is there love?" No. Then it is not of God. "He that loveth not knoweth not God." That is now what he teaches. He brings me up to the object - what God was. "That which we have seen with our eyes;" "God is light;" "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin;" the communication of life in the Christian; the height of the source of the life communicated to us. But in the gospel of John you will find, "of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace," - "which thing is true in him and in you." "An old commandment which was from the beginning;" now a new commandment, become true in Him and in you. He called it a new commandment, though an old one - a simple truth that Christ Himself is become our life. " That the life of Christ might be manifest in our mortal bodies." If a poor sinner is converted, he has the life communicated from Jesus up there, and yet it comes down to the lowest need in us; and yet how high it rises! This gospel begins before creation; Genesis begins with creation, and gives the scene in which all is to be acted; but John gives Him who created, and having stated the pre-existence of God, - "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth," "thou art the same," - we get Christ before the creation, and then in creation. "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," and became the source of life; and we receive our life from Him who existed, before all worlds, from

everlasting. We receive our new nature from Him, and are united to Him who was before the world, and who created the world. This has a double effect, (if right with God,) lifting our hearts up in ten thousand, thousand thanks, if it does manifest the life of Jesus. The least thing manifests the life of Jesus. Whatever does not manifest Him is of the world; whatever is not the manifestation of the life of Christ in our souls, that is sin; and do not think that a hardship. No; rejoice in it. I would have your hearts enlarged; as the apostle says, "be ye also enlarged." Oh to have Christ so before the eye as to be able to judge everything in His light! Do not think it is great learning; no: there may be the lust of the mind as well as the lust of the flesh; but if in communion with God, it discerns all things.

I call your minds back to see the way we received the life; it was in the humblest and simplest way. He who came into the world to save sinners, He has made us vessels of His fullness. Thus we have fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and display it. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." The effect is, we have the Father and the Son, and we have nothing more to seek. I have the Father and the Son. Can I get truth out of the Father and the Son? I may have more to learn. If a man is on the ocean, there may be a great deal he has to discover of it, but he has not to get there; he says, I am there. So I am in the truth. I have got a great deal to learn; but I am in the Father and the Son, and I am in the truth. I do not want to seek it if I am in it. I have the very eternal God in whom I dwell-I have come to the Father. When there is a consciousness of this, oh, what comfort! what peace! It not only guards us from evils without, but it gives spiritual rest within. If I am striving to get something, I have no communion. If I want to get to the sovereign, when I am in his presence already, I have no communion; and if I am not brought up there, I cannot have the sense of what the conscience ought to be in God's presence. True joy is, that our fellowship is with the Father, and not that of getting there.

" These things write we unto you that your joy may be full." There is where God brings the saint if there is humbleness. And if there is not humbleness, we shall slip. When we lose the sense of God's presence, the sense of it, I say, (because we are always in His presence in truth,) we are at the point to sin. My natural character or flesh will show itself if I am out of His presence. There is such a thing as the saint's dwelling in the conscious presence of God without fear. If there is anything between me and God, my conscience will be at work; but when the Spirit is not grieved, the soul is in the presence of God for joy; learning holiness, it is true, but in joy, because occupied in communion instead of in detection; and that is a great thing. There is such a thing as being in His presence without the conscience having to be exercised, and in perfect joy. " My peace I give unto you." What was that peace?

There were no vagabond affections-there could not be, and so there was full peace of heart with God. He was divinely perfect - all His affections always in tune with God. Now, through the grace and power of God, we may be brought to that, Christ having been revealed to the soul, the world is cast out, and Christ is everything, and there is perfect joy. This is often what our experience is after conversion, but afterward the love to Christ grows less fervent-the world creeps in little by little, and we have less joy.

There are three things which characterize a Christian. 1st, " He is in the light as God is in the light." Now God had said to Israel, " I will dwell in the thick darkness;" and at Sinai told them to keep off; "for if so much as a beast touch the mountain it shall be stoned." There was a great deal of good

there, but He was in His pavilion of darkness, not seen. God acted towards Israel, but did not show Himself. Now the veil is rent from top to bottom, and all is light. It is the very nature of the truth we are in that God is now manifestly revealed, and He that is come in through the rent veil stands in the light of God's holiness, perfect purity in itself, and it shows everything that is not Song of Solomon 2:1-17 nd, " Fellowship one with another." We are there together, and all have fellowship by the same Holy Ghost dwelling in all. 3rd, We can be there because " the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." The more thoroughly in the light, the more it is seen that there is no spot on us through that blood. This could not be said of a Jew; but now the righteousness of God is set forth, and we are brought into the light as He is in the light. Is this a thing that makes you unhappy, or gives you joy of heart? If we are true of heart, we shall be glad of the light to detect the darkness in us. " Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." We do not want to escape from the light, but to be searched by it - not with a pretension that we have no sin, but the consciousness that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. For the effect of being in the light is, that we confess our sins. " In whose spirit there is no guile." There are two things there, the confession and the love. From the 1st to the end of the 4th verse is that there may be no deception. Then in the 5th verse, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Now that is the test, - when Christ is known in the presence of God there is no question about sin - How came I there? I came through the blood - then I have got peace. If I am reasoning about God, that is another thing; but if we have got there, we got there through the blood, and that gives peace, a peace which is never lost. There is a peace which may be lost: happy at first, while fresh from conversion, and all is easy and smooth with us, our hearts attracted by the grace of Christ; but if failure comes in, conscience is awakened, sin alarms, and we lose our peace, so that we do not know where we are. Until we have apprehended that we are brought to God - where we never could be brought if there remained a spot of sin upon us - we cannot know settled peace in our souls, as spoken of in Hebrews, " no more conscience of sin" - and that is enduring peace. The power of the affections of the new nature forms a link of fellowship with God; and only as we keep in the light, shall we know the practical enjoyment of it. We must be in the light that evil thoughts may be shut out, so that we may have fellowship with God. In how many things, in our intercourse with one another, or with the world, self comes in, and is not judged by us. There is a practical consciousness in the Christian that he cannot go on without God, and he judges, waits, and confesses, trusting in God, and thus his heart is kept calm and in peace.

There are two things - 1st, The manifestation of the eternal life - for it has been manifested to us; -2nd, we are partakers of it, I have fellowship with the Father and Son. He has communicated to us that nature, so that we can delight in His fellowship. The Lord give us to keep ourselves in the love of God - in His presence, in the light, detecting everything that is not of Him, judging it, and thus to be in the enjoyment of His love.

Vol 01 - Gentile Mercy, Not Jewish Promises

Gentile Mercy, Not Jewish Promises Matthew 15:21-28

There is a practical lesson in Christ's way of mercy toward this woman, as well as a secret in her lowly, uncomplaining, assumption of the place that belonged to her, that many a heart, that is seeking for help in Jesus, needs to know. The soul that knows and owns its wretchedness, and makes no pretension to any claim, yet brings its misery before a God of goodness, is a soul that Jesus can never refuse to comfort: He may be repelled by the claims of a false and pretended righteousness; but He cannot hide Himself from the misery that seeks His aid, and has no plea nor appeal except for mercy's ear. For mercy dwells, as in its proper fountain, in the heart of God; and Jesus is both the expression of that mercy, and the channel through which it flows.

Blessed Lord! He can dismiss from His presence a company of proud Pharisees, who find fault with His ways of grace, with the stern rebuke, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice;" and can say to a poor outcast Gentile, that pretends to receive nothing from Him but what goodness can give to a dog, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Misery thus owned and felt, and making its appeal to sovereign mercy, reaches at once the eternal spring of goodness. This woman was of the outcast nations of Canaan, (dwelling in the regions of Tiro and Sidon, proverbial for their wickedness,)—a mere sinner of the Gentiles—an "alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenants of promise." Her misery had drawn her to Christ for help, and her heart had entire confidence in His power. Still, at her first, and even second, appeal, she meets only with a repulse. She said, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David."—"But he answered her not a word." The "Son of David" was a title that indeed belonged to Christ, but it was as the Messiah of the Jews; and this woman was not a Jew. A Canaanite had nothing to do with "the Son of David." She was a Gentile, and she must take the outcast Gentile's place, relinquishing the ground of Jewish promises, to which she had no claim. The disciples would have got rid of her at any rate—for her misery could not be repulsed—but man's thoughts are not to set aside the order and the covenants of God. Therefore Jesus answered them, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This but brings the woman nearer to Christ, with the more touching expression of her sorrow, "Lord, help me!" But no! she must go lower yet. She was an outcast Gentile; Israel's covenanted mercies did not reach her case; and she must hear the word from Christ, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs." This was a terrible word to fall on her ear. But it was true. And until our hearts have learned to submit to this, we have not reached the place to which sin has brought us in the presence of God; nor are we on that ground of rest, (even if believers,) that nothing can shake or disturb. It is indeed a terrible thing to feel one's ruin in the presence of God, and to know that His mercy is our only resource, and, at the same moment, to be obliged to own that we have not the least claim to the exercise of that mercy. But this is the truth of our case; and the Lord's dealing with this woman illustrates it in the plainest way.

She had no claim to the promises, and therefore could not plead them. She was not a child, and therefore could not claim the children's portion. She was, in truth, a Gentile dog-and she could only have a dog's portion. In the presence of God, even when suing for mercy, we must indeed take the place that belongs to us. This poor woman does so. She does not refuse the place that belongs to her, however low and degraded it may be. But, oh, there is a reality in her dealing with the Lord that nothing can set aside. She meets the reply of Christ, by taking the dog's place; and answers, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

She owns God's sovereign right to choose a people, if He pleases. She acknowledges that she is not one of them, and that she has no right to the children's portion. But, at the same time, she casts herself on that sovereign goodness, to which she can make no claim, and is content with what, in its sovereign exercise, it can bestow on a dog. The apparent harshness of Christ in refusing to meet her appeal on ground that did not belong to her, only drew her soul to where mercy could flow without a bar. When she lets go the title of "Son of David," which a Gentile could not use; when she owns that she has no title to the children's bread; when she asks only for the mercy that the God of goodness can show to a dog, she finds that her apprehensions of His goodness are more than confirmed by Christ, and that she has reached a fountain that rises above every thought and desire of her heart.

Vol 01 - Grace and Truth in Jesus Christ

Grace and Truth in Jesus Christ

John 8:1-11

It is a different thing to have a rule of what is right, and to have the heart searched out. God can give a rule, and yet dwell in the thick darkness. But this is a different thing from having the soul unveiled in His presence. Now, it is not the sending of a law or a prophet merely that we have in Jesus, but far more; the Lord Himself was there. And this is what puts every one to the test, and what brings everything out into the light. Yet there is vast comfort in it; for having come to Jesus we have come to the last and ultimate tribunal, and found it to be all grace. So the soul that has got peace knows that nothing remains behind, nothing remains undetected; but all has been brought out and disposed of according to the holiness of God.

Take the case of this poor sinner, who finds herself in the presence of God. It is not the day of judgment, but it is the presence of the Judge Himself. She finds herself in the presence of Him who will judge in that day by the same principles; the presence of Him who is not now judging, indeed, but a light to bring out every one's character. So everything is brought out, as it was with the poor Samaritan woman. And that is what we want if we are honest to ourselves. If we are honest we shall not desire to have sin slurred over. If we like sin, and wish to get to heaven, too, then we shall want to get sin slurred over; but if we have any sense of God's claim over us, we shall not want to have sin slurred over. And this is the test of the renewed heart. Well, if thus honest about our sin, we want mercy. We want what will meet our need in grace, and what will meet God's holiness. If you do not wish your sin to be meddled with, - if you do not like God to probe your heart, you like sin. You want to get off, - of course you do! but that is not being honest in the sight of God. You want to get happiness and still to keep your sin. So it ever is with mere natural conscience. But when awakened by the Spirit of God there is no desire then to slur sin over. In these scribes and Pharisees there is the most dreadful wickedness, - a readiness to show sin up and yet an unwillingness to have it detected in themselves. Now, nothing marks a soul to be wrong like wishing grace to be wrong. Whenever we think of grace, and blame grace, we have no sense of ourselves, and no sense of God. It may seem strange to speak of not liking grace, but really that is the case; and the principle of this is in every natural heart. Therefore, you will hear persons talk of judgment, because they have a notion that they can stand in the day of judgment, and therefore they do not like grace. Take the case here and you will find extreme hatred of grace. The Lord did not come to judge, He came as the friend of publicans and sinners. These Jews liked righteousness; and as the Lord liked grace, they brought this woman before Him, in the hope of confounding Him. It was the attempt to put His grace in opposition to the righteousness of God. They saw that He was all grace, and thought that if He condemned her, He would not be a Savior, the law could do that; if He let her go, He would despise and break the law. The thought of the natural heart ever is that if grace is fully come in, it is no matter what we be. People say, God is merciful - and indeed He is blessedly merciful - but not in the way they mean, not in the way of

slurring over sin. They think they are good in the main, and that God will be bad for the rest. Now God is perfectly good and perfectly righteous in Christ.

Mark another aspect of the righteousness of these Pharisees; it has no pity; and it is the spirit of every self-righteous man. As soon as one comes to a pitch of wickedness to which he had not reached, he will condemn this person, who is more evidently a sinner than himself. So with these Scribes and Pharisees. They do not care for the woman if only Christ be condemned. It is the heartlessness that could condemn an outwardly greater sinner than themselves, and the attempt to condemn Christ too, if He will pardon. The question which this narrative answers so blessedly is this - What is Christ to the sinner, who stands before Him just as he is? What is Christ to one to whom God has told his sin, and who stands in conscience before Him, confessing it? This scripture, and all scripture, shows that Christ is to that person all grace. It is not a question of what I am that is settled, but of what Christ is. When I am in the truth of my sin, what is Christ to me? I repeat it, all scripture witnesses that Christ is to such nothing but grace. But the world is not in the truth about sin. The world wants to keep a character without a conscience. The whole history of the world is this, that men's characters and their consciences do not go together. Now God cannot go on in that way. These Jews cared about their character, and therefore had to get out of God's sight. That is what the world is at. Does Jesus leave them here with their character? No! But first He allows, in the fullest way, the righteousness of the law of Moses. What He does is this. In effect He says, I cannot let you apply the law until I put you under it, for law has to do with those who are under it. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." If you have no sin, so that the law cannot touch you, then you may use it. What men want is a little righteousness, and the rest of sin slurred over. But this will not do with Christ. He will put every particle of sin under law. Therefore do not take justice in your hand, if you have sin. God will not put the weapon into your hand to slay your fellow without its first laying bare what you are. He brings home to the conscience all that is in the heart of unrighteousness - in effect saying, if you will have righteousness, you will have it. If you are in the presence of God, are you not all condemned? And if you are, not condemned in your own conscience, it is because you have never been in the light. If you cannot bring out all that is in your heart, you have never been in the light - you are living without God in the world. The publicans justified God, the Pharisees justified themselves. All will justify God in the day when He judges; and that is what a sinner does now. "Being convicted by their own conscience, they went out one by one." And if our souls are not true, if we shrink from the light, we shall do as they did.

Why "one by one?" Because conscience always convicts individually. "Beginning at the eldest." The one who had the oldest reputation goes out first, and lets the others care for themselves. "One by one," they get away from the light as fast as they can, and leave Jesus alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When they were all gone, the Lord turns to the poor woman. She was, indeed, a wretched sinner, but in a better condition than her accusers. She is honest about her sin. And being in the truth about her sin, she had nothing to go out for. As to man, when dealing with God about our sin, we do not care what he thinks. But it is a very solemn thing to be in the presence of God when all my sin is fully told out before Him.

Now mark how Christ acts. When it comes to be a question of righteousness, or Himself, He will give righteousness; but when that is done, then He can deal in His own way - then He can deal in grace. And thus He does deal with this poor sinner, condemned in her own conscience. He does

not judge her, He did not come to judge. He came, indeed, as a light, to bring out the sin; but He came to reveal the love of God after all the sin and judgment is owned. Now this woman had to find out what Christ was to her. She knew she was a sinner but she had to learn what Christ was to her as a sinner. What would the Judge say to her, a convicted and confessed sinner? He was the Judge, but He did not come to judge. So, in effect, He says, There you are, deserving to be condemned, but I do not condemn you. No man can condemn you, and I will not. They thought they could condemn her undetected themselves, but they soon found they could not. Man could not condemn her, and Jesus would not.

Now suppose this woman had said, Ah! but if you knew everything I have done. If you knew what a sinner I have been. This is not the first sin, &c., &c. Ah! He well knew all her sin. With one word He brought into the consciences of her accusers all their sin. And this woman was in the light, and He knew it all. We alas! forget many sins. God never forgets. And in the knowledge of all she was, Jesus says, I do not condemn you. Now it is not a prophet who says this, but the very one who is to judge; and think you that then He will reverse His judgment? Will He then say, Now I am to condemn you! Oh, no. He anticipates the judgment in her conscience, and then gives her the assurance of full forgiveness. But how can Jesus act in such perfect grace? Because He went under the condemnation of all the sin. He put it all away. So with the thief on the cross. He acknowledges his condemnation before men, and Christ bore it before God. Herein is the unspeakable comfort, that if Christ speaks peace, He does it, not merely with divine title, but in the perfect knowledge that it is the sin which He bore and put away. Why am I sent away fully acquitted? Only because He has had love enough to bear it all for me. We find in Christ, God not imputing to us our sins. If it is a question of our righteousness, law must condemn us, but the God of the law has forgiven me according to the holiness of the law. And more than that in the love which has forgiven us, we have come to know God. " We love him because he first loved us,"-and he that loveth knoweth God. Thus we get, as the blessed fruits of being alone with Christ confessing sin, peace for the conscience, and a happy heart.

Vol 01 - Grace for the Wilderness

Grace for the Wilderness Romans 8:18, &C

There are two things needed to make good our journey through the wilderness; first an object, a divine object; and second, the assurance of the love of God as the foundation of all our hopes.

Another thing, however, comes out before the glorious object is reached, and one which underlies the whole relation of God, and that is, the path we have to tread, from the time of our knowing redemption to the obtaining of our rest. Thus, when the Lord visited Israel, redemption of the good land was promised, but not a word was said of the wilderness; for the wilderness was no part of redemption properly speaking. God would show them what was in their hearts, and thus what was in His heart; but this was not properly the fruit of redemption work. In the 5th of Romans we have, first, "Peace with God," "access by faith into the grace, in which we stand," and "joy in hope of the glory of God:" in all this not a word of the wilderness. But when he says, "and not only so but we glory in tribulation also," there is the wilderness. This is not properly a part of redemption, but rather the exercising of us for the discovery of what we are, but in the presence of the God who has redeemed us. The danger is in not holding the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. There is no doubt of the faithfulness of God to lead us on to the end; still, as regards detail, there is danger in the journey. When the joy of deliverance is first known, confidence in God is unbounded. But then we have to learn the unbelief and waywardness of our hearts. We own it, but we have thus to learn it. And if the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, these exercises will not in the least touch the sense of our relationship with Him. The secret of getting on our way rightly is holding the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. For we have a difficulty, when conscience is lively, under the sense of failure, in laying hold of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, so as to apply it at all times to our need. It is not that the Lord would have our consciences unexercised. Paul's was exercised night and day. But the danger is in this, that the eye which is turned in, and conscientiously too, is apt to be turned off from Jesus and grace. Now remember all this exercise we get as the fruit of redemption. All experience previous to that is to bring us to feel the need of redemption. In Romans 7:1-25, when he found the difference between getting better and being saved, and was rendered hopeless of the former, then he is willing to be saved as he is, ungodly, and without strength. Then God comes in, and there is "no condemnation." Now he is brought as a believer, as saved, into the wilderness. Now, we are apt to be either careless, saying, It is all grace, or careful, asking, Is it all grace? We may be honestly searching our hearts; but if not with God, we shall do it imperfectly. But if we are sure that God is for us, we shall spare nothing. So in Psalms 139:1-24. It is flesh that weakens confidence.

After all, though exercised, though brought under responsibility, it is Christ that is carrying on the work all through. It is grace from beginning to end. It is not merely priesthood; there is a third thing. He is the "apostle and high priest of our profession," but also "Son over his own house." Moses was not only a messenger, but a constant manager over God's house. He was to be faithful; and generally he was faithful. "But Christ as a Son over his own house." Moses was not over his own

house, but over God's. But Christ is not in faithfulness, as a servant, but over His own house. He has an individual interest in it. The good Shepherd sought His own sheep. Christ is carrying on, not only God's house and affairs, but His own house. He takes the immediate care of what is His own: and He is doing it all as God. Thus we have all the nearness of being His own house, and yet it is God who is over it. He never fails in taking care of His house. In the failure of Moses, we see that He did not get up to this principle of grace. But man can never be brought through the wilderness but by grace. The rod is the authority of Christ, but it is authority which has life-giving power. We need grace, special grace, which will not pass over a single fault. It would not be grace to do so, for it hinders our enjoyment. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." He will not pass it over, but work in our hearts to show us the root of our sin, that it may not hinder our fellowship. He carries us to the end, but not blindfold, but through faith. Moses did not sanctify God. How? He did not manifest God. But God did sanctify Himself in spite of the unbelief of Moses, by giving all the water needed. When we see redemption, we see God to be for us. But do you say that all the way? Alas! no. You see failures, and then you think anything but God for you. But why? has God changed? No; but you have. Then comes exercise to bring this out, and to deepen the soul in the knowledge and enjoyment of the unchanging love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

End Of Vol. I.

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Vol 01 - Growth Through the Truth

Growth Through the Truth A person may be honestly delighting in what he hears, and yet not connecting it with Christ, so he does not grow a bit: he knows nothing; for then what he hears is as an object before his mind; whereas, when mixed with faith, it connects his soul with Christ, and he gets it livingly in Him. Whatever is revealed of Christ, judges something of the old man antagonistic to it, and then there is growth. If I hear and delight in the truth, and yet do not detect and judge the old man, there is no growth. So, as to detail, verse 22.

Vol 01 - How Christ Is Graven on the Heart by the Holy Ghost

How Christ Is Graven on the Heart by the Holy Ghost 2 Corinthians 3:1-18 The apostle, in the beginning of this chapter, tells us what a true Christian is. He calls him an epistle of Christ. He is a person upon whose heart God has written Christ, as Moses wrote the law on tables of stone. This the apostle opens out; but first he states what Christians are in contrast with the law. A Christian is a person on whom Christ is engraved - not on tables of stone, but on the fleshy tables of the heart. If the heart is serious, one must see that many have not this. We see many persons very amiable, and others with a trying nature. But here it is not difference of mere natural character. That is not the point. Natural amiability of character is not Christ graven on the heart. It has nothing to do with being a Christian. That is a positive real work of God. It is the Holy Ghost engraving Christ on a man's heart, putting Christ into his thoughts, his words, and his ways, just as the law was put upon stones. Now a person may get angry at this; but, nevertheless, Christ is the object of a Christian's life, and your own conscience must judge if it is so with you. It is not that there is not failure. A man who is seeking to make money does not always succeed; but every body knows what his object is. Just so, Christ is the object of a believer's life."

God gave the law, not to make men righteous, but to prove that there were none righteous. The law condemns every one. It was the ministration of death. But after men had broken God's law He sent His Son. " God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." " When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son." God's Son has been in the world. How comes it that He is out of it? The world would not have Him. Men spit in His face. That is what the world has done. Now I do not ask you about duties; but I ask, is Christ engravers on your heart? We cannot kill Him now; but our hearts can reject Him as much as ever the Jews did. An honest man-I do not speak of a Christian-will own that from morning to night Christ is not in his heart.

Now what was the apostle doing? When a Christian went from one place to another, it was customary to give him a letter of commendation. But, says the apostle, Do I want a letter? If one came to him to ask what he went about doing, he would say, Look at these Corinthians: (for they were going on well then:) they were his letter. How so? Because they were Christ's. Now I leave it with you as to whether Christ is on your heart. I do not ask if you love Him as you ought; for if you love Him at all you will not say that; He is too precious for that. But if you are a Christian you are sure there is not anything that you would not give for Christ. You may not be able to govern yourself, still, Christ is the object of your heart.

Notice now another thing: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." It is not liberty to be fearing and trembling before God. "Liberty" is to be happy with Him. When the Holy Ghost begins to show me my sins, I have anything but liberty. I begin to be afraid of my sins; I do not know whatever to do with them. False liberty is taken away, and true liberty is not given. And that will always be the case until the perfect love of God is seen. Now, law will never teach me that. Suppose I command my child to love me, and threaten him if he does not; will that make him love me? Why, it will make him tremble. That is what the law does. It cannot produce the love, it can but

command. What is the effect? I cannot stand in its presence. When Moses had been up on the mount, his face shone. He had been with God. And when he came down with the two tables of the law, the children of Israel were afraid to come near him. He had to put a veil on his face, for the glory of his countenance. When in the presence of God's glory, they cannot bear to look on it. The only effect of the revelation of the glory of God is to drive me away as far as ever I can get from Him against whom I have sinned. There is not a pleasure in the world that the presence of God would not blast in a moment. There is not a happiness of man, as man, that is not spoiled by the very mention of the name of God. Now think what a terrible state that is to be in. The apostle calls this claim of God by the law the "ministration of death and condemnation;" because it claims righteousness, and does not produce the thing it claims. Whenever a person is looking to his conduct for what he ought to be, he is under the ministry of death and condemnation. That is not the way to get Christ written on the heart.

Before we turn to look at Christ as He is now, let us look at what He was, God manifest in the flesh. In what state did He find men when He came? He found them "all under sin." And what does Job say of himself, as being in this condition? "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet thou shalt plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both. Let him take his fear away, then would I speak; but it is not so with me." Now what do I find in Christ when He came? I find "a daysman"-the very thing that Job wanted. Was there fear in Christ? Was any one afraid of Christ? If a sinner was ever so burdened he could go to Christ, and thus to God. Now here I find that though my sins hindered me from going to God, they could not hinder God from coming to me. You will never find a single case in which Christ did not receive the sinner with open arms. Never. Now, that is what you want. Christ did not say, get righteousness and come up here, and I will have you. No; but He came down here to meet us here. That is an entirely new thing. Christ came in this way to win our hearts thus. And therefore they reproached Him with receiving sinners, and eating with them. It is quite true, He replied, but is not a father glad to receive his lost son? Even so is it with my Father in heaven; and therefore am I come to seek and to save that which was lost. Now that is grace. But there is righteousness too. When the father fell on the neck of the prodigal, he was in his rags. He could not bring him into the house in his rags, it would dishonor the house. So His blessed love goes on-and Jesus gives Himself for the sins, which unfit me for the Father's house. I see that the very Lord, against whom I sinned, has taken my sins and put them all away.

Now where do I see the glory of God? Not now on the face of Moses -I could not look on it there. But now I see it in the face of Jesus Christ. Dear! I say, that is the one who died for my sins. He could not bring my sins into the glory, and therefore He put them away. I have got His word and His work for it; and the glory for it too; and therefore God is now ministering righteousness. Now it is "the ministration of righteousness." The sins are not passed over. He sweat great drops of blood for the sins. He has really gone through everything that holiness required on account of them, and now He is in the glory; so that every ray of the glory I look at is the proof that my sins are put away. When I see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, it is the very thing I like to look at; because the one whom I see in the glory is the one who bore all my sins. Oh! I delight to look at Him. And that is the way I get Christ graven on my heart by the Holy Ghost. "We all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from

glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." It is the ministration of righteousness, because the Holy Ghost comes and tells us that there is a righteousness accomplished "by one man's obedience." It is the ministration of the Spirit, because the Spirit is given on the foundation of the righteousness. And now the man is at liberty, because his conscience is perfectly purged. Here he will have trial and conflict, it is true; but as between himself and God he will never have anything but perfect peace. This is God's way of graving Christ on the heart. First He gives a man the consciousness of being entirely condemned; showing him that his nature is enmity against God; that the law he has broken; and that when Christ came in grace, Him he did not love. And when He has brought him to this in his conscience, then He shows him that the God against whom he sinned has come and wrought out a righteousness for him, and that this blessed man is now in glory.

Now mark how the heart thus learns to trust God. Dear! I say, when I was in my sins, God came and put them away. My sins are the very thing that give the greatest proof of His love. He has given Christ for them. Well may I trust Him for everything else.

Let me now ask you, dear reader, if your confidence is in this God? Has your heart been brought to submit to this righteousness-for you have none of your own? Oh, it is the hardest thing for the heart to be broken down so as to be willing to have righteousness by the obedience of another! "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Romans 5:19.) But if you have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ you will desire to "be found in him, not having your own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness, which is of God, by faith."

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How a Believer Is Dead Unto Sin, but Alive Unto God

Romans 6:1-23

Grace always sets us in liberty. Even in holiness, liberty is the character of its separation. It is liberty from the bondage of sin. It is willing, joyous, consecration to God. This chapter is most practical, yet deep, very deep, as everything is that comes from God. For everything that comes from God returns to God. Man is his own end by nature, and all his thoughts and actions begin and end with self. But Christ could not come down here and walk in righteousness without doing everything to God. So the incense of "the meat-offering" went all up to God. No doubt the priests smelt the sweet savor, but as offered, it went all up to God. So this new life, of which the chapter treats, as it comes from God, so it goes to God. It brings forth fruit, of course, but that is not its end. Its end is presented in Ephesians 5:1-2, "Be ye followers of God as dear children, and walk in love." This is Christian morality; but then it is God's nature, God's life, expressed in men: life that flows from God and must go to God. But it is added, "as Christ also bath loved us and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." The life God gives goes to God. And when that is wanting, all is wanting. Beloved, that is everything--because a man is not what he does, but what his motive in doing it is. Two men may do the very same thing from the most opposite reasons: one, for example, may labor for his family, another, to spend what he earns on sinful pleasures. How different the act, though they do the same thing, and equally well, for their employer! Everything in the new nature goes back to God. Hence we have to judge ourselves. For even the Christian, when walking blamelessly before men, may suffer other things than simply pleasing God to come in and spoil the sweet odor. Oh, how dreadful, when self comes in and spoils the odor--it may be not to others, but to ourselves! In the 3rd chapter of this epistle we get the way in which the blood of Christ met actual sins, whether of Jew or Gentile. In the 4th, we have the full character of christian faith,--reposing in God, who had come in power, and had raised one who was under death to His own right hand. Looking at Jesus as a man under death we see divine power coming in and raising Him up. In the 5th chapter, this principle is applied to justification; and we have the joy which is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost. Then the law, which is contrasted with grace, and was brought in by-the-bye, after man had become a sinner, itself righteous, and thus demonstrating the sin of man.

There are two ways in which man might stand before God; he could be righteous, or he can be saved. There is no other way. He could be, indeed, innocent, I mean, as Adam was; but by the entrance of sin that is lost forever. So now he can only stand on the ground of sovereign grace. The law is a good law; and if lived in, it would make any man happy--it would make angels happy. For to love God with all one's heart, and one's neighbor as one's self, is practiced in heaven. But it could not, in the form in which it was given at Sinai, be given to an innocent Adam. For the law always supposes sin to be there, and it comes in to bring out its real character. Having shown us that as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall

many be made righteous-thus showing us that God traces the family of sinners up to Adam, and the family of righteous up to Christ he takes up, in this 6th 'chapter, the objection, that this seems to make it indifferent how we walk. Thus, if by one man's obedience men are made righteous, and we are looked at in the head to which we belong, our actions are no matter, not being the ground of our acceptance. The flesh would say this. For the flesh will turn everything to evil. It will take the law itself, which was given to convict of sin, to make out righteousness by it; and grace, which is the power and way of holiness and communion with God, it will turn into an occasion for sin. Adam and Christ however are brought before us as the two heads of the two families of men. But Adam becomes a sinful man - sin has been accomplished in his condition ere he becomes a head. Christ, too accomplished righteousness ere He becomes the head of His family. And as we come into the state which was accomplished in Adam, so do we into that which was accomplished in Christ. And as there was a life in us which liked the state in which we found ourselves by Adam, even so, when we find our-selves justified in Christ Jesus, there is a life in us which likes this state. The apostle's answer, then, to the use the flesh would make of the truth of our being made righteous by another's obedience, is drawn from the very truth which gave rise to the objection. The Christ, in whom we are, as our Head, has died and risen again. " How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" In Christ we have died to sin. It is never said that we ought to die to sin, but that we have died to it. We are set in Christ. Where is my place as a believer? In Christ, dead and risen again. If I have this justification, it is in Him in whom I have possession of this life. If I have not the one, I have not the other. The apostle is not now talking of motives. He is laying down what must be from the nature of our union with Christ. If I believe that I am saved by the blood of Jesus, then, I find in the blood, put on my ear, my hand, and my foot,* a motive to walk in consistency with its claims. But here, he is not talking of motives, but of resurrection. How have you got this justification? By death and resurrection. I am treating you as dead, for Christ is dead, and you are in Him. If I am dead, I cannot live in that to which I am dead. That is the doctrine. We are to mortify our members, but we are not commanded to die.

(* See Leviticus 8:23-24.) The great question is, how can we get rid of sin in our nature? We must kill it. We must put ourselves to death. How can I do that in that nature itself? I must get another life before I can kill the one I have,--a new life, before I can begin to crucify the old. Otherwise, I put to death the only life I have. But I get this new life, and so I can mortify what is of the old. It is my members, too, that I mortify-not me. I, the old I, has died in Christ's death, as it is written, " I am crucified with Christ," but, it is added, " nevertheless I live;" the new life is me now. I live. I have a new life, though the old one was put to death, and I can now afford to exterminate all that belongs to the old.

Liberty is thus connected by the apostle with death and resurrection,-- " knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." "If we be planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

What Christ have you a part of? A dead, or a risen, Christ? Is Christ divided? We do not get a half Christ. If we die with Him we also rise-" that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life." There is our walk. And see the standard of that walk-the measure that is set before us-" the glory of the Father."

I stop here to examine this wonderful expression; for whatever shows us the excellency of Christ gives us power. What I see is this, that there is not a single thing that makes the Father glorious that was not concerned in the raising of Christ from the dead. Take divine power,-it is God that raiseth the dead. Take death as the ruin of man,-out of it God raises Him. Take the love of the Father, it is in special exercise. Does ever the love of the Father appear so drawn out as because of the death of Christ? Never. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." A new motive is added, as it were, for the Father to love His Son. But, besides, it was the Father's Son who thus lay under the power of death, and, therefore, He cannot be left there. For His glory's sake, the Father would not suffer His Holy One to see corruption. Take righteousness,-the Father's righteousness was magnified. "I have glorified thee on the earth, and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self." The Father, having been indebted, so to speak, to the Son for having been glorified on the earth, had to see to it that He should now obtain His reward. Thus, everything that constitutes the Father's glory was at work in raising up Jesus to His own right hand. There would have been a gap in heaven, a fearful gap, if Christ had not been raised. - But it was not possible that He should lie under the power of death.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." He does not say realize, though that be all right in its place; but, reckon yourselves to be dead, since Christ is so,-in the power of this risen life. It is here I get this life-even in Christ risen. I get my soul elevated into the apprehension of the Father's glory, and character, and relationship to Christ, in seeing every divine perfection displayed in the raising of Christ, and being made partaker in Him of the life in the power of which He is raised.

How does this associate me with it? Why was He there in death? He was there for my sins, and this connects this risen life with my every day affections. It is not mental power or penetration that enters into it. It is the soul in the power of the Holy Ghost entering into the excellency of the person of Jesus-seeing that He was such a sort of person as could not be holden of death, and the glory of the Father engaged in His resurrection. Oh, when we know the person of Christ, then we know that He could not be holden of death. It was to the knowledge of this that the Lord led the woman of Samaria. He first deals with her conscience, "Go, call thy husband;" and then, after telling her "all that ever she did," He leads her on till He can say, "I that speak unto thee am he." So that the person of the Lord Jesus fills her heart and soul. It is when God has made the soul to apprehend, through the power of the Spirit, that it is a dead Christ who is raised that we get the power of life. I enter into union with Himself as risen, but as once dead for my sins, and come, by grace, into the condition I was in; raised up out of it by the glory of the Father. How near it brings the Lord to us. How could you or I rise up to heaven to see the Father's glory? But here I see the Father's glory enter into the place where Christ was dead for my sins. He has been concerned for me-exercised for me. And do not suppose, for a moment, that it is mental wisdom that gets to this. It is knowing that you are such a sort of sinner as that Christ was in the grave for your sins. First, conscience is reached by the power of the Spirit of God, then, the whole issue of its conflicts is seen in what takes place in His person wholly under the burden of our sins.

We see that all the power and glory of the Father was concerned in raising Him up, and the heart follows Him up there.

Next as to the manner. " If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." I do not get a half Christ. If He has died, and our sins are put away, then also He is risen, and our place is in Him as so risen. (For justification is not in this part of the epistle. Justification is not presented as His having put away sin, but that He in His person is the accepted one; (raised again for our justification;) and we in Him.) " Our old man is crucified with Him, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Serve sin! He is talking in the language of a country where they employ slaves; talking after the manner of men. You are servants now of righteousness-and yet not servants, for indeed it is liberty. The idea is that of one person who is at the will of another. He was the slave of sin. It is the same thing to be under the law and to be under sin. (See John 8:1-59) " The servant abideth not in the house forever." If you are under law you cannot abide forever you are only servants-you may be turned out, or (as told of slaves) killed if you do not serve well. But if you are a son you are a part of the household, you are free and you abide forever.

Now you cannot charge a dead man with anything. His master cannot bring a dead man under guilt. You cannot mortify till you have somebody to mortify. The life to which guilt could be charged has gone out of existence. We are dead. How can I talk so? Christ is dead, and we are dead in Him. "Now he that is dead is freed from sin." Ah! but you say, it is not done with. Are you wiser than God? He says that it is done with in Christ. It was all attached to Christ, laid on Christ, for us by grace, and He has died, and there is an utter end of it. For all that I see in myself, evil principles, and an evil nature, that is what He died for. It is done with in Christ. And now I am to mortify all that savors of it. Therefore " reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin"-reckon-that is the word-and there is liberty-liberty from sin, and not to sin.

I make two remarks. While fruits are surely produced in me, the grand doctrine of Christianity is, that I am saved by a mediator. If I am to be saved by myself- all is gone; all is lost. If you ever enter into judgment you are lost. Therefore, the whole doctrine of salvation is this-there is a days-man. As to myself, as Job says, " If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." But there is a days-man. One who can lay His hand upon both. And this days-man is Christ. He is my life, and of course I bring forth fruit; but I am made the righteousness of God in Him.

Still you say I find sin alive, nevertheless. But let me ask you, Is Christ all this for the sins that you have, or for the sins that you have not? Of course for those you have-those you find out. Those are the sins for which Christ died. The jealousy is all good, but with the jealousy remember the grace which has put them all away.

If we are dead we also live. I am brought, through connection with Christ, into a new state of existence, in which nothing can come against me - sin, Satan, or death. There is not a thing which could reach me as a sinner into which Christ has not gone for me, and He has got out of it all. We are set in quite a new place, like Israel the other side of the Red Sea. He died unto sin once. If He had shrunk from going through all that weighed down upon me as a sinner, I should not have escaped-I should have no liberty. "But he learned obedience by the things which he suffered." He was put under obedience to the uttermost. He was put through everything to see if unwillingness to obey could be found, (and that is sin,) and it could not. Therefore, in this death, there is not only expiation, but the moral perfection of the Redeemer. Christ never asked any other cup to be put

away; but that cup He could not wish to drink. It was suffering for sin-the hiding of God's face. So in the garden, He chose rather to have God's face hidden than fail to obey. Now He lives beyond it all. Now mark, what is your position? You are dead-are you not? "Dead, indeed," but yet alive. There we get the proper christian position. It is not, "if you are not this you will not get the value of the blood," but you must be this because Christ is. I do not exhort one who is not my child to live like my child, No, in truth I do not. "Likewise, reckon ye yourselves," &c. I get the position and the consequence, I am to reckon that I am dead. This is faith. It does not say "experience," but reckon, and the consequence will come. By grace I have the title to reckon myself in like manner to be risen, then I live to God. I now get the justified position of living for God before the world, as before I got the condemned position of the sinful life of Adam. He does not say, yield your-selves to morality, but yield yourselves unto God. Whatever comes from God goes to God. (I hate myself when. I find myself doing a good thing, if it is not done to God. Alas! I find it. And in speaking of the best thing there may be the worst sin.) Now I yield myself to God. One of the first things I saw in the Gospels was, that Jesus never did anything for Himself. He had not time to sleep. Prayer occupied His night, or He rested in peace in the tossed ship. He is there in obedience, not merely in the things commanded, but because they were commanded. Oh what liberty! If you are a Christian you know what it is to be a slayer of sin and self-and that is the most blessed thing you can know. I have a right to have done with myself. In the 5th chapter we have one, ungodly in himself, under the judgment of unrighteousness; here, one under the dominion of sin-like Israel of old, making bricks without straw. They did not like it, but they could not help it. Well, but you say, it has dominion; I am afraid I am not right. Where are you? You are putting yourself not under grace. You must be under grace, and then go to God and get power against sin. Therefore chapter 5 is before chapter 6. You must get under grace. Grace is not to a holy being-that is love. Grace is to one unworthy of it. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace,"-you have God on your side against it.

Men will say that if you give man perfect peace he will forget God. Alas! it is in our wretched nature to do so at all times, and to abuse the relief of our conscience to do so. But the power of resurrection in Christ in which we have this relief sets us free from sin. How can he that is free be a slave? " If we are led of the Spirit we are not under the law." The Holy Spirit will never lead us into sin. " Being then. made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." When I speak of your being servants, I speak after the manner of men; for after all it is real liberty to serve God. Now mark there is fruit in righteousness. What fruit had we in sin? Its end was death; but, righteousness, serving the will of God, bears blessed fruits. Not merely is there righteous fruit, but there is fruit in righteousness. " We have our fruit unto holiness."

What is holiness? Separation unto God. Adam was not holy-he was innocent. God is holy. He knows good and evil, loves the good and hates the evil. So it is with Jesus, and so with us. We love good and hate evil. I, as a creature, cannot estimate the difference between good and evil. So I must have God as an object to make out the full measure of good, and thus judge and be separate from the evil. The affections drawn to Christ are the channel and power of it. In this latter sense Christ could not have an object, though ever regarding the Father; and as man looking to the joy that was set before Him. But He had no need to have His affections drawn to an object to sanctify Him. He had them in perfect communion and truth. And indeed, as taking this resurrection place, He sanctified Himself, set Himself apart as the resurrection man through the revelation of

whom we should be sanctified through the truth. He Himself was the object of God's delight on earth. (Matthew 3:16; Matthew 17:1-27.) Elsewhere He is ours in heaven. (Acts 7:56.)* (* When I say on earth, I speak as when actually revealed. He was ever God's delight. See Proverbs 8:1-36.)

There is no fruit from sin. It is the perishing down into death of that which is degraded by having lost the image of God. Now I must walk in righteousness. What is the consequence P I get withdrawn from the spirit and ways of the world; I get away from the influence of the things which govern it, my heart is more abundantly occupied in the practical liberty of the new nature, with that which is of God; confidence in Him is increased, prayer has a larger sphere, the heart is drawn nearer to Him, and living in intercourse with Him, He Himself is more fully known. It is not merely that there are fruits, for besides this practical walk in righteousness, there is connected with it the consecration of the heart to God, and the having knowledge of Him. If we live to God there will be the knowledge of what good and evil is in the eye of God-not simply that you live to Christ as to outward devotedness, but you will get your heart withdrawn from the influence of the things which drew it formerly away.

Therefore, in plain common life, oh let God be everything! Be not like one slipping and getting on, and slipping and getting on, as Christians often are, but be advancing quietly and steadily, increasing in separation to acid; then you will have fruit unto holiness, you yourselves being servants, it is not said unto holiness, but) unto God. There is the spring and glorious excellency and liberty of service. You may be a servant unto righteousness to satisfy your conscience and worry yourself to death. But what I get here, through grace, is, liberty through righteousness, and then Christ's will the motive of all I am to do. O blessed thing! It is liberty indeed. There must indeed be the practical every-day fruit; but besides this, there is the joy of serving God, positive joy of serving God. And it is sweet after all -after showing us this practical way of getting righteousness and true holiness, even the image of God-to learn, that eternal life is altogether of grace, the free gift of God. I had rather have eternal life as the gift of God than earn ten lives; for having it so, it is the proof of His love, and that is bliss. The Lord give us, in every day common life, to live in the secret life of the heart, and hence in the outward life of our daily service to Him, founded, as it is, on reckoning ourselves to be dead and alive again, yielding ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead.

Vol 01 - How a Believer Is Delivered From the Law by Union With Christ

How a Believer Is Delivered From the Law by Union With Christ From the 4th chapter of this epistle the apostle develops the great doctrine of the power of the resurrection in deliverance and righteousness: not only God's taking the blood of Jesus for our sins, but God acting in power on man even when dead; first, in raising Christ, and then in the quickening of a saint by the Spirit of God, by the same divine power by which Christ was raised from the dead. In taking up this great principle, he applies it in the 5th chapter, not only to the putting away of sin, but to the acceptance of the person of the believer. In the 6th chapter he applies it to the practical walk-" Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? " No: a dead man will not go on in sin, or else he is not dead. He connects our not continuing in sin-not with motive, from the love of Christ constraining-but with death and resurrection. In this 7th chapter he applies the same doctrine of death and resurrection to the law. This is the great point under discussion, and not whether we have a renewed man's experience or not. Let me have never so new a nature, yet if I am still under law, the law will condemn me. The only effect will be to give me such a sense of the holiness of God as to make me miserable. Put any person under law, and you put him under the curse: not that the law is bad, but that no one can keep it. But one will say, I use the law, not for justification, but for sanctification. I answer, you cannot use the law as you please; the law will use you as it pleases. If you do not obey it, it will curse you. It is holy itself, but it has no power to sanctify. The effect of using it is to put a man under the curse; as it is written, " Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The law is good, if a man use it lawfully. You will never say it is good, if you are under it; for who has not broken it? -who has not lusted? It is a good weapon, but it has no handle? If I take it to condemn others, I must first condemn myself. It is as sharp for the person using it as for him against whom it is used. Thus, in the case of the woman taken in adultery, they thought that in whatever way Christ should act, He would be in a dilemma. But they find that the law, which they were to use against the woman, condemn themselves as well as her. Christ lets them use it; and when it condemns all, He then takes up grace. The law is adapted to the unrighteous. Of what use is it to say to a righteous man, " lust not? " If he has no lust, he does not need it; and if lust is there, what can the law do but condemn him and deny his righteousness? It was never meant to do anything else. Well, we should thoroughly understand what deliverance from it is.

" Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Verses 1-4.) What the apostle does here is to

take the principle of resurrection and apply it to the law. The law, says he to the Jew, or to any one thus under it, was your first husband; but you have now another, being freed by death from the first, and you are risen in Christ. We are not physically risen, but we have a part in the death and resurrection of Christ. The law is the one husband-Christ risen the other. Now we cannot have both at once. We are bound by law to have only one. Well, the law was my first husband, but I am freed from it by death. The law kills me. I die, and the law's title is gone-the tie is gone. How? for it is blessed to trace the manner. It is not that we have died personally. It is not that the law was ever abrogated. It could not be. But we are dead to the law by the body of Christ, because the full curse of the law was attached to Christ. He died under the curse. The law spent its weapons on Christ. It did everything it could in the way of curse against Christ-it spent itself entirely on Christ, and Christ has risen out of it. He was perfect, yet, having been made sin for us, the law brought a curse on Him; and what can it do more than spend its curse on Christ. And now that He has risen out of it, what can it do to Him? Nothing. Is Christ under it now? Oh no. He is in an entirely new position-"Set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." There is the position of Christ now. Now this position of Christ is applied to the Christian by faith. For whilst Jews were actually under the law, almost all who are called Christians are under it virtually:-alas! that is in their thoughts and apprehensions. But here I see how God has set us free. Here I see Christ coming and taking up my cause. I see Him, as mediator, taking my place, and faith applies to me everything that He has done, and into which He has come for me. I find my place in Christ as the Second Adam risen. He comes and gives me a portion in His place. What is the law to me? It condemned me, it is true; but then God has settled every claim the law had against me in the body of Christ; and now I have a life in Him beyond the reach of law. Now I have life in Him; for the tie with my first husband is broken by death, and is gone. Hence the believer is dead to the law. Does this take away its power and authority? By no means. People say to me, do you know the killing power of the law? Yes-but I know it as freed from it, for it has killed me. It cannot kill me again. You cannot make a dead man feel. The law found sin in me, and it has not merely pronounced the curse, but executed it in Christ. And now I can talk about it in peace. It is not to the law that I am now joined, but to my new husband, to whom I am tied by faith; not to exact fruit from a bad tree by commanding it, but to graft a new graft-Christ as our life-"that we may bring forth fruit unto God."

Thus you see that if you are under the law in any sense, you are under the curse. You have sin in your flesh. Will the law allow it? Do you think it will let you off? Can it deliver you from it? Do not talk of the sanctifying power of the law. Your putting yourself under law is not wanting to be good, but your unwillingness to own how bad you are. You hope to get good out of your heart, if you have not yet succeeded. Now, if God require anything from me, I cannot give it. God does in fact leave us often under law. What is the consequence? The sin which works against the law becomes positive transgression, and sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful. Not only so, but the motives of sin are stirred up in us by the prohibition of the law, and the will works against the barrier to work to death and condemnation.

Persons say, take away a man from under law, and you leave him without restraint. Of course, if there be no reality in the life of Christ-but He liveth unto God, and unto God we too live with Him. I dare you to be under the law with a sense of God's holiness. You could no more stand one moment in the presence of His holiness than compete with His power. The law will have righteousness and true holiness. It will not ask you if you take it as justification or a rule of life. It

will take you on its own ground. " For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death." This was not the law's fault. God's law is holy. " But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." While there is a will in us, the law must condemn us, for it resists the law and authority of God. Law does not talk of a new nature. It asks, do you produce the thing that God demands. It will allow of no excuse. It would be a bad law if it did. Do you love God with all your heart? No, you do not. Well that is sin, and you are cursed. The effect of a will in us, restrained by the law, is to urge the will against the law which checks it.

"But 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." It is a deliverance. You do not know that you are slaves to the law if you do not know that it is a deliverance. How do we obtain it? By dying to the law. "Being dead to that wherein we were held." (margin) I died under it, and that is the way I got deliverance. The law is not dead. It is in full force against all who are under it. But we have died under it. It has killed us by its righteousness. It is the ministry of death. It was written on stones in its requirements, and I have a nature which does not meet them. It will not neglect-not modify them. It condemned me because not obedient, and now it has had its full effect-of course in Christ. By faith I find my place there. I get by faith into Christ-I get part with Him. One man takes another into partnership, and gives him all the benefit of the connection, and the advantages the firm already had acquired, though he had no part in acquiring them. So we all come into partnership with Christ. All debts are discharged, and I have a part in all that is His. It was all kindness on His part, for I had brought nothing.

" We are delivered from the law, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." It is not a letter demanding, but a spirit making me walk in that which is agreeable to God, as partaking of His nature-its desires and delights -in the power of the Spirit of God. It is not a law delivering up to a curse for breaking its requirements; but that which makes me partaker of righteousness as it is in Jesus before God.

" What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law." But it did not cure me of sin, but provoked it; and then it came and brought death to my soul. It is thus good in the way of showing the need of Christ. But will bringing death to the soul convert a man? Never. When he says, I had not known sin but by the law, he means in conscience: of course he knew sin; and was sinning every day. " For I was alive without the law once;" that is, going on quietly, without any thought of its bringing death and condemnation on his soul. " But when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." He found it was of no use to be combating sin in this way; that is, by thinking on the prohibition of' the object, and of course of the object prohibited, with the lust in the soul. Victory over it is obtained by looking away from it altogether, and. this we are enabled to do in the power of a new object, Christ possessing the heart by the Holy Ghost.

" And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." This was not the fault of the commandment. It was given for life if men had kept it; but man being a sinner, it was a commandment unto death. The source of all this we find in the 5th verse, in which we get a most important truth. " When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." In chap. 8:9 we see the contrast. But here "being in the flesh" gives the whole position and standing of' the man. He stands as before God in the

flesh-in the helpless sinful nature of fallen man. That is the case, the condition the man is in. He is not a dead and risen man. Does the law quicken him? No; the law could not give life. (Galatians 3:1-29) It proposes life when man is at a certain point; that is, when he has already kept and obeyed it. But how can a man get to this without life? How obey in sinful flesh? Can we while in the flesh and under law? Hear the judgment of the word. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God. For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The law does not give life or the Spirit; but to obey I must have both. Now we are all " in the flesh" until we are " dead and risen with Christ." Compare Romans 7:5, and Romans 8:9, and see the difference. In the one we have, " For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death:" in the other, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." Now the law and the flesh go together; they are correlatives. The law deals with man as man-with man in the flesh-man ere he gets the Spirit, which he receives in virtue of redemption. And what is the effect of its operation? "The motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." "Sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought all manner of concupiscence." "Sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful." Is that the way- to get holiness?

Verse 14. "For we know that the law is spiritual, But I am carnal, sold under sin." He could not say, we are carnal. For of whom is he speaking when he says "we"? of Christians. Hence they are viewed in what they have as such in common; that is in their spiritual standing, so viewed in Christ. "We" know that the law leaves nothing untouched respecting a man's standing in the sight of God. It judges everything in the motives and intents of the heart, according- to the searching judgment of the Spirit, and to the light of God's nature. But when he says, "I am carnal," he is talking of individual conscience. Christians, as such, are in the Spirit. They are not carnal. " Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." (Romans 8:9.) The flesh is in us, it is true, but if walking in the Spirit we are not in the flesh: for in the Spirit is power and liberty according to God. Here, however, man is not set free, but is viewed in his own capacity to deal with evil when his will is set right, and seeking to attain righteousness according to the desires of a new nature. It is personal individual conscience making the discovery of what is in his heart, but in the presence of the law which judges the whole result. You will find, at the end of the chapter, that he speaks constantly of I, I, I; and never once of Christ or of the Spirit. It is the experience of what the human heart is, and not the knowledge of what the heart of God is. It is the experience of what I am, as acquainted with good and evil, and not the knowledge of my position by faith. This we get in the 8th chapter, and there we are not under law.

What is our subject all through the chapter? The question is not whether it is a renewed man or not. I believe it is a renewed man, for he delights in the law of God after the inner man. But it is the case of a man under law. It is the effect of the law, as a measure of righteousness, on the conscience, where there is no power. You will never understand the end of this 7th chapter of Romans until you see that it is the discussion of law dealing with a man under it. He always wills what is right and never does it. There is a total want of power. Do you not want power for holiness? The law will never give you that. It is as feeble to do that, as it is strong to curse. What the apostle is here saying is all about self. Till Christ is known as a deliverer, and the power of the Spirit comes in, giving liberty, and occupying the soul with all that God is, has done, and sets before us, in the

love which secures us for the enjoyment of it, all that the soul can say is, I am this, and I am that. And while it is what you are to do and to be, you are occupied with yourself. There you are floundering, like a man in a morass, because of the kind of ground you are on. If you think to pull one foot out, you have only the other deeper in. Now you want a deliverer.

Take the question of peace with God. If you were more holy, do you not think you would have more peace with God? Oh yes, you reply. Then your holiness increases the value of the blood of Christ, or you are not resting on that blood as that which makes peace fully and absolutely. Your answer shows that. Is holiness then not necessary? Most surely it is. But I thus speak to show you that you cannot have peace in this way, because the result of holiness in you does not reach the holiness of God, and God forbid that that measure should be lowered. We are made partakers of His holiness. I say it to make you know that you cannot have holiness in this way. That is given us in nature, in the communication of the divine nature. It is practically maintained through the knowledge that God is "for us," in the peace with Him which Christ has perfectly wrought and gives to the believer. In verses 15 to 23 it is I, I, I; and God says, 'I will give you enough of it; you will get tired of it, and then you will be glad to be beholden to me in grace, and to be done with law and self.' Now what is the end of all his laboring? "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Divine power is needed. If you have got a good will through grace, you must get power too. Is he brought by progress to peace? No; but he is brought to give up the effort to bring flesh up to it, and to the knowledge that no good thing is in him-that he has no power to do good. So now he says, "Who will deliver?" He learns that he has got a bad self, and that he must get a deliverer. All is now changed. He looks on another to do that which he cannot do, and he finds it all done. Man is brought to his real level, and then God is brought in, and he thanks God through Jesus Christ. Thus he gets power by learning that he has none, and by receiving peace with God through the blood of Jesus, while knowing that he has none. He is brought low-finds that he is a sinner incapable of getting better and reaching God thus; and then Christ dies. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." But this is not merely giving strength for the struggle, so as to make a man content with his success, and so get peace, but it is the knowledge of a complete salvation, wrought by God in view of what we were, and to the sense of which we were reduced-salvation and peace. I come to know what I am as man and I am wretched: I come to know what God is for me, and I am happy. Moreover, the resurrection, which has obliterated every trace of condemnation, brings into a new sphere where the Spirit gives liberty, and the hope of glory to which it leads on.

Thus we have, first, that you cannot have two husbands at once. Then the doctrine that the law provokes sin. Then we have man put under the law, that he may have what is called experience. It is all about I and self; and not till the end do you get Christ and a deliverer, and thus, "thank God," though the two natures remain the same; the new, however, walking in grace, the old being held for dead. Thus, as a doctrine, we get entire deliverance from the law; not weakening it, but giving it its whole power-but that power kills. The person who weakens the authority of the law is he who puts man or any one under it, and leaves him any hope. For sin is in the flesh, and the law will allow of no sin, but curses all who take up its works to do them. To mingle grace with it is to destroy its obligation, and undo its authority, which is righteously exercised in condemning. We die to the law; and then we get Christ's position, being delivered by death and resurrection. Then we get the law applied as a matter of experience in this holy way, to bring home to the soul the want of

its power to keep it. It is a great deal more difficult to know our want of power here than to know our sin. Conscience will tell you of sin, but it requires long experience, though we know it is true, to learn that we have no strength, and to have flesh so broken that we have no confidence in it; to learn that there is no power, just as there is no forgiveness, but in grace; and to find that it is the discovery of what we are that settles the question of peace and power, for then it is God Himself.

Vol 01 - How the Lord Accepted Job

How the Lord Accepted Job

We see in Job's history the workings of God in the soul in bringing it to Himself, and the exercises the heart passes through when learning itself in the presence of Satan and in the presence of God Himself.

" The Lord accepted Job." It does not say that the Lord accepted his acts, or his works, or anything connected with him; but that He accepted himself. And that is just what we want. The moment our souls are really awakened to a sense of what God is and of what we are, we then want to know that we are accepted of God. Till that is known, we may try to bring our acts and our works to clothe ourselves with them; but when we have really come into God's presence we clothe ourselves with nothing, and then we get the sense of the divine favor. The converse of this is also true. We know that our works are unholy; and when our souls are truly awakened we look at ourselves as being the spring of these unholy works; and thus we learn that in heart, and spirit, and nature we are far from God. Then I am grieved, not only for my sins, but because it is I who committed them. And this is a present thing. If I am looking at my works, I may put them off till the day of judgment; but for myself, personally, I cannot be satisfied without the sense of the present and immediate acceptance of God. I must know that I am at this moment standing in His favor.

It is not said that God accepted Job till the end of his trials. And what had his friends done for him during the sifting through which he was passing? Well might he say, " Miserable comforters are ye all." They had no true apprehension of God's character, and so were unable to understand His dealings with a soul. They had no proper sense of sin, and therefore knew not that if God would deal in blessing with man, it must be entirely on the ground of grace. They did not know how to meet his case; and though they had said many true things, yet they had not said one single right thing in its application to Job, for they did not understand him.

Job had never really been brought into the presence of God. There had been a certain work in his soul, which produced fruits. But in Job 29:1-25 we evidently see that he had been walking in the sense of blessings from God, and in a measure in the sense of the fruits of grace produced in his heart. He was resting in what he was to others, and not in the favor of God Himself. He owned God, it is true, and bowed under His hand; but notwithstanding, he had never been truly in His presence, and consequently his heart had never been searched out. It was not a question of fruits, but a question of what he was. So God goes on dealing with Job, till in the very thing in which Job was most famous, he is brought to nothing. Job, the most patient man, curses the day of his birth. Why is this? Because we must be broken down - we must be brought to the sense of what we are, as well as of what we have done; and then God can deal with us out of His own heart. Thus God's dealings with us are intended to bring out really what we are before our own eyes in His presence, in the presence of that eye which looks on while we see what sinners we are. Thus God went on dealing with Job till Job was brought to say, "I am vile, I abhor myself." In Job 23:1-17 we see Job's confidence in God, and his desire for God, although the stroke was bitter. He said, " Oh! that

I knew where I might find him!" He did not attempt to keep away from God. He had that kind of sense of what God was that he wanted to get to Him, " even to his seat." It is true he speaks of "ordering his cause before him;" but in Job 9:1-35, where he is speaking of man being justified before God, he says, "If he contend with me, I cannot answer him one of a thousand;" and again, " If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me." Here we find that Job was thinking of being in God's sight. There was not the wretched, hypocritical attempt to keep away from God; there was the consciousness of having to do with God; and in heart he desired to get to Him, though his conscience kept him away. Thus there was much more truth in Job than in the see-saw truths of his friends; for conscience was in full exercise in him, and not at all in them.

There was also more grace in Job's heart now than when he was floating along in prosperous circumstances. It was, in truth, wretched, miserable work; but still he was finding out what was in him. And what grace it is in God that He should take up a heart, and thus wring it out, that the soul might be brought, such as it is, into immediate dependence on Himself. The sinfulness of Job was brought out, so that he could not say it was not there. The sinfulness of his heart was brought upon his conscience; it had come fully out; and a terrible thing that is. We know what it is to the unconverted man; it makes him reckless in iniquity. Let a man think that he has lost his character, and he will then run loose in wickedness. When a man comes to this it thoroughly breaks him down. It is, one thing for a man to lose his character with himself, but it is another and a very different thing to lose it with his neighbor. But when Job has lost his character-when it is entirely gone, then God comes in.

After all the sifting, Job is brought into God's presence, and then " the Lord accepted Job." In God's presence his mouth is stopped; then he said, "I am vile;" " I will lay my hand on my mouth." But Job must be brought further, because God is to bring him to Himself; he must be brought to confess not only that there is no good in him, but that there is a great deal of evil. And this he does, as in verse 3, " I have uttered that I understood not." For now it is not a question of condemnation, but of sin. When the sinner has judged himself, the fear of condemnation has passed away. " I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Thus Job takes God's side against himself. He laid himself before God, and abhorred himself; and then he repents in dust and ashes; for it is only in the presence of God that we learn repentance. In its fullest sense true repentance is, when our sin is so thoroughly brought out that we are taking God's side of the question in judging ourselves, and in justifying Him. Then it is that He justifies us, and makes us accepted in the Beloved. Then it was that " the Lord accepted Job." And blessed is the man whom the Lord accepteth. May we indeed feel the need of Him, and not rest in the hypocritical quiet of keeping out of His presence.

Vol 01 - How to Be Simple

How to Be Simple

If a person does not say more than he has to say he can be simple. But when we want to please people, a quantity of things come up in order to do so.

I am speaking right when I say something God bids me. But when giving out my own thoughts, I have a thousand things to inquire, How far they go, &c.

Vol 01 - Humility

Humility

1. There is a difference between being humble before God, and being humbled before God. I am humbled before God, because I have not been humble. I am humbled, because of my sin. If I had been humble, I should have had grace given me to prevent it. For " God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

2. The only humble place is the presence of God. It is when I get out of His presence that I am in danger of being lifted up. People say it is dangerous to be too often on the mount. Now I do not think that it is when we are on the mount that we are in danger, but when we come off it. It is when we come off the mount that we begin to think that we have been there. Then pride comes in. I do not think that Paul needed a thorn when he was in the third heavens. It was after he had come down that he was in danger of being exalted above measure-from thinking that he had been where no one else had been.

3. I do not believe that to think badly of ourselves is true humility. True humility is never to think of ourselves at all-and that is so hard to come to. It is constantly, I, I, I. If you only begin a sentence with I, there is nothing that a person will not put after it.

4. What hearts have we! " I the Lord search the heart." Who but God can know them. Persons who think they search their hearts and are quick in their evil, do not really know their hearts, nor are they truly humble. The fact is, they must be talking of themselves, and their pride is nourished even by talking of how evil they are.

Vol 01 - Life in the Spirit, the Holy Ghost in Us, and God for Us

Life in the Spirit, the Holy Ghost in Us, and God for Us

Romans 8:1-39

There are three parts in this well known and remarkable chapter: first, Deliverance in the power of life from God.,-the power of God in resurrection giving life in the spirit as our portion through the work of Christ; secondly, The presence of the Holy Ghost Himself,-not merely the fruit of His operation, but His own personal presence; and thirdly, The outward security-what God is for us-not anything in us, but that for which we can count upon Him. Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God. For only the creature can pretend to separate us; and no creature can separate from God, as being mightier than He. " If God be N. us, who can be against us!" Therefore in the end we have nothing of the inward work; that the apostle had fully spoken of before. So entirely does he pass it over, that when he says, " Whom he justified," he does not add, them He also sanctified, though that is true, but " them he also glorified."

I repeat, we have, first, the inward effect and work-life-to its full result, even to the resurrection of the body. (Romans 8:1-14) Then, secondly, the presence of the Holy Ghost in us. (Romans 8:15-29.) And, thirdly, all the securing power of what God is for us outwardly, in His counsels, & not looking at His work within the soul, maintaining it, and so on. But before I enter on this chapter, I would say a few words on the conclusion of the last. A godly person, who had come to the deliverance there is in Christ Jesus, in the end of the 7th chapter, - that is, to the beginning of the last verse,- might suppose that there was an end of conflict; but it is not so; for such is the instruction of the latter part of the same verse. It is after the soul has known deliverance by Jesus Christ, that this great principle comes out, "with the mind I serve the law of God;" therefore, until the deliverance is known, this cannot be realized; but the flesh remaining in us, after we have known deliverance, occasions conflicts after deliverance, because there are conflicting principles, contradictory one of another. In the 7th of Romans the law and the flesh are opposed to each other; but in the 5th of Galatians-where we get the real form of both conflict and deliverance-it is the opposition of the flesh and the Spirit. In Galatians, they have the Spirit, and therefore you get real power after the deliverance, which you do not get in Romans, because they have not the Spirit. Thus, in this 7th of Romans, it is not flesh and the Spirit, but man under law; and, therefore, he does not say, " the flesh lusteth against the Spirit;" but, " O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He delights in the law, it is true. Of course he does; for, if the new man is begotten it will delight in the law, whether under it or not. But the law has no power to give the Spirit; therefore, if under it, I cannot be led of the Spirit, I must be led of the flesh. "But we" -who believe-" are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us." "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." " And, if we be led of the Spirit, we are not under the law." Therefore, in Galatians, where they have the Spirit, they are exhorted to " walk in the Spirit." But, if they have the Holy Ghost, why this exhortation to walk in the Spirit? Because the flesh is still there, and " lusteth against the Spirit," and there is ever a danger

of acting according to it. " The Spirit," however, on the other hand, " lusteth against the flesh;" and is given for the very end that we may overcome, " that we may not do the things that we would," which is the force of the passage. If I walk in the Spirit I do not fulfill the flesh's lusts.

I now turn to the doctrine of our chapter. In the first three verses of this 8th chapter, we have the results of the argument shown in chapters 5, 6, and 7. In the first verse we have the result of chapter 5, in the second Adam-"justification of life." In the second, we are "dead unto sin," as in chapter 6. In the third, we are "dead to the law," as in chapter 7. Under the first Adam, who brought in sin and death, there was nothing but what pressed down; while in the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, it is all lifting up--perfect liberty. God has come in, in delivering power. But you say, " How is that?" God's own Son went down under the power of death for our sins, and rose in the power of a new life without them. He left them behind Him, with the life in which He had borne them, and to which the claims and curse of the law attached, and entered into a new position before God. And by association with Him we are taken from under our sins into this new position-into resurrection-life with Christ. " There is, therefore, now no condemnation." Christ has undergone the judgment due to sin, and then arisen from the dead; and in Him we too have died to all that came upon Him as dying, and in Him risen; and because we are alive, through the life of Christ, after the judgment for sin has been executed on Him who died for it, there can be no condemnation to those who are in Him. Moreover, " it is God that justifieth." God came in. in power, and put them through a work of death and resurrection in Christ, and there is an end of their whole standing as in flesh before God, and of all that attached itself to it.

Therefore, now it is no question of hope where faith is simple. I do not hope anything in speaking of the effect of the cross. I do not hope that the work of Christ puts away my sins; it has put them away,-it is a past thing, executed and done. He "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Moreover, we do not now trust in promises for our peace, but in a fact, in an accomplished promise. Of course we do trust in promises for our every day's need and deliverance, but that is quite another thing. As to salvation, we rest in that which is already done. "By the righteousness of one the free gift is of many offenses unto justification of life." We are brought in living power into God's presence in resurrection. We are in Christ Jesus, who not only died, but having passed through death is beyond it all, in an entirely new position. There is our position, in Christ Jesus, in God's presence. There is no condemnation there. There is an end of the whole condition to which it applied: for it has exercised all its force on Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Here, too, is the secret of the walk of the Christian-" who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Now we get that of which we had nothing in the end of the last chapter, that is, Christ and the Spirit. Indeed, we get more of the Spirit than of Christ and His work, for He is talking of that which results from what Christ has done. I find here the living power of the Spirit in Christ Jesus, setting us, as associated with Him, in a position where we are sitting out of the region of condemnation, made free from the law of sin and death.

Notice now the connection of the three first verses of this chapter, with the argument of the three preceding chapters. The first verse looks back to the 5th chapter, and asserts that we are justified because Christ is dead and risen; and that there is no condemnation if we are in Christ Jesus. The second looks back to the 6th chapter, and answers the question, " Is this free justification a principle of sin:" No, for how have we got into Christ? By death and resurrection. Then you have

the life of Christ, and that is the very principle of holiness. The law of the Spirit of life has made us free. The third verse looks back to the 7th chapter, and shows that what the law could not do, God " has done;" viz., condemned that sin in the flesh which so troubles and besets us; and that through Christ's coming in the likeness of it, and as a sacrifice for it, so taking us from under its dominion. The righteousness of the law is now fulfilled in us; the principle of it is planted in us, " for he that loveth hath fulfilled the law." Thus we get the practical result, besides "no condemnation" and standing in Christ. The law could never give that.

I desire to call your attention again to the first verse, as there is extreme force and power in it. " There is, therefore, now no condemnation." It does not merely say that they are not condemned, but it goes a great deal further - " there is no condemnation." And the soul needs this full assurance. For conscience is more lively the nearer we are to God. And the nearer to God the more miserable, if there is anything at all as a question between the soul and Him. There is, then, no condemnation to them that are in Christ. Is there any condemnation for Christ? Why! He is the Blessed One of God, the very substance and principle of being and accomplishment of what God delights in. How then can there be any condemnation for the one who is in Him? He makes our standing. In Him is our peace. All the old sins are gone, and there is perfect peace and security in God's presence, for we are there " as he is."

Verse 2. " For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." In the 7th chapter, we saw the power of the flesh, which was constantly subjugating the man, whose will was set right. There was a law in his members. But the Spirit has a law-a constant uniform principle of action-just as much as the flesh had. There is power too-living power- in Christ. It is not taking a man and saying to him; here is the law, and keep it. Man would put this first, and get out of condemnation by it. Now we are quickened by the life-giving second Adam, and have part, as we have seen, in His resurrection, in order to getting out of condemnation; Christ having first wrought the atonement, we enter into life discharged from sin. But man would get his conscience free by the movings and actings of this life, that it might be as to his consciousness-himself; but this cannot be. There must be submission to condemnation, and the sense of helplessness, so that Christ may be our hope; in other words, there must be submission to God's righteousness. Until the conscience is clear, we cannot be dealing with God as a God of power. God will not let us have the power until we submit to the condemnation, and get it settled by Christ. But having submitted to God's righteousness, there is living power in Christ, which sets the man free from the law of sin and death. In Romans 7:1-25, there are the desires of the new life, but working in. relation to the law, and therefore no power; but here it is life bowing to Christ.

Verse- 3. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." The law was not in fault; it only failed. through the weakness of the flesh. You cannot make anything perfect out of bad materials. A man may be a very skilful workman, but if you set him to work upon bad materials, all his skill will be of no avail. For instance, a man. might carve on wood, and display the most exquisite taste and workmanship, and produce that which every one would admire; but if he were to attempt to do the same in clay instead of wood, it would only crumble to pieces beneath his hand, and all his skill would go for nothing. So the law attempting to work on the flesh only crumbles it to pieces. The material breaks down under it. The law never effected the giving of righteousness.

It promises life to those who keep it, but it never gives life. Christ alone gives life.

What man could not do, that God does; and that is the secret of the whole chapter. " For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." The question is, How can sin in the flesh be condemned?-not our sins merely, but this terrible thing, sin in the flesh. Well, God is going to deal with it. God condemns it. I see He ought to condemn it, and that frightens me. Well, how has He done it? " By sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin." Thus He condemned sin in the flesh, and put it away in Christ's sacrifice. He executed it in Christ's dying for us. The whole condemnation has run out on Christ. This terrible thing, which I do not know what to do with, God has done away with-outside of us altogether-in Christ. Christ died, not only for sins, but for sin. It is a real, thorough redemption. If God sets about delivering, He does it perfectly. He would not deliver you from your sins and leave you under your sin, to worry your conscience about it. For the grand point here is not merely pardon, but deliverance, so as to stand in liberty before God. Therefore, what the true heart wants is power over the sin with which it is in conflict every day, and a conscience really freed in God's sight, that if past sins are put away they be not working in power in him as a law in his members, by which he is captive to sin. Yet he knows and feels that its root is still there. But root and branch have been condemned by God's sending His own Son. It was He who thought of this. His own Son. There we learn the extent of His grace and His firm purpose to accomplish that work of deliverance for us.

Verse 4. " That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Here He takes up the walk. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us. It is not a law which is given outside us, and has to act by a flesh whose lusts refuse its requirements, and whose will rebels against its authority. It is a new life in power which discerns, indeed, and brings to light, the lusts of the flesh, but which makes me walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The flesh is not changed, therefore I am not to walk after it. The flesh is there, but that is no excuse for walking after it, for the Spirit of Christ is in us. And, moreover, " God will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear." The flesh is still present, and must be judged and kept down. We all, as believers, have the flesh in us, though we are not in the flesh; but that does not necessarily make the conscience bad,-it does not hinder my communion if it is not allowed to act in any way. I go and talk to God about it. I am in communion with Him about it. I go and say, " Father, help, or I shall fail." If I allow it to act in any way, conscience gets bad, and I lose communion, and I have to go and confess my sin before communion can be restored. Thus, the mere fact of indwelling sin is-if we walk with God-all occasion of communion; (I do not say the cause of it;) whereas, in so far as I allow it to act, it is a barrier, though grace comes in and restores.

Verse 5. " They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." " After the Spirit" gives the condition and position of the man looked at as a spiritual man. Every nature is suited to certain objects. The vile nature has its objects; and they who have the Spirit will delight in the things which are according to the Spirit's nature. They who are after the Spirit have a mind which has objects on which it rests, and towards which it tends in its desires.

"For to be carnally minded is death." The carnal mind, fruitless in its nature, lies under the death of the old Adam-death comes in to seal the condition. "But to be spiritually-minded is life and peace." Here we get the inward thing in the power of the Holy Ghost -life and peace.

There is a two-fold peace; peace in the conscience, and peace in the heart. The former the blood of Jesus has obtained and gives; the latter, of which this verse speaks, is a far higher thing; it is peace in the heart and affections. There is peace in the heart when the affections in quiet are at rest in the steady delight in and pursuit of a perfectly satisfying object, for the pursuit of which the conscience will never reproach us. If we are delighting in the Lord, there will be peace. If we are ever disquieted, it is with ourselves we are occupied; but if the Spirit is at work, He takes us away from self to God. And herein lies the contrast between Ecclesiastes and Canticles. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon is taken up with himself: it is "I, Solomon, the king; "singing men and singing women; gardening, and knowledge, and all that the heart can desire; and "what can be done after the king?" But the things of the flesh cannot fill the heart: " all is vanity and vexation of spirit." For let him exhaust all that the world can afford, the energy that exhausts it is never satisfied; the greater the energy to find out all the world can afford, the more is it found out that it cannot satisfy. But when we get Christ, as in the Canticles, we want, on the contrary, the capacity to seize it all. What peace and joy is found in communion with Him! But if self comes in the rest is broken.

Verse 7. " Because the carnal mind is enmity against God." Here we get a deeper thing still. Here we find that the flesh has a will that will not be subject to God. It would not be will if it were. The flesh has not only desires that are contrary to God, but a will that is not subject to His law. The law declares not only right things, but also the authority of the lawgiver; and when the authority of God comes in it brings out the rebellion of the flesh; for the flesh immediately says, I will, and I will not.' So if you break one commandment you are guilty of all; because unwillingness to submit is as much shown in the breaking of one as in the breaking of all. If I bid my child do three things, and he does only two of them, which he likes, and in the third takes his own way, insubjection of will is as much brought out by his disobeying in one point as if he had disobeyed in all. " So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Its lusts are contrary to His nature-it goes against His will and authority. This will, by its existence, is hostile to God,-for our place with Him is to obey. To have a will of my own is not to obey.

" But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." Our standing before God is not in the flesh-not in the first Adam and in his nature and will. We are looked at of God as alive in the Spirit. The flesh is there and lusts, but he is in the Spirit; the living power of God having come and wrought the new man and working in it. Hence by His power there is liberty-holy liberty. All that the Spirit delights in and desires characterizes the man before God; for a man is what the object, thought, and feeling of his mind is. You are not in the flesh-He does not say the flesh is not in you. There is another life, even that of the risen Jesus, which is in. you, and is that in which you live before God, though the flesh may seek to guide you; if it does lead we are not walking in the power of the Spirit.

" If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." It is not merely God working for us, but God in us;-not merely producing a new nature, but dwelling in it and working in it. For besides the new nature we want power.

If we have the new nature only, we have good desires, but we do not accomplish them, as is the case in the 7th chapter; but if the Spirit of God dwell in us not merely have we new thoughts and

desires, but there is living power to accomplish them. It is most precious to see how he brings in God as the real practical deliverance of the man who was before in the flesh. For it does not say, "ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, "if born of the Spirit-though that is true; but, "if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you;" showing that it is God Himself working in power-as the Spirit of God. Such is His form and character as working in man in power, in contrast with flesh and man. As to practical character He is called the Spirit of Christ in man, for there the life of the Spirit was perfectly displayed.

Verses, 10, 11. Finally, for the full and complete accomplishment of deliverance from the body of sin and death, we are assured that if the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ dwell in us, He that quickened Jesus shall quicken our mortal bodies by reason of His Spirit that dwells in us. The body is not left until it, too, is brought to participate in the full result of resurrection power. Meanwhile, this is realized in the power of the Spirit and new life. I hold the body for dead; for, if its will works as alive, its movements and fruits are nothing but sin; and I hold the Spirit as my alone life, for its fruits are righteousness. And how entirely this testimony of the resurrection of the saint being by virtue of the Spirit dwelling in him, separates him from the whole condition of the world. The world will not be raised because the Spirit of Christ is in them. They have it not. We however shall be raised by His Spirit who dwells in us.

Here is the link. Saints are raised, because livingly united to Christ. " He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." This shows in what a place we are set. Thus we have three characters of the Spirit: He is called the Spirit of God, as contrasted with the flesh; the Spirit of Christ, as characteristic of our walk in the world; and the Spirit of life, as connected with our resurrection.

Thus we get, up to the end of this 11th verse, the answer to the 24th verse of the 7th chapter, O wretched man that I am! For here, there is full deliverance, not for the Spirit only, but even for the body. The Holy Ghost, in the working of His power in the saint, does not leave the body until it is fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. The desires are there according to the new nature -liberty and power, - all in and through the working of the Spirit by real life communicated, and, finally, glory. It is the forming of the new man - power; while the flesh is there resisting the working of the Spirit; and finally, a body fully conformed to the life which we have by the Spirit. This communication of life, so that it may be our nature, and the presence of the Holy Ghost Himself, causes the effect of that presence to be spoken of in two ways; for Scripture speaks of Him as our life, and as separate from it and acting in it. Hence He is both nature and power. The new nature given to us, but the Holy Ghost dwells in us. And, as the fruit of His operation, we read, " The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." A groan comes forth. I may not understand my groan, but the Spirit in me does. I may not have the intelligence to know what is the just answer to it; but God finds the working of the Holy Ghost sensible of what is around me according to God. " He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." It is my heart, but also the Holy Ghost who has produced it as a real feeling in my heart. It is me, for it is done in me; and yet it is not me, looking to its power. We thus get the working of the Holy Ghost in us, and the comfort of knowing that it is us, and the Holy Ghost too. For, from the 14th verse, we have the second form of this truth, that is, the Holy Ghost acting personally in us, as Himself there in power and sympathy. It is not merely that He is a source of life in us, but He acts in and on this life - He leads and guides us as Christians. He Himself acts in us, though here as in connection with this life.

" The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, &c. When He wants to show the source of power in our spiritual life, He points to the Holy Ghost. " The Spirit is life," and so He is. Without the Spirit we cannot believe; "after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise;" yet it is very important to remember that after having believed the Holy Ghost Himself is given to dwell in us. " Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The indwelling of the Holy Ghost is a different thing from the quickening power of the Spirit. Old Testament saints had the quickening power of the Spirit, but the indwelling of the Holy Ghost could not be until Jesus was glorified. (John 7:1-53) Instances are given in the Acts, where there was an interval between these two things, to make us sensible of the distinction between them. We read, " that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," that is, the new nature. But then the new nature wants power; it has neither strength nor power. The very characteristics of the new nature are dependence and obedience. But there must be power; and that is the Holy Ghost, - ours in virtue of redemption and uniting us to Christ; and then the leading of the Spirit. Then it is said, are " led of the Spirit." Now the Spirit does not lead the flesh, but the new man. It teaches me to reckon the flesh to be dead; and if I reckon it dead, it is not me. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, then ye are temples of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, which we have of God. A temple is that in which God dwells; and our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost. What a solemn reason for holiness of conversation! And again it is said, in John 14:1-31, He shall be in you, as the other Comforter. He was not in them before. Jesus went away; but there is this new Comforter, not merely with us as Christ was, but in us; and He abides, He does not go away as Christ did. There is no power in us to apprehend the truth, or to walk in the power of it. But the Holy Ghost not only presents the things of Christ, but gives us the capacity of apprehending them; and moreover it is by Him we are enabled to enjoy them, and to walk in the power of them. In 1 Corinthians 2:12-15, we find these three things stated regarding the Spirit: 1st, Divine instruction received by the Spirit. Ver. 12. "We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God. 2nd, Communicated to others by the Spirit. Ver. 13. " Which things we speak in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." And 3rd, Spiritual capacity to discern, through living power in the souls of those taught. Ver. 14, 15. " He that is spiritual, judgeth [discerneth] all things." The solemn truth is this, that the Holy Ghost has been really given as indwelling power. " Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh;" for, besides life, there is this indwelling power of the Holy Ghost. The Comforter could not be given in this way, until Christ was gone, and redemption fully accomplished; for by the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, the seal was put on the value of the work which Christ came to finish. The seal was put, not on what we had done, but on what Christ did. The Lord's own anointing, when baptized, was a seal to His personal perfection. Him hath God the Father sealed; but could God put the seal on me in whom sin is found? No. " In him after that ye believed ye were sealed." Even if I am born of the Holy Ghost, righteousness is not accomplished in me according to God. Therefore He could not seal the whole result. The Holy Ghost was also given to testify of Christ's glory as the risen man. It is not merely that Jesus personally was accepted, when He went up on high - He was present for us, and as the Head of the body; and He received from the Father the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost's coming is declared to be dependent on Christ's perfecting His work, and taking His place on high as man - the Head of the body; and He bears witness also to the personal glory of Christ. The effect of this was manifest in the difference in the apostles before and after Pentecost, and before the giving of the Spirit. Peter was born again; yet we find ignorance,

stupidity, and fear. What do we find after? We find the same Peter, who had denied Christ worse than the Jews, (for he was in fellowship with Him,) charging home this very sin on the Jews. Was he afraid? No; his conscience was purged, for Christ had died meantime; and besides we find he was filled with the Holy Ghost. " They perceived the boldness of Peter and John." I am not here speaking of miracles, the mighty signs and wonders which were wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost; but of the boldness with which the apostles spake after they received the Spirit, as we see all through the Acts.

It was not the boldness of the flesh, but the fruit of the presence of the Holy Ghost working in them spiritual energy and power, so as that the conscience should be in perfect liberty before God, and the fear of man disappear through the acting of a power which made God present to the soul in love. We have a beautiful type in Aaron. After he was washed, he was anointed without blood, but his sons were not anointed until sprinkled with blood, So Jesus was anointed down here with the Holy Ghost, and with power, as the seal of His personal perfection, before the blood had been shed; but we are anointed and sealed after we are perfected through the blood of Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:1-24) Christ sends the Holy Ghost, and He is in us as the Spirit of adoption; the effect is to put us into direct communion with the glory and place of Christ in the presence of the Father. This gives the character of our walk. We are to mind the things of the Spirit. Do they who are after the Spirit mind the law? No; they keep it, because they do not mind it, nor are under it. They mind the things of the Spirit. And what are they? Anything in the world? No! nothing. " He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." He gives us the knowledge of past redemption, present peace and liberty, and future glory. He occupies the soul with Christ; thus bringing joy, and thankfulness, and power, into the soul. The Spirit turns the eye back, and teaches the glory of the cross, after we have known its saving power, and this we can then peacefully contemplate, for we are on God's side of the cross. Whatever is morally glorious we see it in the cross. There we see love, obedience, holiness, righteous-ness, and law; there, too, we see what-ever Was morally bad; condemnation, sin, and death. God and sin met together in the person of Christ on the cross. When I have found peace, I can say, " now is the Son of man glorified;" not now I and saved, though that is true; but, " now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." And surely there is no joy like the joy of knowing that, in that act of deepest suffering for our salvation, both God and Christ were most deeply glorified. If Christ suffered all that agony for my sin in obedience to the Father's will, surely there never was a moment when God could look on Him with deeper delight: and. I have now all the effect of it. The heart gets impressed and penetrated with the sense of His love, if I now look at what I am in Christ, such as that Christ is satisfied in me and the Father too. I am the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul. The light of God's love rests on Christ Himself, and we are in Him. " In that day," when ye obtain. the Comforter " ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." We have the blessing of union with Him now, and there is but one thing more - to be with Him forever. The Comforter is the perpetual remembrancer of that word, " so shall we be ever with the Lord." The Church is to be brought to Christ, as Eliezer brought Rebecca to Isaac. All along the road he was telling her of the one to whom she was going. Just so the Holy Ghost is leading us up to Christ-the cross being the starting point of the journey, and the whole character of the road all along the way answering to it; and meanwhile He is telling us of all the glory of Christ and of the Father's house. There may be trial in the way, but what is that to the heart whose affections are set on Christ. Poor Rebecca! if she thought of her father's house when she was in the wilderness with an uncertain future; but if she thought of what was

before her, then all was joy, and there was certainty as to the future. The cross is the commencement of this journey, as separating us from the world; and if we know the Spirit's power in our souls we must keep in this narrow path (in heart I mean) all the journey through. Be-loved, you have to go through the world, but do not make the wilderness the object of your hearts. Israel did this. You may desire earthly good, and you may get it; but it will bring leanness into your souls. Rather let us be, like Paul, doing one thing-so pressing on to the glory, as that we can forget the world and all that is in it, as things which are behind us-on which we have turned our backs.

I add a few words on the rest of the chapter. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. The Spirit giving us the assurance that we are sons, we have no longer in any wise the spirit of bondage to fear. Fear has torment. Our relationship with God is of quite another character. He has loved me, blotted out my sins, made me His child, and I am now in that relationship with Him. I do not know Him otherwise than as a loving Father, and I a saved son. But then I am an heir, an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. Such is my joy and hope by the Spirit. But in this world of sorrow and evil Christ was a sufferer; if led by His Spirit I must be so too, like Him and with Him; but then it is the path to glory. But then this very apprehension of the glory by the Spirit makes us sensible according to God of the sorrow and suffering of the whole creation, which is waiting for the manifestation of us the sons of God-and not only do we see the creation groaning around us; but, as to our bodies, we are of it, and we groan ourselves being burdened; not because the heart is uncertain of God's love, but because, having known our share in the glory, we are therefore sensible of the contrast of the state in which we are as in the body, and thereby connected with the first creation. But then the Spirit enters into all this sorrow, not in the selfishness which dreads it for itself, but in the sympathy which is according to God, as it was shown in Christ Himself. We may not know the remedy, but the groan of the heart is the movement of the Spirit sensible of the sorrow and misery that is around. Besides, if we do not know what to ask for as we ought, we know that God makes all things work together for good to them that love Him. This leads to another very important point -what God is; not as working in us by the Spirit, but what He is for us. Hence, sanctification is omitted. He foreknew, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified. Nothing shall separate us from His love.

Thus, after the first three verses we have, first, the Spirit as life. Then, secondly, the Holy Ghost acting personally as present with us. In this we have the double character. He gives us the knowledge of sonship and joy of inheritance, and He takes part in our sorrow and infirmities as in this world. And thirdly, we have God for us, so that none can lay ought to the charge of God's elect, nor anything separate them from His love. Blessed thought it is. We have life in the Spirit, the Holy Ghost in us, and God ever for us.

HYMN.

O Jesus, when I think on Thee, My heart for joy doth leap in me;

Thy blest remembrance yields delight; But far more sweet will be Thy sight. Of thee, who didst salvation bring, I shall forever think and sing:

Thy love, O Jesus, ne'er can cloy, Fountain of bliss, and source of joy. For me Thy precious blood was spilled, To seal the pardon of my guilt; And justice poured upon Thy head Its heavy vengeance in my stead.

O let me ever share Thy grace;

Still taste Thy love and view Thy face;

Wher'er I am, wher'er I move, Be Thou the object of my love.

Blest Jesus! what delicious fare, How sweet thy entertainments are!

Never did angels taste above Redeeming grace and dying love. To Thee I'll be forever joined, Joy of my heart, joy of my mind, And in Thy Father's house above, Unhindered taste Thy perfect love.

Vol 01 - Looking Unto Jesus

Looking Unto Jesus

Hebrews 12:1-29

There is one thing remarkable in this epistle, that whilst it is full of warnings, still in none is encouragement and full confidence in God so remarkably set forth. And nothing brings a soul into entire confidence in God but encouragement in grace. So here, the apostle says, You are not come to the Law, but to Zion - to grace. He does not pass by the difficulties - he takes them all up; but he shows that the true way of over-coming difficulties is to treat them as none at all.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight," &c. As if he said, As for all that hinders you, why, throw it off. How strange to a soul that is toiling under the burden! But remember it is with difficulties he is dealing -not with standing; - that is settled in chapters 9 and 10. Now there are two things that hinder in running this race - a weight and an entanglement. How simply the apostle treats either! Just throw it aside. When a soul has got into weakness it has simply got away from Christ. That is what the Hebrews were doing. They were looking to something visible, to ordinances and the like, and had forgotten an invisible Christ. They had known Him once as the portion of their souls: for we read in chap. 10, ver. 34, "Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Now that is the point he is pressing here. It is to this principle of faith that the cloud of witnesses were bearing testimony. The reason why any difficulty gets power is because we have got away from Christ. If I have got Christ for my portion, what is difficulty? Nothing. Paul speaks in Php 3:1-21 of having suffered the loss of all things, and of counting them as dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. If Christ is my joy, it is no hard thing to throw away dross. The Hebrews had all those other witnesses to living by the power of unseen things - Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, &c. But in Christ we have the beginner and perfecter of faith, one who has run the whole course, so that there is not a single step in the life of faith that has not been trod in the person of Jesus. He had everything against Him. Yet for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross; &c. The joy was not His motive. His own love was His motive. Reward is never presented as motive for our conduct, but as an encouragement when we are in the course. Christ, God's love, is motive. Now herein is the power of running this race, of throwing off every hindrance - it is in having Christ as both our motive and our power. But this supposes that we are clearly on the ground of grace - on the ground of this, that " God is for us." It is not at all a question of conscience. The ground here is the ground of a Christian's course. There is no proper Christian course till we are brought to God in grace. There may be exercises of conscience, but these are in order to acceptance. If I am connecting acceptance with glorifying God, I do not know what grace is - I do not know what a righteousness, not my own, and yet mine, is, It is so hard to give up everything that we are, and to believe that by one man's obedience many are made righteous. And if it is by the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is as perfect as God can make it. That is why, so long as a soul is hankering after something in itself, it can never be happy. It is not submitting to

the righteousness of God. But when I do submit, and Christ is made of God to me righteousness, then I have to walk as a Christian. That is what we have in this chapter. Now we get the race. Jesus did not run in order to be accepted. Why? He was the blessed Son of God every step of the way.

Well, in running this race the very difficulties with which faith is exercised become chastening. Faithfulness may bring us into trials; but the Lord uses the very trials of faith as a moral discipline for the killing of the flesh. The chastening is discipline - correction; not necessarily on account of sin; but even the troubles which come from our faithfulness serve to detect and correct the flesh. And everything in us hinders from the full enjoyment of what God is for us. See the grace of God in marking out and noticing every step of the walk - the constant care of love and wisdom to discipline us, to the breaking down of everything that hinders from the full enjoyment of Himself. We have admonition and warning here. Why? That we may be partakers of His holiness - that His own nature may be practically realized. What could be higher? His own holiness! Every step is toward this - and yet, alas, we often do not like the means! It is not requiring holiness; (of course it is required;) but here it is grace making us partakers of it, - positive grace communicating the essence of the divine holiness. His people He is to make like Himself - to enjoy Himself. For He has given us the nature that can do so, and His own love. Well, in bringing us to this He says, I must break down this, and that, and that.

But, he goes on to add, Do not be discouraged by it. Why? God is for you through every step of the way. " Therefore, lift up the hands that hang down," &c, If you were at Sinai you might fear and quake. I could not tell you to lift up, if you were at Sinai. I should say, Do not go too near. For no man can stand before God's glory when it is requiring that He should answer to it. But ye are not come to the mount that might be touched, &c., but ye are come to Mount Zion. What is the character of this Zion? Israel had entirely failed - the ark of God was among the Philistines. The ark was where the mercy-seat was, and on the mercy-seat the blood was sprinkled. So Israel could not offer a sacrifice - for the very place where the blood was presented was in the enemy's hand. Now what is Zion? It is sovereign, royal grace. It is God coming in, and bringing back the ark and setting it on Zion. It is victorious grace in power accomplishing all the promises when Israel had failed. In this passage (22-24) we get every part of the millennial glory - the whole fruit of God's counsels concerning Christ.

First, we have Mount Zion - full, royal grace. Then the heavenly city Jerusalem - the heavenly capital of the kingdom. Then the innumerable company of angels - the general assembly - the whole host of heaven. Then He singles out what is most blessed among this company - the Church of the First-born - those with us united to Christ. Next, God the judge of all; and he gives Him this character because in connection with His displayed glory. The spirits of just men made perfect-Old Testament saints, who had run their course, but were not yet glorified - who had not yet got their bodies. Now He comes away down to earth again, when He speaks of the new covenant in blood crying from the earth. " To Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant," because it is through that that Israel is brought in then. The blood of sprinkling, &c. Earth had received Christ's blood as it had Abel's. But now he has got on the ground of grace, and so it speaks better things than that of Abel.

Thus we have here all the counsels of God for the glorifying of Christ:- the mount of' royal grace, the heavenly city, the heavenly host, the Church of God, God Himself, the Jews resting in the new covenant, Jesus its mediator, and His peace-speaking blood. There is where I have been brought, therefore I am to have courage. " You are come." It is not hope. If I am thrown back on hope I am thrown on effort. But I am not thrown on hope, for I have got it; - got it, it is true, in the midst of trial, but look at all those witnesses, or rather at Jesus, "who for the joy," &c. We are in connection with all this - not merely conversant with it by faith, but livingly associated with it. Herein is strength. For we are come to what cannot be shaken. Grace has brought us to everything connected with the display of God's counsels for the glorifying of Jesus. The Lord sees it needful for us to learn what we are; but the moment we get Jesus, we get the strength of Jesus and an object. Lay aside every weight. How can I? the soul may say. It is very easy for you to speak so who are not burdened so. But why have these things this power? Because your heart is on them and not on Jesus. When the heart is on Jesus they lose their power. Do not despise the chastening; there is a needs-be for it - something to be done in you; but do not faint, for it is love that is doing it. The thing that rests on the heart is the wondrous grace that is incessantly occupied with us - with all our folly and failing. The great thing is to be with Jesus; not merely to run to Him when we have got into a fault. We may then not find Him all at once. If I have been long away, I shall get exercise before restoration. But be with Him. Therein is the power of throwing off these difficulties. Be with Jesus for His own sake, and then you have Him for everything.

Vol 01 - Man's Paradise and God's House

Man's Paradise and God's House The 84th Psalm opens out a new and special source of delight, but one which unfolds itself in many other passages. When God put man in paradise it was not God's dwelling, but man's. God visited man there, though man was already unfit for His presence; but at least it was man's dwelling, though prepared of God for him. But now God calls us to dwell in His house-His tabernacle. This is altogether a new thing, and of sovereign grace,-our dwelling with Him and in His house. (Compare John 14:1-31) We have this by His dwelling in us, and so our dwelling in Him; for thus we know the joy of what belongs to the place where God has made His home, and thus become the home of that soul where He dwells. The passages above; Ephesians 2:1-22, at the end; Revelation 21:1-27; and 1 John 3:1-24; 1 John 4:1-21, all open this out.

Vol 01 - My Home Is Not Here

My Home Is Not Here MY home 'tis not here, in a region of death, Which sin has defiled with its poisonous breath; Where Christ was rejected, where man is oppressed, In a world full of groaning, I seek not my rest.

You may show me its palaces, stately and fair. But the brows of their inmates are furrow'd with care; Its wisdom is folly, and madness its mirth: For the shadows of death all envelope the earth.

I may gaze on the mountain, and forest, and flood, They speak of their Maker, my Father and God; His sun it enlivens the day with its light. His moon and His stars give a voice in the night. His hand paints each flower with its beautiful dye, His providence watches the sparrows that fly;

I hear Him, I see Him, wherever I roam, For this earth is His work, though it is not my home. My home is in heaven, for Jesus is there, He's gone His own home for His friends to prepare; In the land which no evil has ever defiled, Where each tear shall be wiped from the eye of His child. My home is in heaven! yes, there we shall meet;

What joy it will be our companions to greet, With whom thro' this desert we journeyed along; When the sigh shall be changed for the harp and the song.

Vol 01 - Note

Note

There are many unsuspected places of the New Testament that would receive a perfect elucidation from these things, which have vacillated between many interpretations, or been done wrong to, or passed as merely general when their application was most strict. We can justly understand the expression, "Your faith groweth exceedingly, and your charity aboundeth." If faith meant faith in the ground of peace, the quantity of faith has nothing to say to it, but the value of the object. So the difference between the "work of faith," and "the labor of love." The expression of James, "Hath not God chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him," receives its just force; and corresponding texts also, "The meek shall inherit the earth." "Blessed are ye poor," and giving this the sense of the spirit of poverty to the expression, "poor in spirit," declining the greatness of this world. The position of poverty held in faith saves so many of the positions easily felt to be necessary to the position of this world, if there is an heirship to the world to come, and that the present world, and every part of its constitution contrary to God and to Christ, except as to the bare fact that power belongs to God. If the position of the heirship of the kingdom is held in poverty, how naturally and without question is the saint free of the world and its ambitions, its frowns and favors. The utmost that those that possess can do is to possess as though they possessed not, to use as though they used not. It is an abuse to do otherwise, and in respect of the kingdom, (in fact its revelation,) loss. The work of faith will make this world a very wilderness. The labor of love one to another is called for: the walk of faith in it opens the way to, and is the field of it; in fact, mutual help and love among the strangers who wait for an enduring substance. The more thoroughly the possession of the kingdom is realized, the more steady must be the recurrence to Gilgal, and the creeping in of Babylonish things, and the value of this world's goods, guarded against. We shall not be separate before God unless our hearts are bound up with Christ, it will be a meager and failing confession without Him, and it should be "true in him and in us."

Lastly, the duties and the relationships of the saints on earth, such as are recognized by Christ, are ruled by the Master and done to Him, and they receive the reward of the inheritance, because they serve the Lord Christ; He is confessed in all things, and every thought is in subjection to Christ; and His name is on their foreheads, both here and hereafter. (Revelation 22:4.) We have not to go out of Christ for anything. "We are complete in Him (and this is, I believe, the true and only sense of the word in Col.) who is the head of all principality and power."

There is a point which receives perfect elucidation from this position of the believer. The truth of the place of Melchisedec, in this respect, has, I believe, been rarely fully, and clearly understood. We find in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Melchisedec spoken of as entering in, but there is nothing of His coming forth. Again, happy souls know that it is not intercession that keeps them in the place of grace. They are in Christ, before the Father, in Christ in whom they have believed. Placed there in the settled claims of Christ, to be there unprovable in the sight of God, and yet the office of

Melchisedec is intercession while above, not only of advocacy in case of failure, (1 John 2:1-29,) but of intercession for them in the difficulties of confession; compassed with the consciousness of past infirmity, (though without sin,) and a compassionate High Priest. Even the ignorant and those out of the way are the object of His graciousness. Held, indeed, as safe in Him, they, as the objects of His Father's love, are His charge while on Satan's ground, and He becomes, to all who look to Him, the strength of their confession, and the leader in the path they walk, the beginning and end of their faith. Heirs with Him in a usurped country, seeking wisdom to distinguish between God's and Cæsar's, they confess Him not only in His grace, but in hope and patience, " in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," desiring to be with Him, and looking to be in His image. The fitness of this High Priest is most instructive. He who has received this office from the Father is in His place, where He intercedes, and from which He sends His help, and whence the love that animates the saints comes, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, becoming those who are to follow Him, in whom they stand, and in whom they are presented to the Father.

Vol 01 - On Taking the Armor

On Taking the Armor

If I do not know practically in my soul my acceptance, and my position as a member of Christ's body, I cannot take in the instruction of this portion of the word of God. It presents, in its connection, emphatically, the full result of Christ's work in relation to the Church, as the object of God's thought and counsel before the foundation of the world. There is such a union between Christ and His members that His standing is their standing; His acceptance is their acceptance; and His life and glory are theirs. So, also, there should be a correspondence in the walk with the position in which we are placed. My walk, indeed, is here, but the springs of it are all above. It is just as I apprehend my acceptance in Jesus, and my consequent place in the world, as He was in it, that I shall practically realize this. The apprehension of this conflict depends upon the realization of the Church's position in Christ. It is not merely the mortifying of the flesh, though it is impossible to meet Satan if I do not keep under my body: for if I am yielding to the flesh, Satan has me down, and, so far, under his power. Nor is it the contending with the temptations of the world, though these, of course, we have to overcome. So far as a Christian is a worldly man, he is a miserable man; and the more so the better. This conflict takes a higher character than either the mortification of the flesh, or the victory, in spirit, over the world; but it will never go on, if those be wanting. It is in a region where Satan and his hosts put forth their might. It is not conflict in our souls about God as to our standing in His sight or as to His thoughts about us; or what the final result of His grace may be. It is of an entirely different character. It is "against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places." (See margin.)

Now it is not by underrating these enemies that we are to meet them. It is not by making light of them that we are to overcome them. Satan may soon put down our vaunting. Yet there is no reason to fear him. David did not fear Goliath; but it was because he went against him in the strength of the Lord, and only in His name. There is a phalanx, then, of spiritual enemies - not want of spiritual affections, which, indeed, may be, and will surely unfit us for the conflict - but an army of real spiritual enemies, which every Christian, and the Church of God, has to meet in the heavenly places, if our true and blessed position, as risen in Christ, is to be enjoyed.

Now, says the apostle, in effect, if there is no room for boasting, there is no room for fear. For we are not avenging our own wrongs; we are fighting for God, and seeking, in His might to destroy the works of the devil. Therefore he says, "be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." And, if we are found practically walking above with Christ, we shall find our need of the exhortation, "Put on the whole armor of God." To illustrate what is meant by "heavenly places," take the case of Israel. First, there is redemption out of Egypt by the blood of the lamb; not merely from guilt, but from destruction by the sprinkling of the doorposts. Then there is the power which made the path of death to others (the Red Sea) the path of life to the believer. And after all this, there is the wilderness. We are in the wilderness - Oh that we realized it more and more! Well, Israel had there to meet Amalek: (see Exodus 17:1-16) and their whole strength was residing in Moses' uplifted

hands. So it is by the power of God alone that we overcome. Everything depends on the power of God. It is out of ourselves; yet it is ours to lay hold on it. But the conflict of Israel with Amalek presents rather the conflict of the believer with the enemy, as seeking to hinder God's pilgrims in their onward progress through the world as a wilderness. It is the hindering power of the world, used by Satan to stop the march of a Christian through the world to God's rest in heaven. Hence his power must be met and overcome too, or we cease to be strangers and pilgrims upon earth. " This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." But the world must be overcome; or the pilgrim character must be dropped. But afterward, even when Jordan was crossed, there was conflict; that is after death and resurrection in Christ are realized this conflict begins. After Israel had got beyond Jordan and were in Canaan, the Canaanites had to be overcome.

Now, here is the point. How am I to live a heavenly life? How am I to present a heavenly character. Why, by living in heaven. It is not by rule, but by living in heaven. Christ said, "I am from above;" so, as to every spring of my action, it ought to be drawn from heaven, from Christ. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." If the wars of the Lord are to be maintained, and if the character of a Christian is to be maintained, it is by our living in heaven, by having our hearts in heaven. We belong to heaven. O beloved! it is not words that can communicate the knowledge of this to you. I might talk forever of heaven to you, and you would never comprehend it unless you were there. But if you are there you know what I mean. Now if you are in heaven, it will cost you no trouble, no anxiety, how to live down here. The power of that life which has brought you there, and the array of everything which faith finds there will mold your character down here. If, however, you are not in heaven, it will cost you much anxiety how to shape your conduct; and how to act so as to have the good opinion of others; and also how to keep on good terms with conscience and yourself. This is the thing, walking in the light as God is in the light.

Now, just as we realize our position in Christ shall we be able to meet the wiles of the enemy. It was just as Joshua got beyond Jordan that he had to conquer Jericho; that Israel fled from the men of Ai; and that he had to meet the wiles of the Gibeonites. The point is to keep our position in the heavenlies. Thus you see how the conflict is taken wholly out of the world. Worldly things have to do with it, yet it is carried on in heavenly places. How little do we realize these powers of evil! Not mere flesh and blood, but spiritual enemies, who strive to hinder our enjoyment in the heavenlies.

We begin at the wrong end when we begin with ourselves. Oh! it is sad for a Christian to be ever questioning and doubting, not certain of his salvation. It is not merely that he is unhappy - of course he is that; but he is not realizing what Christ is. It is a positive slur on the work of Christ. You may say, it is only a question of privilege; but no question of privilege stands alone. Oh, no! It is no light thing to be ignorant of Christ: I do not mean ignorant of His salvation; but ignorant of the fullness of His person, and the divine, eternal, perfectness of His work.

Now as to the Armor.

" Take unto you the whole armor of God." Make a practical use of the truth that is in the scriptures, and especially of that which is presented in this epistle, and let it have its due power in your souls. Thus you will be able to stand against the enemy.

" Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." Do not hold truth loosely. There is much taking up of truth in a loose way. Why do men use a girdle? To enable them to gather up their energies, - to strengthen them for combat, or the race. Truth is what I want to strengthen me for my conflict with Satan's falsehood. And it is just so much of the truth as I am practically enjoying with God, that I can use as a girdle. O beloved, what are you doing here? Are you drones? Are you taking your ease? Are your garments loose? It must not be. " Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:13.) We are called to serve Christ. " And if any man serve me," says He, " him will my Father honor." Every one is called to serve Christ. It is poor work if we are not asking every day, " what wouldst thou have me to do?" By and by, He will need no service, and we shall need no girdle; then we shall rest. But here we are in a world where Christ needs service. We are called to fight for Christ, and the apostle says, "no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath called him to be a soldier."

" And having on the breastplate of righteousness." It is the breastplate of righteousness which gives us a perfect standing before God, so that Satan can never raise a question as to this vital point. " We are made the righteousness of God in him." What is the good of Satan's coming to me, and telling me what I have been? I know it all; but I also know what I now am in Christ. By a careless walk the sense of this may be lost: I may lose, practically, the breastplate of righteousness; I may forget that I was purged from my old sins. But there is a righteousness, a perfect divine righteousness, in which the believer stands accepted in the Beloved. I may trip, but nothing can undo the work of God in Christ.

" And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." A walk in peace; fitted by these shoes to walk in the rough places in the world in peace, fitted to go on in peace in the path set before me. If I am abiding in the peace of the gospel, I shall be in rest and quiet, whatever the circumstances of the world may be. Yes, in that peace I can go anywhere. Jesus is our peace; that divine blessed peace, which does not hang upon circumstances.

"Above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." All the fiery darts. There is not a single shaft that can pierce or wound me, if I am holding up this shield of faith. Satan wounds by weakening our faith; and nothing does this sooner than neglect of God's word, or the allowance of any practical unrighteousness. It is not a question of what darts; it may be about acceptance, or temptation to a careless walk. But I by faith get up into the heaven-lies, and see my position there: what then can harm me? There I know that all things work together for good.

There is no ground for faith but the word of God.

" And take the helmet of salvation." I must be sure of my salvation if I go up into the battle. There is no maintaining this conflict with Satan, if the soul is not established in grace. What a blessed thing it is to know that I am already saved! Then I can hold up my head, having on the helmet of salvation. As David says, " Thou halt covered my head in the day of battle." A soldier might almost as well be without his shield as without his helmet: in either case he is unable to look his enemy in the face; - almost as well be without faith, as without the knowledge of salvation, in the practical question of meeting Satan in conflict.

" And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." This is an offensive weapon. All are not defensive; though we are secured against injury by the breastplate, &c., before we are called upon to take the sword of the Spirit. We are to use the sword to make head against the enemy. We are to use it so as to deliver others held in his bonds. And this is not simply by a great knowledge of the word. I cannot use the sword of the Spirit with an arm of flesh. I must use it in the power of the Spirit. Oh! there is need to honor the Holy Ghost - near to me as Christ is, and dear to me as Christ is! For we read not only that Christ died for us, but that He sent that other Comforter. Oh! that word, "quench not the Spirit!" " Grieve not the Spirit!" Beloved, we should be anxious about this. We cannot use the sword of the Spirit, if we are grieving the Spirit. We cannot enjoy fellowship with God, if we are grieving the Spirit. There cannot be too much enjoyment of the corporate presence of the Spirit; yet we must have the apprehension and enjoyment of His indwelling power. Alas! alas! the inward life has fallen far short of the position in which we are placed. There is a great want of individual practical walking with God, not only so as to get enjoyment-that is low ground-but so as to glorify God, so as to give the consciousness to every one who comes in contact with us that our walk is with God, and that our strength is in God. The sword is not wielded in the power of the Spirit. We take the blessing, but the power to keep it, and to glorify God by it is wanting.

" Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," &c. It is blessed to find that after being fully equipped for the warfare, absolute dependence on Christ crowns the whole. There is our place of strength. And it is for all saints; because it is alone as I see the Church's union with Christ as risen, and the Holy Ghost revealing the common position of all believers in Christ as His body, that I can understand the place and grounds, and reason, and power of this conflict. God has provided the armor; it is for the believer to take it to himself and to put it on.

Vol 01 - Peace of Conscience and Peace of Heart

Peace of Conscience and Peace of Heart

Peace of conscience and peace of heart are two distinct things. A person may have peace of conscience, knowing that he is a forgiven sinner, and yet not have peace of heart. He may say to himself, I know that my sins are forgiven, but I am not happy. And why? Because in heart he has been wandering from Christ: one thing or another occupying his heart rather than Christ. And whenever a person goes vagabonding from Christ, he is sure to lose peace of heart: and the secret way to know this is that his thoughts are all turning round himself and not Christ.

Vol 01 - Rest for the Weary

Rest for the Weary

Matthew 11:1-30

Sin against God may be looked at in two points of view: 1st, as seen in Adam's transgression in the garden, when he broke the first commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart;" 2nd, as filled up in Cain's slaying his brother, who thus broke the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." But there is another character which sin takes, and is seen in connection with the pains God takes with the sinner, thus in his sins. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and set to work to make himself comfortable away from God. Now, suppose God sent messengers after him and pressed him to return, his remaining away would, in such a case, be additional guilt. But if God Himself came out and entreated him to return, and he would not, this would be a much greater sin than his having at first left him. Carelessness may take a man away from God; but refusing to return when besought is positive hatred of God. Not merely does the sinner see no beauty in Christ, but God has now to deal with him on the ground of refusing the activities of His love. Sin, therefore, now takes a new form, far more dark and more deadly, namely, that of a positive refusal of God's dealings in love. The Jews were put under the law and failed, thus proving that man could not keep the law. But the rejection of Christ is a proof of what men's hearts are. If you take a piece of ground by the sea shore, and plant it, and then find it fruitless, you reject the whole shore; not only the piece you cultivated, but the whole shore. So the gospel proves what all our hearts are in the sight of God. God has given us the history of the Jews, not to tell us what the Jews are, but what we are. Thus do these plain testimonies about ourselves prove that our dependence is only on grace; for "by nature we were children of wrath, even as others." What resource have we, then? None, but to turn to God's nature, which is "rich in mercy." This is what the apostle is doing in Ephesians 2:3-4. He there takes up what man is, in contrast with what God is. After speaking of the sins of Gentile and Jew, he sums them up by saying, "and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others;" and then he turns to God's nature, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, - by grace ye are saved," &c. God has now given up seeking fruit from man as - man. (From the saints He does seek fruit, the outward manifestation of the life within.) Christ came to the Jews seeking fruit, but finding none, He will thoroughly purge His floor. Then, as a certain King, God made a marriage, but those bidden would not come; "they all with one consent began to make excuse." Thus they rejected the one, as they had failed in the other.

"Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tire and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." And why? Because their natural conscience was not hardened by a profession of religion. "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought

down to hell," &c. The nearer they came to God outwardly, the farther they were from the reception of the truth, and the more hardened they became. They said of Christ, "Is he not mad, and hath a devil?" So now, men call themselves Christians from mere outward profession; this has the evil tendency to harden the heart against the truth. But the peculiar feature which characterizes the saints of God is, that they hear the voice of the Shepherd. "My sheep hear my voice;" that is, they believe Christ's testimony. Christ is received into the soul, by His own testimony. "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, but we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." Every witness to Christ must come in on the same simple ground of Christ's testimony to that individual soul. As a matter of testimony, John did bear witness to Christ, and yet John comes in as one who must take the testimony of Christ about Himself. Christ testified, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." But woe unto him who rejects the counsel of God against himself. John was a believer, knew certain truths, and said, "there is One to come;" but that was not the point. It was the fixing the truth upon his mind, the testimony of Christ concerning Himself. The soul that hears the voice of Jesus Himself, and receives His testimony, is thus a believer in Jesus. You know that nothing can cleanse but the blood of Christ, that Christ is the only Savior; yet, perhaps, like John, you are saying, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" You have not yet got your confession from the word of Christ Himself, that "He is indeed the Christ;" for when the sheep has heard the voice of the Shepherd, there is never any uncertainty about it. Moreover, He calls His own sheep by name. The moment He said, "Mary," she immediately responded, "Rabboni," without any hesitation or uncertainty whatever, because she had received the testimony of Jesus about herself. The voice of Jesus had reached her soul; she was sure it was the Jesus she loved, and she was happy. It is not merely a spiritual hearing of the voice, but receiving Christ's testimony about Himself. When Jesus had come to the house of Zaccheus, He said, "This day is salvation come to this house," because Christ's testimony about Himself had been received. The testimony of the Holy Ghost is still to the same effect, as we see in Acts 11:1-30; Acts 13:1-52; Acts 14:1-28, "Send for Peter, who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." And the testimony of a soul that has received Christ is this, "I know in whom I have believed." There is a conscious apprehension of the connection of the soul with Christ, which it is not in the power of Satan to undo.

John sends to Jesus, and the Lord turned round and gave a testimony to His servant. It was Adam who named the beasts, and not the beasts who named Adam. So now Jesus must give John his character. "What went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet," &c. The Lord's heart goes out in delight in testimony to John. The Lord delights in His people; and if John is suffered to doubt, and be a mark to others, it is but that he may receive a greater testimony from the Lord Himself.

Men were brought to the trial in two ways. "We have piped unto you and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented. 'For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a devil.'" Why? Because he did not go on like other men. Men, who have fallen into the hands of the devil themselves, account that, when any testimony from God comes in, it must be of the devil, because it is not after the manner of men. John came in the way of righteousness, and therefore he could have nothing to say to any one; he could not eat and drink in company with any one, and therefore he went into the wilderness. He who was to testify about

sin, said, "The ax is laid to the root of the trees," &c. " I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor," &c. Thus John was pleading with their consciences. Jesus came eating and drinking with publicans and sinners. When John does not do as man does, they say, he has a devil; and when Jesus comes in the way of man, " eating and drinking," they say, He is the worst of men, " a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Thus they rejected the testimony of God, whether it came in the way of mourning or piping; and rejected it with the full testimony that God was there: " they repented not."* John could not forgive sin, therefore he went into the wilderness away from it; but Jesus could forgive sin, and therefore He went amongst it. He had " power on earth to forgive sins," as we see in the case of the adulteress and others. Therefore He upbraids those cities; for, do what works He might in them, they rejected Him in them all.

(* It is strange to think that while Jesus could not mend the world then, men can now. A pretty mending they will make of it! When they have brought men to do without God, in self-sufficiency, they will then think that they have done the work.) But in this He submits to His Father. "I thank thee, O Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Having bowed His heart to the will of God, at once the glory breaks in: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." As the rejected one Jesus has received all the glory of heaven and earth. " No man knoweth the Son but the Father, and no man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." To bring man out of his lost condition the Son must reveal the Father. " No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." The grace that is in Jesus alone can reveal the Father's love. " Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Jesus healed the lame, gave sight to the blind, forgave sins, &c.; and what did these mighty works bring Him? Did they believe on Him? No; they rejected Him and knew Him not. Yet " at that time Jesus rejoiced in Spirit." And so He says, " Come unto me, I will give you rest." He knew where rest was to be found; and as having experienced the bitterness of trial and sorrow all the way through His labors on earth, He knew how to give rest to the weary. Therefore He says, if you are seeking rest for your souls, come unto me, for I know what is to be found in the world, for I have passed through it and tried the hearts of men; and I know where alone rest is to be found. Therefore " come unto me, and I will give you rest." How many a heart may be weary that cannot say it is sorry for sin! Well, then, if there be a weary heart, come unto me, and I will give you rest. And where did Jesus find rest? In the perfectness of the Father's love, and the wisdom of the Father's ways. Jesus came to reveal the Father; and He revealed Him as He knew Him. "The only begotten, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." And what did Jesus know of Him? Nothing that saved Him from the troubles of the world. If Jesus has revealed the Father, what more can you seek? That is perfect rest - rest, the perfectness of which nothing can disturb. It is a rejected Christ who could thus speak. For He has blotted out, by His blood, all that could have been against us, so that God has nothing to look for, or to seek about our sins. To speak otherwise would be to deny the efficacy and power of the blood of Christ. It is by coming unto Him that we get this rest; and when we have come to Jesus Himself, there cannot be a cloud to disturb it. There is no uncertainty there; the troubled soul has done troubling then.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." He had to bow his heart at every step, and this is the yoke put on the Christian. He gives us the rest, but puts this yoke upon our necks. He reproached the cities, but had Himself to bow - " Even so, Father." Then immediately He adds, "All power is given to me in heaven and earth." Therefore He is saying to each of us, " Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls," &c. And mark here, that no man ever gets to the point, and discovers it to be the will of God, but He finds a perfect rest in God's ways and bidding. It comes in and meets the soul as it needs it; and the soul thus practically learns the blessedness of following in the path of Christ. If you are weary and heavy laden go to Him, and He will give you rest. Perhaps you are not troubled about your sins, not feeling the greatness of them, &c.; but He well knew them all, having borne the judgment due to them; and He is now saying to you, if weary and heavy laden, "Come to me, and I will give you rest."

Vol 01 - Rom_3:17; Rom_4:1-25; Rom_5:1-21

Romans 3:17;Romans 4:1-25;Romans 5:1-21

I have just taken the close of this chapter, as being the summing up and application of the apostle's argument, which he had drawn from the sin of Jew and Gentile. Then, in chapter 4, he passes on to another principle, as brought out in the testimony of Abraham and David. After the opening introduction, at the beginning of the Epistle, in which the apostle presents the mission with which he had been charged, and consequently, as we have seen, grace and righteousness revealed to man in the gospel, he turns to unfold man's need, and the way in which it had been met, as that alone on which the soul could rest. He opens out the horrible evil of the Gentile, and of man generally, throughout the world; and he then shows that, without any inspired testimony, the two great testimonies that ought to have acted on their consciences, were first, the knowledge of God possessed by their fore-fathers, but which they had not retained; and second, the creation. The invisible things of God being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and godhead, so that they are without excuse. "Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man," &c. "Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts." For if a man has left God he cannot suffice to himself; - that is the prerogative of God - he always turns to the lusts of his own heart, and to objects below even himself. Hence if they had not discerned what became God, they should not be able to discern what became man. It is God's way, when the light He gives is rejected, to give those up to blindness who have rejected it; and this giving up by God is an act of judgment on God's part. As these Gentiles, not liking to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. It was so with the Jews in rejecting the testimony God had given them; God says by the mouth of the prophet, "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." (Isaiah 6:10.) So will it be with professing Christendom. In 2 Thessalonians 2:11, it is said, "God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie."

Thus we see, whether Jew or Gentile, or Christendom, the effect of man being given up by God. We see what man becomes when left to himself. It was not all, as regards the Gentile, that natural light was given in the beginning in the testimony of creation, but men did not like to retain God in their knowledge, when that knowledge was there. Every man has a conscience, distinct from grace; but conscience cannot bring us to God. Conscience is the sense of responsibility, united to the knowledge of good and evil; and if the conscience becomes awakened, and there is not the power of life drawing to God, it only drives us away from God, like Adam in the garden, hiding himself from God. The Gentiles did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and God gave them up to a reprobate mind: properly, they did not discern (in the way of moral approval) to retain God in their knowledge, and God gave them up to an undiscerning mind, i.e., a mind incapable of distinguishing what was good, with approbation of it. So the Jews, having rejected God's

testimony, sentence is passed upon them by Isaiah, seven hundred years before it was accomplished. " Make the heart of this people fat," &c. Also, as Stephen says, " Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did (before Christ) so do ye, (now that He has been revealed.) Both are guilty of the same sin. As regards the public state of that people, they were adjudged to blindness; and so it will be at the close of the present state of things. Those very things by which, according to Peter's testimony, Christ was testified to have come from God, will be the very things, according to 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17, that will lead the Jews (as it will doubtless others) to receive the false Christ in the latter days. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which GOD did by HIM in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." (Acts 2:22.) Compare this with 2 Thessalonians 2:8-9 "Then shall that wicked be revealed, even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders. In Greek the words are the same, 'power' in the one being the same as 'miracles' in the other. Thus as the Jews rejected what God did in their midst, by Jesus of Nazareth, so they will be allowed to receive what Satan will do by that wicked one; and all this, as the apostle goes on to say, " because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." From the 17th verse of Romans 2:1-29, the apostle speaks of the Jews; and finally, from the 3rd verse of Psalms 14:1-7, and other passages of the Old Testament, in the 10th to the 18th verses of Romans 3:1-31, concludes all are under sin; the Jew under law, as well as the Gentile without law, are alike guilty. For if the Gentile be given over to a reprobate mind, the Jew is proved by his own scriptures to be just as bad. Thus " there is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh." The will is gone wrong. They are blind in mind, perverse in will, and guilty before God. Not only was the nature sinful, but they had slighted the testimony, and rejected the light God had revealed to them. Such was the state of the Jew, for the law spoke to him. Natural conscience sufficed to condemn the Gentile; but the God of judgment was there to discern the truth of the state of those who boasted of the law; and now it is proved that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be saved; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Thus we see those under the law are brought under condemnation. It is no use for the Jew to attempt to get his part before God, in virtue of the privileges and condition in which God had placed him; for the law, of which he boasted, condemns him. " By the law is the knowledge of sin." The 7th of Romans springs out of this. The Gentiles had no right really to put themselves under the law; but we all do, somehow or other, put ourselves under the law; and see where it brings us to: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek after God." And were there any? None. "They are all gone out of the way;" and the Jew, if he listened to the law, learned that on his own ground he was utterly guilty; though the apostle does not bring against them their hardness of heart in rejecting Christ. But both Jew and Gentile are alike thoroughly guilty. But now it is the righteousness of God without law: and here the apostle carries on this great principle to its full extent. He states it in a direct and absolute manner: righteousness is altogether on a different principle - it is the righteousness of God; and it is a righteousness without law at all. It is God's righteousness, and who can give a law to Him? And being God's righteousness, it is altogether on a different principle to law? for law requires from man; but here the righteousness is God's. God's law, consequently, only condemns, for it requires righteousness, and it cannot give life. Put a man under obligation, as a means of righteousness, and it is all over with him, because man is a sinner. He is blinded in mind and perverse in will. Man

has a will, (that is not obedience,) law brings it out, and man's will never submits; for it would cease to be will if it did. God never meant righteousness to be by the law. It would have been cruelly mocking man, being a sinner, to have proposed it to him with this object. "The law was given that the offense might abound." Not, mark, that sin might abound; for sin was there and abounded before the law was given; but it is not offense until there is a law. Thus it is that the law worketh wrath; for where no law is there is no transgression; but sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful. Thus every mouth is stopped, and all the world is brought in guilty before God; and now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. Remark that it not merely exists, but that it is manifested; it exists ever in the purpose of God, and hence promises were given, to which faith clung by grace; but it was not manifested till the gospel was brought out; therefore the apostle says, "to declare at this time his righteousness." No sinner ever stood, or could stand, in God's presence, from Adam downwards, but in God's righteousness. But it had not been manifested until now. "But now the righteousness of God without [the] law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." Thus the law and the prophets only showed what God was going to bring in. But the church of God is founded on God's righteousness, and is in the light as He is in the light; therefore it is manifested at "this time." God's righteousness is brought in without law, but witnessed by the law and the prophets; it was witnessed to before it was manifested. We do not get into the Church position till we get into the 4th chapter. In the 3rd chapter we get all brought in guilty before God; and then how we are to get into the presence of God. Can man, that is a sinner, approach God in himself? No. But Christ has been made a sacrifice for us; He has answered for all we have done in the old man; and as the new man, He is in the presence of God for us, and we are there in Him, in all the favor and acceptance in which Christ Himself is: always there as He is. Thus it is man gets, or rather becomes, the righteousness of God. The claims of God against the old man have all been met in the new man, Christ Jesus: and we are made the righteousness of God in Him. In the end of chap. 3, we have the answer to God's perfect demands; - the sin, whether of Jew or Gentile, put away by the blood-shedding of Christ Jesus, and God's righteousness brought in; for Christ has perfectly glorified God in respect of good and evil. In chap. 4, we have another thing, resurrection, at least in principle: "Abraham believed God." And not only did he believe in the resurrection, in spite of the principle of death which was in him; but he did so, as believing the God who could raise from the dead. So we, as the apostle states it, do not merely believe in Jesus, who rose from the dead, but in the God who raised Him. Thus we, having entirely done with law, by which sin is imputed, get the second of the two great principles on which the gospel is founded. The first is blood-shedding, the second resurrection; and the Jew, who might be put to silence on the ground of law, might appeal to Abraham; but here the doctrine of faith, and righteousness by faith, comes clearly out; for in referring to Abraham, who had nothing to do with law, he says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." It is not said that he believed in God, but he believed God, and that is how he got his righteousness. So also David; he believed God. Thus we see that Abraham and David alike found righteousness by grace, through faith: and the faith of Abraham, in this respect, is our faith; only we believe not that God can, but that He has raised Jesus. Thus it is that Abraham is called the father of the faithful, - first publicly called out from the world to righteousness and relationship with God by faith. Having touched this point of the resurrection, before going farther I would show its use in the following chapters. Christ having taken, in resurrection, the place of the accepted man, after having been delivered for our offenses - justified

by faith, we are at peace with God, stand in His favor, and repose in the hope of the glory. For there Christ is before God. This brings out the great doctrine of our standing in the first and second Adam; constituted sinners by the disobedience of one; righteous by the obedience of the other.

Having thus, in the 5th chapter taken up the two men, the old man, the first Adam, and the new man in Christ, the second Adam, - in the 6th chapter he goes on to show that some will say, 'Oh! if Christ's obedience alone has made me righteous, and grace reigns, it is no matter what I do. If it is righteousness without works, then we may walk as we like.' No; it is not so; for we cannot have part in this righteousness but in Christ. Now Christ has died to sin, and lives to God. Hence in Christ I have not only righteousness, but have it as in Him, dead to sin, and alive to God. I cannot be righteous but in this condition; for such is the Christ that I have it in. If I have a part in justification, I have necessarily a part in life, and that a holy life; not that the life is the same thing as the justification, or the cause of it, but the two are always united. I am risen again in Him to be in this new position of justification. Now a new and holy life brings with it hatred of sin. The same principle of resurrection is applied, in chap. 7, to the law. If I am dead and risen again, the law, which is binding on a man as long as he lives, has lost all claim upon me; I am dead to the law by the body of Christ; I am delivered from that which has power over me, that I might serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. We have the application of the risen life to man as placed in justification before God, as in a risen Christ, in chap. 5; as dead to sin, and alive to God, as risen again in the power of a holy life, in chap. 6; as dead to law, in chap. 7; for the law has killed us, therefore it can do no more; its greatest work was to kill Christ; but He rose again, and we in Him, beyond the power of the law. Chapter 8 then brings out the Christian in perfect liberty, in virtue of our being risen in Christ, justified in Christ, our affections showing our life in Him; "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;" and "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." Being thus fully and freely justified and accepted in Christ Jesus, we are only waiting for the redemption of our bodies. It is now no man's righteousness, it is God's righteousness for all; and no man can come in in any other way, if it is God's righteousness. He cannot accept a Jew in preference to a Gentile; it is "to all;" it is as free to sinners of the Gentiles as to the Jew. As regards the standing and peace of the soul it is deeply important to see that what we are ever struggling for is to get something in which we can come before God, while it is God who comes and presents to us Christ as our only righteousness. "It is unto all;" but it is upon those that believe. Mark here another thing that is connected with peace of soul. Some may say, 'I do not deny His divine righteousness; I believe it; but how am I to know that I have a share in it? Is it applied to me? I want it applied to my soul.' Well, God does work by His grace to make you believe, (and He alone can,) but what do you mean? If, by divine teaching, you believe you are verily guilty, and look to Christ's work as your only hope, then God has applied it to you. If in the consciousness of your sinfulness you have believed the record God has given of His Son, then you have had it applied to you, for it is upon all them that believe. You are righteous. It is bad if, when awakened of God, we go on tampering with sin, or with the world; God must work this out of us; and thus it is often long before the simplicity of faith is there; but the thing that is believed is what His Son is, and has done. If there is tampering with sin or the world in our souls, it prevents our laying hold of the truth; neither can we have, consequently, the joy of the Holy Ghost in our hearts; for God must be real in His ways with us. The Holy Ghost cannot tamper with sin, and if He work in us, He will make us recognize and judge and resist sin. But it is not by seeking fruits we shall find peace; for till the Holy Ghost is there in power, there can be no fruit; and for this we must submit to the

righteousness of God. He it is that takes of the things of Christ, for the joy of our souls. But if God has fixed the faith of your hearts on Christ, God has applied this divine righteousness to you. But if there be any sin or worldliness lurking in the secrecy of your soul, God being real and faithful to you, He must work it out in judgment in your soul, to bring you to lean on Christ as your righteousness because of it; and of course while that process is going on in the soul there cannot be joy. But we are returned to our main subject. " The righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all that believe, for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. " Here we have the absolute freeness of divine grace, the sovereignty of God's own goodness, in His being glorified in respect of our sins, by virtue of the efficacy of the work of Christ, which has met and put them all away, having discharged everything that was against us. That is the efficacy of His death; and being in Christ, I rest upon the acceptableness of His person. Many a Christian would be glad to rest there; and why don't they? Because they have not really learned the value of the cross; for if they had they would not be trembling, as if their sins were not put away. You say 'you have no other confidence than the cross;' as to the conviction of your heart, that may be true; and 'that you feel your need of it;' that I suppose, or you would not look to it. But you have not yet learned the value of the cross; and the secret of it is that you have still a little bit of your own goodness lurking within. You do not think yourself as thoroughly bad as God says you are. You have to learn that it is the ungodly that God justifies. You do not think yourself ungodly, and nothing else, and to be nothing else, in order to be justified; and therefore you have not yet realized God's justification.

Here, "being freely justified by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," is not mere justification, but actual deliverance, entire redemption. In the case of Israel it was a question between God and Pharaoh, "Let my people go." It is a real, positive redemption, not merely a forgiveness. Christ has bought us, free from all Satan can have against us. If I buy a slave, he is mine, and no one can have any right over him; and that is true of us. Even with regard to our poor bodies, though not yet redeemed by power from sorrow and suffering, they are free from Satan's power to serve God with. The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. God will have us entirely for Himself, by the work of Christ; for not even the smallest particle of our dust shall remain in Satan's kingdom; and this is why redemption is mentioned last in 1 Corinthians 1:30; it refers to full, final deliverance, and includes the redemption of the body. Such was the typical order of the deliverance of Israel in Egypt; it was one thing for them to be screened from the destroying angel, by the blood on the door-posts, when in Egypt, and another, and very different thing, for them to be brought clean out of Egypt by the passage of the Red Sea, thus being entirely delivered from the power of Pharaoh. But more than this; Jesus has broken and destroyed all the power of death, by which Satan held us, taking them captive whose captives we were; and is now making us, who were Satan's captives, the vessels of God's power and testimony against Satan.

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." Here we have the connection of the blood of Christ with God's righteousness. It has been declared. It rested only in promise till Christ came in the flesh. It was not manifested until then; so that, take Adam, Abel, or Job, they rested on the promise of righteousness, because the blood was yet to be shed. But now it is declared as having been fulfilled, and it is an amazing difference between

resting on a promise, though that is blessed, and on a fulfillment. A man in prison, with a promise that his debt shall be paid, though relieved by the promise, is not in the condition of him who is walking at liberty, with the knowledge that it has been paid. It is not forbearance now, but accomplished salvation. It is God's own righteousness declared: can He forbear with that? The time of forbearance was in the time of the Old Testament saints. Then God was forbearing because of what He was going to do; but that is not our condition. We have God's righteousness at "this time," this present time. He is not speaking here of that which is past of our natural life, but of the time passed before Christ's death. This is part of that "better thing God has provided for us." For if I sin, I do not want a prophet, as Nathan, to come and tell me my sin is put away. I can say I know the blood has been shed, therefore I know, as a present thing, that my sin is put away. It is a settled question. It is such a righteousness that He who accomplished it is set down at God's right hand, and our life is in Him there. Abraham could not say, 'I am one with the man at God's right hand,' for Christ was not there as man then. But the believer in Christ can say so; for as surely as the first Adam was turned out of paradise, so surely has the second Adam entered heaven, and I am as sure of my place in Christ as of my place in Adam. Well, then, it is such a righteousness as God recognized, and, as regards the blood, such a work as has fully satisfied God.

He is just to forgive. It is His own righteousness which is upon the believer, and he must own it; and here is the resting-place of faith. This is justice; but the opening of my heart is at the out-flowing of love. For the opening of the heart is under the sunshine of grace. To see ourselves perfectly cleansed makes us hate sin. A man who is thoroughly clean will not like to get a spot on his garment; while he who is already somewhat dirty will not care about getting a little more dirty. When the blood was put on the lintels of the door posts, it was to keep the God of judgment out, and He passed over; for had He come in, He must have judged them, for they deserved judgment as much as the Egyptians; nay, more, for they knew better. Therefore it was grace keeping God out. But at the Red Sea they were to stand still and see the salvation of God. It was God over-riding every barrier and coming in and taking them out of the place of judgment altogether, and bringing them to Himself. While the one was keeping God out, the other was bringing them to God, on His own ground and by His own arm. As an un-godly man I am justified by His blood; but as a Christian I am accepted in Him. Has the cross then left me out-side? No, it has saved me from judgment, therefore I value it. I see a sinner trembling at the foot of the cross, feeling his need of the cross, or he would not be there; but not seeing the value of it, so he gets no further. He thinks he values it, but if he valued it aright he would not be trembling any longer at the foot of it. Where is boasting then? It is all gone, as it is God's righteousness by the law of faith without any legal deeds whatever. Recollect we are not under law as innocent; for man is a sinner, and the law cannot allow of even a lust. Then where is the use of giving a law to man that is a sinner. What is the use of my giving a righteous law to a man who sells fraudulent goods? What is the use of my giving a true measure to him, but to teach him where he is wrong? So God never gave the law to make men righteous, but only to convict them and show them their sin. Men may abuse the grace to continue in sin, but that does not alter the nature of God's righteousness. If a law is given to man, already a sinner, it must be to make him know himself a sinner. Is He the God of the Jews? Yes, and of the Gentiles also; for He will justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? No, we establish it. Not only Moses's law, but the principle of law. If a thief is hanged on a tree, is that making void the law? No, so far from making it void, it establishes it. So when Christ died, He established the law; and faith comes

in and says, So far from making void the law when Christ died on the cross for my sin, He established the law: but that, does not put me under it. If under it, I am lost, not merely as a sinner, but also by the law itself. Nothing establishes the law like the death of Christ. The first chapters give us the Gentile, lawless, and the Jew, under law, condemned out of the law. Christ was born under law. He kept the law and died under its curse; and is He under it now? No, He is dead to the law and risen again. I am the dead sinner; He died for me; He has borne the curse, and it is all gone, and it has lost all power to touch me, for I am one with Christ. I stand in Him in the presence and favor of God, as dead and risen again in Christ. He gave all His sanction. to the law and suffered it-glorified it, but delivered us from it. In chap. 4 the apostle refers to Abraham and David, as believing God; for if the law did not bring in righteousness, this does not dispose of Abraham, who was before. His testimony, therefore, is brought in. He goes on, therefore, to show the ground on which Abraham gets the promises, and in what state he was when he got them. He was accounted righteous through faith, and it was in his uncircumcised state that he obtained the promises. As righteousness was reckoned to Abraham in uncircumcision and on the principle of faith the Jew's mouth was stopped and the promise available to the Gentiles. Then in David we have the same thing. "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." The law worketh wrath; and therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace, so that the promise should be sure to all the seed of Abraham; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all before Him whom he believed, even God who quickens the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they were; - thus introducing us as raised men in Christ into the presence of God. Beloved, in a day like this, what a thought it is to be set in God's righteousness. Christ has set aside all man's reasonings by the manifestation of God's righteousness, as the rising sun not only dispels the darkness, but causes even the stars to vanish by reason of its brightness. When Christ is first revealed to the soul, it is always humbling, because it displays to the soul what it really is. I do not say that the affections may not be moved towards Christ without this; but there must be, sooner or later, such a revelation of what Christ is, as to show us what we are in the presence of Christ; and it is that which breaks down all inside the soul-foolish and vain desires, self-will, sinful thoughts and feelings, and everything that is the opposite of Christ; thus showing us, not only our need of Him and our committed sins, but that we are sin. Then afterward we understand how we are brought into the unclouded favor of God, according to the love which sought us and gave His Son for us.

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Romans 5:1-21

It is a wonderful mercy that the scripture is so plain as it is; for the mind of man reasons about truth, therefore the heart rejoices in the wonderful plainness of scripture. Its depths, it is true, are infinite and unfathomable; but all that the salvation of the soul rests upon is perfectly simple. The more you examine the word of God, the more you find its perfection. The word of man may dazzle for a time, and seem to be clear, but it is found afterward to be full of flaws and obscurities. In this Epistle to the Romans we are not to look so much for the development of the Church, as for the relationship of individual souls with God. The question is - how can God and man meet? First, the blood satisfies the justice, and saves from judgment: as we saw by the blood being on the doorposts, when Israel was in Egypt. Secondly, Christ came down, and was made sin for us, and having gone through all the wrath of judgment due to it, He rose from the dead, and ascended an accepted man into the presence of God; and now all that was His by right is made ours in Him. At the close of chap. 3 the value of His blood-shedding is settled as the ground of acceptance; and the epistle goes on with the results of this. Chapter 4 shows us righteousness imputed through faith: Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Only there is this difference between Abraham's faith and ours. Abraham believed God was able to perform His promise; we believe He has raised up Jesus. It is not so much here the believing on Christ and His blood, as the believing on Him that raised up Jesus from the dead. The subject is the intervention of God in power to bring us up accepted in the Beloved. Christ had come under judgment, and God, by raising Him up, raised us up also: "raised us up together," &c. Faith also sets us there. Chap. 5 follows out the subject, and is divided into three parts. First, our condition before God; (the basis having been laid;) second, he reasons on the consequences of this condition as to our present state and feelings, and shows what we get, unfolding God's ways and our portion in Him from ver. 2 to 11; third, from ver. 11 to the end of the chapter, points out the contrast of the first and second Adam, and heads up the family of nature and of faith in one and the other. The last verse of chapter 4 is connected with the 1st verse of chapter 5; and here I would remark, that it is not properly "raised because of our justification" - as has been often said, but that it should be, as the text has it, "delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." The reason for this we see in the first verse of the 5th chapter. "Therefore being justified by faith," &c.

Thus I see, in scripture, that God never separates justification from faith; for we cannot have justification without having our souls brought into living connection with God, by the exercise of individual faith. There are three things brought out in the first verses. first, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God;" secondly, "Access into this grace wherein we stand;" thirdly, "Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God." First, Peace with God. All the past, all connected with the old man, not only our actual sins committed, but whatever can die under the judgment, is put away - is done with - to the saint: hence perfect peace. Secondly, the present divine favor in which we stand, as a positive thing, a personal introduction to the full favor of God. But not being yet in the glory, we are, thirdly, rejoicing in hope of the glory. Christ has borne all that deserved judgment, and has entirely

left behind him in the grave everything to which judgment can apply, and is now set down at the right hand of God without it; all therefore that respects judgment, in connection with the saints, is ended to God's satisfaction. Though, of course, there will be the Father's chastening for their profit; but it is impossible that judgment can be executed on those who are "the righteousness of God in him." It is as impossible as that Christ's worth should be inadequate, or that God should punish the same sin twice over, or rather put it away and then punish it. So impossible is it for God to punish for the sins of those who believe. If any one had to be shut out of heaven for my sins, it must have been Christ, for He bore them all, but we know He is raised and gone in to glory. It is this, either He has borne them all, or else I have to bear them myself, and then I am lost. But Christ has borne them, and was accepted and received up into glory; therefore the question is settled, if I believe Hebrews 9:26-28; "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

He did not hold back. Sin, in all its horribleness, was laid upon Him, as on the day of atonement, when the sin was laid upon the head of the victim, and judgment was fully passed upon him. But when "He shall appear the second time" it will be without sin, not merely in His person, He was always so; but as having nothing whatever to say to sin as regards them that look for Him; having perfectly settled about sin when God dealt with Him on the cross. No sin there and then escaped the eye of God, as seen on the spotless Christ; all was perfectly brought out; dealt with and put away, and Christ is not now on the cross, the positive value of His work having taken Him up to heaven. The judgment of my sins has all been settled between the all-seeing God and His spotless Son. We have, therefore, not merely a hope, but settled peace. "When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down." He must have failed or else I have perfect peace, and I know He did not fail. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." The reference of faith is never to itself - to our own feelings and experience, for they may deceive us, and refer at any rate to our state, not to Christ's work; as the reference to faith in this passage often deceives people who would make their faith the object, and so turn back upon themselves for something to give them peace. Peace never rests on the experience of anything in ourselves. There will be experience, but the perfect justification of the sinner (who believes) does not rest on experience, but is the answer of God to all that exercises me about myself, (and rightly exercises me too.) When I get peace in God's way then I get the answer of God to my soul. I can trust the heart of God, for I know what it is, having learned it in the gift of His Son; and it is in believing what that is, through His work, that I find peace to my soul; and the more that freedom is worth and to be valued by us, the more horrid must be my own self, and selfishness in the sight of God, if I bring anything of it, or of its pretended righteousness into it; even as "dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor;" and the better the ointment the sooner will it be spoiled. I cannot trust my own heart or its feelings, for it is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; God's I can, and His who will keep me to the end, His has never deceived me.

Faith is not experience, though we shall have experiences of what we are; but I am not justified by experience; it is the answer of God to these experiences that gives peace. Peace is not joy; those often have joy that have not settled peace: but this rests on feeling. When the graciousness of the

Lord is seen and one forgets oneself there may be joy, while the conscience may not be purged; but peace rests on that which is settled. Faith looks at its object, and not at itself, and the soul has peace with God and not with itself.

I do not want you to be at peace with yourself. We are not called on to believe that we do believe, but to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, by whom we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and are brought into perfect favor, every cloud that would hide God's love removed; and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God. His favor is better than life, therefore I can praise Him while I live. So in the midst of wilderness weariness I can rejoice.

I have been lately greatly struck with Revelation 4:1-11, in connection with peace of soul. You find God's throne here in its Sinai character, and not the throne of grace. The twenty-four elders are sitting on their thrones in perfect peace while the terrible judgments are going on towards the earth, but when it is said, Holy, holy, holy, they all fall down and worship. The thunderings and lightnings do not move them at all, but when the worship commences they are all in action.

"Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God:" - how could I, a man, think of being in the glory of God, save through perfect grace? Thus God had not only given us blessings, but associated us with the Blessor. "The glory thou hast given me, I have given them." Thus, in these first two verses, we have the Christian, as such, brought out: past, present, and future, all settled. The old man all atoned for, and the new man in Christ before God. For the past, for all that concerns the old man, perfect peace; for the present, perfect favor; and for the future, glory. What more do I want? What more can I have? Yes, there is more.

"Not only so, but we joy in tribulation also;" there are present realities for the saint to learn in the wilderness. "Tribulation!" The more faithful the saint is, the more trouble he will have. The more blessing he has, the more trial: because there is much to remove which would hinder the blessing when given. As man, I find trial is not pleasant, it is not joy to realize being put into the fire to be refined; but it is most important in all the tribulation of the way to know that my peace is settled; that the matter of my justification is a finished thing; else when I come into trial I shall be saying, how can I suppose now that I have God's favor, when everything seems against me? If the believer be not quite settled in God's favor, he cannot "glory in tribulation;" but if I know my condition before God, then I am able to understand what I am going through, and learn the result of tribulation, which is patience; for "tribulation worketh patience." I find all sorts of things hindering me: I need my will to be broken; I shall hope to get a thing, and perhaps expect to get that which I shall never have. I may have to cry to God for three whole weeks, and fail, as Daniel did, to learn patience, and in it learn the rashness of my heart, that would expect everything at once. Thus, "patience works experience." The saint feels the process; but he does not see the progress in himself. Others are to see that, and they do see it. The saint is thus taught not to trust in himself; and not to be in such a hurry, but to wait on God. A man may be in earnest, but in such haste, that he will break down, because of not waiting on God. "He that believeth will not make haste." See Moses and his devotedness: he goes, in true devotedness, but in the energy of the flesh, (learned in the palace,) and kills an Egyptian without God's bidding. Pharaoh hears of it; Moses flees, and abides for forty- years in the wilderness, to have his win broken; for where faith is not the power, the strength of God is not. When God was going to send Moses for the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, Moses says, "who am I that I should bring forth Israel out of Egypt." Now we do not find as

much energy here as when slaying the Egyptian, thus showing that where the energy of the flesh is not mixed up with the Spirit, man is not up to obedience. Moses left the court of Pharaoh's daughter, where he had been brought up, and preferred taking his place with a parcel of slaves, because they were the people of God; but though sincere and devoted, and with a right intention in giving up the position in which providence had placed him, (for the Holy Ghost in Hebrews 11:1-40 specially marks his giving up his providential blessing as pleasing to God,) he must be cast aside and made nothing of; then he gets that "strength which is made perfect in weakness." But first his flesh had to be broken down; and this was done through forty years' tribulation in the wilderness, keeping his father in law's sheep. He was learning experience, and "experience worketh hope;" because in this kind of experience I learn what God is, and detached from the world and its promises my hope is then resting above. Moses had more knowledge what the people of Israel were to be delivered for when he went to Pharaoh by God's sending, for he knew nothing of the Canaan they were to go to when he slew the Egyptian. "Hope maketh not ashamed." In learning experience it may be a struggle with God, but we shall find it is of no use to struggle against God's hand in tribulation, for He will hold us there until we submit. But in the end it will cause me to hope, because the love of God is shed abroad in my heart. Not only has He given His Son for me, but God who is love, is in me, God's own love is enjoyed in my soul. But how is it that I get this? By the Holy Ghost which is within me. He has shed abroad this love of God in my soul by the Holy Ghost, and this brings us back to a strength of hope which nothing can shake. I may be going through all sorts of trial, but resting in Christ and having this testimony of the Holy Ghost in my heart, of the love of God for my soul to rest on, I can go on calmly, whatever be the trial. Also, observe, that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who maketh intercession for us according to God. A man may say, in the face of all this truth, but suppose I do not feel it. Your saying so proves that you are gone back from faith and are looking to your own feelings; and the moment you lean on your experience or your feelings, that is not faith. But then how do you know you are the object of this love? Are you perfect? No - the enjoyment of it is within, the proof without.

I know it, because I see that "Christ died for the ungodly," and I am simply an ungodly one, if the ground of my hope is inquired after, and in myself have no feelings, no strength at all. But His strength is made perfect in weakness, and Christ died when I had no feeling at all. Christ died when I could do nothing at all. What better proof could you have than that God has given the greatest thing in heaven for the worst, the vilest, thing on earth, a sinner? I am a sinner, and therefore Christ died for me. "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This is what distinguishes God's love from man's. While man must have some motive on which to act, something to draw out his love, God's love, on the contrary, springs from Himself. For God could find no motive in us, for we were hateful and hating one another.

Here mark the glorious character of the reasonings of the Holy Ghost. They are exactly the contrary of those of the natural man, and even of the quickened soul. What work it is, what havoc it makes, to reason from man to God. When man reasons, he judges of what God will be towards him, from what he is towards God. The Holy Ghost says, "when ye were yet sinners, Christ died for you." He reasons from what God is, and has done, to what He will be and will do. If, as a

quicken soul, I judge of God by myself, I should say, God must judge me, for I know that I deserve it; but that is not grace; for "God commended his love unto us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Much more being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. The Holy Ghost reasons downwards, from what God is, and not upwards, from what man is, as man always does. The Holy Ghost unfolds what God is to meet the wants of my soul. It is true that the sinner does deserve judgment - not with any hope, however, that he can be made better; for give peace to a conscience charged with what is past, and guilty before God, and take the law in addition, and that only shows a man that he is lost; as the apostle declares in Romans 7:1-25, where, after useless efforts to satisfy the exigence of the law with a sinful flesh present, the soul is brought to the consciousness that it wants somebody to deliver it, for it cannot deliver itself. Man needs a Savior; well, this is reasoning which God will follow till we have got a Savior, and are forced to cast ourselves on Him by our hopeless need. But here, where the Holy Ghost is reasoning from what God is and has done for the sinner, and not from what the sinner is it is quite another thing. It is much harder to learn that we are without strength, than to learn that we are ungodly. If a dead Christ will save an enemy, surely a living Christ will save a friend. There is divine beauty in God's reasonings for God knows our hearts are such wicked things, that faith in Him is the hardest of all things to us. Satan's effort is first to hide God's judgment of sin from us, saying, "Thou shalt not surely die;" and when that has not succeeded, he then tries to hide from us God's grace, so that man should not be with God. If a dead Christ is made a Savior, a living Christ will be a friend to you in all your need. A dying Christ, the weakest thing, as appears to nature, though it was God's strength, has saved you when a sinner, will He not do all you want of Him in His life? If He died for you when your sin was upon you, how much more will He care for you. now that it is passed away? A living Christ cannot be to destroy you, if a dying Christ has saved you. And mark, not only the power of the argument, but its grace, in taking away all torment from the heart - for "fear hath torment?"

Romans 5:11 - "And not only so, but we also joy in God." Now that you have this point of salvation settled, and that you can rejoice in what you will get in the glory, - for your boast will not be merely in joy and happiness for yourselves, but, better still, you can joy in God. We first rejoice in the things given, but we do not rest there. We rejoice in Him who gave them, and delight in that which God is in Himself. His very holiness - a thing that would naturally terrify us - is now my joy; and all in which He has revealed Himself becomes my portion and my joy; for He is my God, and what He is is my delight. We are in the light as God is in the light, where no spot nor cloud can ever come. I can now delight and make my boast in God Himself.

After speaking of the peace, the enjoyment of grace, and the hope of the Christian, the apostle shows we can then sit down and enjoy the source of all our blessings. But if my will is not broken, it is true I cannot joy in God; He has then to deal with me in such a way as to break my will; and, of course, we never like that process. But when He has broken it down then we can joy in Him. So if I stray in practical walk, I do not doubt my salvation, but then I cannot joy in God. We only joy in God when walking with Him. If I stray, I can reflect about the joy, but I must take a double step in getting back (the judgment of sin on the cross, and God's unchanging grace) before I can again joy in God. (Romans 5:12.) Such being the blessed result of God's dealings and of justification, the Holy Ghost now goes on to show in whom we have this justification - its grand and unchangeable basis - and draws the contrast between our headship in the first and second Adam; thus laying a

great foundation for the principles He is going to bring out. Romans 5:13-17 form a parenthesis, and this you will see if you read verses 12 to 18 consecutively. The noticing this makes the passage clear. In Romans 5:12-18, the Jew and the Gentile are equally headed up in the obedient man and the disobedient man. Death passed upon ALL men, and grace heads up the new and living ones in Christ; but the unbelieving ones are left in the first Adam. It is not here the bride, but the children of God looked at as in Christ. We get, then, the doctrine of these two men, the first and second Adam, in their relationships to us, in the 12th and 18th verses; but before turning to that more particularly we will look at the contrast of grace with law, of which the whole parenthesis treats. See Amos 3:2; "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities." Now "until the law sin was in the world," &c. "But the times of this ignorance God winked at." God winked at the evil in other nations, inasmuch as He did not treat them as breakers of the law, where there was no law. But when there was law, they (the Jews) were governed by law, therefore Israel had the rod held over them, and they were to be chastened for breaking the law; and we know they were banished ultimately into captivity on account of it. But of the Gentiles who had sinned without law, He says, I will judge the secrets of men's hearts by Jesus Christ, &c.

Law never made sin, but law made transgression, which is disobedience to a law made. The sin was going on all the time from Adam to Moses; as the sign of sin's reigning was present, when there was no law, for death was there. My child may have a bad habit of running about the streets, and it is a bad habit that cannot be allowed; but if I command him not to do it, it is another thing; for if he does it then, it becomes disobedience; and the thing I correct him for is not merely his bad habit, but for his disobedience to my command. But before I forbade him it was only a wrong thing he was doing that needed correction. If we know the scriptures how simple they are! For the want of this what absurd mistakes are made! what volumes have been written on this passage, which has been applied even to the salvation of infants, and all sorts of fancies! But how clear it is when it is seen to be a quotation from Hosea 6:4; Hosea 7:1-16, "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? For they, like Adam, [margin,] have transgressed the covenant." Some have not transgressed, like Adam, but they are sinners still, though they have not broken a given law. Sin is always, therefore death is always; but law is not always. The argument of this passage is, you are not going to shut up God to the Jews only. There are plenty of people who have sinned before Moses, but the sin is not larger than God. If sin and death have been there, God must go there. Christ did not come only for those who had sinned under law, but for those also who sinned without law; for sin and death reigned between Adam and Moses, and grace overrides it all. " Law entered that the offense might abound." You Jews have added offense to offense, therefore you need justification and grace all the more for having the law; for you have been guilty of positive transgressions. Then how beautiful the contrast in the 17th verse, where the Spirit is still making God more excellent in His ways than the just fruit of sin. It is not merely that life is reigning, but "you shall reign in life;" a crown of royal glory shall be yours with Christ Jesus; thus showing God's heart to be greater than the evil that has come in.

Verse 18 marks the generality of this address, "upon [or rather towards] all." It flows "towards all," to condemnation; accomplished, not in result, but in its own proper and natural effect: grace comes in to deliver. So by the righteousness of one the free gift came "towards all;" that is not in the sense of application; the meaning is TO ALL in its direction, and not UPON all, ("εις παντας") As

Adam's sin did not rest on Adam alone, but ran over to many, so Christ's righteousness did not end in Him, but abounded unto many. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." In Romans 5:19 we see, where it is a matter of application, the word "many" is used, and not the word "all," as in the preceding verse. The 18th verse is the abstract thought; and thus I can go and preach the gospel to every creature, saying to the sinner, "the blood is on the mercy-seat, come to God;" but to the believer I can say, "you are righteous in Christ." "By the obedience of one shall many be made [constituted] righteous." Man may say this will do harm. Well, but God has said it; and what a comfort there is in the simplicity of scripture! In the next chapter we get, as the certain effect of this, newness of life. You may have got the principle of resurrection, so as to have new tastes and desires, but if you do not see the need of your having the righteousness of Christ, you do not know yourselves; if you do not know the holiness of God's heart, you do not know the unholiness of your own. Christ's death may be considered, as in itself, glorifying God, apart from its results; it may be considered, also, as His being efficaciously substituted to bear the sins of many. We have the double aspect of the death of Christ shown in the two goats, one of which was the Lord's lot, and the other was for the bearing away, into a land of forgetfulness, the sin of the people. The first was for the glory of God, the second for the conscience of the sinner. Both were needed. I am a sinner, says the awakened believer. Yes, but all your sins were laid on Christ.

Verse 20. - The place of the law was that the offense might abound. Wherefore the law? Not to make sin abound, but the offense abound, so to make sin exceeding sinful: "but where sin abounded grace did much more abound." And abounding grace has been shown! Wonderful is the way of God! He gave man his own will, and sin is suffered to rise up to its full height in wickedness, even in putting Christ to death. Then, to show how powerless sin is, in the height of God's grace, that very thing, in which man's sin was at its climax, has put sin away. It is a glorious thing that God should thus manifest the utter impotency of sin in the presence of His grace. If righteousness had reigned we must have been sent to destruction; but it is grace reigns, though it is through righteousness: it is not righteousness hath abounded, but grace, (through righteousness, of course.) Grace means love working where there is evil righteousness is being consistent with what God is. "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Then, if there be the reign of grace in the heart, there must be practical holiness - a righteousness consistent with it. If God's love works in the heart it is to produce something like itself. God's love is such as has never been seen before in heaven or on earth. His perfect love, and grace, and righteousness, bring out what God is, in a wonderful way. It is grace reigning because God has the upper hand, even over our sins, and has put them away.

Vol 01 - Simplicity of the Gospel of Christ

Simplicity of the Gospel of Christ 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

It is astonishing how hard it is to get the heart of man to believe in the efficacy of the work of Christ. Even in the case of those who have felt their need of it, the simplicity is unseizable; and, therefore, their power is lost. There is liberty before God, and power where there is liberty. It is of this full and blessed liberty which belongs to the believer in Christ, that it is so hard to persuade. I am sure the more I go on, the more I see how little those who believe enjoy the full and blessed grace in which God has set them. When once we have seen our entire ruin, and are cast entirely on what God is, and what God has done, then the simplicity of the Gospel is apprehended. But not till then. Here it is called " that which remaineth." And truly this is what conforms to Christ, as the last verse shows. No responsibility can bring to this. How can I be an epistle of Christ, If I am trying to get to Him? It is Christ that is ministered; and through the ministration of Christ we are put in the presence of God, without fear or torment, so to enjoy the glory as to reflect it. It is Christ glorified in heaven who is thus graven on the heart, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Now what is the Christ thus ministered? A Christian is a person who carries Christ graven on his heart before the world. What is this Christ? Is it a Christ graven on stones? No, that was on the outside. When God puts man under responsibility He gives a rule outside of man. Christ, even, as an example, was outside of man. He was perfection; but I am brokenhearted because I am not it. But if Christ is written on my heart, I am it. When the Gospel is presented in its simplicity there is great plainness of speech. Nothing can be simpler in itself than the Gospel. Nothing simpler than this: you are lost. Nothing simpler than God so loved us as to send His Son to die for us, that we might live through Him. But what the apostle is doing here is showing what men are doing - that they are mixing up law and grace; not taking up pure law, but a mixture of law and grace. And that is done in two ways: in the way the natural man takes it up; and in the way the quickened man takes it up. Pure law no man would take up. At bottom no man would pretend to stand by it. So they say that God is merciful. But mercy with them is God's treating sin as lightly as they do. A quickened person will not go so far; yet in his case the mixing up of law and grace is far deeper and more subtle. When Moses came down the first time his face did not shine. Then it was pure law. But when he came down the second time, the skin of his face shone, and Aaron and the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him. Now it was on this second occasion that the Lord proclaimed his name. " The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, and that will by no means clear the guilty." That is what men say they wish to stand on. But that is precisely what they cannot stand on. True, there is the revelation "forgiving iniquity," &c., but Moses brought back the law, and the authority of God's law cannot be given up. That is what men want. They wish to use the mercy of God to weaken, the authority of the law of God. But this God will never do. He will never weaken the authority of His law. If one ray of the glory of God comes in on the principle of law, it will terrify you. Israel could not look at it. Moses said, " If thou wilt forgive their sin-; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou least written." But God answered, the man that sins, him will I blot out. You must either destroy the authority of the law, or rest under death and condemnation. But

the moment I am brought, in my conscience, to bow to the condemnation which is my due, and so am cast entirely on God, I find that what the law could not do, God has done for me by the death and resurrection of His dear Son. Now I get two things in this ministration of Christ; righteousness and the Holy Ghost. " And where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." Thus I find that God can meet me in my sin; that God is so entirely above sin that He can meet me in my sin, in order to this wondrous deliverance. One thing is needed to understand it, and that is confession. In taking up this Epistle to the Romans, I purpose, guided I trust by the Lord, not to enter into every detail of the Epistle, but to trace its leading idea, the intention of the Spirit of God in it, and the course of the apostle's reasoning, trusting that the Lord will give some practical exhortation to the profit of souls. In speaking lately of the Epistle of John, I remarked on the distinction of the writings of Paul and John. The subjects of John's Epistle being the character of the divine life, which was with the Father, manifested in the Son, and communicated to us through the Spirit; so that the divine nature in us should be traced out in the affections of the child of God. In sum, the general scope of John's Epistle is, first, the manifestation of the divine life; and, secondly, the communication of it: Paul's Epistles have another character altogether. They reveal the counsels and the ways of God, and the consequent relationships in which men are put, through the grace which justifies them in His presence. The great subject of the New Testament is the manifestation and communication of the divine life, the making us partakers of the divine nature, and our presentation before God, and enjoyment of Him in that nature. The child derives his life from his father; thence results, not merely likeness of character, but also the peculiar relationship of a child. But the better to comprehend this, I would here recall the four truths prominent in the New Testament. 1st, There is the manifestation and communication of divine life. 2nd, The counsels of God in the accomplishment in Christ of all the promises given from Adam downwards, made good to the Jews, His people. 3rd, The mercy granted to the poor Gentiles, as in Romans 15:8 " Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy. 4th, The Church, as united to Christ its Head. The first is in John's Epistle. The manifestation, then the communication of the divine life. The 2nd and 3rd are found in Romans, with only a glance at the 4th: individual relationship with God being the main subject of that Epistle. This 4th and last is brought out in Ephesians. The Church is only hinted at, not taught in Romans. The 4th point of truth, which is revealed in the Epistle to the Ephesians, is distinct from the promises to the Jews and the general idea of mercy to the Jews, being a new thing. The seeing these distinctions greatly facilitates the understanding of the Epistles, and clears up passages otherwise obscure.

We have seen that in Romans there are two great subjects brought out: the accomplishment of the promises made to the Jews, and mercy to the Gentiles. In treating these points, the apostle lays the foundation of all relationship between God and man. Thus the commencement of the first chapter is an introduction to all that is afterward unfolded in the Epistle. The Epistle to the Romans has this large character, naturally enough. It consists well with an address to the great center of the world's empire; for Paul was writing to the Romans, whom he had never seen, as the apostle of the Gentiles, and takes his stand on the high ground of being the one to whom God had committed His counsels. Peter, in addressing the Jews, presents resurrection as a living hope; and speaking to them on this new principle, addresses himself to them as to strangers and &c., thus carrying out that which was consequent on this principle here below, as regards those who are to participate in the resurrection itself.

Thus the varied Epistles are suited to the varied need of those addressed: as in Corinthians, to the case of moral evil; Colossians, slipping away from the Head; Galatians, falling from grace; Thessalonians, deep affliction, and the clearing up of the doctrine of the Lord's coming. But the Epistle to the Romans addressed to the capital of the world, where the apostle had not yet been, takes the great principles of God's relationship with men, and that which He has with the Jewish people, in connection with these principles.

There are two parts in this Epistle. From the beginning, up to the close of the 8th chapter, forms the first part: the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters form the second: the concluding chapters are occupied with precepts. In the first part you get both Jews and Gentiles reduced to the common condition of sinners. But some might object, and say, if this be so, that there is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile, how, then, admitting that the law only aggravates the sin of the Jew, is God to make good His promises to the Jews? The infallibility of the promises of God is shown, and this truth reconciled, and that from the Jewish history and scripture, in chaps. 9---11, the common ground on which both Jew and Gentile are set in perfect salvation, common to both, in Christ Jesus. In the next place, mark the way in which Paul sets man aside, as being proved a sinner, poor, vile, and lost; and that he does this to bring God in. It is not merely that he introduces man, as a sinner; but man must be thoroughly put down, to bring in God Himself, in the place of man, that God may act towards man in His own way, and according to His own character. As in Ephesians, after Jew and Gentile are spoken of as children of wrath, the apostle passes over at once, to that which God is in grace; and God is brought out in His own character, as "rich in mercy;" and what He has done, and what He is to such as they are, is unfolded. We can have no settled peace or rest of heart till we are on this ground; nor can we know God, so as to trust Him, to rest in Him and adore Him, till we know Him thus. Then it is a settled question, and our hope and trust are in God. As it is written, "Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God." Therefore the apostle does not say, we are justified before God, though that also is true, but "it is God who justifies," that the heart might be brought to rest in God Himself.

Paul himself had gone to the extreme extent of sin. It was not a mere looseness of expression when he called himself the "chief of sinners;" for Paul in heart was the wickedest man that ever trod the earth; not guilty, of course, of immorality-as he says of himself, "after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee," --but the most deliberate and ardent enemy of God's anointed. When he reached the highest point of his wickedness, "being exceedingly mad against them," at that moment he was separated unto the gospel of God.

We will now rapidly go over, without entering into the detail of it, the history of what man was. God had borne with man, leaving him at first to himself; but the result of leaving man to himself was, that, so great was his iniquity, he must be destroyed from off the face of the earth; and it became necessary to put a close to his abominations by a flood. The law followed, and that was broken. The prophets came next, and they were despised, stoned, and were sawn asunder. Last of all, God sent His Son, and Him they killed. It was not all, therefore, that man had broken God's law, and slain His prophets. The goodness of God had come, and men hated the goodness, and Jesus was rejected and crucified. But even then Jesus prays for His murderers, pleading their ignorance: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." As in the case of the one who owed the ten thousand talents, forasmuch as he had nothing to pay, his lord forgave him his debt. And this

is what I take to be the meaning of this passage. Israel was guilty of the death of Christ, yet in the testimony of the Holy Ghost, God deals in forgiveness with them; but they reject the principle of grace. And mark here, that the Holy Ghost takes up again, and carries on, this very intercession of our Lord, as forgiveness of sins is preached by Peter at Jerusalem, saying, " And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Did they repent? No. Not only had they killed the Prince of life, but, in stoning Stephen, they now fill up the measure of their iniquity by rejecting the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the grace and goodness of God. Just at this point, in the history of man and of Israel, it is that Saul of Tarsus comes upon the scene, as the participator in this hostility to the testimony of God; and so mad was he against it, that he became, voluntarily, the very apostle of the enmity in the heart of man, against the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the grace and goodness of God. But here God meets him in the way and his mouth is closed in conviction, and to all but the grace that had visited and pardoned so bitter and determined an enemy. All that God could do to reach the heart and act on the responsibility of man had been brought into operation in this testimony, and Paul was found in the most active hostility to it, being determined to put a stop to the testimony of grace and goodness if he could. While thus occupied, the Lord appears to him in glory, revealing the Church's connection with Himself, " Why persecutest thou ME? " - for "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." Thus Paul sets out as the leader of this active energy, in opposition to God; and is called, in the midst of his career of enmity, that he might be a perfect witness of the grace that overcame him, as he himself sets it forth, testifying that there is grace and forgiveness for one such as he. " That in me first," he says, " Christ might show forth all long-suffering." Everything that could have religiously sustained his heart was broken down when God met him by the way. Take conscience, for instance how very terrible it must have been to Paul to find that his natural conscience had been all wrong. He had thought that " he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." He was an enemy of the Lord in doing it. All his thoughts are upset. Three days without sight, he neither eats nor drinks. Then take the law. He had been blameless as regards its enactments; zealous for it; but he is the Lord's enemy by his zeal. It is his ruin before God. Then the priests, the pharisees, and his own zeal, had only led him into opposition and open rebellion against God; and everything in which his heart had trusted, every prop suddenly broken, and its falseness and futility shown to his amazed heart, left him a mere sinner, naked in the presence of the glory of God. Thus ended all means, leaving Paul a child of WRATH, even as others. But the consequence is, through grace, that Paul starts, not from what he is, from what God is. His will is broken, too, before the divine presence, and he commences his onward journey, as the Lord's servant. " Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He starts in his career, and so addresses the Christians at Rome, as a called apostle, separated* unto the gospel of God. It is not merely, remark, the gospel of Christ, but the gospel of God: and it is a wonderful expression. The gospel of God is the activity of God's love, going out into a world of men, as hopeless and bad as Paul had been. It is not dealing with man on the ground of what man may be, save as ruined and miserable, but on the ground of what God is. The gospel of God is God's own good news in giving His Son to carry this message of mercy and grace to lost man. It can well be called the gospel of Christ also, as it is He who brings the message of salvation to man, and who declares Himself to be the only way of access to God.

(* This last expression, however, refers more to the mission from Antioch. He was called by the Lord on the way to Damascus, but specially set apart for the work by the Holy Spirit who said, "

separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost," &c.) The Jews accused the Lord of breaking the sabbath. The sabbath was the sign of the covenant between God and His people, and to be kept on the seventh day. It was also the expression of God's rest in the creation, which He had pronounced very good. But that covenant is set aside - buried in the tomb of Christ, where He passed the sabbath which characterized it. But besides this, as we find in John 5:17, there was no sabbath, for sin had come in; and there is no rest for a holy God where sin is - none for a God of love, where the misery it brings in reigns. " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." It was not that the people were to work; but God had come down where sin was, and God was working in grace; and His Son, too, was working in the accomplishment of that grace. Such is God's place, as revealed in this glorious answer of Christ to the malicious accusation. God might destroy in judgment; but grace in the Father and the Son works in redemption. Paul comes in here as the servant, or slave, bound to the work, and bondsman to Christ; separated unto the gospel of God. That was his business. If he could further the gospel by making tents, of course he would continue to make them; but he was an apostle called to the gospel of God; and where God gives ministry it is as the vessels of God's activity in grace, for the calling of sinners and the building up and edification of His saints.

It is very important to distinguish between teaching to the Church and the testimony of mercy to the world. The Old Testament is full of mercy; but that is not the Church: nor is what He had promised afore by His prophets, in the holy scriptures, the Church. The Church was not the subject of promise, but the gospel of God was: " the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." The Gentiles had not the promises; for the promises of God were made to the second Adam, and not to the first. The promises in Genesis that the serpent's head should be bruised, was made to the seed of the woman, which Adam was not. So it is said, to Abraham were the promises made and to his seed, that is, the promises given to Abraham were confirmed to the one seed (Genesis 22:1-24) offered and received from the dead in figure. The promises, then, are entirely connected with Christ, who is the seed in whom all these promises center. The person of Christ is the great subject of the gospel, even before His work. This point is of all importance. God is now claiming subjection to His Son. There is not an infidel, nor a rebel, however great, that shall not bow the knee to Jesus. If in grace it is salvation; but if the heart does not bow to the grace, the knee must bow under the judgment. In this 3rd verse, "concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh," the apostle is bringing out the double character of the Lord. In the first place, we have the person of the Lord as the subject of the gospel. Then, secondly, He is presented as the seed of David according to the flesh. Then, thirdly, Paul brings out definitely the character of the Son, "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." There is the accomplishment of promise and the introduction of divine power in the deliverance of man from the state in which he was lying. Then we have the Son of God with divine power, though clothed in humiliation. Further, we have the Son in the midst of defilement, according to the spirit of holiness. This was shown all through the whole scene of evil through which He passed, untouched and unsoiled by sin, though in contact with it, and touching it all round. Separate Himself, He touches the leper. Was He defiled? No. In touching it He chases away the uncleanness without becoming un-clean Himself. None but the Son of God could do this. But His was perfect grace coming down into defilement, banishing it and dispelling it without receiving defilement Himself. Such was Christ living in the world.

Further, the manifested power of Satan was this, that he had the power of death. This Satan had by the judgment of God Himself, for God had said, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" and God could not go from His own word. Thus man was under the power of him "who had the power of death, that is the devil." Therefore, if the Son of God is to deliver man from under this power of Satan, He Himself must go down to his stronghold, this last citadel of Satan. He must Himself go down under the power of death; for God's judgment was there as well as Satan's power, "that through death he might deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." He, the Son of God, feared it as the judgment of God, but "He was heard in that he feared." He broke all the bars by which Satan held us, and has set us free. Satan committed himself entirely by putting his hand on the spotless person of the Prince of life, who bore our sin. By His rising from the dead the judgment of God, the sin which was its cause, the power of Satan in death, were all gone for him who had part in this work. The resurrection shows the divine power of the Son of God. When Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the Lord said, "upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" that is, neither the power of death, nor Satan who possesses it, (for that is the meaning of the gates of hell or hades,) shall prevail against the Church, which is founded on Him who has the power of the life of God in Him. Man had been tried by every means besides the law, which gave the measure of His responsibility. He only brought forth wild grapes. It was in result double death, while holding out the promise of blessing to obedience. But if the foundation of blessing be the Son of the living God, the gates of hell, the power of death, shall not prevail against it. The power of the spirit of holiness, which characterized the life of Christ, is demonstrated by* resurrection from the dead. If we consider the resurrection, as it was displayed in Christ, and will be in the saints, it is the power of God coming into the place of death and breaking its bonds in those that are His, and taking them out from among the wicked dead. This resurrection in spirit is our present state, though we still wait for the redemption of the body. The very same power, we learn in Eph., which raised Christ from among the dead, has wrought in us and quickened us together with Christ. The Son of God goes down in grace for us to the very place we had got by sin, and by His own divine power breaks the bands of death, and takes us up from under its power, placing us, according to the efficacy of His own work, in the presence of God. Thus all that my sin could do has been met by divine power and put away; rendering void of power him that bath the power of death, that is, the devil. How marvelous the grace! The consequence is not merely that there ought to be holiness in us, but that there must be holiness. How did Christ get out of death? By His own divine power. Well, it is the same divine energy raising me from the dead that will be the power of a new life in me. All that He has done is mine as righteousness before God; but I enter into it by virtue of a new life, which is a holy one. It is not merely a duty to be holy; but there is holiness in us, because we are partakers of justification by means of a life which is essentially holy. Let us ever remember this wonderful truth, that the Son of God has come down in divine power into the place of sinners, and broken all those bands by which Satan held us, and set us free. This is the gospel of God, God in the activity of His own love in the person of Christ, coming down here and walking in holiness where sin was, going down under the power of death, that He - might deliver us from Him who had the power of death; for I am raised - now spiritually and morally by the very same divine power that will take up my body.

(* The expression is abstract. The resurrection of all-of Lazarus, of Christ, of the saints, of the wicked, all show the power of the Son of God. Though, of course, as to His person, His own

resurrection was the great proof.)

"By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations." All are called now to bow to the revelation of Christ, who was dead and is alive again for evermore. The expression "called to be saints," is incorrect; it should be, saints called, that is, saints by the calling of God: the same principle here as the apostle called. We are saints called, thus showing the grace of God. It is not to us by birth or descent, as to the Jews; but it is all of grace: so Abraham was called, and chosen, and faithful. If we are called, it is not of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. And we are bound to give thanks, in that "God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling." What a very different thing it is in our souls, (for what a very different thought we have of God) when we believe the activity of His love! It is not only that God is love; but that God is ACTIVE IN HIS LOVE. "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Alas! we pass over these gracious words very lightly; and what is there that we do not pass over lightly? The apostle felt what he said in the power of the Spirit. Favor and peace from the Father and the Son. Mercy is only added when the epistles are addressed to individual saints. But when the saints are looked at as a whole, they are seen as the objects to whom all "mercy" has been already extended, being seen by the eye of God as under the influence and energy of the love and grace that had saved them. Still, as individual saints, they need mercy every day. The apostle looked at them as under the eye of a Savior God, and he wished them to have the full manifestation of what was in the God that had saved them-all the effect of there being not a cloud between them and God. God is never called a God of joy, though He gives joy; but constantly He is called the God of peace. The apostle desires their peace from God should be undisturbed - that they should have perfect peace in Him in the midst of this wilderness. He desired for them all the effect in their own souls of the consciousness of their position - the full exercise of what God was to them in this relationship. If a child feels towards his father as towards a master, he does not know his position. If we have not unlimited confidence in God as our Father we have not found our place. All these relationships are known, not by the intelligence placing us in them; but in the exercise of affections flowing from the consciousness of bring in them. A child addresses his father as such - why? servant his master as such, and why? They live in these relationships. The saints, in the love of the family, will address God as their Father. In the government of the Church it is the Lord Jesus we shall address. This distinction will be always marked when praying in the Spirit, not by an effort of attention, but by being in the spirit of the relationship. In all our petitions, as children, even in our failures, confessions, and need, we go as individuals to God as our Father; but in everything relating to the Church - conduct and order - we go to the Lord Jesus, as Head of the Church. The consciousness of our relationship is of great importance in our daily walk; for the character of our walk, and the state of our souls depend upon it. If our souls have not unlimited confidence in God to go to Him with our very follies, we do not know " the Father."

If Christ said, It is my meat to do His will, Paul could say, " whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son." It is no service at all, if it be merely outward. Unless we can say, " Of thine own have we given thee," it is no service at all: true service must flow from communion with the source of service. It is no service if we are not drinking in Christ, and conscious that we are doing His will. If I could take up any service without being confident God would have me do it, there would be no power in it. Service, then, if real, must flow from direct communion with God. We may

go on in a course of action, as a consequence of communion, for a good while. Thus, for instance, contrast the Thessalonians with the state of the Church at Ephesus in Revelation. In the Thessalonians Paul knew " their work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope." Here we see the three cardinal points, faith, hope, charity, springs of the activity displayed by the saints; so that their service had all the freshness of the source from which the service flowed. Not so in the address of the Lord to Ephesus in the Revelation. There was work, labor, patience; but there was not the present spiritual power of that which comes direct from God. Therefore we find the candlestick removed. They had left their first love. How often does our service flow rather from something we may have to do, than from direct communion with God. It then becomes the mere activity of the flesh, or of habit, or, at best, a mere duty; instead of serving with " my spirit."

What a comfort, that all my life through I may be serving the Lord with my spirit. This would be a wilderness, a labyrinth, but God is guiding us through it. When Israel was in the wilderness, was there any path for them? None. " They wandered in the wilderness where there was no way." So we read that Moses said to Jethro, his father-in-law, " Leave us not, I pray thee, forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness; and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes." No; God says, I will be as eyes to you; for as Israel departed from the mount a three days' journey, the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them three days' journey, to search out a resting-place for them. Now the ordered place of the ark was in the midst of Israel; for they were to keep the charge of the Lord, and they were to journey as they encamped. But when Israel journeyed it went before them as eyes to them. Again to Israel: "Though I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come." And is God less than this to us? No; He is leading us through this world's wilderness, where there is no path, no way, but Jesus; for He is our only track in this wilderness of sin and sorrow. But what an unspeakable comfort to have such a track; for if we are perfectly dependent, we shall discern the perfect path that has in it the stamp of the Lord's own footsteps. But to this end flesh must be practically mortified and the WILL subdued.

" Without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." See the apostle's wonderful energy with God. And this is one mark of spiritual power - the capacity of keeping up in his own soul, an interest for all saints everywhere. In practice he intercedes for all saints in every place. This leaves him in entire dependence on the will of God; for no real spiritual power takes us out of the place of waiting on God. So it was with Eliezer. He said, "Lord, let the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher,.... be the same thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac." And when the woman had given him drink, and his camels also, he does not say, Oh! here is the answer to my prayer; but he is still waiting on God, and, "wondering at her, held his peace; to wit, whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not." And when the camels had done drinking, he said, "Whose daughter art thou?" And when he found that she answered the description, that is, according to the will of God by the word of Abraham, "he bowed his head and worshipped the Lord." Success often takes us out of the place of communion; because it is our success when we do not acknowledge God in it.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation." It is God's coming in in power. That is the true character of the gospel. It is complete in its object, and in the means it employs to effect it. And it is God who works in it to produce this effect; it is not a mixture of man and God; but God acting for, and in quickening power in, man, justifying the believer by the

work which He has wrought, and creating us again in Christ Jesus. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven." It is not yet manifested, though it was seen, to a certain extent, in the deluge. On the cross it was complete in the moral sufferings of Christ, though not yet executed against the sinner. But the nature and character of God is brought out. Hence, necessarily, all that is contrary to His nature and character is necessarily judged. Wrath is revealed against all that is opposite to His nature. It is not merely certain acts condemned, according to the measure of a revelation, in which God remains as yet veiled in His own nature. He is revealed; and hence what is contrary to Him is judged. But then in the gospel He is revealed to meet what man is. God now looks at what man is, in the presence of what God is. But it is the very perfectness of the activity of grace that has brought out what man is. Is it claiming righteousness? No; for now man's righteousness is entirely laid aside. It is God's righteousness made known; not something which is to grow up to righteousness, but that which is perfect now. It is revealed from faith to faith, - that is, faith is the principle, on which it is revealed; and henceforth, wherever it is found, has part in it. God's righteousness being a perfect and existing thing, complete in itself, is revealed on the principle of faith. The man that has faith gets it. If it were given on the principle of righteousness, the righteous man would have it.

I would desire that our hearts might rest on this wonderful truth - the activity of God's love coming down into a world ruined by sin, and under wrath, when every remedy had been tried, and nothing would do. But God Himself has conic in, and done it, and there we rest. The more pains God has taken to set men right, the more only was it proved that the more you dig and dung a bad tree, the more bad fruit it will produce. But God, from the beginning, has had His own way of salvation; and He who undertook the work comes down into the stronghold of Satan's power and God's wrath, and by rising from the dead, has openly declared that Satan's power is destroyed, through death, and God Himself is satisfied in this righteous claim. And now there is a perfect revelation of God's righteousness - not of man's working or man's righteousness, but of God's working and God's righteousness - to be trusted in and believed, that it may be by grace. It is God's righteousness, and given to us at the same time, according to the spirit of holiness. He Himself is the rest of our souls and conscience, as He is the guide all the way; His divine favor and unchanging love and goodness accompanying and abiding with us all the journey through. The Lord only give us the simplicity of faith, that we may see this activity of love, that we may apprehend His ways in grace, and thus know Him, -- know His grace in working, that we may know Himself.

Vol 01 - The Believer's Resource: When I Am Weak Then Am I Strong

The Believer's Resource: When I Am Weak Then Am I Strong Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

It is not what Paul's "thorn in the flesh" might be, nor the nature of the revelations he received in "the third heaven," nor whether he subsequently wrote what he tells us it was "not possible for a man to utter," that I would now consider; but a point of far more practical importance, namely, the conditions on which the grace and strength of Christ are imparted to believers for their daily walk and service. When the question of salvation is in view, one does not speak of conditions - for it is God's grace to sinners - but when it is the believer's walk with God it is otherwise. Here there are conditions. If it be as to the certainty of divine knowledge, it is "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine;" or if it be the sustainment of the soul in trial, or the impartation of strength for service, it is, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." For, if the apostle's case was special, as to revelations and the necessary counterbalance of a thorn in the flesh, and the buffetings of Satan's messenger, the principle which it brings out, in the Lord's answer to his thrice repeated supplication for the removal of the cause of his trouble, is absolute and universal.

There are two points in this answer: first, the entire sufficiency of Christ's grace to meet the exigency; and, second, the conditions on which alone that grace is imparted. Now the grace of the Lord Jesus is the only sufficiency of a Christian. "The flesh profiteth nothing." Yet Christians often act as if they themselves were sufficient for everything, except to meet some great trial, or to cope with some great difficulty, which drives them to their knees, and forces them to acknowledge their weakness, and to seek for Christ's strength. This was not, however, the case with the apostle. He habitually leant upon that grace, and not on his own strength. He says, "we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." His ordinary course was not to go on, like many, in the spirit of neglectful unconscious independence, until some crisis in his experience, or his circumstances, made him feel his dependence, and turn to the source of his strength. But even he had to learn that there was a fuller sufficiency in Christ's grace than he had ever yet experienced, or even imagined. His crushing trial drove him to the Lord as his only resource, and the intensity of his feelings is seen in his earnest prayer for deliverance; but he had no thought of a grace that could sustain under it, and make it an occasion for the fuller display of Christ's glorious power. Still, when the answer comes, it shows how simply Christ's glory was his object, and not his own ease, or credit, or anything else. We hear no more of the pricking of the thorn, nor prayer that the messenger of Satan might depart from him; but he says, "Most gladly therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." The paradox, "When I am weak then am I strong," by which he closes this account, shows how entirely his heart assented to the conditions of his strength, and how thoroughly he had learned the force of that word, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And how many practical lessons are to be drawn from this narration! In the first place it is manifest, that the higher we reach in heavenly things, the lower it will put us in the estimation of ourselves, and in our condition as to this world. He who was highest of all in heavenly glory and heavenly worth, was

lowest of all in earthly circumstances and human estimation. "I am a worm and no man," was His declaration in the hour of His sorrow; and "the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," shows the condition in which He pursued this earthly service. But even in this He is our example. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Php 2:5-8.) And if Paul was taken to "the third heaven," where none but himself had ever been, his heavenly elevation must be balanced by a corresponding earthly depression; or else he would not have been able to use this token of the Lord's favor for anything but self-exaltation, which is but to corrupt from its true end what Christ bestows. Hence the necessity of the flesh being mortified in proportion as spiritual advances are made. If I enter into the truth, practically, of being "risen with Christ," the other side of the question is, "mortify therefore your members which are on the earth." A ship must be ballasted in proportion to the sail she carries, or she will inevitably be capsized. In the school of Christ the spirit is taught, on the one hand; and the flesh is scourged into submission on the other: and the proof of advancement in the knowledge of Christ is found in increasing distrust of self. In the next place, it rebukes that vanity of mind, which esteems everything of little worth which cannot be displayed for the admiration of others. The mere reference to what he had been taught as to "visions and revelations of the Lord," the apostle characterizes as speaking "like a fool." They were afforded for another end than to bring himself forward. And if he could not talk about his experience, in the best sense, namely, what Christ had taught him and wrought by him, without being in danger of becoming "a fool," I wonder what those are who are constantly talking about themselves in connection with what the flesh and the devil accomplish in them! Moreover the apostle could not communicate to others what he had learned in the third heaven. The revelations were abundant, but it was "not possible to utter" them. As good not to have them, then, (says the foolish heart,) as not to be able to use them. But why is it necessary for the heart to disclose all its treasures, like Hezekiah to the ambassadors of the king of Babylon? Is there nothing that Christ teaches me for myself? Must I count that as nothing which I cannot vainly show to others, or even use for the edification of others? Why should I hinder Christ from giving me a "white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth save he which receiveth it?" But the non-removal of the thorn in the flesh, moreover, teaches us the folly of thinking a change of circumstances, or the removal of trial, necessary to one's service for Christ. If we want to shine ourselves, circumstances of trial will hinder our shining; and Christ sends them for the very end that we might not shine. But if we want Christ's grace to shine, that will shine most by means of the very trial and difficulty we may have longed to get removed. "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness!" And this was to bring out in the apostle, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." Circumstances may have their effect on our own spirits, but, unless they are sinful, (and then we must get out of them,) they are certainly no hindrance to God's Spirit. A man may feel his hands to be always dirty in the world's service, and yet if he leans on Christ's grace, which is sufficient for him, he may have his heart always clean for the enjoyment of Christ, and for the service of Christ. Such a man serves Christ in his daily toil; and if he cannot always be reading and praying, he may, nevertheless, be always in communion. A mother, with half a dozen children which occupy her hands through the day, and often keep her

awake through the night, cannot serve Christ as she sees, perhaps, some others; but if she owns Christ in her circumstances, and hangs on His grace, while she is rocking one child in the cradle with her foot, and mending the clothes of another with her hands, may have her heart fed by the hidden manna from Christ's own hand, and serve Him, whom she loves, more effectually than if she had all her time to herself, and thus felt less the necessity of the injunction, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end."

I want no change of circumstances, nor removal of trials, to enable me to pursue Christ's service; I only want to know the truth, practically, of the word, "my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." But then the sense of weakness, which alone makes room for Christ's strength, is what nature always shrinks from. "I am so weak," is often on the lips of Christians; and it often means that they expect strength in themselves instead of in Christ; or, that they have hitherto leant on a strength which has now broken down. In either case they have yet to learn the solution of the enigma, "When I am weak then am I strong." A Christian ought always to feel himself so weak as to dread to undertake anything in his own sufficiency; and yet so strong in Christ as to be able to accomplish everything through His grace. The sense of weakness, from which nature shrinks, is essential to the display of Christ's strength. Without it we should neither know the extent of our dependence ourselves, nor should we use the grace communicated for the glory of Christ. "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:29-31.).

Vol 01 - The Christian Mariner

The Christian Mariner "And so he bringeth them to the haven where they would be."

Yes, billow after billow - see they come Faster and rougher, as his little boat Nears evermore the haven. Oftentimes It seems to sink and fall adown the wave, As if borne backward by the struggling tide;

Yet mounting billow after billow, wave On wave o'er riding, tempest-tossed, and shattered, Still, still it nears the haven evermore.

"Poor mariner! art not thou sadly weary?"

Dear brother, rest is sweeter after toil.

"Grows not thine eye confused and dim with sight. Of nothing but the wintry waters?" True; But then my pole-star, constant and serene, Above the changing waters, changes not.

"But what if clouds as often veil the sky?"

Oh, then an unseen hand hath ever ta'en The rudder from my feeble hands the while; And I cling to it. "Answer me once more, Mariner; what thinkest thou when the waters beat Thy frail boat backward from the longed-for harbor?"

Oh, brother, though innumerable waves Still seem to rise betwixt me and my home, I know that they are numbered; not one less Should bear me homeward, if I had my will; For One who knows what tempests are to weather, O'er whom there broke the wildest billows once, He bids these waters swell. In His good time The last rough wave shall bear me on its bosom, Into the haven of eternal peace. No billows after! They are numbered, brother.

"Oh, gentle mariner, steer on, steer on; My tears still flow for thee; but they are tears In which faith strives with grief, and overcomes."

*** Some of the hymns may have been in print before.-ED.

Vol 01 - The Divine Calmness of Christ, Even on the Cross

The Divine Calmness of Christ, Even on the Cross Note on Luke 23:27-45

It is lovely to see how the Lord does not merely show a resignation under trial, produced by an effort which makes Him bow, - and yet be absorbed by it, as we often are, - but a perfect obedience and acceptance of His Father's will, such that He rises altogether above it, so as to be quite free, to be in the fullness of, and to express just what grace would do; or, if needed, truth also, in that which was presented to Him.

Thus, when led to the cross, to the women He says, " Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children; for the days come," &c. Then, when speaking on the cross for Israel He says, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This was the one and only ground which could be good for Israel. The Holy Ghost answered to it in Peter's sermon; and Paul refers to the principle. Then to the thief on the cross He says, " Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." There was the full present effect of His work and salvation.

Now how perfectly calm - as if He had only to teach in grace from heaven - is all this; and in the perfect appropriateness in each case which divine clearness could give. And how wide the scope of instruction! The judgment of Jerusalem, - the ground on which the Jews might be forgiven in virtue of the cross, - and the full present blessing in virtue of the cross, short of resurrection, not yet accomplished. The whole scope of truth was here.

Thus, if we quietly do that which is given, and trust God in the peaceful answer to what is brought before us, what wide-spread power of truth comes in.

Vol 01 - The Effect of Paul's Life

The Effect of Paul's Life

I do not know anything that humbles one more than Paul's life. You get judged by Christ's life, but Paul's was that of a man of like passions with ourselves. Such thorough abnegation of self! Such death as to everything in himself.

Vol 01 - The Passover Continued: Christ Our Passover Is Sacrificed for Us

The Passover Continued: Christ Our Passover Is Sacrificed for Us

Exodus 12:1-51 The general idea of the passover, as a type of redemption, has already been given; but the details of its institution are of the deepest interest, as bearing upon the application of the wondrous death of Christ, as the ground of a sinner's deliverance from sin, and the basis of his peace and security before God. The chapter begins with the statement, " This month shall be the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year unto you." The commencement of Israel's existence, as the people of God, dates from the time of their redemption from the judgment of the firstborn, and from their bondage in Egypt. God cannot acknowledge a people to be His, and yet leave them under the judgment of the world, nor under bondage to Satan, as its prince. The death of Christ alike delivers the soul from the world's condemnation and from the world's bondage. The passover unfolds the grounds of this. It is the presentation, in type, of the means by which a sinner is brought into association with God. Hence the first thing presented is the victim, whose blood preserves from judgment, set apart for death - according to the force of the scripture, " Without shedding of blood is no remission;" and "ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Most precious truth that it is God that marks, and estimates, and condemns the sin, which His infinite grace puts away! The lamb was especially marked for the households of Israel. Every man was to take a lamb for his house. And if his own household was too small, his neighbor's was to be joined with it; for the relationship of a redeemed family must not be lost. It is the household of faith which is shielded from judgment, by the sprinkled blood; as it is also said, the whole household were to partake of the lamb. There may be in the family of God " little children, young men, and fathers," but one and the same ground of redemption is common to each; and eternal deliverance, through His blood, the blessed position of all. Redemption is the bond which unites together the whole family of God.

It was to be a " lamb without blemish." The purity of the victim is marked before the efficacy of the blood which delivers from death is brought into view. Jesus, also, is seen in all His purity, as the spotless lamb - "the Lamb of God " - before His blood-shedding on the cross, presents the full answer to every claim of the moral nature of God. It needs but to refer to the word, "ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." But the, whole assembly of the congregation of Israel were to kill the lamb: because redemption is the common need of all who are called to have to do with God. "There is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." He can surround Himself alone by a people whom He has redeemed; for He cannot be associated with sin, nor can sin, for a moment, abide the holiness of His presence. Hence before there is any feeding upon the lamb, the blood is sprinkled upon the lintel and the door-posts. For the death of Christ must be known, as delivering from the judgment of sin, before Christ, who is the object of God's delight, can in any sense be delighted in, or become the object of satisfaction to the heart.

For in the passover God is seen in the double character of judge and deliverer. His judgment falls, and falls of necessity, wherever the blood of atonement does not shield - for "he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." this is seen in the death universally of the firstborn, taken as the representatives of the people, and also in the blood being the symbol of deliverance. The Israelites were not delivered, in this sense, because they were Israelites. For God is viewed as judging sin, and they were sinners as well as the Egyptians. They were delivered from the judgment of God only by virtue of their trust in the sprinkled blood. When God judges for sin there can only be one of these two results - either death, as in the case of the firstborn of the Egyptians, who met His judgment in their own persons; or perfect deliverance, as in the case of the Israelites, because the judgment of sin has been met in the death of Christ, as seen in the sprinkled blood.

" 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." The blood was given to the Israelite as the pledge of his security when death and judgment were all around him. He took refuge inside the house, when he had sprinkled the blood on the doorway, and trusted that it would be for him a bar against the entrance of the judgment of God. And did he trust in vain? Did God enter as a judge notwithstanding this pledge? No! He had said, " When I see the blood, I will pass over you." The symbol of deliverance was presented, not to the eye of the Israelite -with him it was dark night-but to the eye of Him who was Judge, and who had given the pledge of the blood, and well knew how to estimate its value. The expression is, " When I see the blood, I will pass over." It is not said, when you see it, but when I see it. The soul of an awakened person often rests, not on its own righteousness, but on the way in which it sees the blood. Now, precious as it is to have the heart deeply impressed with it, this is not the ground of peace. Peace is founded on God's seeing it. He cannot fail to estimate it at its full and perfect value as putting away sin. It is He that abhors and has been offended by sin; He sees the value of the blood as putting it away. It may be said, But must I not have faith in its value? This is faith in its value, seeing that God looks at it as putting away sin; your value for it looks at it as a question of the measure of your feelings. Faith looks at God's thoughts. " When I see the blood," says God, "I will pass over you." But the flesh of the lamb, roasted with fire, was to be eaten on the night of the passover. The victim, whose precious blood delivers from judgment, having been submitted to the trial of God's holiness, becomes the food of the sheltered soul. Eaten, indeed, with the bitter herbs of repentance, for sin is fresh before the mind, and the judgment due to it vividly displayed. Every part of the lamb was to be eaten, " his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof," because all that Christ is, as having offered Himself without spot to God, is given to us as our portion and our strength. Being shielded by His sprinkled blood from judgment, we feed upon Him by faith as sacrificed for us; and thus have fellowship with God in the perfectness of the sacrifice which Christ has presented to Him on our behalf. The flesh was to be eaten on the same night that the blood was sprinkled, and not on the morning after; for Christ cannot be fed upon by the soul that does not see the power of this sprinkled blood as delivering from the judgment of sin. All thoughts of Christ, apart from His sacrifice, are vain, and are the mere offspring of nature, alike ignorant of its own condition in the sight of God, and of the holy judgment of God. Moreover, the flesh was to be eaten in the blood-sprinkled house, and not apart from it.

They were to eat it with girded loins and shoes on their feet, with a staff in their hand, and in haste. For the pass-over was eaten in Egypt, where they had been slaves, and where God's judgment was now being solemnly displayed. Redemption by the blood of Christ separates the soul from the

world's final judgment, and sets free from its present course. It brings into association with the thoughts and counsels of God's goodness; and while it makes the world no longer our home, it is because it presents to the heart a better home of God's own providing. The passover made Israel pilgrims under the guidance of God, instead of leaving them slaves in Egypt, and exposed to its judgment; and it put Canaan before them as their hope, instead of leaving them in " the iron furnace," and to such present ease and plenty as might be gathered by them in the land of their oppressors.

" The ordinance of the passover" (from ver. 43-45) brings into view the relationship in which the believer is set toward God by virtue of The death of Christ. No stranger was to eat of the passover, nor an uncircumcised person, nor a hired servant. And how simply does scripture show these relations to exist, and these barriers to be set aside by association with the death of Christ! For it says, "ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." And again, " thou art no more a servant, but a son." Or if the servant that was bought for money, and afterward circumcised that he might eat the passover, (ver. 44,) be looked at, it is the same. For " ye are not your own: for ye are bought with a price." And again, " In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands." But the ordinance proceeds, (ver. 46, 47,) " In one house shall it be eaten: thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it." The flesh cannot be carried abroad to be the portion of those who are not in the blood-sprinkled house. Men may pretend, by means of outward ordinances, or in ways of their own, to give a participation in Christ, while they are strangers themselves, as well as those who are led by them, to the faith which brings a sinner in all his sins to find a refuge in the blood of Christ; but it can never be. Christ is no portion for those who despise the efficacy of His precious blood. The fruits of His death will never be participated in by those who have any other hope of meeting God or of being delivered from the judgment of sin but through trust in that death. This point is especially guarded here. Security was alone found in the blood-sprinkled house. There only could the lamb be eaten with bitter herbs. It was not allowed that the eating of the flesh should be so far dissociated from the sprinkling of the blood as to be partaken of on the morrow. And in the verse before us, " In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof." [It is not a Christ mutilated by man, but solely offered in sacrifice to God, that is our portion.] And " all the congregation of Israel shall keep it." Redemption is the only link of connection between the sinner-any sinner, a sinner in any circumstances-and God. The feast of unleavened bread, to which the passover introduced, (ver. 14-20.1 comes in to strengthen this position. Christ, in His unleavened perfectness, is indeed the food of the believer; but not until he has fed upon Him as a sacrificed Christ; until he has thus eaten His flesh. It is not Christ in death only that we are called to know, with all the grace that brought Him there; but Christ in. life also, in all His perfectness as a man subject to God; " the bread of God which came down from heaven to give life unto the world." But He is not thus fed upon, cannot be, as the power of a believer's separation to God, until He has been known in death. Holiness (of God) follows, not precedes, redemption. The passover introduces to the feast of unleavened bread, and not the feast of unleavened bread to the passover. Holiness, or separation to God, begins with the knowledge of the death of Christ for our sins. It is the fruit of His death that we are delivered from this present evil world. " Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Vol 01 - The Passover: Christ Our Passover Is Sacrificed for Us

The Passover: Christ Our Passover Is Sacrificed for Us

Exodus 12:1-51

Redemption, as presented in the type of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, has two aspects. The one is seen in the feast of the passover, the other in the passage of the Red Sea. The history and circumstances of the two disclose, in a wonderful manner, the redemption which God has wrought for His people in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the deliverance at the Red Sea, by Israel's being brought through a path, by the power of God, which was death to all who attempted to go through without it, we have presented to us the power of God in associating believers with Christ in His resurrection, and so delivering them from the reach of all their enemies-sin, Satan, death - as well as separating them from the whole portion and judgment of the world.

Accordingly, at the Red Sea (Exodus 15:1-27) there is the song of victory, and the celebration of the triumph which God's power has given to His people over all the power of their enemies. And the --knowledge which a poor sinner finds now, through God's grace, of his being "risen with Christ," makes his heart indeed rejoice, and say, "we are more than conquerors through him who hath loved us." But in the passover the deeper question is met, of how God's power can be thus displayed on behalf of those whom His holiness has condemned as sinners.

"God is light"- "There is none holy as the Lord." He cannot, therefore, link Himself with sin, nor can He bring a people into association with Him-self until He has put away their sins.

Hence the passover comes before deliverance at the Red Sea; even as Jesus must be known as dying for our sins, before we can say, through His resurrection, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The passover, which answers to Christ's death, brings redemption before us in connection with God's righteous holiness, and the judge and hater of all sin. The deliverance at the Red Sea, which answers to Christ's resurrection, shows how God's power in Christ is on His people's side, because His death has met the claims of all the holiness of God.

Israel were delivered, it is true, on the night of the passover: but from what were they delivered? Not from the pursuit of Pharaoh, but from God's judgment for sin. The blood was sprinkled on the lintel and on the door-posts to bar the way of God's entrance as a judge. It is not power that delivers in the passover; but weakness, death, the blood of the Lamb! The question to the Israelite, on that night, was how God should be staid from entering his dwelling as a judge. And God showed him that nothing but his trusting to the sprinkled blood of the Lamb, would cause the angel of death to pass over his dwelling. He entered every dwelling, of high and low, of the Egyptians, where the blood was not sprinkled. For "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." "For," says the Scripture, (verse 23,) "the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians: and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and

will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you." Blessed picture of the ground of security, which a simple trust in Christ's blood gives to the chief of sinners! For in the blood of this precious Lamb, God's justice has found its full answer:- "He was de-livered for our offenses." "He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Can I then, though trembling with a sense of guilt, say, "O God, my trust is only in the blood of the Lamb;" "I seek a refuge only in the blood shed on Calvary?" Then the answer of God to my heart is, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." What security is this, when God says, "I will pass over!" The passover, then, as a type, presents the redemption of believers from the just judgment of sin; while it, at the same time, shadows forth the execution of that judgment upon the world. And, alas! there will be no escape for high or low, if the blood, which alone shields from judgment, be despised. It is said, (ver. 29, 30) "And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead." No height of position, no worldly power and glory, can shield from the judgment of sin; nor can any meanness of condition escape. The firstborn of Pharaoh on the throne, and the first-born of the captive in the dungeon, are smitten alike. "There is no difference, for all have sinned."

I may add here, as to the world's judgment, that the Red Sea is a type of death to all who are not brought through it by the power of God. Israel was brought through the sea, and safely landed on the other side of it, as believers are brought through death, by the resurrection of Christ; but Pharaoh was lost in it. He entered in pride and unconsciousness of the power which was leading the hosts of God through the deep waters, and, when too late, he found that he could neither retreat nor make good his passage on the other side. Not one escaped: "The depths covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone." To meet death without a part in Christ's victory over death, is to be lost in it. It is ruin and perdition. But God's people are brought, by the resurrection of Christ, even in this world, to the other side of death: as it is said, "If ye then be risen with Christ." And as Israel, when brought through the Red Sea, and safely landed on the other side of it, could sing both of the power that had delivered them, and that would finally plant them in Canaan, so the believer, now, who is associated by faith with the power of God in the resurrection of Christ, can sing of present victory over death, and rejoice in the certain hope of coming glory. "He hath quickened us together with Christ... and hath raised us up together;" and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory."

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

Vol 01 - The Power of Eternal Life

The Power of Eternal Life

We have, first, the object fully revealed by the power of God shining in upon the soul, but giving it as an object in its own perfection-" The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face [person] of Jesus Christ." Here was the divine object, life in glory. " God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6)

But, secondly, it was really possessed as life within: " We have this treasure in earthen vessels," which of course did not answer to the object.

Thirdly, this was the occasion of the display of divine power, and the exercise of dependence. " That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (2 Corinthians 4:7) Hence cast down, and divine power sustaining. " We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." (2 Corinthians 4:8-9) The manifestation of the life, in proportion of the sentence of death in ourselves, God securing by the path that nature be kept in check-the new man developed and exercised. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." (2 Corinthians 4:10-11.)

Fourthly, then comes the possession of the glory to which the power is competent to work us, and of which we are assured. This power is in " knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you," (2 Corinthians 4:14, and on to chap. 5) only he sees there is power enough in this life, seen in Christ, to swallow up what is mortal, so that death disappears. Not yet having possession of the objective glory, we have the earnest of the Spirit, and the certainty already that God has wrought us for the very glory we have seen in Christ. "Now he that bath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also bath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." To this we have a most wonderful and glorious result as regards the time of seeing Christ in the glory.

All (saints and sinners) will be manifested before His tribunal. Thus, while seeking to be agreeable to Him ourselves, we have the terror of the Lord before us. But what is the effect? We are righteousness perfected for Him, purified by God according to the purity of God. Hence the manifestation of the light which judges raises no question then at all. Indeed we shall be glorified to appear before the judgment seat, for Christ will come and receive us to Himself. But there are two aspects of God, perfect holiness and purity, and love. The purity in judgment having to do with His own purification of us, whom He will then have conformed to the image of His Son who sits on the judgment seat. There is, as to this conformity, no question; but this other part of God's nature, love, free to act in virtue of this conformity, constrains when the judgment is thought of, and he seeks to persuade men. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are

made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences...For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all were dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (2 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.) Yet we are still in the body, still in conflict; but we have this immense advantage from the revelation of this glory in judgment, not that we think of being manifested, though we shall be; but that that being laid hold of by faith we are manifested to God. This is a glorious position, and full of preciousness to our souls, if in truth we seek to be with God. This is all founded on the work stated in 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 : " Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

HYMN.

Oh! dearest Savior take my heart: Where can such sweetness be, As I have tasted in Thy love, As I have found in Thee?

Let every fervor of my soul, Be Thy sweet sacrifice, Forever be at thy control, And but to serve Thee rise.

'Tis heaven on earth to know Thy love, To feel Thy quickening grace; And all the heaven I hope above Is but to see Thy face.

Then keep me in Thy love, O Lord, And teach me of Thy ways, Till Thou shalt come to take me home, And see Thee face to face.

Vol 01 - The Son Quickeneth Whom He Will

The Son Quickeneth Whom He Will

John 5:1-47

All through these chapters the Lord is bringing out the power that is in Him, in contrast with the means of Judaism. These means could not give life. The law could not give life. Regulations could not give life. And ordinances - helpful after there is life - nevertheless could not give life.

Whether we look at the guilt of sin, or at the power of sin, the law cannot take either away. Now this is the very thing that God has done in Christ. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," &c. That is, Christ has died for the sin, and guilt is gone; and Christ is now my life; and over this life sin has no power. God condemned sin in the flesh. Not merely has Christ died for my past sins, but sin - my whole condition - has been met in Christ's death.

"Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep-market, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years." There was the remedy; but the disease he had got hindered him from using the remedy. Now that is our case, as sinners. There is the law. If we keep it, well. But sin has taken away our power of keeping it. And you cannot help a sinful nature. The will is wrong. How can you help one whose will is wrong?

"When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?" Here the Lord brings him to the conviction of his want of power, in order to smash all hopes of getting better. The impotent man wanted to get into the pool, and this very desire made him the more miserable from the feeling that he could not go in. He must be brought to the sense of his impotency, But the Lord is there, who gives life, and with one word the thing is done. The whole thing is changed. The paralysis is gone. He does not say, "Get first into the pool," &c.; but from His own love, and in the power of His own word, He says, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." "And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked."

"And on the same day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed." They were professing to keep Sabbath. "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Ah! says Jesus, There is no rest; God is not resting. For sin had come in. Now God cannot put up with sin. He must either sweep it all away, or work to put it away. Now this last is what God was doing. The very effect of the sin on God's heart is that He sets about working in grace to put it away. God is working,' said Jesus, and 'I am working.' Thus I see God working for my salvation! My heart has got this principle, that the

love of God is such that He could not rest because of what I was, until He had "made peace by the blood of his cross." I have no power to put myself right; but here I find One working who has power, and who has had love enough to take up the work. Now it is just because we needed it that He is working; and our sin - alas! we had spit in His face - our sin did not hinder Him. The more it came out, the more need it showed of His working. Oh this love in the Son, come down into our midst to work for our salvation! It is not that we have to take a long journey, and then when we get to the end, He will have us. No. He has taken the long journey and come to meet us just where we are. In the verses which follow we find two things presented: first, that the Lord Jesus gives life; and, secondly, that He executes judgment. These two things are never mixed. He does not give life to judge the one to whom He has given it. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Here I find the Son of God in the world. How comes He here? Because I was lost! God sent Him to give eternal life. And my sins did not hinder Him from coming. But I have not power. Well, Christ has. He has got life, and He has come to give it. The Father sent Him to give it, and that I might know the love that sent it. He tells me the truth about my sin - why I am lost, and that I have no power to get better; but He also tells me that He came " To seek and to save that which was lost."

Vol 01 - The Whole Armor of God

The Whole Armor of God The Epistle to the Ephesians has a peculiar character. It considers man, not as having a life of sin, which he has to hold as dead in principle, and to resist in practice; but, in order to give God His own full part, and the blessing He gives its full character and perfection, it treats man as dead in trespasses and sins; and, hence his whole moral existence is a new one, and depends on God, and is derived from His power; it has its origin and subsistence from His creative and life-giving energies. It is a new creation.

Hence, in the first chapter, before even speaking of the redemption which meets the necessities of man, the Spirit directs our eye to the eternal counsels of God's grace, towards those chosen in Christ, (ver. 3-6,) the unspeakable riches of the blessings to which they are destined. The inheritance which has fallen to them in Christ comes afterward, (ver. 11,) as a subordinate thing. Hence we have the union of the Church with Christ as its Head, exalted above every name in this world and that which is to come. Hence, the vivifying and raising up with Christ, and setting in heavenly places in Him, where all difference of Jew and Gentile is forever lost, and our creation again in Christ. The Holy Ghost, according to the mystery hidden from ages, but now revealed, becoming by His presence, the power of the Church's unity as the habitation of God, and the conferring of every gift necessary for the perfecting of the saints, for the gathering and edifying of the body by the Head on high, who had received the Spirit to this end, for the members thus united to Him. Thus viewed in its Head, and in the power of the Holy Ghost on the earth, the Church has a heavenly character, and as its privileges take this elevated character, so also its testimony, its difficulties, and its combats. (Compare Ephesians 1:3; Ephesians 2:6; Ephesians 3:10; Ephesians 6:12.) For in the measure in which our spiritual position is raised, so, of course, do the difficulties and exercises of heart assume a character which requires greater experience and greater power. Our spiritual advance introduces us necessarily into them. But God is faithful not to suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. We could not expect a babe in Christ to be exercised as an apostle. Still the principles of all temptations are in general the same, and the experience of an apostle would render him capable of entering into the trials of an infant all the better. His more thorough knowledge of the wiles of Satan, enables him to expose those wiles in their true light to the more inexperienced Christian. Because they have ceased to be wiles for himself, he can expose their wiliness, to him by whom they are as yet unsuspected, or imperfectly judged. By following the word of God the simplest soul avoids danger, though it may be inexperienced in the devices of the enemy; for in that path God is found, and all is simple. One is wise concerning that which is good, and can be simple concerning evil. Still such as we are there are exercises; and the same human nature is in the oldest and in the youngest saint. The form of the trial may be different and suited to the progress made; but the principles are the same, and the means of defense too. One may, if humbler in spirit, use them better, but God's weapons do not vary in their nature. The apostle will explain their use to the young soldier; but he uses (if with greater expertness) those he explains. But before I enter on the character of the armor, a few words as to the position of him who is called upon to use it. It will be remarked that the spiritual use of the armor is found at the

close of an epistle in which all the highest spiritual privileges have been spoken of as the portion of a Christian. He is looked at, all through the epistle, as in the heavenly Canaan; blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; quickened with Him, raised up, and sitting in heavenly places, in Him. He has redemption and forgiveness. The desire of the apostle is that he may know the fullness and extent of his calling, of his inheritance, and the power that has brought him into it, in spirit and life, if not in body. On the earth he is looked at as builded together with all saints, as God's habitation by the Spirit. Hence, when the apostle treats of warfare, it is not carried on in order to enter into these privileges, but in order to maintain oneself in them, and to realize them by the power of God. When the apostle speaks of not combating with flesh and blood he refers to Joshua and Israel. Now the combats of Israel were not in Egypt, nor even in the desert, as such. They were oppressed in Egypt and slaves there, as the unconverted man is a slave of sin and Satan. God sees his afflictions, comes down to deliver him. He leaves his misery; weakness he cannot escape, and is cast on God as a Savior, and through the death and resurrection of Christ, that is, through redemption, passes into a new scene, where he is forever beyond all that was his plague and sorrow before his deliverance. "Thou hast led forth the people thou hast redeemed, (says the song of Moses, Exodus 15:1-27,) thou hast led them by thy strength to thy holy habitation." Not only the blood on the door-posts had sheltered them from the just judgment of God, but the active power of God had now delivered them entirely and forever from the condition in which they were lying. The only difference in the Ephesians is one we have noticed, that the previous troubles and sorrows are passed over. Man is looked at as dead in trespasses and sins, that all his privileges, and the whole work of God, may be looked at in their full extent in themselves. I pass over the desert, which represents what this world is become to the redeemed, and which is characterized by the exercise of faith and patience, not by spiritual combats in order to realize or to maintain privileges given. In order to enter fully into these, we must realize our own death and resurrection with Christ; not merely that He is dead and risen for us. We must pass the Jordan, and thus enter into the land, in spirit. The Red Sea prefigured redemption by the death and resurrection of Christ; Jordan, our being dead and risen with Him, in the power of the Spirit of God, so as to enter in spirit into that which is within the veil, according to the power of the redemption which has been wrought for us. And remark that on the entry into Canaan, as depicted in the Book of Joshua, the portion of Israel was not rest. Their combats for the enjoyment of the land began then. Jordan was doubtless the figure of death; but properly of death with Christ, in the power of the Holy Ghost, so as to be risen in spirit, in the liberty with which Christ sets us free; that we may realize and live in the heavenly things into which He is entered as our risen Head. As soon as Israel had crossed the Jordan, before a blow was struck, they eat of the old corn of the land. They were, as to title, in full possession of the country. But to possess it actually they must combat with the enemy. The principle of the christian warfare is the same. "All things are ours." As regards our title, we are sitting in heavenly places in Christ, eating the corn of that land. But conflict then begins, to hold our ground against the enemy, and realize the sum of our privileges through every attack he makes upon us. For in holding good our ground against his attacks, there is continual progress in the realization of that which God has given to us, though in the conflict itself we have only to hold fast faithfully. If we sit in heavenly places, as to title, and our place with God, as to possession, we must make it good; for spiritual wickednesses are there.

Having made these general remarks on the position of those engaged in this warfare, I return to the Ephesians. In this Epistle, the blessings, the saints themselves, the witness of the Church, the

combats of the saints, all is in heaven. The rest will be there, as in Canaan, (figuratively,) for Israel. The combat is there; as in Canaan, under Joshua. But now the combat is not with flesh and blood, but with the prince of the power of the air, the rulers of the darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places. Carnal weapons and carnal wisdom are of no avail. One may be victorious over the instruments of Satan's power, in our reasonings, and be overcome by himself. There is no safeguard but the armor of God; and to maintain one's ground continually all the pieces of it are needed. What should we say of one who, armed in every other point, forgot his helmet or his sword? He has forgotten his enemy and his own capability of being wounded. Thank God we have the word and wisdom of God to tell us what is needed, that we may stand! Satan has no power to touch what is born of God. He who lives and walks in the Spirit is not reached by his weapons, nor subverted by his wiles. But the flesh has no power against him; and if this is exposed, we are exposed to be subverted by him. Hence the Spirit of God shows us what is needed. The first thing is that we remember, what I have just remarked, that the armor is that of God; that no human power, no wisdom, is of any avail. Satan's weapons or wiles go clean through them at once. The use of such weapons is the foolishness of confidence in self, which is, (witness Peter's case,) exactly what exposes us to him. Let us remember, too, the foundation we have laid: that the conflict with Satan here. spoken of supposes peace with God. If I am really on my feet, combating with Satan, and armed by God, I have no question with God as to whether He is for me. My combats are not with Him, my fears have not Him for their object. The anxieties of the unreconciled soul have the dread of God, the uncertainty of His thoughts, for their source. The combats of the reconciled soul are with the enemy.

Remark, further, that it is not in the time of combat, in the evil day, I am to put on my armor. I enter into it armed, at least if I enter into it aright, and in the way to be victorious. The armor we wear is our abiding state as regards this world, though with God all be peace. In the next place remark that those parts of the armor which relate to the spiritual condition of the Christian's own soul and his walk - what relates to the subjugation of flesh and self - come first; then the maintenance of practical confidence in God; (and how true that order is;) and then the activity of the believer as regards others; all closed in by the expression of entire dependence. It is not the force and power of Satan which we have to resist, but his wiles. When really resisted, he has no force against us, for he is overcome by Christ; and the new nature he has nothing in or for. When the inclinations of the heart are unjudged, then he has the power to deceive us. Hence, as to receiving any truth, the state of the soul is really what is in question. When this is not right, reasonings are vain. When the eye is single, the whole body will be full of light. So when the flesh is not judged, the enemy can overthrow and trouble us. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." The first part, then, of our armor is to have the loins girt about with truth. The word first girds about my own loins before I can use it as a sword. The girding about the loins is that strengthening and giving of firmness to the whole man, which cannot be if all is left loose in his ways and mind, and which flows from the application of truth to his soul. And this application of truth to his soul, though an internal operation, has a double bearing. It is the application to the heart and conscience of all that is revealed in Christ. Now, this first judges all that is not of Christ, detects it and judges it; at the same time, what is in the heart is seen in its true light as compared with what I see in Christ revealed as truth to my heart. I have judged what springs from the flesh and is adapted to it; it has lost its false appearances and deceiving power, and, as Christ is really there, its power altogether. I do not let my heart go after it; it has lost its place there, because seen not by the flesh, but judged by the

Spirit. Instead of having any attractions for the heart inspired by this, it has its true, hateful character. Christ, as truth, has put it into its true light, out of the affections, and into its own judged hatefulness. It is no longer myself as a moral affection at all. It is sin and flesh in my eyes. But besides this, there is what has wrought this judgment, the revelation of the truth itself of Christ in the heart. Hence what is good is loved, has power in the heart, authority there; the will and affections are bridled by what has authority over them-instead of being let loose-while they, at the same time, delight in what exercises this authority over them. They are girded up, restrained, given moral tone and firmness, by the known value of that which is an obligation, because it is in Christ; a delight because it is good. For in man obligation, where it is in grace, gives strength. That is when the thing itself is delighted in, not imposed on, as a law. It is a governed heart, not an ungoverned will. Yet it is intelligent, and delights in what it sees in Christ. It governs itself. The girding about the loins with truth then, is the application of the truth to the affections, so that a man is braced up, having to do with what is right, in authority over his soul, while he delights in it too.

There are two passages to which I would draw the reader's attention, in connection with the first part of the armor. Hebrews 4:1-16, "The word of God is quick (living) and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Here it is, evidently, the searching character of the word; and "thy word is truth." It is divine, living, and efficacious. Nothing that is creature escapes its penetrating judgment. The declaration of scripture does not here go beyond this. But if I have an earnest desire that all things should be "of God," in me, according to the new creature, (2 Corinthians 5:1-21,) and have learned that as to what is of the mere creature, in so far as it has a will, all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are only evil, and that continually; if my heart is divinely right, I shall be most thankful for this detection of all that hinders my spiritual life, and comes between my soul and God, mars alike my communion and my walk, and brings the hindering inclination into the all-judging and delivering presence of God.

John 17:1-26 goes somewhat farther: "Sanctify them" we read there, "through thy truth, thy word is truth. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth." Here we have the word bringing in its positive formative action, as well as its detective; and Christ also set apart as the perfection of that which we are to be, that the revelation of what He is to the soul may conform us to Him. It is evident that such a communication of what Christ is, while attracting and delighting the new creature, would in everything judge the old; but it is more than merely the divine word as a sword, as the eye of God on us, discerning and detecting; there is an attractive and an assimilating power. It is a man whose nature I have, (for He is my life,) in whom I see all this moral perfection, love, holiness, truth, absolute purity, grace, patient kindness, devotedness beyond all measure, to us self-sacrifice, and an absolutely single eye in devotedness to God His Father's glory, and all the life-giving fullness of God, in all these things. All this is in man, and in one with whom I have to do; who loves me; with whom I am one. He has sanctified Himself for our sakes. By the communication of all this, and much more than this, in the truth, we are sanctified. First of all in believing, so as to have a share in it, and then by daily realization of it in detail, attaching the heart thus to Christ. " We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are

changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." Blessed portion! Used, it is true, in the passage which occupies us in the Ephesians, more in its guardian power than in its delight and advantages; in its moral bracing energy, than in its joys in communion; but profitable alike for both. The truth, then, as this divine revelation to the soul, by the word, detects all that gives a handle to Satan in us, and destroys its hold on the soul. It causes that we are no longer debtors to the flesh; for we have a new life with God, in which we have a right to live, and over which Satan has no right and no power; and in which the flesh has no claim and no part; and which is freely and new-given of God, so that none else has any claim over it. Hence the absolute and exclusive claim of God is brought in, and with delight to the soul; delight, because obedience to Him is now delight. We love Him and His claims over us. It is delight, because the things He calls us to walk in are enjoyed morally by our souls. There is an intelligent nature which is of Him, and from Him, having the delights and desires of His nature, and rejoiced to have the perfect expression of its own desires in God's claims over us. For we are "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust." Hence it is called the perfect law of liberty. "He who hath looked [looked down closely] into the perfect law, that of liberty, and continueth therein, not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of work, that man shall be blessed in his doing [it]." There is our own delight in good thus, the authority of God in it; the rejection of evil, yet not in haughtiness, for God is there; and the authority of God over us, yet in personal delight in what is good, in a nature which loves it for its own sake. What hold has Satan there? The mind is braced up, the loins girt about with truth in the midst of the dissolution and uncertainty of the world; dissolution to which the flesh would yield itself at once. It is girding the loins. In heaven this will not be needed. The flesh will not be there. All that attracts will be divine. We can let ourselves freely go to it. There is nothing but what God has authority over; nothing but what answers to His will, His nature, and His glory; while authority is perfect and delighted in, there is nothing to watch and guard against. We can let out all our affections there. The more we have the better; at least all we have are rightly in exercise, for God and the fullness of Christ entirely fill the scene. Here we must have our loins girt about with truth. Blessed that we can, and have this privilege in a world of which we once were; a world of dissolution. Blessed that we have God's truth to do it with! But when the heart is thus kept, the conduct will follow. The breastplate of righteousness will not be wanting. We must remember that in the passage we are occupied with, the subject treated of is what is needed in conflict with Satan, not what is called for that we may stand before God. Christ is our righteousness before God, perfect and unchangeable; and without that we could in no way make head against Satan; but it cannot assume the character of a breastplate when we consider it as our righteousness before God. All is peace in this righteousness; peace is made, there is no combat there. Christ has met and overcome the enemy, and is become my righteousness; and this is the foundation of all. God is truly with me and before me. But in my conflict with Satan, while I cannot do without this, I need something else - practical righteousness. My conscience must be without reproach, in order to combat with him. If my conscience be not purged with the blood of Christ, I have not yet peace with God; I am still in Egypt; though I may be striving to get out of it; I do not yet know the power of redemption. I cannot say that God is for me, nor that I am for God in this world. I need to be delivered and reconciled. But if I am, a conscience practically bad will make me weak before the enemy. How can he, whose conscience reproaches him, whom the world could reproach if aware of it, how can he go boldly into the combat? He is afraid the blow may reach him there; he is obliged to think of that: he is not free to think, in simplicity of heart, of

nothing but the service which is before him. The Spirit of God also is grieved, and lets him, if he go on thus carelessly, feel that he has failed, as Israel before Ai. For boldness when we have failed shows rather indifference to sin, or an effort to carry on appearances, when the heart is not right. But if the conscience be good, the walk upright, there is confidence in God, and self has not to be thought of. One can do God's work freely. Thus Paul - " Pray for us, for we trust that we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly." And again, " Herein do I exercise myself day and night, to have a conscience void of offense towards God and towards man." The second part of the armor, then, is a righteous walk, a walk with God. Only remark that, as to confidence in service, it is not merely evil known, or easily to be known to others; it is all allowed evil. Because Satan can use this against the conscience and make it timid; and certainly the Holy Ghost will not make it hard or indifferent. A good conscience before God is acquired by one thing alone, by the blood-shedding and work of Christ. But the result of this is the presence of the Holy Ghost in us, and then a good conscience against Satan is only when the Spirit has not been grieved by anything done contrary to the light He has afforded me. But many have not the courage to go on in God's warfare, because they hold to something which is inconsistent with the light they have received. Perhaps, alas! they lose the light which they have not acted up to, and Satan is able to bring their mind under the darkness of his good reasons for staying where they are, without conquering more territory from him, though they are uneasy, perhaps bitterly hostile, when light reaches them from without, which threatens to awaken conscience again. The existence of flesh in us, though judged as sin, does not give a bad conscience, nor interrupt communion; but the moment it is allowed, even in mind, it does both.

If the Lord will, I will send you some thoughts on the remaining parts of the armor, at another opportunity.

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The Whole Armor of God

Although the Christian who walks faithfully, clothed with the whole armor of God, enjoys the effect of its use, in the peaceful joy of communion, the difference must have, perhaps, been felt, between this state and the loss of communion, to know the immense importance of this armor, or rather of wearing it. Far better, however, to enjoy the confiding peace, which accompanies its use, than to know its importance by exposing oneself without it to the assaults of the enemy. Communion with God is a real thing, in which He pours into the soul, in a greater or less degree, the deep joy of His presence, - of that favor and perfect love in which He communicates with the soul, revealing Himself, - and gives, by His presence, the happiness of a relationship, in which no breach is suspected, nor thought of, in which the soul lives. It is more than faith, though founded on it; other than the certainty of salvation, though the crown, and seal, and realization of this. The abstract certainty, the consoling certainty, that my Father loves me, and will not, nay, cannot, do otherwise, is another thing than happy intercourse with this love; with no consciousness of anything else, or of anything in the way of that enjoyment. The certainty of love in God constitutes the bitterness of the sense of the loss of the enjoyment of it, - for I speak only of saints here. The Spirit's seal to the truth assures of God's love; and Christ, if we fail, intercedes for us. But the Holy Ghost being the spring of the enjoyment of it in the heart is another thing. The one - the foundation, it is true, of all - assures that God is for us: the other is God in us, filling the heart with joy, with communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. There are two ways, very distinct indeed in their character, in which I may fail in this communion; one negatively, where negligence has deprived me of positive and sensible intercourse with God - the heart is cold and indifferent; the other, where the conscience is concerned, and, the heart having allowed the enemy to prevail against it, the Holy Ghost becomes in us a stern reprover; and while never destroying the sense of God's love, makes us bitterly bewail the loss of the inward sense and enjoyment of it, and makes us taste, more or less, the fruits of sin, as, in its nature, separating the soul from God; and thus makes it horrible to us, not as feeling with God its evil morally, but as in its nature separating us from Him: not as to faith, indeed, allowing us to suppose that He will give us up at all, but to feel what it is. But this last is an extreme case, and discipline, on God's part, and very severe discipline too. The other, alas! is but too common. They are very different. Many Christians live frequently in a state analogous to the last case I have supposed; but in them it is from being yet under the law, and from their not being established in their relationship with God; and the distress, consequently, is not so great, because there has not been the same nearness to God. I have said these few words as to the result of not using the armor with which God has furnished us. I return to its character and use.

I have spoken somewhat of the loins being girt about with truth, and of the breastplate of righteousness; of the affections being governed and kept in order by the truth; the revelation of Christ, and the walk which flows from this; and godly vigilance of an unassailable conscience. Thus the soul is in practical peace - has not to occupy itself with itself - can walk in unsuspecting

openness and confidence. When the heart is full of peace, and enjoys the unsuspecting sweetness of it with God, it walks in the spirit of peace. This peace characterizes all its ways and relationships with others. There is not effort or constraint, - nothing to guard or keep back. The course is natural, unconstrained and unsuspecting.

There is not fear of evil because there is not the consciousness of it. Not that the soul is without wisdom; that cannot be in such a world; but it is wise concerning that which is good, and simple concerning evil. It does not much fear evil befalling it, because it has a portion of peace that outward evil cannot touch; nor does it count on outward good as its resource. In this peace, the heart depends on God and as above evil in this sense, it brings peace with it into the scene through which it passes. The expression, having the feet shod with it, is beautiful, as showing the habitual character of the walk. Such was the character, especially, of Christ. He brought in peace - rejected, indeed, but not the less true - the great peace-maker. He declared such should be called the children of God. These three first parts of the armor are practically expressed in the words, as far as relationship with the saints goes: "Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another."

Thus governed within, and walking in peace without, the soul is free to trust in God. All three parts of the armor are, indeed, worn together, but there is a moral dependence and order. Internal condition goes before external activity order in the affections and practical righteousness, before the spirit of peace in our ways with others; and both before that confidence in God, which shields from the assaults of the enemy. It is not that the confidence flows from this walk - it is in God only; but it is in this soil that it grows, in this state that it has its free exercise. It is as important to remark that it does not look back or calculate on any state of the soul, as that that state of the soul is that in which this confidence is found in free exercise. When we enjoy our health, all depends on the state of the body; but because it is in health its energies go out on their just object, and the health is not thought of at all. Faith here is the full confidence in God, which counts on His goodness and faithfulness, and that He is for us, - which trusts a God who is entirely for us. Without this, all is despair, or near to it, in a conscience which feels that it has to do with God. Satan has got in; and to the soul who feels the need of God being for it, there is left only the agonizing feeling that He is not. Hence the Savior prays for Peter, that his faith might not fail; that is, that in spite of his dreadful fall, he might not be left to the thought that therefore God had abandoned him, was against him, and that there was no hope. The fiery darts of Satan are not his efforts to seduce, by acting on our various lusts; but where, by any means, our hearts are turned away from God, the inroads he makes in the form of unbelief and despair. This is the force of the passage in the Corinthians, lest Satan tempt you for your incontinency. The evil was there, the incontinency was supposed, the temptation was the power of Satan over the soul, which was the result. It is, evidently, a different power from his seductions. There is no pleasure in despair, but deep agony. The flesh finds its pleasure in satisfying its lusts, but there is no lust of despair; it is as a consuming fire in the soul.

We may see, in the temptations of Christ, as far as He could be on the same ground as we, this same difference. There could be no lusts and no despair; but Satan sought, at the beginning of His career, to seduce Him from the path of obedience; and brought all the terror of death upon Him at the end. Only in the former case He maintained His first estate; in the second His agony only led Him into more earnest communion with His Father. But He went through, for us, the whole

pressure of Satan's power; for us in both respects, only was never reached within by it, so as to turn Him aside from God, in the perfect path of obedience. The fiery darts of the enemy are the power of the enemy over the soul, when it has been left exposed to his inroads, by the shield of faith (an entire confidence in the grace of God, in His favor, as that in which we dwell, and changes not) having been down.

Such, I doubt not, are his fiery darts; and terrible they are, when, from the shield of faith not having been our safeguard - having been dropped, we are exposed to them. But I would add, that I do not believe that this is ever a simple case: that is, that it happens by itself, without some producing cause. The passage I have alluded to in the Corinthians explains what I mean: Satan tempted, for incontinency, a heart which had opened the door to him, by lust; which had even strayed out, in spirit, into his domains, forsaking God - not in will, perhaps, but in heart - in letting itself loose, exposed itself naturally to his power; particularly in these lusts, which a corrupt will nourishes, which, as the apostle expresses it, war against the soul, and which are so contrary to the very nature of God, to His purity and holiness. Where these are, in any degree, willfully indulged by one who is a Christian, it is well if the result be not this terrible power of Satan over the soul, which for a time at least, darkens the light of God in it, and hides His favor; the knowledge of which only makes the loss of the sense of it more terrible to him who suffers under it: it seems to be gone forever, - at least it may reach this point. At any rate it is the most terrible chastisement which can reach a human heart. If a soul belong to God, it will surely be delivered; but who can say how long it may suffer. The great remedy against such a danger is to have the soul frequently, in a positive way, in God's presence. To walk there constantly is our privilege and supreme joy. But I speak of a positive entering into His presence, who is light, that all may be clear in our conscience, all free in our heart. In a word, that we may not only enjoy blessings from Him, but be, as He graciously permits us, before Him. I have gone through the effect of not having the shield of faith up, and particularly what is the cause of it, as a warning; but the case, blessed be God's grace, is as rare as it is terrible. But something of an analogous nature takes place, in a different state of soul, as to what is not unfrequently called the fiery darts of the enemy. I refer to those cases where blasphemous and infidel thoughts seem to arise in the mind. They are not desired, not the effect of reasoning, but present themselves unsought, to the great distress of the soul. But this, I believe, happens when the soul is not set free in Christ. When once we are really introduced into the presence of God, in the knowledge of His favor and love, are there before Him, enjoying Himself, Satan cannot get there, cannot thus reach the mind. In the state of despair, spoken of previously, feelings of rebellion against God may and do arise, but these are the working of the mind itself, in the state it is in; whereas the suggestions of which I am now speaking are foreign to every feeling, and every acknowledged thought. But there is not, I believe, the true, personal knowledge of God in grace, though that grace may be admitted as a truth, and as the only ground of hope. These thoughts distress and harass the mind; and persons assaulted by them sometimes draw dismal conclusions as to themselves, as in other such cases they think they have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. General deliverance, and the true knowledge of God, is to be sought here. The liberty wherewith Christ sets free - for this deliverance is real - brings us, as freed from everything that was against us, to God Himself. In the case, then, of the trying suggestions, of which we now speak, the shield of faith is not dropped; it is not yet up, has not yet been borne up on the arm of faith. The shield of faith, then, is that entire confidence in God, flowing from the real, personal knowledge of redemption, which silences every doubt, and prevents every question, by

the personal knowledge of God's love, which instead of having questions with God, reckons upon Him, against everything else. If God be for us, who can be against us? It is not merely peace, as regards evil, through the blood of Christ, but confidence in God, resulting from His being thus known. If I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, says Moses, let my Lord now go with us, for it is a stiffnecked people. God is our resource and help against ourselves, our security against all else. Satan may prove a thousand things against us; our knowledge of God is the answer to them all.

Entire, unwavering confidence in God Himself is the spring, then, and source of energy; the efforts of Satan to break and enfeeble it are quenched by the shield of faith. Maintained practically in its place by walking with God, it rests in itself on the true divinely given knowledge of God, as for us, as He has revealed Himself in Christ; a knowledge sustained and fed by the grace and intercession of Jesus. But there is a further development of this condition of soul, closely allied to it, yet different, - the knowledge of and possession of salvation. The difference is this: it is not abiding confidence in what God is, but the joyful certainty of what He has done, the consciousness of the position He has set us in.

Confidence is dependence, a blessed, right, and softening feeling; though emboldening in what is right, and as against the enemies of our souls. Salvation gives boldness and energy: we hold up the head, so to speak, a head covered by the strength and salvation of God Himself. Would to God, says Paul, that not only thou, but all that hear me, were not only almost, but altogether, such as I am save these bonds. Was he - after two years imprisonment and wrong, in the presence of judges, as a chained prisoner, without resource save in God - was he disheartened or fearful in spirit? The helmet of a known salvation was on his head. Yet (to be possessed in glory) all was his in Christ, all was his in his own soul. He was what the love that was in his heart could wish others to be; the consciousness that it was his, animated the love which expressed itself towards others, - gave it its object in its own happiness. His relationship to God was known; his being in the light as God was in the light, in the blessed joy of holiness, sin and evil and all confusion outside; Jesus' glory complete; the Father's love unhindered by anything in the state of the object is rested on. This secured by the cross, so that it could fully flow in now; the possession of Jesus' love, in whom it was all secured. Salvation was a helmet to his head; he could lift it up before all. Nor is it less such to us in the day of battle: we have not to think about ourselves; that is secured, for that helmet is riven by no blow: we are free to use our wisdom and strength undisturbed by any fear for self in the conflict in which we are set. We can seek victory and blessing for others, glory for the Lord, success before Him. He has thought of us and put us into the place where we are, and have more than man's heart knows how to desire. And secure in it we can think of serving Him. Evidently this, as all else, must be realized by the ungrieved power of the Holy Ghost, to use and walk in it. In all these parts of the armor we have found what relates to our own standing, our enjoyment, in governed affections and godliness, of our blessed relationship with God which is given us in the new position which the second Adam has, and which we have in and by and ever with Him. This is our security, our defense, in the conflict. Thus nothing separates us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But there is active energy, arms which we wield in the power of the Spirit of God, which silences flesh, and baffles the power of Satan, and controls those who are under his power. When fully in the power of our relationship with God we can take the sword of the Spirit, which is His word. If the soul be not in communion with God it cannot wield His word in His name. It is not a carnal weapon to be used with carnal force or wisdom. It is the Spirit's

sword: sharp, reaching the conscience, and of the most hardened where rightly applied, and bowing and subduing the most haughty. But if the soul be not with God there is not the thought of the right passage, nor the power of God with it. It is not spoken of here, mark, as the means of edification - it is not a sword there - but of conflict. The weapons of our warfare are spiritual, to the pulling down of strongholds. The word of God in conflict, when spiritually used, carries light with it to the soul, as to our whole position in conflict - the light of God's mind on the whole scene and question before us - which inspires a confidence, of which he who has it not has no idea. Satan's object is to deceive; the conscious possession of the divine mind only makes the discovered deception an element of strength, in the knowledge of whom we have to do with, and of God's being in the light thrown upon his wiles. It detects and judges them appositely; and a deception laid bare is a victory over the wiles to which no answer can be found. See the Lord's use of scripture, as an example - ever matchless - of this weapon. How were His adversaries put to silence, no man daring to put to Him any more questions. How was Satan himself reduced to leave one whom he could not touch. For this weapon repels all the attacks of Satan, as it confounds, by its power, all the force and wiles of the enemy.

We have no other weapon; we must have skill to use it, which no practice but the power of present grace alone can give; but it is the weapon of God's own mind, and light, and truth, in the midst of the darkness by which Satan would overcloud man's mind. An arm of a peculiar and distinct character closes the list, showing how all are used in entire and constant dependence. The first parts of the armor, we have seen, are defensive, those which hinder Satan from touching us, connected with the judgment of self and godliness: after these the active energy of the word of God, the sword of the Spirit; but the Holy Ghost, which alone can enable us to use the word, cannot do so by putting us in a position of independence; it is contrary to His nature and service, and to the moral effect of His presence with us. He puts our souls into connection with, and dependence on, the source of all power and grace. He cannot be separated from those in whose name He acts, from whom He comes forth, and by His very presence He puts us in communion with, and dependence on, them. It is thus it is said of Him, " He shall not speak of Himself," that is, unconnected with the Father and the Son, as it is said, Sayest thou this of thyself? as an isolated spirit might say things of' which himself was the source. But there is more than this, because the Holy Ghost acts in us morally, and makes us feel, as new creatures, our entire, and I may add, glad, dependence, on so blessed a source of activity and power, as God Himself. We know we are so. It is a creature's place: it is a godly creature's place, and his willing place; for the heart, led by the Holy Ghost, is rejoiced to receive all from God, as it knows, also, it can receive nowhere else what is good. But this is exercised in confidence; we ask, we express our dependence; we supplicate, both in the sense of need, and in the earnestness of desire for the accomplishment of what we are thus enabled to succeed in or obtain for others. The mind, though in dependence, is brought into the channel of God's desires and blessing, by the operation of the Holy Ghost-given a share in this energy of divine working, though in the sense of entire dependence on God. God meets, answers, shows His concurrence in what He has put into our hearts by the Holy Ghost. We are occupied with what He works in, and works with, and for us. Not only are our desires accomplished, but we have the consciousness of God's concurrence in them, and that we stand, on His part, in our conflicts and service, while we have the joy of everything being His. Nor is this all; it is not only our own part in this divine conflict that occupies; love to others, those without that are His, and united thus indeed to us, acts in the grace of intercession.

Everything is found, in this (seemingly, to human judgment, so feeble) instrument, above all precious, because it is an unseen one. Need is there, earnest desire of others, good in love is there; desire for God's glory, confidence in His love, in His word, dependence on Him, reality of intercourse with Him; while, as a consequence, every inconsistency is brought to light in the heart by this nearness, not only as respects holiness, but as it touches confidence in this nearness. Besides this, there is a close linking of all the whole body together, in its dependence on the head. What a place is this to use the given sword of God; His own thoughts in power, and to be with Himself in confidence for every answer of His love and strength. It will be remarked that it is on every occasion-always. This is one mark of our living in this state of communion, that the heart turns at once, naturally, there. It does not set about to consider, when something arises, but to pray. God's answer surely comes. Next, remark, it is in Spirit, that is, in the power of the Holy Ghost working, in our communion with God. But another element is put before us here; the active exercise of a vigilant mind, so that all turns to prayer, and that we observe that as to which we have to pray. There is the active interest of love, which is awake and alive, does not sleep over the interests of the Church of God, over the holiness and communion of the saints - cannot if we are near to God. For there is an active, living energy of love, which; in the desire of the blessing of the saints, thus draws near to God. This gives perseverance and earnestness; for whatever our confidence in the love of God, affection is earnest and persevering; and here, above all, it is that divine affections, our personal participation through grace in the interest God takes in blessing, are brought out. Here, as elsewhere, the apostle therefore brings in all saints. (Compare 1:15; 3:18.) The apostle knew what it was, as all abundantly testifies, and he knew its value. It is a privilege of all saints on which an apostle himself is dependent. All have not distinguished gifts, but all have the privilege of drawing near to God as child and priest. (See 2 Corinthians 1:11.) Divine power in us is the fruit of dependence on Him who gives it. The Armor of God, then, begins with all being inwardly right in affection; then in practice; then peacefulness of walk; and so it is, for sin is restless, and impatient; then security, by unfailing confidence, from Satan's attacks, the joy and power of salvation before God; and finally, the active energy in which we can use the word in all; and behind all dependence exercised in prayer.

(Continued)

Vol 01 - The Will of God, the Work of Christ, and the Witness of the Holy Ghost

The Will of God, the Work of Christ, and the Witness of the Holy Ghost

Hebrews 10:1-39 The basis of the argument of the apostle in this chapter lies more in the contrast, than in the comparison, between the law and the good things to come. The law, he says, had only a shadow, not the very image of the things. For example, under the law the priests ministered in infirmity; now Christ ministers in glory. They offered oftentimes the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins; He one sacrifice-once for all. Then, there was a veil; now, there is none. Then, the priests could not enter into the Holiest; now, we have boldness to enter in by the blood of Jesus. The law had a shadow of good things to come, not the very image. It was a mere figurative witness of the things that were to be spoken after. Just as the shadow of a man gives some general indistinct idea of him, but does not present a single feature clearly; so was it with the law. It could never make the comers thereunto perfect, as the repetition of its sacrifices showed. Now the unity of the sacrifice proves its perfection; and the present position of the worshippers gives the most complete contrast possible to that under the law, though there is a certain measure of analogy.

There are three things brought out in this scripture: first, the source from which all blessing springs: secondly, the means by which it is accomplished: and thirdly, the testimony by which it is known. This last is a most necessary part of the matter, in order to our communion; because, unless we know sin to be all put away, it would be absolute madness to attempt to enter into the presence of God: a Jew even would not have thought of such a thing-much less a Christian. If I am not as clean, as an angel, the presence of God is no place for me; and the attempt to appear in it would be to follow the example of Cain, who thought to stand before God as a worshipper without blood. We may cry to Him from the depths, of course, and He will ever hear; but if the conscience be not perfect, we cannot go into His presence to worship. With the Jews, this perfection was, of course, only ceremonial; with us it is real: with them, the veil hid God; now that it is gone, and that we enter into the Holiest of all, there is the greater need of perfection of conscience. This is why the apostle insists so strongly on the word "once." In-deed, all the reasoning of the chapter depends on it. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." "Once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself." "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." If those sacrifices could have wrought perfection of conscience, would they not have ceased to be offered? Christ was once offered, thereby proving the perfect result of His work; it needed no repetition. That is why he says, elsewhere in this epistle, that, if this be rejected, "there remaineth no more offering for sin." If that has not made perfect, there is no hope. If that be rejected, there is only "a fearful looking for of judgment." In the repetition of sacrifice there was a remembrance made of sin. It was not God's saying, Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more. Christians now have often a mind to be in the same place still, and call their unbelief humility. With the Jews, of course, it must have been so, because it was

not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin. Therefore, God changes the whole thing. " He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." This brings out the first principle to which I alluded, namely, the source of all blessing. It originates in the divine will. " Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." It originates in the will of God, and not in the will of man; that is only sin. As a creature, man should have no will of his own, just as Christ had none. The principle of His obedience was not a controlling power, hindering the operation of His own will; but, " Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!" This was perfect obedience as a man. God's will was His; and that will alone brought salvation and life, where man's will had only brought sin and death. This gives stability and perfection to everything, to find its source and origin in the will of God. If it had been the result of my will, all would have been vacillating and changing as man's will is; and, moreover, if we had earned heaven by our own will, there would have been no love of God in the matter, and we should lose the sweetness of holding everything as the fruit of divine love. This will of God is not presented to man to do; it is the Son of God who says, " Lo, I come to do thy will, O God! " Men could never have done the will of God. The second Adam does it. As belonging to the first Adam, our place is to confess that we have, not done, and that we never could do, the will of God. When brought back to Him, of course, we have nothing else to do, for we are sanctified unto obedience; but, as regards acceptance, it is the result of the work of another. "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." God does all for us in grace, and leaves man out, both in the will and work. Salvation is the result of God's will and Christ's work. And it gives quietness and confidence in this work, to see that it was not a work done to turn God towards us, as it were, but that, from all eternity, it was counseled by Himself. We have the source of all in the unchangeable purpose of God.

Secondly, we have the work itself. It is a wonderful thing for us to be thus let into what passed between the Father and the Son before the world was; and most blessed to see the freewill offering of Christ. If it were God's will to be the author of our salvation, it was equally Christ's to be the instrument of it; and whilst He, in order to be so, makes Himself a servant, His divine power is still evinced in the very expression, " Lo, I come to do thy will, O God! " that could be said by none but by one competent to execute any command of God's. Supposing that command had been to make a world, instead of to save one, Christ was the only one who could do such a will; and in fact, both divine power and divine love were evinced in a higher degree in redemption and resurrection, than in creation. In verse 5, where the quotation is from Psalms 40:1-17, the verbal difference is considerable, but the sense identical. " A body hast thou prepared me," and " Mine ears hast thou opened," or "dugged," are both expressions of assuming the form of a servant. The ear receives commands, and the boring of the ear was making one a servant forever. So when a body was prepared for Christ, He took on Him the form of a servant.

Thus far we have the will of God working in grace, and Christ undertaking to accomplish it.

Then, in verse 11, we have the contrast between the priest standing, and Christ sitting. His work is finished,-there is nothing further to do; and He sits down till His foes be made His footstool. " Forever," in verse 12, means "continually," "constantly," not that Christ will never rise up again; but, as regards His sacrifice for sins, He will never have to rise again to do anything more. Having offered one sacrifice for sins, He sits down till His foes be made His footstool. As regards His friends, all is done-not as to intercession, of course-but as to acceptance and perfecting the conscience. But He has still to deal with His enemies; therefore is He waiting, still retaining His

servant character, until God makes His foes His footstool. We, too, are expecting, till Christ rises up from the throne and judges His enemies. This is not done yet, else wickedness would be purged from the earth; and it explains the call for vengeance in the Psalms, which sometimes puzzles people,-" Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered," &c.; and, " Of thy mercy cut off mine enemies." These surely are not the cries of the Church. She does not want to see her enemies judged, but saved. She goes to meet the Lord in the air. Not so the Jewish remnant. It passes through great tribulation; and, " except those days were shortened, no flesh should be saved." So they call earnestly enough for deliverance. But such is not our part at all; we are associated with Christ while expecting; in grace now, and in glory by and bye, but not in judgment. In verse 12 we have seen that Christ's one sacrifice was such, that He has forever sat down; so in verse 14 we read, that " by one offering he hath perfected forever,"-or "continually," -"them that are sanctified." Thus we are continually perfect; not practically here-though the Spirit sanctifies the heart and affections as far as this goes-but here the work of Christ makes the conscience constantly perfect. " The worshippers, once purged, should have no more conscience of sins." Thus we are brought into the presence of God, never to have any more conscience of sins. " For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." We are called so to know Christ's work, as to see that it is quite impossible for us to have sin on us before God. Sin cannot be in God's presence. There is nothing but perfection there; and we are there because perfected forever by the one offering of Jesus. We are in God's presence because we are clean, as clean as He could wish us to be. " The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." It is quite true we have to keep a conscience void of offense; and not to grieve the Spirit; but we are sealed of God unto the day of redemption, and there can be no mistake. The Holy Ghost could not dwell in us unless cleansed by the blood of Christ; and then He is the witness, not to the fruits, but to the virtue of that blood. The fruits could not be produced unless He were there, of course, because they are " the fruits of the Spirit;" and when produced, the order is, first, the internal ones, then all the rest. "Love, joy, peace," precede the outward manifestations of the Spirit's presence. The Christian ought to keep himself in the present communion of his known place before God, because then, besides the joy, the Holy Ghost has its full flow in using him as a vessel to others, to God's service; whereas, otherwise, He must occupy us with ourselves. I have not only communion, but power, only as thus in immediate intercourse with God in His presence.

We come now to the third point. Having seen the source of all in the divine will, and the accomplishment of all in the divine work, we get the testimony to it all in the divine witness. " Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after that he had said before, This is the covenant," &c., then He said, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." And here is the secret of settled peace. If I think that God will ever remember sin, I am denying the will, the work, and the testimony of God. In short, if a believer in Jesus, it comes, to being a sin to have the least thought of God's ever imputing a sin to me. It is just as much a work of the flesh as to commit the sin. He does not now impute sin, and He never will. "Where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin," sweeps away every refuge of lies, and lays the blessed foundation for full confidence. " Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus," shows that the very way we enter into God's presence, proves that the thing which shut us out is gone forever.

" Our bodies washed with pure water," refers to the priests, who were washed with water, sprinkled with blood, and anointed with oil. The latter is not mentioned here. After they were once washed, the priests needed only to wash their hands and feet. The anointing with blood of the ear, the thumb, and the toe, was the application of the work of Christ to the whole moral man. The work of Christ is always set first, then follows the work of the Spirit. In Ephesians it is said, "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word." Therefore, in the tabernacle, the first thing you meet is not the laver, but the altar. As a sinner, I must first meet the blood; then I am fitted for service, by the removal of all that is contrary to God: but I cannot skip the altar to reach the laver; I must there own myself a sinner first; then I can delight in the holiness of God, and understand it too. The apostle then goes on, "Consider one another to provoke unto love," &c., that is, having got to God in grace, we must be diligent in acting towards others in grace. He introduces-" Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together," to meet the tendency there was to avoid public testimony, and to think that private faith would do, in times of persecution such as these were. This was their natural tendency; and, whether it be persecution or reproach, it is the same thing. The latter is perhaps our snare. "And so much the more as ye see the day approaching; " for judgment is surely coming. If the power of evil increases there is the more need to cling closely to Christ. And we must not suppose that the world is improving because the Spirit is working; on the contrary, this is just the proof that judgment is nearing. The more rapidly souls are gathered in, the more reason have we for believing the coming of the Lord to be at hand. Whilst the long-suffering of God is salvation, the hope should ever be a present one to the Church. It was the wicked servant who said, " My lord delayeth his coming; " yet he did delay it.

Then, in verse 26, it is as though he said, If you do not hold fast,-if you will give up, and abandon this perfect sacrifice, then there remains nothing further; there is no year of atonement to come round again with a new offering; but just as those who believe are eternally perfect, so, he who refuses, is left remediless. It was he who despised Moses's law who died without mercy, and not he who broke it; so it is he " who counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and does despite to the Spirit of grace, that shall be counted worthy of a sorer punish. meat; " not he who fails. " If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; " such is the gracious provision for failure through infirmity-advocacy, righteousness, and propitiation. But if a man, after having seen all the grace and fullness that are in Christ, deliberately chooses sin as his portion; and, rejecting the blood of the new covenant as insufficient, turns back again, then he must take the consequence. God's grace is His last resource, so to speak, for winning man. If that does not suffice, judgment must take its course; and " it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." On this ground the position is at once that of " adversaries," and we know Him that hath said, " Vengeance is mine, I will recompense." " Let us, therefore, hold fast our confidence, which path great recompense of reward; " and let us remember that we shall " have need of patience; " but " yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

Vol 01 - Two Requisites

Two Requisites

There are two things we need in order to the understanding of our privileges. The first is to have a consciousness of the love of God. Even a gift from a father is a mere sign of approval otherwise. The second is to measure the outgoings of God's heart by Christ as the object of it. We get oppressed otherwise if thinking of ourselves. We must first know grace, and then see that it is in Christ. Thus it is far easier to understand it. The moment I am rooted and grounded in love, I can believe that God can give me anything.

Vol 01 - Union With Christ

Union With Christ

People have a notion of a mystical union with Christ as an ideal thing. But the word is very explicit, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." I am more really united to Christ than my hand is to my body; for the life of the latter union is in my blood, but that of the former in the power of the Holy Ghost. This is an amazing truth - that I am livingly united to Christ at this moment. It is not merely that He has done certain things which suppose that I was in Him, as to their value, so that I have peace, a whole class of affections spring from the realization of this union. I am drawing life from Christ with every affection that Christ has in me. And as to power - I am in the Lord; and when strong in the Lord, whatever Christ is competent for, I am competent for; or, as the apostle has it, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Vol 01 - What the Christian Is

What the Christian Is

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

There are certain expressions in the word of God which unfold, in the most familiar manner, what the Christian is; and which, if there was but the most ordinary attention on the part of the reader, would lead him to say, "well, if that is what a Christian is, I know nothing of the matter."

These expressions are not the violent stretching forth after some hope, but they are characterized by the quiet certainty with which they appropriate the blessing. As John here says of all the Christians to whom he was writing, "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," &c. Now, if I were to ask you--you, perhaps, who would be affronted if I should say you were not a Christian--if I were to ask you, are you sure that Christ loves you? that He has washed you from your sins in His own blood? No, you would say, if honest, I know nothing of it. Yet these are the expressions of the common recognized state of Christians. Or can you say--"yes, blessed be God, though a poor thing in myself, I do know that God loves me." To be able to say this is the common portion of the believer. And so it is written, "we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." All Christians are recognized as knowing salvation. And in 2 Peter we read of one who had forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. But he could not forget what he had never known. Forgetting "that he was purged," was backsliding; the Christian state was knowing that he was purged.

You will find every kind of exhortation addressed to the believer; but they are all based on the ground of his having been brought to God. I ask any one, would there not be a quieter, happier, state of soul if you were certain that God loved you? There cannot be happy affections if the soul is not in confidence with God. That is the kind of knowledge of God which is life eternal. God is love, and if you do not know that you know nothing. And where are you if you know not God?

If you believe fully that God is love, love toward you, what kind of thoughts would you have of Him? Would you think that you must obey, or else He will punish you with His vengeance? Would you think of Him as a Judge? No. Such thoughts are not the thoughts of one acquainted with His saving love. Of course there is a judgment, but there is no mercy then. When Christ comes to judge, can you stand if He marks iniquity? can you answer Him for your transgressions? No. But if you really believed in His righteous judgment now, you would say, "enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." But Christ is not now a Judge; He is a Savior. It is all mercy now. He is not imputing to any their trespasses. Every eye must see Him. We Christians see Him now as a Savior. You who do not believe put it off till the judgment, hoping to be able to meet Him then; but then "all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." He is a Judge when He is not a Savior. It is judgment then, not trial as to whether you will pass. Now there is a trial going on, not indeed as to whether you are a sinner or not; but as to whether you will receive

Christ or not. Now your heart is put to the test: alas! your willful heart would still reject Him, if grace does not bow you in the sense of sin. God will justify Himself in that day, and no one else. In that day He will demonstrate the sin which is the ground of the judgment. Every secret thing will then be made manifest. It is not then that the question is raised, but that the judgment is manifested. Now, the question is raised. All this is brought into the soul now. In spite of all the fair appearances of the world we justify God now, we accept the judgment God gives of man now, we justify Him in condemning us. The eye of God brings the judgment into my conscience now, and I bow to it. I feel and say that God should not let such a wretch live before Him. That is what will be when every eye sees Him; but it is also what is now in the soul, when the Lord reveals to us our state by faith. I now justify God. I say I have been all darkness and sin, and I abhor myself in His presence. Conscience is dumb in the light of God. If you have been brought to this, you know yourself. If you seek to hide it you are not the better, but the worse.

Suppose that I am brought to this, I shall not now be trusting to a vague feeling that God is merciful. It was not so with Peter when he found himself a sinner in the presence of the Lord. He said, "depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." He felt that sin and Christ, as the Holy Lord, should not be together. So is it ever when the soul is brought to be jealous about God. The idea of compromise is a horror to one whose conscience is active about sin. Well, when brought to this, what can the soul have confidence in? Oh! in this,-that when we were in such a condition we have full assurance of the love of God toward us.

Now if I turn to nature, I see signs of goodness, but wide-spread misery and wretchedness too, so that I know not how to say God is love; and these very signs of goodness show me that I have lost it all, for this God I have offended. If I turn to providence, I find it all confusion. How often have the wicked the upper hand. If I look to the law, it condemns me, and leaves me without hope. In all these I see things about God; but nothing that reveals Him. In Christ I get what reveals God. I, for myself, just where I am, find that He is the "faithful witness" of God. For it is in this world, where all the sin was, that Christ was the faithful witness.

There will be no need of a witness in heaven. Now I can go to Jesus and see God in Him. Do you ever find a single act or word of this faithful witness that was not love? Never. Of course He would unmask the hypocrite. But the moment a person is true,-were he the greatest sinner in the world -the moment he is contented to be what he is in Christ's presence-you will never find that He was anything but love. Of course God must convince of sin. He will write on the sepulchers and tell what is within. God will unmask what we are; our self-deception He will discover to us; but then He is perfect love, and nothing else. What brought Christ here? To know that there was sin? Oh no! He knew it well; but He came here because there was sin. The very sin I am confounded at, is the very thing that brought Him here in love. In the case of the woman who was a sinner, in the seventh of Luke, Christ puts down Simon, and He does not care for the guests. Why? Because a poor woman was to be comforted in love. Christ came into the very place where sin was. If it is a question of truth, He knows my sins. When I speak of Christ loving me, it is that He loves me knowing all that I am; it is not loving, surely, the sinful condition I am in, but loving me when in it. He will write on the ground to let my conscience act; He will bring my sin into my conscience. He will not let me get satisfied with myself; but He will have me to rest in His thoughts of me. What the heart struggles to do is to be satisfied with itself; but God will break that down; and the moment you are brought to that, He will make you to be satisfied with Him, just as you are. He will not leave

you there, of course; but He will have you to rest in the knowledge of His perfect love: " Unto him that loved us;" then I find rest. But that is not all: it is added, " and washed us from our sins in his own blood." It is not said, will wash us, but has washed us. We want it now, for peace, and for holy affections. " In his own blood." Who has done this? Christ. He has done it. He has made us " clean every whit." And if He has washed us He has done it in righteousness, knowing all our sin, and maintaining all this perfect righteousness which made us tremble because of our sins; but in accordance with it all He has washed us from our sins in His own blood. He knew what our sins were in the sight of God, and so He gave Himself up; Himself entirely He gave for me. An angel could not, nor should not, do it; he is called to keep his first estate,-but Christ only. In this act of Christ in washing my sins I find Him giving His blood, His life, Himself; for me. Not one single spring do I find that was not love to me. Such is the knowledge I get of Christ.

He has washed me from my sins in His own blood. Do I believe this? Oh yes! I do. I believe that every one of them is washed away, and that He has done it, as it is said in Hebrews, " by himself he purged our sins." Ah! you say, if I only felt this! But let me ask you, will your feelings add to the value of Christ's blood? Oh no! Then why not rest on it, as that which has perfectly satisfied God on account of the sins? The question of sin Christ settled between God and Himself. " By himself he purged our sins;" He did it according to the holiness of God, and according to my need. And what cleanness do I get? The cleanness which God's eye requires; all that which shut us out from God being perfectly put away, so that we are brought into the light as God is in the light; and in doing it His perfect love has been revealed.

"And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." If I take a person and bring him into the enjoyment of everything that I have myself; I give the fullest proof of the perfect outgoing of my heart towards him. Kindness may give something for a person; but that is perfect love. I cannot do more. Well, that is what Christ has done. He is the King and Priest; and He makes us kings and priests too: and it is worth so much the more because it is the very thing He has Himself.

Another thing we get,-the perfect love of the Father. Not the love of Jesus alone, but the love of the Father, the knowledge of which Jesus gives us. He makes us priests unto His Father. Was ever love like this? Never. Was Christ ever anything else? Never. He is nothing but this perfectness of love for us. And the sum of it all is, " he has loved us." Has He anything else to say to us? No. What love had to do, it has done. Oh, in the simplicity of thankful hearts, to say, " he has made peace by the blood of his cross." " Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion, forever and ever. Amen."

Vol 01 - Worship

Worship

Worship is the rising up to God again from the believer, or from the Church, of His own thoughts about His beloved Son, and about what He has done.

Confession is not worship. We have constantly to confess before worship, because we cannot worship while there is a spot on the conscience, but if we stop there, we know not worship.

It is when I have passed through the blood of atonement, and (if needed) have used the sin and trespass offering, that I have fellowship with God, which is being led, through the power of the Holy Ghost, into God's estimate of the beauty and the humiliation of Christ. It is when resting, in the Spirit, between the Father and the Son [that I have this fellowship]; not telling about my sins - for God's mind is not filled with my sins, nor is the Holy Ghost taken up with thoughts about my sins - but with that in Jesus which put my sins away.

Worship is being nothing, and having God's thoughts about Jesus rolling through my soul. When Jesus, Jesus, is everything, I am acting in the power of that life which is by and by more fully to be manifested. If we act upon this life, we shall then, from Jesus risen, have the flow of glory in our souls; for we are in Him now, and have the mind of God about His Son. God is not occupied with what I am, but with what Christ is.

God wants us, as His children, to know, not only that we are within the Father's house, but within the Father's bosom also. He wants to have our minds filled with a volume of thoughts about His Christ, and when a saint is full of this, and it ascends up to God, that is worship. And there is transforming power in Christ to change us into His likeness while we are in communion with Him and with the Father about Him.

Worship is the being lost in wonder at what we find in God and in Christ. When the Spirit has led us to know the blood on the Mercy-seat, He does not send us back to feed with the swine, but spends His time in taking of the things of Jesus and showing them to us, and thus supplies food for worship. In the burnt, meat, and peace offerings, we have Christ presented to us in type as the subject for worship. In the burnt offering, His perfect self-renunciation and devotedness to God, even to the death; in the meat offering, His life in action; in the peace offering, as the link between God and the Church, that on which God and the Church together feed in happy communion. When this worship is interrupted by sin or defilement, we find, in the type of the sin and trespass offering, that God has already made provision beforehand in Christ, to restore the soul, as soon as confession is made, to the power of worshipping.

Vol 02 - And They Shall Never Perish

And They Shall Never Perish " Never perish," words of mercy, Coming from the lips of one, Who, though here a homeless stranger, Fills the high eternal throne.

Brightness of the Father's glory, God and man in one combined;

Faithful Shepherd of the chosen, Safe are those to Him assigned.

"Never perish," words of sweetness, Dissipating every fear, Filling all with joy and gladness, Who the Shepherd's voice can hear;

Bringing richest consolation To the soul fatigued, oppressed;

Sweet refreshment to the fainting, And to weary spirits rest.

"Never perish," words of power, Satan now I can defy;

Safe my soul beyond my keeping, Hid with Christ in God on high.

Come what will, I'm safe forever "'Tis the promise of my God, Written in His word unfailing, Sealed with Jesus' precious blood.

"Never perish," words of glory, Heaven is mine, and all is well;

O, my soul! With rapture burning, On this precious sentence dwell.

Think not of thy faults and failings, Nor on they deservings brood;

What thou art in Jesus ponder, And this promise of thy God.

Vol 02 - Aphorisms

Aphorisms God will not adapt Himself to unbelief; He adapts Himself to the heart.

Jews had to do with the seventh day of the week; Christians with the first -a mingling of time and eternity. The flesh is always an inhabiter of the earth; for what else can it inhabit?

God was perfect love to me when I was perfect enmity to Him. A man is never justified by experience; he is justified by faith. The Spirit of God is never our righteousness; He is power in me; but Christ is my righteousness.

If the word of God has reached my soul, it shows not merely what is in the word, but what is in my soul.

Grace is love working where there is evil.

If any one had to be shut out of heaven because of my sins, it must be Christ, because He took them. The experience of faith is never toward self-no faith is in my own feelings-I have faith in God.

Prophecy is never about heaven, but about earth.

Events about earth are never the fullness of Christ in heaven.

God never lowers His standard; "Do thy first works?"

Grace brought Christ where sin brought us.

Man is heartless about grace; bold about glory!

Paul never lets his mind loose in a sea of motives. The moment religion accredits a man it is nothing; that which does not put the heart to the test costs him nothing.

Fresh truth will never lead a man to give up old truth.

Common topics of truth bring no rejection from the world; but fresh truth tries. For the sinner, the conflict is between God and the conscience; with the believer, it is between God and the heart. The place the saint has in the Father's house is with Christ and as Christ.

Because we are sons, God seals us. We shall never find thwarted affections in loving Christ. The darkness of the world is religiousness: "this is your hour and the power of darkness." It was religiousness that crucified Christ. "If the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness!" To doubt if God is for us, is unbelief.

We are fallen so low, that by some means or other man will lift himself up.

If you choose to take your place with the Lord, you must be content to be cast out by the world. In heaven every one will have his place, and all be looking to God.

Selfishness itself can admire the unselfishness it profits by at the moment. Would to God Christians were as honest when they have got peace, as they are while seeking it!

Man has turned God out of the world by crucifying Christ. The law is not grace. Grace may say it is holy, just, and good. When judgment comes grace is over forever. " Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The law is neither grace nor truth. Truth is the real condition and relationship with God in everything, and with every one. Who told the real state of man and of this world but Christ and the cross?

"The kingdom of heaven" is said because the King is in heaven. "The kingdom of God" could be said when Christ was on earth. The law showed what man ought to be before God. The law deals with evil. In the law we find what man ought to be. The law is extracted out of the Old Testament. The law cannot mend what is broken under it.

Love finds its link wherever there is a misery-wherever there is a want.

Righteousness will reign when Christ reigns; "grace reigns through righteousness."

If I take law and judgment, there is only perdition for me; but if I take grace I am brought to God.

What I cannot escape, Christ would not escape.

We get death by disobedience, Christ by obedience.

God shows His love, not in giving us our old nature restored, but in giving us of His own nature.

Practice in scripture is always put after grace.

Paul brings out the counsels of God. John brings out the nature of God-eternal life manifested in Christ, and communicated to us. In Paul we get the development of knowledge, in John the development of the affections. The new nature is a dependent nature; it never could act of itself. The old man pretends to be independent.

Man gets the good thing, enjoys it, and leaves God out.

Mind cannot measure love. Mind can measure mind. Love is known by being loved. No knowledge can love; we must be born of God to love; for " God is love."

Truth is authority.

If ministry be real, it brings the conscience to God; if false, it leads from God; it stands between God and the sinner. The word of God never treats men's minds as competent to judge of it. The power that works men's minds is totally incapable of judging of God's word.

What I have faith in I am subject to. Christians are never put on their own minds to judge error.

Israel undertook, in terror too, what Christ undertook to do in love. All was living obedience and living love in Christ: the touching living expression of love in spite of sin.

Saul is a destroyer amongst the Jews; Paul a workman amongst the Gentiles. When we lose the sense of God's presence, conscience sleeps, and will awakes.

Vol 02 - Aphorisms

Aphorisms Jesus had the taste of heaven in everything He did, and the world cannot bear this!

We suffer here because we have a soul risen in a body that is not risen, and that is in a world at enmity with God.

Christianity alone could give great force to individuality and to conscience, and at the same time unite men under the direction of Christ, towards one center, which is Christ. This could only be possible by the Holy Spirit, who takes away selfishness, while it gives power to the conscience; giving by faith an object to the heart outside of itself-an object which acts on the individual conscience, and unites us all, through one predominant affection, to one center of affection, by one life, and one only power of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit acts as the Spirit of union of the children of God; but conscience cannot be in society, and reject its own individual responsibility. It is individual, otherwise God could not be the master of conscience. The Holy Spirit directs conscience toward Jesus.

If we will avoid the principles of evil, it must be through conscience; there is no other way. The Christian who acts from conscience will avoid a thousand snares, of which he is not at all aware. So far as the Christian enters into the ways of the world, it is a complete prostitution.

Whatever makes the world happy in spite of God, is in the spirit and course of Babylon, and for a Christian to be there is to be in Babylon.

Babylon is the spirit of worldliness, cast out far away from God, as guilty of the death of Christ, and which nevertheless gives itself up to embellish the world. All those Babylonish principles, all that your eyes may lust after for your drawing rooms and for your pleasures, all those things separate you from heaven. It is Babylon on a small scale.

What is often important to man is not so to God; for God has Christ in view.

Man glories in a truth that costs him nothing, inasmuch as it is generally received, and takes advantage of it to oppose the admission of more light which would demand faith.

Heaven is familiar with evil as judged, as with that which is good, to enjoy it.

All that happens to us is foreknown and prearranged of God, in order that His child may stand in the midst of difficulties. All I have to do is to say God is perfectly acquainted with the position I am in, and He knows the way He has prepared to extricate me from difficulties, if I remain faithful. When Jesus was on the earth heaven looked on the earth; now that Jesus is in heaven, the Church on earth looks on high. In a yet fuller revelation, as at the conversion of Paul, it is owned as one with Jesus, who is there.

Prophecy is a revelation of future things, to act on my conscience now.

There are always warnings that we have neglected previous to chastisements. A soul that is unconverted has no idea of a God, tender, gentle, who "wipes away tears."

It is precious to have always God's true object in view, which cannot stop short of His glory.

If one would get at the bottom of the counsels of God, one must look at His glory. The sight of the glory sanctifies truly, and gives an object far above all that could be prepared to stop us here on earth.

We shall never walk well here below, even in the smallest details, if the great end is not constantly before our eyes.

If I have any object on this side the glory, even the welfare of the Church in detail, my soul will suffer from it.

We want faith to lose our fortune and to forgive; but if it is coming out of the society of man, it is entering into that of God. The selfishness of the world understands the grace that is in the Christian which can forgive; but in principle that grace is foolishness to him.

If you are wishing for money, or seeking to make provision for placing your children in the world, or if you have any plans for the future, you cannot wish for the Lord Jesus to come; and if you cannot, then your hearts are not right with Jesus.

It requires more real grace and faith to pray for the Church of God than to labor and to preach; though neither can be done rightly without.

It is comparatively easy to love and feel humble when conscious of making people your debtors by service; but when there is neither energy for service, nor power to communicate, this tries what is in the heart.

Vol 02 - Aphorisms

Aphorisms 1. It is better to keep Christ's character than one's cloak.

2. The world never draws towards Christians, and it cannot do so, for its own nature cannot allow it; but Christians may, to their own loss, draw near the world, because the old man is still in them.

3. You cannot be in the truth if you ramble from the person of the Son of Man.

4. The things which God will separate in judgment are already separated in His mind, and they are as much so now as when they will be seen, the one in the lake of fire, and the other in heaven.

5. Christian liberty is never liberty of will: the liberty of the Holy Ghost is absolute.

6. The seventh of Romans presents the legal form of the conflict: the Galatians the Christian form of the conflict. In the seventh of Romans there is nothing about the Spirit; but Galatians speaks of the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusting against the flesh. In Romans it is about the law, and not about Christ nor the Spirit.

7. There may be great activity of service without its being the service of God in the Spirit.

8. "That we should be holy and without blame before him in love," is that we should be there according to God's nature and character. For He is holy, blameless in His ways, and He is love.

9. The difference between the Holy Ghost's reasoning and the saint's is seen in this, that the Holy Ghost reasons from what God is, to what we shall experience from Him; while the saint reasons from what he is, to what he may expect from God.

10. The question of justification is presented in Romans and Galatians; divine government in the wilderness in Peter; the communication of life in John.

Vol 02 - Aphorisms

Aphorisms

We must not put the Holy Spirit in the place of Scripture; but we must remember that it is the Spirit, through the scripture, that gives us the knowledge of God's mind.

It is God's faithfulness that gives His mind where two or three are gathered together; or if it be individual, it is, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."

It matters not in what form I get the mind of the Lord; I am not to ask as to the form: " we have the mind of Christ." But there is need of a lowly state of soul.

I do not admit the principle that there is commandment in anything, as merely ordained, in the New Testament. Everything is binding upon me that is there; but then it is on the principle that the Holy Ghost bows my will to the mind of God.

I do not look at the Lord's table as a matter of command: it is a blessed privilege thus to remember Christ, and love makes me obedient to His will. I do not pray because I am commanded, though there may be a command. If people pray only because they are commanded, it is poor work.

It is an important thing to remember that when God's glory is concerned, one must act without a command. Moses did so when he took the tabernacle outside the camp, because Israel had set up the calf within. But one may have gathered the mind of God from His word.

Vol 02 - Boldness to Enter Into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus

Boldness to Enter Into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus

Hebrews 10:1-39 The gospel sets the conscience at rest, and gives perfect peace with God. God made man upright, and so there ever is in man a clinging to goodness. But the fact is, that the more upright I am while under the law the less hope I have; though where the Spirit of God is working there is always a glimmer of hope. Yet we must remember that the gospel is not setting hope before a man, but actually revealing salvation. The gospel so perfectly sets the conscience at rest, while bringing into the very presence of God, that while we see that we are utterly lost, we see also that the perfect answer is given by God to the conscience; and the sinner, once condemned, is brought to God, standing in perfect righteousness. To bring the conscience into the presence of God it must be perfect. God cannot brook sin, and an unpurged conscience cannot stand in His presence. So there never can be perfect peace until it is understood that the question of righteousness is settled; only then is unhindered communion established. But then how blessed! Stumbling as we are, failing as we are, in conflict as we may be, between us and God there is not a cloud, not a question. We joy in God! It is not a question, then, of seeing whether a man can be presently saved - whether we can get a standing before God; we are set there on the ground of what Christ is, in the unclouded brightness of the presence of God.

Dear reader, let me ask you, Is your conscience purged in the presence of God? If it is, you do not want help to stand in the presence of God tomorrow; you are there today. Your privilege is to be spotless before God now. When brought there how happy we are, how blessed! His own grace has brought us near to Himself, and set us there cleansed. Boldness is given us to enter into His presence, - into the holiest of all. How do we get there? Because "He has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "By himself he has purged our sins." If done by Himself, how perfectly done! By Himself we enter, through the rent veil. The work of the Lord Jesus Christ has so entirely put away the sin that I was guilty of, that I enter into God's presence. God has been glorified by my entrance there, by the putting away of my sin. It is by virtue of the sacrifice that I am in the presence of God. And what is its virtue? The putting away of sin. There is no more memorial of sin before God. What is there, then, before God? Christ is there. There is always a memorial of righteousness. I, too, am there by virtue of an eternal righteousness before God, a righteousness which enables to enter heaven itself, and not only this, but which enables to enjoy God Himself. There the soul gets confidence, and learns how God has ordered everything for the soul's enjoyment of Himself. There righteousness gives strength to enjoy His love; the love that brought me there, and brought me, too, with an unclouded conscience. The heart that knows this cannot do without Him, - "we joy in God:" and the result is we want to walk with Him. He gives an eternal redemption, an eternal righteousness. I not only get peace, but rest. I not only live by Him, but walk with Him; and, abiding in His presence, walk in the light, knowing that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. The high priest stood because his work was not perfect; Jesus sat down, and I am at rest. Where? In the presence of God, and by that which rent the veil, the blood-shedding of Jesus. And now I am not waiting to have my conscience purged, but waiting for

Jesus from heaven.

You will know no rest, until you have no hope left of being better tomorrow than you are today. When the conscience and God come together, and not till then do we know that we are saved. This is the ground of walk with God. For communion is interrupted by sin. A light thought cannot be had in communion with God.

It is the blood that makes the conscience perfect. Has not God accepted Christ? I go with His blood before God, and I am cleansed, and I worship and adore God. He saw me a slave to sin and Satan, and redeemed me. I am in the house by virtue of what He has done. I never should have been there had He not washed me in the blood of the Lamb. I should have fled from God. But He brought me in; not in my rags, but in the very best robe; and I got rest, and peace, and joy, because God has given me all that is good in Christ, and put out of my sight all that is bad in me. The Lord give us to know how to abide in His presence. In this lies the secret of all strength.

Vol 02 - Christ in Everything

Christ in Everything

Philemon

It is interesting to remark, in the Epistles, the way in which the Spirit of God enters into every minute thing that concerns us. Not like the prophets of old, such as Jeremiah, Isaiah, &c., who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, with a "Thus saith the Lord;" and they had to learn and inquire about the things of which they spake. In the Prophets the Spirit of God is communicating a certain message, and this is occasionally seen in the Epistles, as in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17, for example; but in the Epistles (I am not here speaking of the Apocalypse) it is not so much a message delivered, but the Spirit of God down here, as being the soul of the body of the Church, entering into everything. Paul tells out all his thoughts, his affections, his consolations, and all that he feels. He not merely gives the details of Church order and discipline, but all the sympathies and trials of every day domestic life. Take this epistle to Philemon, for instance, where the Spirit enters into all circumstances of receiving back a runaway slave, who had run away from his master; and tells us in what spirit he is to be received back by his master. The Holy Ghost leads into the high and deep counsels of God, and also into all the minute details of the saints' walk down here. "Christ that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." The Holy Ghost therefore enters into them all, that He may bring them into the everyday walk of the saints; not by way of message sent to men, like the prophets of old; nor yet as servants, by way of commandment; but by entering into us as sons. For the Son of God having passed sinlessly through all the circumstances down here, the Holy Ghost enters into them also, that He may show them unto us in every difficulty through which we may be called to pass. And this it is which forms part of Christ's glory. Were it not so, as human beings, men down here, we should be without Christ. But thus the Holy Ghost consecrates the whole heart, thoughts, and ways of a man to God in Christ. While unfolding and bringing us into connection with all the riches of God's counsels, it is remarkable how the Spirit of God connects those mightiest things with the most minute. We are so thoroughly and entirely brought into the new creation, being dead and risen with Christ, that we cannot properly touch a single subject without bringing Christ into it. See the word to servants in Titus 2:10 : "Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." This shows the way in which the Holy Ghost enters into everything, bringing into every detail the fullness of Christ; thus humbling the man, and yet exalting him, too, as partaker with Christ. It is in virtue of this connection with Christ that every direction is given as to the long hair and head-dresses of the women, in connection with Headship. "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." So also the servants' not purloining is in connection with "the grace of God that bringeth salvation." Again, when the mind of the Lord is given as to women speaking in the Church, the whole mind and thoughts of God about Adam and Eve are brought out. If we look into the word of God, we shall be astonished at the way in which the Spirit of God takes the soul up to Christ, and uses Him in all these things that are brought out

in the New Testament.

Vol 02 - Christ in the Vessel

Christ in the Vessel

" And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even-the winds and the sea obey him! "-Matthew 8:23-27.

It is evident that our Lord can never at any time or in any way fail in His dealings towards us. He can never for a moment forget, nor can He fail in power. It is impossible that there can be any failure in His ways or dealings towards us. Hence the smallest degree of fear or distrust is always sin-is always unbelief. Yet we must all be conscious that it does often arise in our hearts. There may indeed be various shades of it; there may be anxiety about ourselves, about our families, about our circumstances; still, we never can be in a position in which this distrust can be allowed. Sorrow may be very right and very wholesome to our souls-we may be cast down-but the Lord always remains the same. It is well to be cast down sometimes, and to have to say as in the Psalm, " My soul is cast down within me;" but we ought never to be cast down without proving the effect of it to be to cast us upon God for help. But faith has to be exercised in respect to the character of God's dealings with us in the path in which He is leading us. I could not, for example, now expect like the Jews, that God would be with me to give me the victory in some violent conflict with a foe, because it is our privilege to suffer quietly. Still I shall learn, that in whatever way I count upon God, He is faithful. People have sometimes quoted the 91st Psalm as a proof we are not to die of pestilence, but this is a mistake. It does not apply to our case-though God may preserve his people amidst every calamity-and we ought to be intelligently walking in His ways. In the path of obedience, in doing the will of the Lord, we may count indeed upon the fulfillment of His promise, " He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." But we must not forget how Satan quoted this promise. He wanted the Lord to do something which God had not bidden Him to do, and used this promise as his warrant to expect the exercise of divine power. But we are only to look for the exercise of God's power, when we are simply in our proper path as Christians. When the Lord told His disciples to take nothing for their journey-no purse, nor scrip, nor two coats-it was because He Himself was there, as Emmanuel, in the midst of His people. But when He asked them afterward, "lacked ye anything," and they replied, "nothing," He added, "But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one." When rejected by Israel's unbelief, He was no longer acting as Emmanuel upon earth, and consequently the position of His disciples was entirely changed, they must now take what they may meet with. For what He was showing in His miracles and acts was, that Emmanuel had come in amongst His people, and that all Satan's power and all man's misery would disappear at once, if man were morally capable of receiving Him in this character. Hence the lepers were cleansed, the hungry were fed, and all that were diseased came to Him and were

cured. If they had had faith, the LORD was there on earth; there to bind the strong man, to remove all evil, and to make man happy on earth; but man had not the capacity to receive Him in that character in which He came. The disciples ought plainly to have counted on this power. They ought to have healed the sick and raised the dead and cast out devils. It was when they were proved incapable of using this power, and were complained of for not exercising it by the father of him who had the dumb spirit, and who brought him to Jesus, that He answered, " O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" They afterward came to Him apart and asked, " Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, because of your unbelief" They had not faith to use the power. So again, when the multitude were an hungered, and the disciples asked Him, " shall we go and buy bread for them?" and He answered, "give ye them to eat."

They were expected to use the power, and they ought to have used it according to the revelation God had made of Himself. And here is where our faith is to be exercised in walking in subjection to God's word, and to what His word points out, and in this path, counting on the power of Him to sustain us who has set us in it. It is there, most surely, we shall be put to the test. If Israel is to go through the wilderness, they will need faith. And if Israel is to fight in Canaan, they will need faith. And if Israel has not faith for the wilderness, Israel will fail in Canaan. So here, the disciples ought to have counted on Emmanuel's power. If He is in the boat with them, they are not going to perish in the storm. But their unbelief is shown in their distrust. They awoke Jesus, and said, " Lord, save us, we perish." And if this showed their earnestness, it showed too their unbelief-and is too accurate a picture of ourselves.

We are in the same boat with Jesus, and in whatever shape the trouble comes, we are called to have faith in Him. The trial of our faith comes in the path we are in, and not in some other. Christ has perfect love to the Church,--He loves it and cherishes it -and we are to count on Him for a constant supply of grace to our souls, that we may overcome every trial. He calls us to live as saints on the earth, to walk as He walked, and to continue to the end; and, just as the disciples in the boat, we ought to count on His power and help to overcome every evil, let what storm there may arise.

I have said that the Lord is not exercising His power in the way of temporal deliverances now-that is not what characterizes the present exercise of His power. If therefore I am looking for temporal deliverance, I may be looking for that which He never meant to give. The Church is to be in a state of weakness in the eyes of the world, and to be sustained in that weakness by an unseen power. " Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." (Colossians 1:2.) The more we get to be companions with Jesus, the more will He defend us against everything evil, and keep our souls in a quiet, lowly, and humble place. Let us be once in that place of quiet and obedient service, and then we may always reckon on the Lord for help. There is a ground in the relationship in which we are set to God, which secures to us all that His almighty presence can give. " Come out from among them, and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." I have been struck with the embodiment of the Old Testament Scriptures in the New, with regard to the way in which God manifested Himself in former dispensations; as the Almighty to Abraham, as Jehovah to Israel, and the like, and the way in which it is all brought to bear on us in the endearing name of " Father." Now in this

relationship of " Father," you may count on all things-not indeed simply as " the Almighty" and "Jehovah"-but that as " Father" He will use all His power as Almighty, and Jehovah too, in your behalf. I, who was the Almighty, and am Almighty, am your Father. Therefore it is not our place to come to Him with fear, but to count, as walking with Him, as a Father, on all that He is. " Holy Father," said the Lord Jesus, "keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." We are " holy brethren," as having a holy Father. " And if ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." May we desire to be in the place where God has set us, and being once there, to count on all the tender grace and love we want in the way, and to reckon on His faithful goodness.

Vol 02 - Christ, the Chiefest Among Ten Thousand

Christ, the Chiefest Among Ten Thousand Song of Solomon 5:10 O Jesus! the glory, the wonder, and love, Of angels and perfected spirits above, And saints who behold Thee not, yet dearly love, Rejoicing in hope of thy glory:

Thou only, and wholly, art lovely and fair, Who robb'st not JEHOVAH, with Him to compare.

JEHOVAH's own image glows in thee,-shines there In visible bodily glory.

Worth divine dwells in thee;

Excellent dignity;

Beauty and Majesty;

Glory environs thee;

Power, honor, dominion, and life rest on thee, O thou chiefest among the ten thousands!

Wherever we view thee, new glories arise; The Man who's God's fellow, who rides on the skies;

Made flesh, dwelt among us; brought God to our eyes; In grace and truth showing His glory.

Thou spak'st to existence the heavens and their hosts, The earth and its fullness, the seas and their coasts;

Time hangs on thy Word, and eternity boasts To crown and adorn thee with glory.

Worth divine, &c. But how lovely and fair dost thou look in our eyes When we view thee incarnate in childhood's disguise!

Thy loves, past all knowledge, with rapture surprise And ravish our hearts with thy glory.

Thou in thine own body, accurs'd on the tree, Did'st bear all our sins, while thy God frowned on thee, Expiring in blood in our stead;-and now we Exult in thy merit and glory.

Worth divine, &c.

Thy blood all divine, from the grave back again Brought thee, King of glory, thou Lamb who wast slain!

First-born from the dead, crowned with honor supreme, Thy name is exalted in glory.

O hasten thy coming that in glory adored, We may see thee, our Savior, our God, and our Lord, And joy in thy joy over all things restored, And eternity blaze with thy glory.

Worth divine, &c. From a Scotch Hymn Book-slightly altered.

Vol 02 - Divine Fellowship

Divine Fellowship

1 John 1:1-10

It is a great mercy that God has not left us in the dark as to our state before Him. Now men, by nature, have a notion of judgment. Even the heathen have this; and much of the Christianity of the present day is little more. Men try to conduct themselves in such sort as to stand in judgment, tempered perhaps by mercy. They confound what is never confounded in the word of God - judgment and mercy.

Now Christ did not come to leave men there; He did not die to leave men there. He came to put men in a totally different condition. If the Son of God came into the world and died, it must have been for some great purpose. He brought down into this world the whole light of grace and truth, - all that was needed to change the whole relation of a man to God: - He came with it. In the third verse we get the object of writing this scripture, that we may have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. It speaks of such an entire putting away of sin, and such a knowledge of God's thoughts about the Father and the Son as that we may have fellowship with them. What a wonderful thing! Not a mere natural thought of judgment, but companionship of heart with the Father and the Son. Does that leave any uncertainty as to our state at the great day? No. He is not to have fellowship and intimate friendship with us and then condemn us. No. There is such a cleansing as that all that could, hinder this fellowship is forever put away.

Mark how far a man's thought is from that naturally. He says, I have not this fellowship, this joy. God is in heaven and I on the earth. Well, if it is so, you have not got the good of the gospel. If you have not fellowship with the Father, you are not thinking about Him at all, or else you are dreading Him. You have not fellowship, cannot have fellowship, if you feel criminal before Him. It is anything but fellowship. The will is not broken down when there is dread. But how is this? Why! is not your heart given to pleasure, to money? Are you not after the flesh, after things which are quite contrary to God, and contrary to fellowship with God? "The carnal mind is enmity to God." That is our state naturally, and what the word of God calls "darkness;" - not merely being in the dark, but darkness itself, just as God is light. It is in you that the evil is. There is the insensibility of a drunkard; but besides this, there is the fact that he loves to gratify a vile lust. "Ye were sometime darkness." And what is this darkness? Corruption of nature. Compare yourself with Christ. He is the pattern of what is good. Are not you just the very opposite? How came you to be so? All the objects for which you are living are just the opposite of that for which Christ was living. You are living for pleasure, for money, for fame, and for a thousand other things, while He was ever living unto God. I am not speaking of your outward life, but of your motives. All that is governing your life is the opposite of what governed Christ. Suppose a person brought up in filth from his youth; he does not know that it is filth. He has got accustomed to it! And why? Because his heart is as filthy as his clothes or his house. Now we are so accustomed to sin that we do not see it to be sin. What does that prove? Just that we love it. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved

darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." The rejection of Jesus is the proof of it. You may say that if you had lived then you would not have done as they did, you would not reject Him. Are you sure of that? What are you doing now? Do you see any beauty in Him? Do you see one bit of darkness in yourself? When He is brought in testimony before you, you do not see beauty in Him. That is darkness. We love our lusts, and we do not love the Lord Jesus Christ. That is our state. Christ is not the thing that governs and possesses our hearts day by day. If so, how can we have fellowship " God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." But you are darkness, and how can you have fellowship with Him P You are darkness in your conduct, in your will, and in your judgment; for your judgment is governed by your will, your motives, desires, &c. He is holiness itself, "light," which is pure and which manifests everything. But if He manifests everything in you, how then can you have fellowship with Him?

Now this is a message of what God is, " God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." He cannot give up His light, He cannot have fellowship with darkness; and it would not be a blessing if He did. But it is a message brought down here. It is not in heaven, but here that we have the message, " God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." If you call yourself a Christian, you are saying that you have fellowship with him; but if you are walking in darkness you are deceiving yourself. This is a fearful thing. God is so totally out of men's minds, that they have not the sense that they have got away from Him. God is light. There cannot be the slightest communion with darkness. God cannot undo Himself, and destroy His own holiness to have fellowship with darkness. You are deceiving yourself.

Now there is another thing; " 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." God will not leave you away from Himself. If He makes you happy, it is in Himself. Now this is what natural conscience dreads to be in God's presence. God, as He is, without modifying one bit of His holiness, puts us there in the light. Then I am in the light as God is in the light. This was in Christ. What do we see in Christ? Holiness in every thought. Israel undertook to obey God under terror, Christ in love. Men undertake this as Israel did, under terror of judgment. Men do undertake to do God's will in view of judgment. Now Christ said, " Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." That is what Israel undertook, and we know how they failed. That is what men are doing-undertaking to have to do with God in prospect of judgment. God dealt with Israel so to prove that they could not do it. But that is what Christ did in grace. So when He came on earth He was all obedience and love. Christ comes, and what do we find in all His ways? Separation from evil. He kept evil outside of Him in passing through it. He touched the leper and was undefiled. He was love; never did anything but love. He was the living expression of the holiness and love of God in the midst of sin. When that is brought into the conscience, when I see that I have slighted this Christ, and preferred idle vanities to Him, how it shows me what I am. When I see the love of Christ, does not that come and say, ' O you are a wretch to prefer a bit of dress to Christ, to take anything when Christ is disliked for it!' And when thus brought into the light, in the presence of God, we judge ourselves. I judge rightly what I am, and what I have been doing all the while I have been in darkness. I must, of course, see the light; therefore it is by faith. Not that I may realize all, but yet I judge all in God's presence and hate myself. And it is just when we begin to think that God does not hate us that we begin to hate ourselves. When the spirituality of the law comes, we hate sin, but dread the consequences; but

when the light of Christ comes, we hate sin through and through, and there is humbleness. I hate sin, and abhor myself. How, there is a real moral change. I am brought into the true light. O what a difference when a man is brought to God; not in terror which makes him run away, nor in full peace, but yet to a God who, in love, has brought me into His presence to show me what I am. Then, I repeat, it is getting into the light. There is distress at first, but so much the better, for the heart is set right.

" The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Here is something more than hating sin. We are in the light. God will not enfeeble that light so as to allow one shade of darkness. He loves us so much as not to dim one ray of His glory, but He is doing that which will make us happy in it. Instead of allowing it, He cleanses it away.

If walking in the light as He is in the light, how do I get there? Not in Christ's life merely, for I get His death. There the light was more shown than in His life. There God is shown to be intolerant of all sin. God Himself has marked there, in the cross, that He cannot tolerate sin. And if Christ was holiness Himself, it shows more clearly the fearfulness of sin put upon Him. If God and Christ are to settle the question of sin between them, they must do it according to the perfection of their own knowledge of it. There light and sin met. Light is turned into judgment against sin. Light did meet the sin, and in judgment. Where are we? To get the fruit of this. Now take love. There He was giving Himself up, all that He was for us. There never was a time in which light and love came out so as on the cross-the perfection of light, because of obedience; of love, because of giving up of self. Never was there such obedience as when Christ was made sin. All is brought to the same focus, that I may see light and love in Christ. Why all this? That the blood of Jesus Christ His Son may cleanse us from all sin.

Now that I am brought into the light, what do I see? Sin on me? No, I see it was laid on Christ. I see light dealing with sin on Him. When I learn the extent of sin, then I learn the extent of love. When brought into the light as God is,-in the cross -I see that Christ has put my sins away; and my being in the light it is that enables me to see it. When I come to see sin in its fullness, I see that it is on Christ. And now there is not merely the cleansing of my conscience, but peace with God. It is in the light. I am in the light, as God is in the light; and the very thing that brings me to see sin, brings me to see sin put away. I know too that God is love, and here I have peace. Then we get truth in the inward parts. If I confess sin,-own all sin as such-that is truth in the inward parts. (See Psalms 32:1-11) So we are brought in the consciousness of forgiveness into the presence of God; and there I know I am cleansed according to God's mind. Then I learn God's love. In Isaiah the 43rd, God says, " Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities." What then? " I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own name's sake.

Now this is the message that " God is light." He cannot change, you must. The place where this takes place is the cross. The message is God's perfect love. God, in love to your souls, has not waited till judgment to tell you what sin is, but has told it out in Christ as in His sight, and He has done so in putting it away. Hence the fearful guilt of despising such grace.

Vol 02 - Earth's Jubilee

Earth's Jubilee "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.-Isaiah 11:9. That blessed time will surely come, when all shall know the Lord, I find the promise largely writ in God's most precious word, When "holiness unto the Lord" shall greet each gladdened eye, And oft my soul impatient prays, "Lord haste this time of joy."

Sweet are the visions of that time, portrayed by God's own hand, When righteousness and peace shall reign supreme o'er every land, When all shall know the blessed God, shall know and love Him too, And earth present the scene again, which angels loved to view. No longer Satan's wide domain, creation ruined, marr'd, But all earth's kingdoms shall become "the kingdoms of the Lord," No proud usurper then shall rule, no power acknowledged be, But Christ, and He alone, shall reign, while earth keeps jubilee.

How cheering is this prospect fair to all who now bewail And mourn the wide-spread evils that so mightily prevail, Who grieve to hear that name blasphem'd, the only name they prize, To see poor sinners hate the cross, and mercy's gifts despise.

Yes, it will come, then O my soul, take courage, all is well! The glories of the Son of God creation yet shall tell; The groanings of the earth shall cease, all sin be done away, Come, Lord, disperse the midnight clouds, and usher in the day.

A. M.

Vol 02 - Fellowship With the Father and the Son

Fellowship With the Father and the Son Read 1 John 1:1-10, and 1 John 2:1-2.

If our hearts were as simple as the word of God, our perception of its truths would be as simple and as easy. But it is not so. In a certain sense it could not be so; nor ought it to be so, till our hearts and thoughts are brought into subjection to GOD'S thoughts. There will be no simplicity till the conscience is purged; because, till the soul is brought to God, all is confusion and darkness on account of sin. In partial and dimmer light there is often terror, because everything is confused. So when the conscience is at work, until we are brought to set to our seal that God is true, and learn that all our thoughts perish, all our ways are foolishness, terror and confusion reign in the soul. But when brought to this, our hearts become as simple as the word. It is a great matter to have the heart exercised. God would have, and will have, the mind and conscience exercised. But till our thoughts are brought into subjection to God's thoughts -our own thoughts utterly set aside-we cannot have blessed and happy thoughts of God. When our thoughts flow in the current of God's thoughts when His thoughts become ours - it is blessed in every sense. The conscience is blessed, the heart is blessed; and you go on cheerfully. Not so when God speaks, and we begin to reason; setting up our thoughts against, or mingling them with, God's revelation. That is not simplicity. Till the soul is bowed to receive God's thoughts you cannot, and ought not, to have perfect peace. I have sin in me! how then can I have peace? Here is the difficulty. "For, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." If the revelation of God in Christ shines into me, I cannot say, " I have no sin." What follows? " If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." Here, then, I find how I can have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Christ, the advocate with the Father, maintains us in the communion we are apt to lose. This is the great secret which breaks down human pride - entire subjection to God's thoughts. If God has given a revelation, and I am not subject to it, it is unbelief - it is rebellion. God says, "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." If I say, "I have done this or that, and God cannot forget; He knows all, and He must remember;" I am found reasoning, and not submitting to God's thoughts. I am concluding what God must be, from what I find in myself, consequent on the light which has shined in.

How then can I have peace? God does not mean us to take up things lightly, without exercise of soul. When the light of God shines into the conscience sin is felt, and seen too, where it never was seen before. God shines in, and I find darkness. God cannot have to do with darkness. I find that in me which God cannot accept. How can God accept me?

I am always glad to see a conscience exercised thus. It is all useful to convict of sin. It is good for the light to probe to the bottom of the heart. It is awful to think what the human heart is. I do not mean in the gross forms of evil. There is something in the selfishness, the cold calculating reasoning of man's heart, worse than all the sins one could enumerate. Yes, even of the decent man who keeps his character! Is there one single motive which governs your heart, decent and sober as you are, which governed Christ's? Is there one feeling in your breast which was in

Christ? Not one. What governs men? Selfishness. Not so Christ. There was no selfishness in Christ. In Him all was love. Love it was that brought Him down. Love gave Him energy when hungry and weary at the well. Love carried Him on, one constant unfailing stream of love. Never was He betrayed into anything contrary to it. Deserted, abandoned, betrayed, still there was one unwearied acting of love. Selfishness can feel love. It is even lovely to man's mind, though he is the very opposite of it. Yet some are amiable and beautiful characters. But how do they use their amiability? To attract to self-self governs man. Selfishness need not be put into Him; it is there. All is sin from beginning to end-all self. Whatever be the form it takes it is vanity. Is it not true of every one that will read this, that some personal gratification, perhaps some little bit of dress, has more power to occupy the thoughts, than the agony of Christ? Not that He would have us always occupied with that; He would have us occupied with His person and glory.

What I want to prove, then, is that we cannot think badly enough of what our hearts are. It is well that we should know it, for we cannot have the truth without in some measure judging the root and principle of evil within. But then have we any power to remedy the evil? No, none. But when brought to God, happily we get miserable about it. When there are desires after truth I hope, because I see some goodness in God; but hope is dashed by seeing some evil in myself. That is not simplicity. It is judging God by some sort of knowledge of what I am. It may be true and righteous; but it is law. The principle of law is, that God is towards man according to what man is towards God. It is the principle which conscience always will act on; for according to conscience it is right. The evil is not in this, but in the fact that I am not brought to total despair. The light has not as yet broken down the will, so as to make me cry out, "I am vile, and abhor myself in dust and ashes." Beloved friends, if I take the ground of expecting anything from God, in virtue of what I am towards Him, all is over! there is nothing but condemnation. God is holy, and I am not. God is righteous, and I am a sinner. The end of all these exercises of soul is to make you cry out, "I am vile," and that is all. God is holy, and I am not. He is holy, and must be holy, and ought to be holy. Would you have Him lower Himself down to what you are? No, never. I may tremble before Him when I think of it, but I would not have it otherwise. No person quickened into the divine nature could deliberately wish God to come down from His holiness, to spare one sin, because he has learned by that same nature to hate sin. My heart has tasted a little of love in God Himself; for He cannot reveal Himself without revealing "love. The law shows man what he ought to be; but does not show what God is. It says, love God, and shows me that I ought to love, but does not tell me who or what the God is I am to love! Job said, if I could but find Him! However distracted and broken to pieces under the hand of God, he felt that if he could only find Him, he would love Him. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!" Flesh is always under the law. Realizing by faith the precious truth that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, then all is easy, all is peace. Flesh comes in and troubles, and the soul is down; and it is up and down; and the evil is that the soul gets habituated to such alternations, and not to walking in communion with God. To think that God is going to condemn me is not fellowship with His thoughts. What is fellowship? Common thoughts together; common feelings, affections, objects; one heart, one mind. Thus we have fellowship with God! How wonderful! Fellowship with the Father and the Son. How so? Why; what have I received, if I have not received God's thoughts? Does not the Father delight in the Son? and do not I delight in that there is all beauty and perfectness in Him? Do not I delight in a soul being converted? Is it not your delight that Christ should be perfectly honored and glorified? and is it not God's too? If God's thoughts are the spring of our thoughts, can we wonder that our joy

should be full? The Holy Ghost gives thoughts, and our hearts are too narrow to take them in in all their fullness and power; but our joy is full, nay so full that it runs over. It is not that we are not inconsistent to the end. The peace and rest that we get is, that there is no modification, no change, in God Himself. If we say there is this or that inconsistency in me, and how can such as I look to God, and begin questioning, we get back to law-to judging by my own good-for-nothing heart of what God is. Would I have you indifferent to sins? No! but I would you had so settled and constant a judgment of the flesh, as vile and cannot please God, as to give yourself entirely up. Many of us have to learn this by detail-by failing, and failing, and failing. It is better to learn it by a ray of light shot from God's credited word-to believe, from His report, that from the first shoot it puts forth from the earth, to the last fruit it bears, it is the old tree, and will never bring forth anything but wild grapes. A hard lesson this, but a true one. Are your hearts brought to say, in God's presence, I know that "I am carnal, sold under sin?" Have you come to this point, to accept the entire judgment of God against yourself? Terrible! But you must get these to know more full blessedness. Have you ever sat down satisfied to know that that self, that is sitting there, cannot please God? When it comes to that I give up all thoughts of judging God by what I am; for then He could only cast me out of His presence! I am not looking to gain eternal life. I cannot; I have failed. Where then shall I find that which I so desperately want? Why in this was manifested the love of God. (verse 2.) Himself is manifested. The life you want is come by another. " Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

You are just the opposite to Jesus. How did you find that out? Jesus is manifested, the eternal life which came down from the Father, to you, because you could never have got your heart up to it. If Christ is not my life, where is it? Is Christ my life? Yes I and what a life I have. It makes me see sin in me-true. But if I have the sin, have I an imperfect life? A life which, perhaps, God cannot be pleased with? No it is given from God, because I am mere sin. God sent His Son that I might live through Him. It is God's free gift. Where is responsibility then? As regards getting, there is none. It is in the using! Do I weaken responsibility? Nay, I give it all its force. If you are under the law, you are either weakening its authority, (for if I say God is merciful and will give a reprieve, I destroy the law,) or you establish the law, proving its utter condemnation, and that you are dead through it,-a lost sinner-alive - by the life of Christ. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." (verse 5.) God comes in as light. Sin is darkness. "Light has no fellowship with darkness." Light being come in, we must so stand in the presence of God, that in the full light of His holiness, no spot at all is seen in us. Do you walk thus in the light? It is a real thing. The walk is what a man really is. Can you stand in the light, as God is in it without a veil between, walking, not according to the light, but in the light? Have you ever walked in such sort, knowing, without an effort in your conscience, that you are in the presence of God. If not, how have you been walking--going on for a few brief years? Whither you know not-in the awful folly of the human heart-in a constant state of moral madness! Have you ever had it all told out in your conscience, alone with God, all that you ever did? A long tale! That is what you have done, that is what you have thought, and I saw it all. Would you like thus to be told out, alone with God, the things that perhaps were not done before men, just proving that you thought more of man than of God? Is it all going to sink into oblivion? Have you thus been manifested to God, as the apostle speaks? Here is a message-mark who brings it! A message by Christ. To bring me to Christ -to God-to judge? No! But to bring me to one who has come to put away all that He has made manifest! I breathe again! What comfort I can desire now that

everything should be known; everything I have even thought of, because it is to Him who came to put it all away. Not to hide, nor excuse, but to put it all away. The Son of God has died for it all. It is God putting my sin away, instead of putting me away. I am in the light, but the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin. I get the witness of God Himself, God who is light. If He does not show a spot in me, who will? Do I say, there is no spot in my nature? No. But it does not depend on what /am; it depends on God, in whose light I am. The God who manifests me tells me that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin! God has loved me perfectly. How do I know that? Because of what I am? No; I know it from what God is, and from what He has done; and my soul rests in constant, perfect, undisturbed peace; for God has revealed Himself to be what He is, and has revealed what He has done, in that Christ died; and what He has done never can change-He never changes. It is in the power of an accomplished salvation that the soul rests, and not on anything that is yet to be done; so that there can be no change. The blood of Christ alone blots out my sin. If Christ did not do it perfectly, when will it be done? But He has done it. "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." When faith, by divine teaching, has laid hold on this, faith does not change either. " The worshippers once purged have no more conscience of sins."

One word at the close on that which is important to us all- communion, fellowship. Is communion never interrupted? Yes! But God's love is not interrupted, nor my confidence, though my communion may often be; for God cannot have communion with a single sin-with an idle trifling thought-so that when such come into the mind we cannot have communion. What is the resource then? The answer is given in chapter ii, verse 1, " My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." It is not here mediator with God, but advocate with the Father. Communion with the Father has been interrupted. Advocacy is founded on two points. He, the righteous one being in God's presence, and that He has made propitiation for us. We have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and we lose it through sin or folly. Christ comes in as the advocate, and the Spirit of Christ works according to advocacy, and restores communion, brings us back to fellowship with the Father and the Son. Here is the remedy for daily failure. Our position is fellowship with the Father and the Son. That our joy may be full. Have you been brought to this? He has made peace. Have you got it? Take no rest till you have it. Tolerate no sin; but see that God has put it all away by the blood of the cross. God forbid there should be any levity about sin. Nothing is so impossible as that God can brook sin. But He can put it away. Have you, by faith, attained this rest, rest in that eternal life which came by the shed blood, never to be shed again? Beloved friends, only be sure of this, that God is love; that in all His ways with you, He is love, and He would have you happy. You cannot be happy in evil. Because He is love He would bring us to know this love, and find therein our rest. Aye, and He 'would have us reckon on Him as regards our failures. I have sin in me, and I have no strength save in Him. If I cannot, or do not, go to Him when there is sin and failure, where am I to go for strength? Moses said, Exodus 34:1-35; Exodus 9:1-35, " If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance." Could you go up with the stiffneckedness you have without God? "Go with us," says Moses, "because it is a stiffnecked people" You will never get the victory over sin, nor indeed properly judge it, unless you have God with you! Christ can give us to hate the sin and strengthen us against the thing we hate. God is love. I know it in Christ, and I have Him against the evil that would hinder me--the thing I

feared would be too much for me. " We have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Vol 02 - Four Wise Things on the Earth

Four Wise Things on the Earth Proverbs 30:24-29

" There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; the conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces." In these verses we get many of the principles of faith. We see it first in the ant, who, though she is not strong, prepares her food in the summer. Faith always looks to the future, and gives up present enjoyment for future blessing. The ant may be considered a mean, laborious creature, while it is preparing its food, and others are enjoying themselves in the summer-time; but it reaps the reward of its toil in the winter, when its storehouse is full, and others are wanting food. Thus the saint is despised and rejected now, but he will soon enjoy happiness when those who are happy now will be miserable. In "the conies" we see a picture of the Christian, feeble and unable to defend himself, but strong in the Lord, his rock. Away from Christ, he is nothing, but in Him he is strong and invincible amidst all the attacks of the enemy. Christ is our rock, our fortress, our God, our strength, our buckler, and the horn of our salvation. (Psalms 18:2.) " The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands." This gives us a beautiful picture of the love and harmony that ought to exist between Christians, though they have no visible head, yet should they show the influence of their head in the order and unity manifested in their assemblies. Though the locusts have no king, yet there is not the slightest disorder in their bands; all is closely compacted together, all is harmony and order. In systems of men's devising, there is always some head set up, and the worldling will mock those who have no head, because he would say, " there can be no order or regularity where there is no head." But though the worldling know it not, Christians have a head, and the vicegerent of that head (the Holy Ghost) presides in their assemblies.

" The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in king's palaces." Here again we see another picture of the Christian, disagreeable and contemptible in himself, yet he has access into the holiest. Mark the ambition of the spider; it is not in the lowest corner only that the spider is to be seen, but even on the golden cornice and the marble stone.

Thus let it be with the saint, endeavoring individually to be like the ant, providing for the future; (Matthew 6:19-21) like the coney, trusting not in himself, but in the Lord, his rock; collectively, like the locusts in love and harmony; and like the spider, having boldness to enter into the holiest.

Vol 02 - Fragment

Fragment

It alters the character of Christianity to make it a system of commandments. Give me an express text, says one, and I will bow to it. Now this is an unholy and bad principle. If a child knew the will of its father, and yet demanded some express command before it would obey, that would be a bad child. It is a very common evil of this day to demand an abstract command. If I have the Holy Spirit I must do what I know to be the mind of God-of course checked by the written word-but wherever I have the knowledge of God's mind it is binding on me.

Vol 02 - Fragment

Fragment

There is nothing to be more cordially abhorred than the pretense of love and unity being used to dishonor Him who is the center, life, and sole object and title of it. There is no devil so bad as the devil who clothes himself with charity. It is the spirit of the day - latitudinarianism. "Charity is the bond of perfectness," but Christ is the test of this, as of all else, and He makes it so. "The poor ye have always with you, and me ye have not always." Thus we must judge - judge, I mean, our own conduct...Local unity, founded on abandonment or indifference to the truth, is a miserable hostility (in sparing oneself) to gathering with Christ, the only true and universal unity...I do not know what is meant by unity, if the foundations of all unity that is worth anything are denied.

End of Vol. 2.

Vol 02 - God's Judgment About His People

God's Judgment About His People Numbers 23:1-30; Numbers 24:1-25

Balaam's four utterances give four pictures of blessing. 1st, the people of God called out; (23:9) 2nd, their justification and entire safety; (ver. 20, 21, 23;) 3rd, the present proper blessing of God's people; (24:5, 6;) 4th, the Lord's coming; (ver. 17-24;) the latter in Jewish connection, not that of the Church. Consider the circumstances in which this prophecy was given. Not when Israel sang in the first joy of redemption, but after they had gone through all the difficulties of the wilderness, after they had known failure. The question now to be settled was, whether Satan had a title to shut the door of the kingdom against them, because of failure after redemption. This is met by learning the abiding power and value of God's work. His all controlling power will bring them in, in spite of everything. It is not through what we have wrought that we are brought in at the end, any more than at the beginning, but through what God has wrought. And in the value of that He sees them, not only without iniquity and perverseness, but as trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, at the very time they were murmuring against Him, despising the manna, &c., &c. When He is settling the question with Israel it is very different. He then passes over nothing, but here it is His judgment about Israel. He knew what they were when He brought them out and separated them from the nations: and God is not a man that He should repent. What can change His purpose? Hath He said, and shall He not make it good. And remember what He has said of believers. Balaam would gladly have found means to bring a curse on God's people; but he is obliged to say, "He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it." If God be for us, who can be against us? When it is a question of justification He beholds no iniquity in His people. Experience of the wilderness makes us need something more than Exodus 15:1-27, even that which this chapter teaches us. It is said of Israel, all the way through what hath God wrought? It is not "what a heart there is in me," so desperately wicked even after conversion! but what a heart there is in God for me. "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob." Balaam in vain attempts it; his efforts only bring out each time a fresh declaration, a further aspect of blessing. Note, Balaam never said, "let me live the life of the righteous," he had no heart for that, "but let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." It is God who brings us in through His work. His worth, His word are mine, to rest my heart upon. God must fail before a believer can be lost.

Vol 02 - Good Works

Good Works Do not let even the enjoyment of your social meeting, pleasant and profitable as it is, trench upon your actual service among those without, specially the poor. As it is harder and less grateful; so, when done in the Spirit, the Lord especially meets and blesses it. Be much amongst the poor. The Lord always owns it. It was His way; and it has its peculiar importance in more ways than men suppose. It is His order and plan of the Church; for results are not always from apparent causes. " Blessed is he that considereth the poor."

Vol 02 - I Will Come Again

I Will Come Again

John 14:1-31

Nothing is more prominently brought forward in the New Testament than the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the first comfort of the angels to the sorrowing disciples: " This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:1-26; Acts 2:1-47) And if you turn to the first of Thessalonians you will find it presented in the end of every chapter as a common doctrine.

It was not at all a strange thing-immediately after conversion to the living God-" to wait for his Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." Again, in Hebrews 9:1-28 we read that " He appeared once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.... and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." In the second of Thessalonians it is presented in the way of warning, as well as the object of the blessed hope of the saints: " For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." From this we see the amazing difference between the coming of Christ for this world, and for those who trust in Him. To the world He comes as a judge of both quick and dead; (see Malachi;) but in this 14th of John we find a wonderful difference in the whole principle and spirit of a believer's expectation of Christ.

" Behold, he cometh with clouds and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." (Revelation 1:1-20) " But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" (Malachi 3:1-18)

Dear reader, let me ask you, Can you stand before Him at that day? Do you think that you would have confidence before Him at His coming? Could you say, " Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him?" This is He whom I have loved and longed for? Men always judge according to what is suited to themselves. In 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18 it is said, " So shall we be ever with the Lord." Now, are you suited to be ever with the Lord? Have you this confidence? If it is founded on anything good in yourself it is a vain ground of confidence. Peter, as soon as he found himself in the presence of the Lord, felt that he was not suited for the Lord. I am too corrupt, he said. This was a true judgment of Peter; and love for the dignity of the Lord and for holiness. If you are content that holiness should be lowered that you may get off, you do not care for holiness, though you do for getting off. The moment I have seen the holiness of the Lord, and that happiness is in holiness, there is the immediate feeling of my unfitness for that holiness; though there may be the longing for it, which the Lord will doubtless in mercy answer.

Two things are needed thus to meet the Lord. First, the conscience must be right. I may have the kindest father, yet if my conscience is not right, I cannot be glad to meet him. And, secondly, affections must be there-the Lord must be my portion. If my heart is on literature, or on anything

else here, I shall not like to be where Jesus is. I shall rather be here for a time. If you like the world you are fit for the world. Heaven is just the contrary, and you know it; and therefore you do not want to go there, because it would take you from being here in the world. There is the comfort of the gospel. It did bring down to men's consciences all that could attract to God. But alas! men no more desired the Lord's company here, than they do there. The coming and rejection of Christ here is the plain proof that the world is not fit for Him, and He not fit for them. But now to turn to our chapter. We find persons here the opposite of all that is in the world. " Let not your heart be troubled." About what? His leaving them. Their happiness, comfort, and joy was in having Christ with them. But now, He says, I am going, but I am not going to be happy without you. There is plenty of room for you. The thing with which He at once comforts their hearts is this, " I'll come again." I cannot stay down here in this vile place, I'm going to prepare a place for you, but I'll come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also. The Lord reckons on this satisfying their hearts; and their consciences did not hinder. " The Father's house!" Oh! they could go there. " I will receive you unto myself." He knew the chord that rung in their hearts: to be with Himself, the source of all blessing. Thus we get the character of these disciples: they were persons whom the absence of Jesus distressed, and whom the presence of Jesus would comfort, not here, but with Himself.

There we find what begot this character. It was all founded on His own word. We do not care for what does not concern us. But as soon as we see a thing that concerns us, it becomes important; and then we want certainty. Now it is very blessed to have God's own word for the basis of our certainty. For instance, I am a sinner-how then can I get into the Father's house? Because God has said, " Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Well, God is true, and He will not remember them. Do you say I am presumptuous to say so? I do not say so, God says so. And again in John v, 24, " He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, bath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." And John iii, 33, " He that hath received his testimony bath set to his seal that God is true." Thus when the power of the Spirit brings home the word, I have certainty. Faith is in the word, but it is about something. Christ is presented, and man is brought to the test. People always judge by their inclination, and not by their reasoning. Now the effect of the testimony of the Spirit of God when Christ is revealed, is that men are not fit for Him, and their hearts do not like to be with Him.

These disciples had loved the Lord. Christ had attraction for their hearts. There, at once, we see the object of their hearts' affections. Christ had fixed their hearts. Take Mary Magdalene, for instance. She was all wrong in her intelligence, yet Christ had attraction for her heart. So with the rest of the' disciples. They all ran away for fear; but it was love to Christ that brought them into the place of fear. Thus we see that Christ Himself was the object of their hearts. They were the companions of Christ-all fear being gone-according to His love and grace. "Ye are they" He said, "who have continued with me in my temptations." Why? He had continued with them; but He speaks as if indebted to them for this fellowship. And being in companionship with Christ in heart, He brings them into all the joy into which He is going - nothing less than the Father's house. What attracts is found in Christ, and then it gets from Him the certain assurance that He is coming-and coming for me. Now when the heart is on Christ, what a thing it is to know that He is coming. Am I afraid? No, I am looking for Him. And it is to His Father's house He is to bring me. All that makes heaven a home to Christ, will make it a home to me. O come, Lord Jesus. If I have learned to love

Christ, I have learned to love holiness, to love God. God, in Christ, has brought down to my soul all that God is. What shall I get in heaven? Another Christ? Another God? No. It is the one we have seen and known. Whither I go ye know. I am going to the Father, and you have seen the Father in me.

Ah! But He has not given up His holiness, perhaps you reply? No, indeed, He has not. But Jesus knew all that is needed for me to be with Mm. And if He will make the heart to love, He will put the conscience perfectly at rest, that I may love Him. Will He do that by dulling it? No. He will do something that will enable me to stand in the presence of God, in whose presence I am to find my joy. He reveals fully God in His holiness, and takes away the sin that would hinder my being in the presence of that holiness. And not only does He put sin away, but He purges the conscience here, so that I am enabled to enjoy God, in full, free, affection. Nothing is more attractive than the death of Christ; but besides that, it puts away the sin of which I was guilty: an act in which I had no part, an act the proof of perfect love, while it meets perfect righteousness. I had done the sins, and I could not undo them. Jesus said to Peter, " If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." That touched Peter's heart. If you are not cleansed according to my cleansing, according to what suits God's presence, you have no part with me. O what a comfort! Instead of saying, depart from me, Jesus said, "Now you are clean." And in Peter we see the proof of a good conscience. He said to the Jews, ye denied the Holy One and the Just, the very thing he himself had done, fifty days before. Now a man will talk of every sin but that he is guilty of; he will shirk that. But here Peter was in perfect peace about the very sin he was guilty of. His conscience was perfectly purged. The happiness of the heart that is touched, is to be with Christ; and conscience is purged for being in His presence. Between the Lord's saying this, and coming for them, He had put away sin from God's sight, and from their conscience. " I will come again, and take you unto myself, &c, and whither I go ye know." There is no uncertainty. We know where we are going to. The soul has found fully the object that has set it at rest, and that will satisfy it up there without fear. Could the Lord thus address you? Could you say, O that is what I am wanting? Or, are you saying I've got here what I would like to enjoy? Is that being a Christian? A Christian may vary in strength of affection, never in object. I am sure I do not love the Lord enough, but I am sure it is the Lord I love. I have no confidence in my own heart, but all confidence in Him. He has died for me; that is what I count on: He has put away my sins; that is what I need: He is coming again; that is what I am longing for.

Dear reader, let me ask you, was it ever a trouble to you that you had not Christ? Do you know where you are going? It may be you have hope; but have you certainty? Now we, Christians, have; for Christ is known, and when He is known there is perfect rest in His word. " I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Vol 02 - Joying in God, and Waiting for Christ

Joying in God, and Waiting for Christ

There are two things which constitute the joy of a Christian, to be his strength on the road, and the object constantly before his heart. The first is, the hope of the coming of the Lord; and the second is, present communion and fellowship with God the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these two cannot be separated without loss to our souls; for we cannot have all the profit without both of them. If we are not looking for the coming of the Lord, there is nothing whatever that can separate us in the same way from this present evil world; neither will Christ Himself be so much the object before the soul; nor yet shall we be able, in the same measure, to apprehend the mind and counsels of God about the world.

Again, if this hope be looked at apart from present communion and fellowship with God, we shall not have present power, the heart being enfeebled from the mind being too much occupied and overborne by the evil around; for we cannot be really looking for God's Son from heaven without, at the same time, seeing the world's utter rejection of Him, and that the world itself is going wrong; its wise men having no wisdom, and all going on to judgment; the principles of evil loosening all bonds, &c.; and the soul becomes oppressed and the heart sad; but if through grace, the Christian is in present communion and fellowship with God, his soul stands steady, and is calm and happy before God, because there is a fund of blessing in Him which no circumstances can ever touch or change. The evil tidings are heard, the sorrow is seen, but his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, which carries him far above every circumstance. Brethren, we all want this. To walk steadily with God we need both this fellowship and this hope.

I do not believe that a Christian can have his heart scripturally right unless he is looking for God's Son from heaven. There could be no such thing as attempting to set the world right if its sin in rejecting Christ were fully seen; and, moreover, there never will be a correct judgment formed of the character of the world until that crowning sin be apprehended by the soul. To a Christian who is looking and waiting for Christ to come from heaven, Christ Himself is unspeakably more the object before the soul. It is not only that I shall get to heaven and be happy, but that the Lord Himself is coming from heaven for me, and all the Church with me. It is this that gives its character to the joy of the saint. As Christ Himself says, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also" - when I find my delight, then shall you find yours also, I with you, and you with me, - "Forever with the Lord." You may think to find good, or to produce good in man, but you will never find waiting for Christ in man. In the world, the first Adam may be cultivated, but it is the first Adam still; the second Adam will never be found there, being rejected by the world. And it is the looking for this rejected Lord which stamps the whole character and walk of the saints.

Then again, there is another thing connected with my waiting for God's Son from heaven. I have not yet got the Person with me I love, and while waiting for Him I am going through the world tired and worn with the spirit and character of everything around me; and the more I am in communion

with God the more keenly shall I feel the spirit of the world to be a weariness to me, although God still upholds my soul in fellowship and communion with Himself. Therefore Paul says, in 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12 "To you who are troubled, rest with us." So then I get rest to my spirit now in waiting for Christ, knowing that when He comes He will have everything His own way. For the coming of the Lord, which will be trouble to the world, will be to the saints full and everlasting rest. Still, it is not that we are to be "weary and faint in our minds." It is not a right thing to be weary of the service and conflict. O, no! rather let us be victorious every day. Still, it is not rest to be fighting.

However, when walking with God, it is not so much thinking of combat, as joying in God Himself. This I shall know all the better when I am in the glory; my soul will be enlarged, and more capable of enjoying what God really is; but it is the same kind of joy I have now as I shall have when He comes to be glorified in His saints; only greater in degree. And if this joy in God is now in my soul, in power, it hides the world from me altogether, and becomes a spring of love to those in the world. For though I may be tired of the combat, still, I feel there are people in the world that need the love I enjoy, and I desire that they should possess it; as it is the joy of what God is for me that sustains me, and carries me through all the conflict. So that our souls should be exercised on both the fellowship and the hope; for if I look for Christ's coming apart from this fellowship and communion with God, I shall be oppressed, and shall not go steadily and properly on. When the love of God fills my heart, it flows out towards all those that have need of it, towards saints and sinners according to their need; for if I feel the exercise of the power- of this love in my heart, I shall be going out to serve others; as it is the power of this love that enables me to go through the toil and labor of service, from that attachment to Christ which leads to service, though through suffering for His sake. If my soul is wrapped up in the second Adam, attachment to Christ puts its right stamp upon all that is of the first Adam. When this love has led out into active service, then the conflict, doubtless, will be found, as in the first chapter of second Corinthians: there it is present blessing in the midst of trial. But in the first chapter of second Thessalonians, it is tribulation, and not rest out of it, until the Lord comes; "that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." In 2 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 4:1-18, there is present blessing in the midst of the trial, -" who comforteth us in all our tribulation;" so that if the sufferings for Christ's sake be ours, there is, at the same time, the comfortings of God in the soul. How rich a spring of blessing is this in return for this poor little trouble of mine! I get God pouring into my soul the revelation of Himself; I get God communicating Himself to my soul; for it is really that. I find it to be a present thing; it comes home to me, to my heart, the very joy of God, God delighting in me, and I in God. He identifies Himself with those who suffer for Him. There is no time for God's coming into a soul like the time of trial, for in no way does He so fully reveal Himself to the soul as when He is exercising it in trial. There is astonishing power in this; for the amazing power with which Christ is to us present power and consolation is by His coming in, in present living power, even whilst these poor mortal bodies are unchanged. Our bodies are not yet redeemed with power, though they are bought with a price; but we have in Christ the life and the power; and, in spite of all, God is pouring in these consolations when we are in tribulation, showing the kind of power in Christ by which I am lifted up above every circumstance of trial. " The Lord direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

Vol 02 - Law and Priestly Grace

Law and Priestly Grace Read Numbers 17:1-13; Numbers 20:1-29.

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

God makes it very manifest by whom He will act. Aaron's rod is chosen out of the twelve, and the remarkable sign of its blossoming and yielding fruit, showed that priesthood was connected with life-giving power, as well as with intercession. Both are needed to uphold them and to raise them when failing. "The second Adam was made a quickening spirit." This is the care and authority by which we are led through the wilderness. God will allow no other, and no other would do. The priesthood of Christ alone can carry us through. It is the rod of authority too; for "Christ is a son over his own house." But we see that unbelief cannot avail itself of this. (17:12, 13.) "And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. Whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of the Lord, shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?" God had shown them that there was this grace, and they ought to have trusted in it, especially as they had seen the power in Aaron's remaining in among the congregation and staying the plague. They had ground for full assurance; but unbelief prevailed. They were insensible to the value of the priesthood, and their conscience was still under law. For they did not know God, though at the very moment He was acting for them in priestly grace. The circumstances of chap. 20, put them to the test: the outward power, too, that had brought them out of Egypt was passing away from their minds. Miriam, the expression of it, had died. When apparent power decays, faith is put to the test. Afterward, Moses passed away too. Unbelief does not get the refreshment that faith does. There is no water. They were in a terrible state of mind-wishing they had shared the judgment that had fallen on their brethren; for there was no confidence in the Lord. Yet they called themselves the congregation of the Lord. They had the pride, but not the comfort of it.

Moses and Aaron fell on their faces. There seemed no remedy. But the Lord appeared. He was the only remedy. And He makes Aaron's rod the means of the application of that remedy. It had already been appointed before the occasion for its exercise occurred. There was real need, and God never denies this. He never says it is not real need; but He will have us go to Christ to meet the need. It was not to be Moses's rod; for then it must be judgment. Nor was the rock to be smitten again. That water could be had now, without smiting the rock, was the result of its having been smitten before by the rod of judgment. Everything comes to us through Christ's having been on the cross; and we do not need the cross again, but the priestly work. It was now "speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water." Speak the word only, and the water shall flow. All things are ours; we draw nigh now not for acceptance, but to have our need supplied. In verses 9, 10, we see that Moses was vexed and speaks unadvisedly. He could not rise to the height of God's grace; and that was why he could not enter the land. He was in a better mind the first time Israel murmured. Then he said, "it is not against us ye murmur, but against the Lord;" now he says, "must we fetch you water out of this rock?" setting up Aaron and himself, and using the Lord's authority to do it. He smites the rock too. There would really have been more glory to Moses if he had spoken instead of smiting; but he did not see this. God called Aaron's rod "the rod." The other was set aside. They were never under that rod again. It is Christ for us, or nothing. Any other principle must have dealt with them as with Korah. It is only a word now, and every blessing flows. To smite the rock again would be the same as saying, because we fail, Christ must die again. It is denying grace to say that anything is needed now except intercession. To "sanctify him" would be to give Him credit for all that He is, as He has revealed Himself. To "sanctify him in our hearts" is to attach to Him all that He is. But Moses did not do this. He did not count upon God's grace, which was all that was needed. But does God stop His grace because of this? Does He stop the outflowing of the water to quench their thirst? No, He does not. If Moses failed to sanctify Him before the people, He will only the more sanctify Himself before them. He comes in Himself when the one who should act fails. Just as when the disciples who ought to have been able to cast the evil spirit out of the child failed in doing so, Jesus, coming down from the mount of transfiguration, said, "bring him to me."

It was wrong that they could not cast him out, but His own personal interference was gained through it. He gives the people the water they need in spite of Moses's unbelief and their murmuring. He will act according to the rod of His appointing, if _Moses does not. Christ never fails in carrying on that which as Priest He has undertaken. Israel should have walked under the power and comfort of that rod. They saw the blossoms and the fruit, and should have counted on it. If there is anything we want, and we doubt of getting it, because we say we do not deserve it, that is putting ourselves under the law. It is forgetting that there is "the rod;" and that it is "speak the word only." God takes away the murmurings by grace. He deals with all our evil, as His children, in grace. Look at Peter's case. Was it because he repented that Jesus prayed for him that his faith should not fail? We know it was not. And was it because Peter wept that the Lord turned and looked upon him? It was afterward that he wept. When we do wrong, priestly grace acts for us, and obtains for us grace, to see, and confess, and put it away. Christ probes the heart of Peter, but does not leave him in the evil. This is the privilege of His children. Grace gives the gospel to the world. Grace gives priesthood to the Church. It all originates in God. If I sin, it is not I who go to the Priest, but He goes to God for me. It is not said, "if a man repents, but if he sins, we have an advocate with the Father." When, through the action of priestly grace, a sense of my sin is

given me, I go to God for strength against it. It is He who obtains that for me which brings me back to God. All this is the fruit of His unsolicited grace. It was God who appointed the rod. He is the God of grace in spite of all our evil; and when we see it we are confounded. Carrying us through the wilderness is as much grace as redemption and forgiveness. Even when Israel strove with God, He was "sanctified in them." It is very sad to have "Meribah" (chiding, or strife) written on any part of our history-sad as to us-but He makes it an opportunity for His grace. They get just what they want, though Moses is shut out from Canaan. He would make them know the extent of His grace. Another time, grace might act in a different way -in chastening, perhaps, if needed; but this taught them what the character and extent of the grace was. Just the same grace that spoke in Isaiah 43:1-28; Isaiah 22:1-25. "Thou hast been weary of me." I have not wearied thee, but "thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities." What language for God to use! yet He goes on: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake." Nothing can make us more ashamed of our unbelief than this astonishing grace. And all because of Christ. Nothing makes us hate sin like this.

Vol 02 - Our Rest Is Not Here

Our Rest Is Not Here "This is not your rest, because it is polluted." Micah 2:10.

"This earth is not thy rest,"

Beloved of the Lord; Of higher hopes possessed, Than it can e'er afford.

Thou hast this faithless world resigned, That thou a nobler rest might find.

Vol 02 - Planting in Grace

Planting in Grace Ephesians 2:1-22 The planting of the soul in grace is the withering of the principle of legality. The principle of blessing for service is really horrible. Am I never to do an action but to one who deserves it? Is the blessing God gives to be measured by what I deserve? What I deserve is condemnation, and the knowledge of this by the Holy Ghost withers up this self-righteousness, and throws me over on grace. Thus I get to know God. In the first three verses of this chapter we get our whole history, all that we were according to God. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world." This world is Satan's world, and now it is given up to judgment. The condemnation of the world is a settled thing. In 1 Corinthians 11:1-34, it is said that believers are chastened of the Lord, that they may not be condemned with the world. The world is thus a finally condemned thing; and this too since Christianity began. For until Christ was rejected, God was going on with the world; but the crucifixion of His Son proved, that by nature men were children of wrath. Then again, we were, besides, under the power of Satan, and fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Well, it is all this that casts us upon God. And what we want is to be cast upon God. When we are entirely thrown upon God, He takes us out of the whole thing. This is what we get in the fourth verse. There the apostle turns at once over to the other end, passing over regeneration, &c., and showing another spring of blessing altogether. He turns the eye away from everything in man, and shows us what God is. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." First, we have God rich in mercy; and then the power by which He has quickened us together with Christ; Christ being looked at as dead for our sins. What He has done for me in Christ is the way I come to know what God is, and I delight in it. I delight in what God is: of course, I must have the nature to understand it - love; this we have, and so we understand that what God is for us is love. The more we are cleared from mere nature, the more we understand Christ's ways, why He did things, and how He did things. What was He in the world? Why? Everybody's servant, no matter what they were. Dear me! I say, Is this God? Yes! He hath declared Him. What a new set of thoughts and feelings this produces in the soul! God's nature becomes worked into it. There is an individual link of the soul with God; and it is life eternal to know God thus. It may be that a person cannot explain it, but he has got it. It is a kind of reasoning for which human reasoning is not a match. Thus the soul comes to know the wondrous blessed harmony of what God is for itself, because, in Christ, He has condescended to every want and weakness. In the end of the chapter we have the Spirit as the power by which we have access through Christ to the Father, with all this revelation of God, full unhindered intercourse with Him. It is the Spirit of God who reveals God's nature to me and in me, and so makes my heart answer to the love of God, for God is love. And just as the love comes down, my heart goes up. What a divine character of communion It is true worship. It is the divine up-flowing answer to divine down-flowing love. And besides this individual communion with God, we are indissolubly united to one Head,—"built together in him for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Thus there is unity and fellowship. Thus every individual is indissolubly bound to every other. You have not one Holy Ghost and I another. So far as I have life

in Christ, I have it for myself, and not for another, but it is the same Holy Ghost in all. As there is one soul in the body, so there is one Holy Ghost in the body.

Thus God has wrought in us individually, and, besides, by one Spirit builded us together. He has awakened and created us anew by this glowing and blessed revelation of Himself. What a thing it is to know God in this way!

What is especially important is this individual communion with God; and we grow in this by studying that which produces it, what God is in Christ.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." (Proverbs 28:13.)

Vol 02 - Preface

Preface

IT needs but few words of introduction to this little volume, since, whatever its aim may be, its character and worth must be judged of by the truths it contains. A preceding volume has been spoken of, in reviews, in terms of praise which the editor would not like to employ or repeat; for thankful as he is for any acceptance that the Lord may give this effort for the good of souls, he would deem it its best praise if Christians were enough interested in it to pray that its future pages may be more under the guidance of the Spirit than the past, and that they may thus minister Christ more effectually to the conscience and the heart.

Vol 02 - Rom_10:1-21; Rom_11:1-36

Romans 10:1-21; Romans 11:1-36 In the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters of this epistle, the Spirit of God, through the apostle, is reconciling the faithfulness of God, in respect of the promises to the Jews, with the general truth of the epistle, viz., that the grace of God was without respect of persons, all being sinners equally by nature; and so there being one, single, blessed righteousness suited for all. But, in doing this, there was a difficulty which had to be met. To Israel, as such, the promises were made. To Abraham, promises - unconditional promises - not merely conditional ones - had been given. How was God to reconcile the absolute promises to the Jews, with making nothing of the Jews, but treating them as sinners of the Gentiles? This difficulty is solved by seeing how the apostle, in the 9th chapter, forced up the Jews to acknowledge that if they took the promises on the ground of descent, they must let in Ishmael, who was as much the son of Abraham as Isaac was; and the Edomites also, who were the descendents of Jacob's eldest son, but were the abhorrence of the Jews; (ver. 6-13;) and secondly, if they took them on the ground of obedience, they had most clearly forfeited all at Sinai, when the golden calf was set up, and God had to retreat into His sovereignty, in order to be able to spare them. (Ver. 14-18.) So that if they do not accept these promises on the ground of sovereign grace they are lost. And if it is by grace, God will show Himself sovereign, by letting the Gentiles in. (Ver. 19--26.) Then he shows, thirdly, that they had stumbled at the stumbling stone. (Ver. 27-33.)

Now, in chapters x and xi, he goes on to show that God has not forgotten His promises; but that He will fulfill them in the latter days, by bringing Israel in, in the complete acknowledgment of entire dependence on Him, just as Gentiles, when they have no right by promise, or anything else.

Chapter 10 In the first verse, the apostle expresses his affection for Israel. Then he says all he can for them. "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." The thing he had been setting forth throughout the epistle was the righteousness of faith. As regards righteousness, they had not only failed in establishing their own, but had gone on persevering in making a righteousness of what they had failed in; and when God sent His righteousness in the person of His Son, Him they rejected; thus seeking to establish their own righteousness, while refusing God's.. In the 5th verse the apostle goes on to say, that the righteousness of the law had not accomplished what man desired; and then in the sixth verse, the righteousness of faith comes in, and it " speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above:) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God bath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Here in resurrection, we get the great principle of righteousness by faith, which they had rejected. Israel, as a nation, had utterly failed, as regards their own righteousness; for they had broken the very highest and nearest link between themselves and God, when they had made the molten calf, and

worshipped it. From that very moment nothing was left for them in the way of blessing, but this righteousness by faith, of which Moses had spoken to them, as we see in Dent. xxx. In the 27th chapter of Deut. we see that Moses, in God's name, had been laying down the great principle of legal righteousness to the Jews, as the keepers of the law; and which if they continued not in, cursing must be the result. And mark here that the curses were pronounced on mount Ebal, the mount of cursing. The blessings were never pronounced, nor indeed could they be, for God Himself stood in the way; because those who were under the law had not kept it, and were necessarily under its curse. The real effect of being under law is curse. Where is the blessing? Nowhere to be found. Now this, that the curse is on Ebal, is our security; for Christ has borne it, having been made a curse for us; and we are beyond it. So it can never reach us, for " Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness, to every one that believeth. In the 28th chapter, we get the government of God in the midst of Israel, which put them dependent on present conduct. "If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God." (Ver. 1, 2.) " But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God., to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee." Then in the 30th chapter he supposes all this to have had its result. They had been brought under the government of the law in the land, and all had failed. They had fallen under the law's curse. In the twenty-eighth verse of the 29th chapter, they are rooted out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, the effect of their failure; and in the 29th verse we get the summing up of the whole, " The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children, that we may do all the words of this law." The things that were revealed were those that they were to act upon. They had been put into the land on the ground of obedience, to do "all the words of this law." This ended in utter rejection, in their being rooted out of their land. There is your rule to act on. But behind all this, there was another thing-a secret thing in the heart of God-and that was grace. " And it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee." (Deuteronomy 30:1.) Here I get quite another thing. All the effect of God's government had had its accomplishment. The things which were revealed for them to act on are no longer owned, and another class of blessings are now brought out. All that had depended on their conduct, was lost; but behind it all there was this secret thing,-God's thoughts of grace. Therefore in the 30th chapter, we have the righteousness by faith brought out. For if, when out of their own land, they shall turn to the Lord their God, He will have compassion on them, and turn their captivity, and gather them from the nations whither He had scattered them. Thus every question of legal righteousness is utterly at an end. If there is any hope for a Jew, it is on another principle-even through the righteousness of faith. Now the moment you bring in the righteousness of faith, Christ is the end of it. " For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth." Legal righteousness is done with, and Israel has suffered its curse; and now Paul shows that they are here thrown on this new way of having to do with God-on the righteousness of Christ.

" The word is nigh thee." You have not to go to Jerusalem to get it, or over the sea, for " the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou

shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Chapter 10:9.) The moment you take the law in that spiritual sense, you get Christ. He confirms it by that other scripture, " Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." And the moment God brings in the Jew on this ground, He brings in the Gentile also. " For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Chapter 10:12, 13.) Well, then, if it is "whosoever," there can be no longer any difference between Jew and Gentile.

Mark here the lovely, beautiful, connection with the beginning of this epistle. In the beginning of the epistle he had reduced man to one common level-even to utter equality in sin: " all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Now he brings all up to the higher level of God's saving grace, which can take up and bless a Gentile. And there being now no difference between Jew and Gentile, neither is there any difference in God; " For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call on. the name of the Lord shall be saved." This "whosoever" again! Wonderful is the power of God in saying these words, letting out as they do the fullness of blessing in His heart to poor sinners! But " How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Now he takes another ground, in which, in exceeding grace, he seeks to provoke them to jealousy. That which shut up the Jews was not merely the rejection of Christ, but the rejection of the Gentiles as His body, refusing grace to the Gentiles. And in the parable of the king who took account of His servants, Matt. xviii, 23-35, do we not see just this-the Jew refusing mercy to the Gentile? " O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?" As Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 2:16, "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved to fill up their sins alway." Christ came carrying all the promises, and they rejected Him. Not merely had they failed in the question of righteousness-that they had done before-now they reject the Messiah. Well, now, Christ on the cross prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." That prayer of Christ's was heard as regards God: and so Peter said: " I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers," but repent and He will come back again. But before he could finish that sermon the priests came upon him and stopped him: and thus they not only rejected Jesus Christ Himself, but the testimony of the Holy Ghost as to His second coming. And this is what Stephen charged them with: " Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye;" and then instead of Christ coming back to them on the earth, Stephen goes up to Christ in heaven.

If you take Christ on earth as man -though " God, blessed forever"-the moment He takes His place as man among men, the Holy Ghost comes and seals Him. The Holy Ghost comes and testifies of that which is on the earth. When He is speaking to Nathanael it is another thing: "Henceforth ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Here it is the Son of man, and angels His servants. In the former case, heaven opened, and the Holy Ghost came down to seal Jesus as the Son of God. In this case, heaven opened and the Son of man is seen here on the earth as the object of all the angels' service. But in the case of Stephen, heaven opened, and the Son of man is seen there. It is not heaven opening to put its seal and stamp on the Son of man here, but to show us the Son of man there. It is not now the

heaven opened to look on what is here, but the heaven opened for the Church to look up at what is there. This is the Church's position now; full of the Holy Ghost to be gazing up into heaven, and having communion with Christ at God's right hand. This testimony of the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Stephen, the Jews stopped, casting Stephen out of the city and stoning him, thus bringing final rejection on themselves. Their rejection of grace to the Gentiles we see constantly manifested all through the Acts of the Apostles: see especially chap. 22:21, 22. There Paul is giving an account of his conversion; and when he came to this part of it, "Depart, for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles," we read, "They gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he should live." Thus Paul was the minister of grace, but they would not hear of grace, "filling up their sin alway, for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." This same spirit was manifested in Saul of Tarsus; for where do we first find him? Holding the garments of the men who stoned Stephen, when heaven was opened, showing Christ to the Church and closing grace to the Jew. Then he was stopped on his way to Damascus, and the glory of the Lord was revealed to him. And what did he then see? The unity of the Church. Not merely the Son of man in glory; but in the glory he saw the Lord putting all the saints in union with Himself. Thus the great thing revealed to Paul was this, that the very saints whom he was persecuting were one with this Lord in glory. He was converted by knowing that the saints and the Lord were one. For the Lord owned the persecuted saints as Himself; therefore in persecuting them he was persecuting Him.

Full of this gospel, Paul sets about building the Church. He goes about telling this glorious truth, that believers are one spirit with Jesus; the Church one body in Him, their glorified Head in heaven. This blessed testimony of the union of the saints with the Lord in glory, against which there has ever been war, was thus brought out by Paul. Now, also, the testimony which Isaiah, seven centuries before, had pronounced, found Israel, in Acts, with hearts fat until there was no remedy. In this 10th of Romans, Paul shows that the gospel did go out unto the ends of the earth, and that Israel ought to have received it. But he touches the subject very gently, saying, "They have not all obeyed the gospel." For their own prophet Isaiah said, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" "So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." It is no use getting on legal ground here; legal righteousness is not believing a report. Isaiah says they have not believed what they did hear. "But have they not heard? Yes, verily; their sound went into all the earth." Thus creation itself was showing that God's eye was on the Gentiles. God did think of the Gentiles. "First, Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you." But you will not allow the Gentiles to be brought in. Well, that is the way your own prophets foretold it. But Esaias is very bold and saith, "I was found of them that sought me not." But to Israel he saith, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Thus he deals exceedingly gently with them, saying in effect, "I was made manifest to those that asked not after me," and he says it in the words of Isaiah; but he adds, here is your character-"a disobedient and gainsaying people."

Chapter 11 "I say then, Hath God cast away His people?" Am I really saying that they are all cast off and done with? "God forbid, for I also am an Israelite." How could I say so, when I am one of you? He brings back their hearts by throwing Himself in amongst them."

You will find in this chapter these three proofs that God has not cast away His people. First, that there was then a remnant according to the election of grace. Second, that if God was provoking

them to jealousy, it was not to cast them off, but to bring them in. Third, the ultimate promise of God to bring them back as a people through Christ: " And so all Israel shall be saved."

We must remember that he is here speaking of "Israel" as a people, not as the elect remnant; for he uses that only to prove that God had not cast off His people. It is, moreover, clear-as we shall see-that it cannot mean the Church of God; for how can we speak of casting off that which is one with Christ in heaven.

God had from the beginning an elect remnant which He would not cut off. " God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias?" He takes the case of Elias. A remarkable case, for Elias comes with judgment to bring back Israel; but he says it is useless, and " he makes intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." I do not say Elias was right, for he did not understand God's grace. " But what saith the answer of God unto him?" You do not know my grace; for " I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." Elijah had not faith to see these seven thousand. The inward life of Elijah's soul was not at that moment up to his outward testimony. He was full of himself-" I, even I;"-and therefore could not look at Israel as God viewed them. Now look at Elijah. The altar of the Lord had been built up; and just after he says, " Lord, they have digged down thine altars." The prophets of Baal had all been slain, and Just after he says, " They have slain thy prophets." The personal measure of his faith was not equal to his outward testimony. And here I would add that in no case should our outward testimony outstrip the measure of our communion with God. The effect of public testimony is sure to bring us into great danger if the inward life is not equal to it. Sometimes the outward testimony is allowed to go on long after the inward life has ceased to act. So it was in the case of Elijah. His inward life was not keeping pace with his testimony at the moment that he called down fire from heaven-though it was by the power of God, as we know-and slew the prophets of Baal.. For just after all this manifested power of God, a woman threatens him, and he breaks down. Ah! he says, it is all useless; and away he flies for his life. Blessed man he was, but here weak.

Now God is above all Elijah's thoughts. For if Elijah has not spiritual discernment to discover God's elect, God has. If such a man as Elijah fails and pleads against Israel, God, in His grace, will plead for them. Therefore this is a proof of His not giving them up. From the 7th to the 10th verses Paul notes these terrible sentences from their own prophets: " God hath given them the spirit of slumber," &c.; and " Let their table be made a trap," &c. Then in the 11th verse he asks, " Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy." So in the 14th verse " If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh." This cannot be the Church; for who would talk of provoking to emulation the flesh of the Church? The Church is not " in the flesh," but " in the Spirit." Still the flesh is in the believer, and through carelessness may be allowed. Verse 15: " For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" This, again, cannot apply to the Church; for how can you talk of the casting away and receiving again of those who are perfected forever in Christ Jesus. It is of Israel, after the flesh, he is speaking; and the reception of Israel hereafter will be the new birth of the world. In what follows we must keep in mind the difference between God's dealings with a series of promises in the earth, and the election of the Church. He is looking at the way God works in accomplishing His

promises down here, and not at the unity of the Church up yonder. Verse 17, " And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree," &c. This olive tree shows the Jewish nation, and cannot mean, in any sense, the Church of God: and the Spirit, in using the figure of a tree has proved that it is for the earth, and not for heaven. And then as to some of the branches being broken off, that could not be if it were a question of the Church and salvation. But it cannot mean the Church, for how could it be said of the Church, "which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ," that it could have its branches broken off? Verse 19, " Thou wilt say, then, the branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." This is not the Church of God; for we are not grafted in among the Jews, but "one new man," as we see in Eph.

Those who are grafted in are the Gentiles, put in the place of testimony.

There are three things connected with Abraham: first, election; second, the call of God; and third, the promise of God. Noah had governmental power in the earth given to him. Idolatry comes in, as we see from Joshua 24:2 and then all the power that acted on their fears or awakened their gratitude, was attributed to Satan,- " They sacrificed unto devils, and not to God. Every idea of God was either. one of terror, or something to gratify their passions. On that God calls out one to be a witness for Him in the earth. Abraham was called out to be separate from this surrounding idolatry. " The Lord had said to Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house." And again, " Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood, of old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and they served other gods, and I took Abraham your father," &c. Well, then, as we see, when this state of things came in, God calls Abraham out in separation from it all, and gives him promises, and thus planted the olive tree in the earth. Well, because of unbelief some of the branches were broken off; but mark, he does not root out the tree; He only breaks some of the branches off. "And thou being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;" that is, the Gentiles were grafted in upon the stock of promise. The Gentiles in their time will be broken off, if they continue not in His goodness. And the Jews, the natural branches, " if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in again " to their own stock of promise, for God is able to graff them in again. He would never speak of " grafting in again," as to personal salvation. Now all these, God's dealings with this root of promise, are quite a different thing from this new and blessed thing that believers are now members of the body of Christ in heaven. There is no breaking off there; no grafting in again there. The natural branches are the Jews. He is taking the dispensations of God, and looked at as a dispensation, Gentiles are put under the same responsibility as the Jews were. Now the Gentile system is the order of the promises. A Jew must now enter into the circumstances of Gentiles. And what he says to the Gentiles is, you will be treated exactly as the Jews were, if you fail. It is not a question of individual salvation; it is not a question of the union of the Church with Christ-that should be no question. What he says is this, that the testimony that is ordered of God on the earth will be set aside if there is failure. And in verse 24 he adds, " how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree." Now, it is perfect nonsense, as well as ignorance, to say that the Church, whose "life is hid with Christ in God," can be grafted into " their own olive tree." It is not a question of the soul at all, but of the ordering of things on the earth. When I get the dealings of God with a people on the earth, then it is " blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in and so all Israel shall be saved,"-that is, when the Church of God is completed and removed,-then all Israel

-not individually, but as a whole-will be saved. Not brought into the Church, for that will have been removed, but saved as a nation on the earth. Now a Jew comes in as a Gentile, and takes his place " where there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus."

" For I would not that you should be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer," &c. I do not doubt that the professing Church has become so. The apostle is writing thirty years after the death of Christ, and yet he is saying, " there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer," and he is marking the way of it. The very object of all this is to provoke them to jealousy. He shows the responsibility of Gentiles of continuing in the fatness of the olive tree; and then that the real secret of what God is doing is, that blindness in part has happened unto Israel, until God's Church is brought in. And then "all Israel shall be saved." " As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." If this is a spiritual Israel, it is non sense. They are "beloved for the fathers' sakes." Who? Gentiles? Never; but Israel; for God is the " God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." " Enemies for your sakes." Is the spiritual Israel that? Never. Nor can believing Jews be said to be so either. " But as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." He does not say that the gifts and calling of God are sovereign. We had that in the ninth chapter. But now he is chewing God's faithfulness. God did call them to be his people, and he will never repent of it. The very same principle which secures our salvation, is bound up with the fulfillment to Israel of the promises made to the fathers.

I would now say a word on the 30th and 31st verses. The 31st verse is more correctly read thus: " So these, also, have now not believed in your mercy, in order that they, also, may be objects of mercy." In times past you did not believe; and now they do not believe in your mercy: that is, they will not believe in your gospel. But what is the end of God in that? That they may come in without claim as lost Gentiles. When Jesus came, a Jew might have said, I have a right to this Christ; and therefore Christ said, Do not tell I am the Christ, for I must suffer and be rejected. Till Israel had rejected Christ, they had, through grace, a title to the promises. But now they have lost all title to everything, and thus they will come in under mercy. And that is what makes the apostle cry out, not at the greatness of the mercy, but at the wisdom of God, which brings in all under mercy, without claim even to promise. Of course God will fulfill the promises, but fulfill them by bringing them to acknowledge that they had no title to anything.

It is wonderful the way in which the apostle gets through all these things back to God Himself, and so sets the soul adoring His wondrous grace. Be it Jew or be it Gentile, I look at God. It is not what the saint is who has received the grace, but what the God is who has given it. I can look at God's acts; but I can get beyond the thing given, and look at the God who confers the grace-who elects the sinner. It is not elect Jew or elect Gentile that has any title now; but it is the sinner who comes in on the ground of sovereign grace alone. " For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things; to whom be glory forever; Amen. '

What a comfort it is, that, while the heart ranges over all his dealings, it can get back to happy fellowship with Himself; and from the center it can see all round; and when it gets to God, it sees

everything in its place. The Lord keep us only there. And when the heart is thus kept in every-day life, through " the truth as it is in Jesus," " putting off the old man and putting on the new," there is a divine capacity to understand God's ways. In closing, it is of great importance to distinguish between the order of God's dealings on the earth in maintaining this stock of promise in the earth, first Jewish, then Gentile, and by and by to be Jewish again, (for the natural branches are to be again grafted into their own olive tree,) and the definite union of the Church with Christ in heaven-His bride and His body. I repeat, it is important to distinguish between God's government of the earth, the olive tree of promise, and our own union with the Head in heaven, with whom we get all things, for all things center in Him.

Vol 02 - Societies and Prayer

Societies and Prayer

There is too much bustle made by various societies. Six praying men would be of more use than ten such societies. A hypocrite may be very exact in all outward appearances-may actively support all our societies -but a hypocrite cannot pray. It is God alone who sustains prayer.

Vol 02 - The Advocacy of Christ

The Advocacy of Christ

1 John 2:1-29 THE beginning of this chapter refers to the preceding chapter. There he is speaking of the manifestation of that eternal life which was with the Father, and the revelation of the perfect light in God, in Him of whom we read in the gospel, "the life is the light of men." Walking in the power of that life, we have fellowship with the Father and the Son; for this life is in the Son. Still, God is light: and if we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But in the light, by life, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin. Then in the first two verses of the 2nd chapter, the apostle speaks of the resources of a Christian when he fails, (viewed as placed in this light,) as, alas! we know that we all do fail. In the former chapter we have seen three things: 1st, the Christian is in the light, as God is in the light; 2nd, he has fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. This can be and is because, 3rd, the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. This depends on the possession of life, and makes the Christian's standing complete. Then in the 2nd chapter, the bearing of our practical feebleness here below on this is met by grace, in another way; the Christian, having sinned, we have an advocate with the Father; and this is bringing out quite another principle altogether. It is not merely that the saint has a divine nature, making him capable, through the Holy Ghost and the efficacy of Christ's blood, of communion with the Father and the Son; that nature he has when he fails; but he is not walking in the power of it, and consequently fails, and therefore needs an advocate with the Father; and this is quite another aspect of grace, from that of communion. It is not joying in God, the just state of the Christian, but the interference of God in grace, in the person of a mediator, one between God and us. Now, what is in question here is not our justification. There is no possibility of anything being imputed to us. He was made sin for us, and the work of Christ has put us in God's presence without a question remaining as to righteousness, and that position we never lose. It is not that which is here touched on, but another thing of all-importance to us, the daily exercise of spiritual affections in free communion with God. It is not that we fail, as to our standing, before Him - Christ is that, and He cannot change - but down here we do. "In many things we offend all."

We fail constantly, inwardly and outwardly, but the exercise of our affections must be, if they are real, according to what we are down here, dependent, on one hand, on our increasing in the knowledge of God, and of what His love is; and, on the other, on what our real state is. God demands righteousness, but it is not, as many think, that the work of blood-sprinkling has to be done over again, or that our righteousness has failed before God; for the moment I believe, I am righteous as He is. There is no decay of it; it is always of the same value. This is a question of who He is - who is my righteousness. The advocacy of Christ is founded on this unchanging righteousness, and on the fact that it has brought us into the light, as God is in the light; and it reconciles the circumstances of feebleness or failure of our actual state with the privileges of our standing in the light, through righteousness divine. It is founded on the fact of the new exercise of heart and conscience into which I am brought, by being placed, through Christ's blood, in the perfect light and love of God, with a nature formed to enjoy them. The advocacy of Christ is thus

founded on the fact that, in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, I have my conscience exercised in a way I could not before, in view of the light and love of God, in which I am, to which I belong, in my new nature. It could not be exercised if the righteousness were not complete; nor, if it were not, could God deal with sin as He does in discipline and tenderness, through the priesthood of Christ. But He is, as here expressed in connection with it, Jesus Christ the righteous, and the propitiation for our sins. He intercedes on the ground of our present standing in righteousness, in the presence of God, in Him, and of the propitiation having been made for the sins in respect of which He intercedes. The righteousness is always in the presence of God. He has not to look for that now in His dealing with us, for Christ is always there. God has been perfectly displayed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and perfectly glorified, as to sin, by Him; and now I can go into His presence and not be afraid, because of this righteousness. But how is my intercourse with God. to be carried on by such a poor failing thing as I am, and that in the presence of light, and called to walk in it as God is in it? It goes on in virtue of what I am in Christ. Christ, my righteousness, does not need to be maintained or renewed. He fails and changes not, nor does my righteousness; but I need to be sustained. Suppose I have failed, my communion is at once interrupted: God cannot have communion with evil. Well, here the advocacy comes in; Christ's priesthood comes in to meet me; it does not acquire the righteousness, but lifts me up, if I fail, in virtue of it. The intercession of priesthood imputes to me, as my abiding position in divine righteousness, what I am in God's sight, to lead me to judge myself, according to the light I have been brought into by this righteousness. My judgment of good and evil increases, no doubt, as I grow up before God. But from the beginning of my justified career, the standard of my judgment is the light of God's presence. There are two things needed: grace to keep us in the way, and mercy to restore us to communion, when we have got out of it. In the enjoyment of these, our great High Priest secures us, - all the grace, in a word, we need by the road, while He maintains us in the abiding assurance of our position before God. Peter did not lose his trust and confidence in God, though he denied his Master. Satan might come and say to the soul, "it is all over with you; you are too bad; His sentence is gone out against you, and there is no hope;" and thus confidence in God, our only resource in failure, be lost. But before Peter failed, Christ had prayed for him: thus he learned what he was in himself, and knew the grace that sustained him; and then he uses it to profit: " Strengthen thy brethren." He was competent to help those who were weak and failing like himself, because he knew his weakness and the blessed resource of grace. It is exactly the same grace that met us at the first, that sustains us all the journey through.

Here is the government of God, as a father with his family. It is not like " Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone." This is the most dreadful of all chastisements, the leaving us to eat the fruit of our ways. God surely will never finally forsake us, but He may leave us to the fruit of our own ways. This is an extreme case. In general He will deal with us in present discipline, according to our ways. As I have before remarked elsewhere, this government of God, in this sense, His love, the present exercise of manifested affections towards us, is made to depend on our acts and doings, as in John 14:23; John 15:1-27; John 10:1-42. God's love to us, as sinners, we well know, does not, nay, cannot, depend on our love to Him; for it is as sinners He loves us in grace and so, even as to our conduct, (for, after all, it is grace that enables us to go on well,) He deals with us always in grace, and can be nothing else towards us; still it is here connected with His righteous ways. He takes notice of our conduct, of the state of our hearts, our walk. God deals with His children. And so Christ as a Son over His own house. If we speak rashly to our brother, or walk abroad

carelessly through the streets, and see some vanity and are distracted, we shall find the effect of it in our own souls at the end of the day with God. If an angry word escapes me, I feel the effect at the end of the day with God: better still if at the moment, judging oneself. Grace will restore us. God will follow us, and bring us back. If we had a child that was unruly, we should not give it up, but wait upon it in love, and correct it in hope of reclaiming it. I might see a child go wrong, and leave it; but if it be my own child, if it be mine, I must go after it, and bring it back. This is the patience of His grace. At the same time God can never give up His holiness. No, He could not pass by or suffer unholiness in His child, - indeed it were our infinite loss if He allowed it in us. Therefore, also, was it needful that Christ should die. Thus God was debtor, so to speak, to Christ, on account of His work, for the glory of His character. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." "I have glorified thee on the earth." "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him."

Thus nothing is passed by; but this is accomplished once for all. But the same thing is true in regard of Christ's advocacy for us. If there is failure, God sees it; but Jesus comes in and intercedes for us, that it may turn into an occasion of instruction, correction, and profit. Some say that we have to use the priesthood of Christ, that is demand Him to exercise it; but it is not so. Christ uses it for us. Why do I turn to God when I have failed? It is because Christ has used it, and fresh grace is applied, which has drawn me back to Him; fresh grace has wrought in my mind, in virtue of the intercession to which my wandering gave occasion. There is nothing in us brings us back to God but fresh grace working in our consciences. Therefore it is said, "if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father." It is not "if any man repent." It is just as much pure grace as at the first looked upon us, when we were in our sins. In the case of Peter, the Lord foretold him what would take place, "Satan has desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee." He needed this sifting; and Christ does not ask that he should escape it; but before Peter got the sin, or run into the danger, the Lord had prayed for him; His grace was in exercise, and at the moment when it is needed. "He looked at Peter," and grace wrought its work. His weeping was the fruit of Christ's intercession and grace, not the cause or motive of it. The grace and intercession of Jesus is exercised towards us in all the grace and wisdom of God. It is grace which makes our very failure the occasion of God's coming in with more grace. The righteousness is not called in question; it is not touched. It is through the intercession of Jesus that I can get to God about my evil thoughts. All the consciousness of failure, all the exercises of heart, are the occasion of my going to the Father; and form so many links to link my soul to God: we learn it in our every-day wants and failures; we are all astray if we do not see that God has a holy foundation for all this. It does not follow that we must fail. God is faithful not to suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. The roots and principles of sin ought to be judged in communion before God. We ought not to fail, though we all do. Our wretched self-confidence makes us fail, and then comes in the priesthood. It is the rod of Aaron. Moses had, indeed, smitten the rock at the first, that the people might have water, but this was not to be repeated; but it was Aaron's rod that blossomed and bore fruit; and he was to speak to the rock, and it would give its water - divine prevalency in priesthood. That is the way grace takes away the murmuring of the heart. Two years Israel was in the desert; and thirty-eight years more, because they did not go up and take the land, as they had been told; and if we, like Israel, will not go up, it detects our state-we are making the way long. Israel had not the faith to go up to the Anakims. If we would break with the world, and take up the cross properly, it would give us the enjoyment of the full power of communion with God

at once; if not, we must learn, by its daily mortification in the desert, what flesh is. If we think to escape dangers by leaving the path of faith, we shall surely get into sin. Israel found the same Anakims in Canaan, the giants still there, when they got into the land at last, that frightened them at the first, and hindered their taking possession. What is the reason Christians have often more joy on a death-bed than all their life through before? Why, the reason is, they had never till then surrendered up all for Christ, had never before learned Christ to be everything, and everything else to be dung and dross. But Israel's raiment had not waxed old for forty years in the wilderness, neither did their feet swell. They learned in all this way the wonderful detail of all God's goodness. The manna never ceased, and the patient grace never fails to the end. Our foolish hearts, alas! will not trust God, and so the Lord shows us the patience of His grace. He goes with us wherever we go, even in our failures, as He turned back with Israel through the wilderness; and if our hearts have experienced the exercises of the desert, we have learned the vanity of earthly things, and after all find it better to give it all up, and trust God -that He may be everything to us; and if we had done it at first, we should have had it at once. But to continue. The constant exercise of Christ's priesthood is carried on in heaven, in connection with our heavenly standing, and is made to bear on our actual daily state down here; we are to be heavenly men on the earth. Christ was the heavenly man down here; we are joined to Christ by one Spirit. " He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." Mark the effect. What was Christ? Not only the obedient man, the perfect man under the law, but He was the perfect manifestation of the divine nature in a man; there was in a man all the effect that Godhead could produce of goodness in a man, (I am not speaking of miracles,) patience, endurance, love, purity, holiness, and every other grace.

It is not that we can be as Christ was, because sin is in us: there was none in Him. But we are called to walk as He walked, through the power of His grace making us walk in the Spirit. There is not a willingness always to walk: there is a will in us. He must break our will. So long as our walk does not flow from the word of God, there is flesh working, and there must be weakness in the ways of God. " Well, but," one may say, " I am so young a Christian; I am so weak." It is not a question of age in grace. If your eye were single, and there were not self-dependence, God would not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but would, with the temptation, make a way for you to escape. We may be weak, but that is no hindrance to our walking as He walked, for His strength is made perfect in weakness; but He cannot be the strength of our will. One born only yesterday may follow Christ as much as an old Christian, and Christ is as much for him; there may not be so much wisdom, but in the child in Christ there is often more singleness of eye and more undividedness of heart; the great thing is that the will does not work. There it is, again, we see where Christ was so perfect. Still I see in Jesus that He comes down to the first moment in the divine life in sinners. This we see at the baptism of John. John calls to repentance, and they go, and Christ goes with them. He needed no repentance, as John insists, for He had no sin; but in them it was the first step of spiritual life, and Christ accompanies them there. From the first step which the working of God's word in them produced, in this baptism by John, there is not one that Christ does not take with them; no spiritual step in the whole course of our life in which Christ does not throw Himself into our path. He is the life, in which we walk in it. The will of God was the spring of all Christ's conduct. He was come to do His will: " Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." "Mine ears hast thou opened."* That is, He put Himself in the place of obedience; and hence the rendering of the passage is accepted: " A body hast thou prepared me." He became a man, that is, took the place of a servant; He was to walk by what He heard. He was willing to do this, "Lo, I come." "Not

my will, but thine be done." The will of God was the spring of all His conduct. He was not only the obedient One, as we commonly understand obedience, that is having a will of His own, yielding it up when prohibition came; such, and in a certain sense justly, we should call obedience in a child: Christ never had such. His Father's will was His one motive for acting. Where no word from Him was Christ remained still. He might be hungry, but would not use His power by His own will, - "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." He might love Martha and Mary, but He waits God's time and will to go to them. "The Father has sent me," He says, and I live by [or properly on account of, in virtue of my connection with Him] the Father," &c. We are not only so to walk, as to acts, as He walked, but the way He walked, in principle and motive, Right conduct does not suffice, it must be obedient conduct. The spring of Christ's conduct was never His own will; not that His will had to be corrected, but He came to do His Father's will. Satan tried to binder; man tried to hinder; but He goes through it all. He takes the first place, as indeed He must go first in the difficulties. "When he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them." He was led by the Spirit to be tempted; everything that could put His obedience to the test must be tried on Him. He learned it by the things which He suffered. Yet even here we see the difference in the glory of Christ's person and another. Moses had to fast forty days to be with God on the mount: Christ, as a living man on earth, was always with God. He fasts forty days to be with Satan, tempted in the wilderness; and you could not see Him in those circumstances without seeing who was there. If all the glory of the world was offered to Christ there, it is offered to you in detail every day; and we see, in a day like this, people are hurrying after it with all their hearts. Well, Christ meets him. "Make these stones bread;" satisfy your hunger by your own will. He had no word from God for it. His will was never shown; it was perfect obedience; the humble, holy, patient life, that does not stir without God. If you will not do anything without a word from God, then you are sure to have the strength of God in what you do. "Cast thyself down." No; He would not put God to the test. He was not going to tempt God by trying whether He would protect Him. He had confidence in God. As we read, "the people tempted God, saying, Is God among us?" They would prove whether He was among them or no; and this is the scriptural sense of tempting God. He was sure in the way of obedience to find Him. When Mary and Martha sent to the Lord, saying, "Lazarus is sick," He does not stir; He had no word from God; and he died. Mary might think it cruel that He should abide two days in the same place, and not come immediately to heal him. If He had been there He might have wrought a common miracle; but His raising him from the dead is for the glory of God. Satan tries him; but there was no will which had self for its center and object. Satan must betray himself at last. "If thou wilt fall down and worship me, all shall be thine." But a manifested Satan, to the obedient servant of God, is a conquered one: "Get thee behind me, Satan." Still He takes the word, "it is written," as the obedient man; but this is power. Satan has power against pretension, against knowledge, but no power against obedience, if we are acting by the word, with no will of our own. He took His conduct from the word. It was the source of His conduct. "If we say we abide in him, we ought to walk even as Christ also walked." Satan was baffled; the strong man was bound; and that is how He bound him, by simple obedience. He then exercises, freely for man, the power which overcame the enemy: that is a distinct subject. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, cast out devils, raised the dead; He could have set men in blessing here, destroying the works of the devil, if they had been capable of happiness, and prepared to enjoy God. But man's heart itself was enmity against God. Will and lust were there, and another work, redemption and a new creation, were needed: but Christ passed through everything that could be put before Him, to

hinder Him in the path of godliness; everything that could test the divine life. Christ knew in that sense what it was to be tempted like as we are, sin apart. It was all the exercises He went through which prepared Him to be our High Priest. Man will say, and has said, He cannot feel what I feel of inward conflict. I answer, we need sympathy in the exercises of the divine life in our souls, not sympathy in our lusts; those we must practically kill, as we have a right to count ourselves dead. But everything that could try a living man He passed through, perfect in all; and He learned the application of His Father's love to His heart in it all, in the peace which He experienced: and now He can say to us, " My peace I leave with you," and " that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

If the world has hated me, it will hate you; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." He knew and understood experimentally and practically, as a man, in passing through this world, how divine favor from above flowed in the comforts of a tried soul, and applied itself to every exercise such a soul went through here below, in the midst of ruin and the presence of the enemies; - how it was sufficient for every soul's need to live in holiness, and enjoy God in spite of everything that beset Him in this life of holiness. He who lived it is become our life, and He strengthens our human hearts in the pain and trial of living it, which He has felt. Do we want to be comforted, when sin is at work? No; we want what is sharper than any two-edged sword for that. This judges the intentions of the heart, there where the sin lies. For the infirmities we have our High Priest, who feels them. He has suffered, being tempted. He will strengthen the new man against the lusts of the old. As to imputation or distress arising from that, it is gone for the believer; as to dominion, sin has it not over us, if we are under grace; we are under law if it has. The most cases of distressed hearts who would seek Christ's sympathy in their conflicts need to be set free. They are under law. Strength against sin we do need, and that Christ will surely give; but if we are under grace sin has not dominion over us. There may be careless failure, but this is not the case of distress we speak of. It rather needs a rod, though God may graciously draw even out of this. But in sorrow and trial we have Christ's sympathy.

(* More exactly cut or dug for me. It is not the same Hebrew word used elsewhere, as in Isaiah 50:1-11, for example. That was daily opening, this the taking the place of hearing the commands of another, even of His Father. This was the body being prepared; for in becoming a man He became a servant.) The Lord knew what trouble was; His soul was bowed down with trouble, but the first word is, " Father." The first moment we are in sorrow, instead of looking around for comfort, for sympathy, or looking to the actings of the flesh, as to what I have done or what I have not done, and pouring forth our sorrow in nothing but fleshly murmuring, let us turn immediately to God; and then the heart would be cast down, indeed, perhaps, - Christ's could be, -- but in perfect submission to the will of God, and thus the sting of the sorrow would be removed. The instant there is perfect submission, there is perfect peace. " Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say, Father, save me from this hour, yet for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name." The deepest depths are the occasion for Him of the deepest submission' and all is light. " Not my will but thine be done," is the expression, of His heart, when finally tested with that which He could not, because He ought not, but to have wished to pass, before which He righteously feared - God's holy wrath. But I return a little back to give its true character to this last trial, as regards us, and one that Christ could, as we have seen, so far as victory over Satan's power went, have brought in all the promised blessing at once. He could have raised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as He did

Lazarus. But, alas! another awful truth was brought out. It was not merely Satan's power and its sad effects. Man did not like Christ to be there, even though He delivered him. He would not have God, even if He came to bless. He showed himself to be alienated from God in his own mind, and was proved utterly incapable of enjoying happiness where God was the source of it. The carnal mind is enmity against God; dreadful thought! " Now have ye seen and hated both me and my Father." Christ could not have anything to do with the world in its moral state. But did grace and divine love cease to work? No; of course God knew all this; and this very rejection brought out the full purpose and work of His grace, and the trial of Christ, which hung on the accomplishment of it.

He now had to meet the effect of sin itself in the power of Satan, holding man captive under death to the judgment and wrath of God, against sin-for I still speak of the trial, not the work of atonement itself. But He had to redeem man; and if Gethsemane was, as He declares, the power of the enemy, the cross was the judgment, the terrors of which the enemy sought to use against him. And now He takes the place in resurrection, to apply redemption; the righteousness was worked out, that we should take our place in heaven; we must be broken off from the world. He gives us everything in the way, but never presents it as our end. It is neither Canaan nor Egypt, but a wilderness. By clinging to it we are not in the wilderness, but in heart turned back to Egypt. And that is why so many need chastening; for if we would make a Canaan of it, then it will become Egypt to us. The moment we make it our home, and settle down in it, it is our Egypt; and the Lord must break our will, thus keeping us there. He says, "A little while and the world seeth me no more." For Him it is entirely done with. He puts a distinction between Himself and the world. Therefore if we take Him we cannot have the world, and if we take the world we cannot have Him; we cannot have both. "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world." Men are everywhere playing into the infidels' hands, in thinking to make the world better with their brotherhood, their arts and sciences, their social intercourse - making themselves happy without God; for while they make a show of their cleverness, and talk a great deal about acknowledging God's gift in the skill and ability he has bestowed upon man; they do it to exalt man, and continue still to reject both God and His gifts. They will not have a God in Christ. Men think the world can be set right by cultivation and science, by encouraging the arts, and such like.

Why Christ could not set it right: infidels are saying, Christianity is only a figment for it has not set the world right, and men are taking the words of Christ in their mouths, saying men should love one another as brethren, and bringing all nations together to cultivate amity and good will, and the very words that they take in their mouths, while they are thus seeking to make the world happy, are the words that the infidels use. They would make it happy, too, in the same way. Christ knew it could not be, and declared plainly it would not be the effect of His coming. No: as to the world, its day is over. Christ was rejected by the world, and its day is closed. God's grace is gathering out sinners; but as to the world, the Lord said, "it seeth me no more.' Either it is to get better without Christ, or not to get better at all. "It has hated both him and his Father," and its day is over. "I have got one Son," we read in the Lord's description of His Father's ways, "it may be they will reverence my Son." They took Him and slew Him, saying, "the inheritance will be ours." And this is what has been done, and now men are making the world comfortable as their own inheritance. The Lord preserve us from all the deception which, by the side of Christ, close to Him, we so soon detect. He has taken a heavenly place. "Such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled,

separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens." He exercises His ministry where we belong. I do not belong to the earth. We have a heavenly calling, and need a heavenly priest, who has gone up on high to take our hearts up with Him. Our body is not gone up yet, but we have our place with Him up there. Christ Himself, who was a man on earth, manifested a heavenly character down here.

Christ having given us our place on high, after having put away all our sins, sends down the Comforter that we may manifest Him in our walk down here, being living epistles of Christ "known and read of all men," a heavenly people on the earth. God loved us when we hated Him. We are to love those who do not love us, and thus show the character of God down here. Christ was the living expression of it as a man. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself so to walk even as he walked." As High Priest, Christ obtains for us all we need, and lifts us up if we do fall; but He sustains us to walk as He walked, having the word of God as the source of our actions, as God was the source of all His thoughts; but if we fail, there is grace to restore us. (1 John 2:1) "That ye sin not," is the object of revealing our privileges and the grace that has placed us in communion with the God of light; "but if any man sin we have an advocate," &c. Flesh ought never to work; your life ought never to be an expression of the flesh, but of the obedience of a child. The youngest child in Christ cannot walk as a father in Christ, but he can walk in the obedience of a child with Christ. We have the flesh; but if I am in the light, practically, with God, I know what the flesh is; but then all that I am, as regards the flesh, is judged. A child of two years old can be as obedient as a child of twelve years. It is not a question of age, of strength, but of obedience. We have the pattern of Christ at twelve years old, who was obedient to Joseph and his mother, and went home with them, being subject unto them. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself so to walk." Is this the delight of your soul, to walk as He walked, as self-denying, as separated from the world, with as much love; or would you spare something? - a little bit of the world, a little bit of comfort? Christ never did, or you could not have been saved. Peter said, "this be far from thee, Lord:" spare thyself. His reply was, "get thee behind me, Satan." How often does our wretched heart say, spare thyself. That is not walking as Christ walked; not doing His bidding as our Master. Have your hearts been attracted by the beauty of Christ? It is real liberty. The world is merely a snare to entrap us: not that I would scorn the world, Christ did not scorn it; but the world is just this - Satan using all manner of things to seduce the flesh, and that is the world. Satan attracts us by his snares, and has the soul in bondage; but the liberty in which the Son has set us, is to be free from the flesh, the world, and sin, and Satan; not only to walk as He walked, but to walk with Him in perfect freedom, and in the comfort and consciousness of walking with Him. May we find our joy in Him, not pursuing a life of our own hearts, but a life of His grace and goodness, and may He keep our hearts fixed on Him; and a crown with Him will close in eternal blessing the history of His grace. In considering this great subject, (though in few words,) it is intended to avoid all question of the time of the application of it, and the like; and to regard in it only the mind of God as the object of faith. The first and fundamental character of all baptism, as an appointment in the outward sign, is, that it is UNTO something. The children of Israel were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea: that is, unto the covenant they were to receive at Mount Sinai, in subjection to him who was over God's house; separated from Egypt and all that was in it, and from the rule of its ruler, by the cloud that stood between them and the land of Egypt at Migdol, as afterward by the sea.

Those who came to John were baptized unto repentance, John saying that they should believe on Him that should come after him, even Christ. The Messiah was about to appear to Israel as the reformer of their state; and the new covenant was the law written in their hearts; and Christ was to rule as the Head of His own house. The word repentance at once betokens what they were to be separated from, namely, the departure from God in the existing state of Judaism, which, as it was, rejected Christ when He came. The baptism the Lord left was unto Himself.* Faith was come. The covenant of righteousness of life and of power in Christ by GRACE. Those who received baptism, as confessing the name of Christ, (in baptism they put on Christ) were evidently in a very various state of advance; some were zealous of the law, others capable of being shown its weakness, but the relationship to Christ in character was an established thing, and every advance only left more behind, in the separation first indicated. The baptized Jew, now zealous of the law, might advance to an apprehension of being dead to the law by the body of Christ, and to the knowledge of union with Christ by faith. Such would not be baptized again. If this baptism were into anything, (as may be considered shortly,) it is not into Christ; but the separation is from all that was evil, and all that was old, whether the soul realized it or not, and that Christ supplied the place of all. It was in truth, then, a separation from law, from the world, from the rudiments of the world, and from all that applied itself to man, in his various pretenses as capable of good, and from ordinances UNTO Christ. The doctrine of Romans 6:1-23, stands out preeminently as marking the separation from the old man in the fruits thereof, in being buried with Christ. ** In Colossians 2:1-23, separation is from philosophy and vain deceit, from the traditions of men, from the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, from sabbaths, and the like, and from all else that is not now by the living God applied to our soul in Christ, through faith. We are complete in Christ, who is the head of all principality and power.

(* So εἰς ὄνομα, unto the name; ἐνονοματι, IN the name, occurs but once, in the case of Cornelius, on whom the Holy Ghost rested as at the beginning.)

(** I believe the expression in Romans 6:1-23; Romans 4:1-25, of baptism into or unto death, is a collective expression, describing what baptism characteristically is, as given of God.)

Further, it is most important for us to see that the things really left us by the Lord relate to us as on earth. HEIRS BY GRACE TO THE KINGDOM, we are separated in the world, by baptism, unto Christ. Nor is it needful to look for significations in these things, for us on earth they can be something. To this the expression of burial directs us. Baptism is given us as the grave of Christ, and all the things which life in Christ has stamped with death are buried with Him, and we and they with Him, in baptism. We are buried (thus can those that are dead in Him look at it) in His grave. We are buried with Him by baptism. The mind of God in it is the object that our hearts are directed to. It is practically important. There is power in measure, through faith, as appealed to by the apostle in Romans 6:1-23 It is important to say that the old man, in his sinful habits, as on earth, is buried. This is being buried with Christ by baptism into or unto death.* The living subject of baptism sees the assigned place of these things. We who are alive and conscious are so to see them. Christ, charged with them, went down into the grave, and came out of the grave without them, and we, coming out of the water, leave them all, and all that can apply to them, being weak through the flesh, in the water, in the mind of God. We leave ourselves there. We look back on our baptism in such an aspect, and are called on by the apostle to do so.

(* See previous footnote) The Church, as divine, is baptized with something else, namely, with the Spirit of God, uniting her to Christ in living existence. The baptism of the Church, as conferring its special character, is heavenly. She has a time to sojourn on earth, and to this baptism refers. The Church, as on earth, has a subjection and confession to fulfill to the Lord, who hath purchased her for Himself, and given her, besides, a character as joint-heir with Him; and her holiness on earth is in being true to it to His glory. The difference between these two greatly affects the application of terms in scripture, which may in no wise be confounded. It is the mingling of that which is of earth and that which is of heaven that has been and is injurious to truth, and to the use of the things of God according to God.

It is not that we are not to see, as on earth, something more than that which is merely significant of other things. It is not intended to enter on them in this point of view now, and they are quite distinct from them. But to resume: the moral necessity of the truth connected with the reality of baptism, as the burial of all that could usurp the place of life, is evident. The divine truth, that the power of Christ's death upon all evil is the necessary preliminary to the expansion of the divine life, is instructive; that carries us far into the divinely moral order of our restoration in the image of Christ. That this is expressed in baptism, over and above the actual burial of the old things, is manifest from scripture. The old man, and all that could attach to him, is to be never seen out of the water again; for it is in this burial we divinely rise, by the regenerating power of God, " through faith of the operation of God." It is not out of it, but in it. (Colossians 2:12.) So it is in Romans 6:1-23, in its proper proportion. We are buried into the death - in fact, in this aspect, the old man is in the grave buried, that we might walk (being risen in the power of God) in newness of life. So in 1 Peter 3:21, We are saved by baptism - clearly by what must die (in order that we should live) lying buried there; in the answer of a good conscience in the living and divine condition of the living man; in fact by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Whenever all that was to be buried rises, it causes to sink, so to say, all that which ought always to be above the place of death in the power of the glory of the Father. This is the divinely moral truth given us in these things. As divine and heavenly, the Church can know nothing but the Spirit of God, as above with Christ, having spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him. Christ is our righteousness; ordinances, therefore, receive a secondary place only. This, their real place, should be seen, lest otherwise they make a gift of God for blessing in the place assigned to them, an occasion of stumbling, and they become a door to the apostasy; and such have they become, and become fixed, as such, through the tradition of men. They were given to serve the purpose of separation. All ordinances were, and those left by Christ as well, - baptism administered by others; the Lord's supper - the act of the living adoration of the Church. We may be in a state of imperfect knowledge as to either, but except as an act of living adoration of the Church in worship in the Supper of the Lord, the knowledge of and faith in the mind of God in them will make a great difference in our blessing. There are many things we have to know about them, which, as they are gradually received, are better sought in the word. Nor ought we to close these remarks without some direct reference to the necessary truth, that we must die in order to live, applying it immediately to our consciences. Found of God when we sought Him not - sought in the wonders of His grace - we are exhorted to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service. This is in the shape of motive, but the matter also lies deeper. The actual relationship of death unto sin and new birth unto righteousness, that being by nature born in sin, but now the children of grace, we may be molded daily into the likeness of Christ, is the work of God by faith - changed into the same image,

says the apostle, from glory to glory. "If," says St. Paul, Romans 6:5, "we are (or have become) plants together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be plants of his resurrection, (or plants in the likeness of his resurrection.)" Justly the same fountain should not bring forth sweet water and bitter. How can there be growth in the Spirit (putting all seeming aside) but in the declension of the flesh and its lusts. If by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, saith the apostle, ye shall live. If ye walk after the flesh ye shall die. Let that mind be, in you which was in Christ Jesus; who on the cross condemned sin in the flesh in dying. It was truth told to us in Him, in whom was no sin. If ye are Christ's, ye have crucified the affections and the lusts. There is no room allowed of God for the old creation and the new in the same man. According to this truth is the death intimated to the Christian in his baptism and in the mind of God in it, and in it is the resurrection he finds in its realization, by the exceeding greatness of God's power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. The separation of us from the world is more on the surface, but is as express. The apostasy has so far grown that its use of baptism is an entry into the world, instead of a separation out of it and from it; while the baptized should, as thus passed the Red Sea, look over the closed waters on the towers and pyramids and glories of Egypt, shut out from them forever, while they rejoice on the way. Let every Babylonish garment, every pursuit of forgetfulness, of which Satan makes such use, - not to say the enticing pursuit of the world itself, - be seen as cut off from us in the water. The pursuit of the world's possession (amidst which God may in His grace have given on earth duties of application to His glory, - and yet, blessed are the poor) shall pierce the soul through with many sorrows, sent in grace that the true and divine riches, those only called "our own," may be duly estimated as enduring forever; while He will not leave nor forsake those that are fed of His bounty in the wilderness, or as strangers in the land.

Now the Lord increase us in acquaintance with the ways of God in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, unto all fruitfulness unto eternal life, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Vol 02 - The Assembly

The Assembly The assembly is the same in the elements of its constitution as the whole Church, but with the blessing that it is acted. on by all that God may send in any part of the whole body, by gift, or by correction needing to be brought home to it. What is necessary to it is truth and love in the Spirit, and a pressing forward, which will be the greatest reproof of those that lag behind, and thus act as the truest discipline for the remnant in the evil day. The danger will be felt when it is found that we cannot wait for those who are ready to fall away. The end of the counsels of God in calling the saints is the glory of Christ, and in having a body fit to be the company that shall be about Him in the specialty of His Sonship Forever-His bride. Every one, then, who, though with the best intentions, works on any other basis than this in the saints will, first or last, be working to his own glory, (I do not include those who work for their own interest, seeking their own things, as must be to their shame,) and is sure to bring confusion, though he teach the holiest truth, or follow the truest form of working. "The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience, and out of faith unfeigned." The assembly is the school of the individual (having received the fitness of grace) for the fulfillment of that character in the power of the coming of the Lord Jesus, and is carried out in making him a perfect member in the relationship of that love which is " first pure, then peaceable, and full of good fruits." The Church, in its extent, is the expression of the purpose. of God's grace, looking to the time of the heading up of all things; but it is only where that which is necessary to it is found that the thought of God will find a true answer. In one respect it is not otherwise in this evil day than at the first. A conscience exercised by present evil seeks God, and finding Him in Christ has found a resolution of every difficulty, a teacher and support in face of the enemy, and a guiding light in the darkness. Christianity, corrupt and defiled, adopted by and as yet used by the world, makes no difference whether Christ and His infinite grace has become the object of the soul or no; but if souls, begotten again by the word of truth, having the enjoyment of His grace, and earnestly seeking their way in practical confession of Christ, and that He is again to come, find companions on the way, they are in need of, as well as are capable of, enjoying, in earnest prosecution of their path, all that God intended for the consolidation and advancement of their faith and love; and God provides it in His unfailing grace. It is in this very different from the remnant in the day of Antichrist, who, though not the Church, having suffered, reign with Christ. These are real and faithful through all proof, in ignorance, but in a measure of holding out against the enemy, made wonderful by their ignorance; the word, perhaps, hardly known, but they kept of God in tribulation, such as never had been, or should be. Not so now with the remnant who keep the truth; beset (at present at least) with subtlety and falsehood, but with the word in constant use, amidst spiritual corruption and dissipation of truth, the tendency of which is to destroy the peculiarity of the calling of the saint, and the true defense of his position. An evil day, therefore, ever brings with it a more individual cast of confession and capacity, in dependence on God, of confessing Christ under very various proof, and therefore is it said, "keep yourself in the love of God," and otherwise to the man of God, "from such turn away." But this never makes any part of the canon of truth necessary to the Church or saint less necessary; while all that is given of God is necessary, and dependence on it, "that the man of God

be thoroughly furnished," and fit to help others; nor is the assembly in its power and offices, according to the mind of God, less called for; it is to supply whatever it ever supplied. It seems to stand last, but that is because there must be so much to minister to its right action; but there is one great characteristic which constitutes it at once as such, and that is the faith of the Holy Ghost, sent as a Person at pentecost to be in the body. "With them," says the scripture, in Christ, in whom He fully dwelt, while Christ was with them; but now in them according to promise, and fulfilling the same in every given power to faith and waiting upon God. The manifestation of the presence of God in action was ever by the Holy Ghost, from creation downwards; but in all God's dealings with mankind lying under sin, the Holy Ghost was never with man personally dwelling in him, as on the Holy Ghost being sent down at pentecost, till Christ, having worked out the full remedy was, because victorious, for man, and as man, at the right hand of God. There never was obedience or life but by the Holy Ghost. There was ever life through Christ believed on; and farther, union with Him by resurrection from the dead individually, as with the head, but not the presence of the Person of the Holy Ghost. He in His presence constituted the Church, and no assembly or association of believers, however general, ever did constitute the Church, nor could do so to the end of time, nor for eternity. A deference to this truth can alone constitute the assembly, or establish its action as such. "Be it to thee according to thy faith." The Church is the habitation of God, by the Spirit, and not the habitation of God without Him. The assembly of all believers would not constitute the Church on earth or in heaven; but as the Holy Ghost is in the body on earth, and is sent, and is ever the same, is it the Church. One body and one Spirit; and farther, the operation of membership to the service of the body, or of individuals of it, rests on the part of the Church and the assembly being the habitation of God, and on regard to it. BY THE HOLY GHOST IS THE SUBJECTION OF THE CHURCH TO CHRIST IN GLORY. The Holy Ghost keeps the Church in possession of the truth of the glory of Christ, and of who He is. According to the measure of the subjection to Christ is the revelation of the truths contained in the word vouchsafed by the Holy Ghost, and understanding of it given. Admission to understanding thus measured was given by Christ while He was on earth, and now according to subjection to Christ, by the Holy Ghost.

If the world was convinced of the righteousness of God, by the coming of the Holy Ghost, because Christ was with the Father, the Church, having the Holy Ghost, and believing in the mission of the Holy Ghost revealing Christ, will be always convinced of the same. Giving God the glory of all things, brings Him forth in His all-sufficiency to man returned to Him in Christ. The cleansing from all sin by the blood of Christ depends on the faith that in God is "no darkness at all." These things wrote the apostle that we might not sin; but if any man sin, &c. Because there is individual communion in any measure, there is blessing in any truth and grace of God, is there not rather the overflowing on all around in the bond of the Holy Ghost? Not but there is individual personal communion beyond what is in company with the body.

If there is indeed a true love for Christ it will be manifested in attachment to all the grace that is in Christ. It is in forwarding of this in souls that all the relationship of the members is engaged subject to the Head. To one ardent of his way, no revelation of his fault is an offense. If Paul, during his presence with the Philippians, (God working in the saints to will and to do,) was suggesting all that was to perfect them, the fear and trembling in which they would seek to please God and abound more and more, in his absence, were but the fruit of this desire. But should there be misapprehension of one's state in this intercourse of mutual help, if it were private discipline, it

may call for the patience of a saint, and nothing can happen but what the supply of the Spirit of Christ can turn to account. The heathen could say that it was the part of true friendship diligently to advise and be advised, and if the Church fails, "bearing the prize in mind," to take advantage of its grace to do the same, surely what hope is there of it? There may be not only misapprehension of state, but of the truth of God - here there would be something to suffer and something to be done; but nothing need be done without advantage. "Lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees." Many forget that grace - grace in truth - is glory begun. Now this course of edification must presuppose both individual desire and love of the Spirit in the body, and the individual seeking "to apprehend that for which they were apprehended in Christ Jesus," and desiring to know "the power of the resurrection," walking in the light, "being made conformable to His death." Nothing binds souls more together in love in the Spirit than the honest purpose of seeking truth, and according to it "to purify themselves, even as He is pure." It confirms in the faith, it admits to the true sense in the full assurance of understanding of the mystery of God. (See Col.)

I see in love in the Spirit the whole of the work of the enemy overthrown. It is the peculiar characteristic of the saint redeemed out of the age of enmity to God, and the conspiracy of selfishness, which is but the concealed enmity of the seed of the wicked one. It is the love of God shed abroad in the hearts of His own, and is full of the peace of God. The form of this love on earth is that of brethren in the flesh, attached beyond the forms of the world, pure and kindly affectioned, considerate, inclined to hide shame, compassionate, but in all things according to the hope of the presence of Christ. The day is evil and the Church confused, but the word is light in the darkness, there is no need to stray. We have but to return to our God; we find Him where He was, and always is; it was we who had strayed. In the day of the blessed Eliakim and the worldly Shebna, they pulled down the houses within to fortify the wall, "and looked not to the maker thereof." Such indeed has been the course of Christianity. In some sort the way of God has been in the growing day of evil and of worldliness just the reverse. God has provided against such a tendency in supplying peculiarly, in such a day, in the development of the word, all the materials to a saint for his individual soul. Salvation is his wall and bulwark. God knoweth them that are His; but in nearness of communion, and its power, and a simple rest on the faithfulness of God-God transports the soul into Himself, and hides it there. But even so, is there no common bond from God for the blessing of the saints in the bundle of life together? Is it not the bond of the Person of the Holy Ghost sent of God, and to abide forever? A mere massive association of Christians is totally unfit, from weakness, to exhort one another at the approach of the evil day; or else they fall quickly into the forms of the world, or sink into corruption. The Holy Ghost sent down at pentecost is also the earnest of the inheritance, and keeps the saint out of the world, and supplies the spiritual need of exhortation in the body. It is not that less grace is needed, though in a different relationship of things, where believers enjoy but little from God, than when there was danger of carnal clashing from the abounding of spiritual gift. The end is the same, the working out of the state is different. The character of love, in its full negative working against the remnants of nature in spiritual men is more needful now than in the days when the Church had yet her garment of glory and beauty, so soon lost. "Love suffereth long, is kind; love becometh not itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Love endureth all things." Men must be on their way to bear this, and if they are so, and have Christ and His grace, in what is it untrue that God shall supply all their need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus, members of His body, and heirs of the kingdom? Let them build

the inner houses of the city and their own first. The husbandman must be first partaker of the fruits. Gifts - real gifts - are indeed a blessing of God, but whoso boasteth himself (by knowledge and various talents, perhaps, or various presumptions) of a false gift, is like clouds and winds without rain. To preach the gospel of grace of the kingdom and of the glory is still given, and the night is not far distant. Encouragement in the hope of the gospel - building - refreshing, is dispensed of Him that abideth forever. He anoints the saint, who subjects himself to Christ - with intelligence of the word that He has conveyed. He is the tender comforter of the confessor wearied in conflict, and the strength of his confession. The apostle is gone, and there may be confusion in the joints and bands, but while the communion of the saint cannot be hindered, (nay special provision made for its depth in the revelations of God's love,) the Holy Ghost sent by Christ from the Father makes the Church the habitation of God forever, and the union of it on earth, by faith of the ordinance of God in Himself - AND SO OF THE ASSEMBLY - and is power from on high for every saint for the maintenance one of the other BY FAITH. The assembly is God's or the world's.

Vol 02 - The Canon of Truth

The Canon of Truth

There is a very common mistake as to the sense of the word heresy in scripture. It may be something definite; it may be truth, it may be error. But no just apprehension can be arrived at as to what it really is, except by looking to the essential meaning of the word. It simply means "choice;" and thus it will not be difficult to see how this transgresses against God, and against the place we should hold towards Him, and in respect of all that we are to receive from Him. As to ourselves, we know the word of the Lord, " You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." So also in all revelation made to man, it stood in God's good pleasure to reveal what He pleased; in His divine wisdom giving such relations between truth and truth as was necessary to make Himself duly known. To reverse this order is heresy. Man a sinner, (and if such be the mercy vouchsafed,) recovered to God by grace, is himself the choice of God; and grace forms the place and rule of subjection and dependence. Treating it, however, as confined to truth revealed, it is the duty of the believer humbly to be subject to it, rightly dividing it; since the word, according to the Spirit, teaches those who are obedient to Christ. The separation of truth from Christ Himself must prevent blessing and growth, and is often the cause of the endeavor to combine in a formal creed the truth necessary to the child of God and the Lord's servant.

There is another source of this evil, viz., that however needful one portion of the truth may be at this or that season, there is, (notwithstanding a succession of revelation) a need of every part for the work of God; for His husbandry and for the building up of the saints. However the spirit of apostasy may work, inasmuch as the promises are made to the overcoming of the corruption of the day and time in Christianity, those Christians are the most " thoroughly furnished" who respect the whole canon of truth as given to complete them in Christ. Truth will not be found in parceling it out and in balancing it. Such a course would make us think that souls, in conscience towards God, were not the intended objects of it; whereas, as seen in God, all is perfect, and each part is a whole; but so a whole as to be in perfect relation to the rest, and without the exclusion of any. Christ is what we receive of God; and if any portion of truth be taken, as in Christ, it will never exclude any other portion, and it will ever have its proportions fitted to Christ, and to which every other part can attach.

If there are particular times and seasons when some portion of truth is specially called for, so there are times and seasons when some portion, which may be highly necessary and important is, either through ignorance or corruption, omitted. Or, if what is material being omitted, a sickly demand of one truth occur in minds from defect of another-all this is, or borders on, heresy. No truth and no order promulgated of God is needless. Hurrying forth when we discover some revealed truth, instead of waiting on God for its certainty and its place, or founding anything merely on the contradiction to falsehood, is in likelihood an approach to this sin.

What shall we say then? Conscience before a holy God is the needed condition of the soul; and, in subjection to Christ, a simple acceptance of the word-even if that word appears unusual-giving

time to the soul in the presence of God, will keep it in the safe path.

These considerations are the more needful because apostasy, or all that prepares for it, makes such strides; and the dissolution of all that imposed any wholesome fear on man progresses so rapidly that a distinctive view of what constitutes "a good confession" will call on souls, desirous of walking with God, to enter earnestly on the question of the "canon of truth."

What is intended is not the canon of scripture, (that has its own various ground and evidence,) but the canon of truth, as needed in confession, and for the enjoyment of the peace and the power of God; and for practical ends, as a sequel to them, in the knowledge of His will, in wisdom and spiritual understanding. The value of this must be apparent. The principle of faith, excluding every object that could come between us and the Lord, is the point on which he who had been in the third heaven made an unrelenting stand in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Faith is towards the future, because the future is towards that which is unseen; and it accepts its rule from God. Nothing could be more righteous than the demand of faith from man, as the road of return afforded by God to one who had sinned, and who continued in insubjection through sin, and had become subject to another, even to the enemy, the revolted one. Distrust of God was the door by which he left God, and the door of entrance to his lost and estranged condition. He had eaten of the fruit of the tree, and was shut out thenceforth from the tree of life in the garden. God now plants the tree of life outside the garden, and outside the camp too, and calls on man to eat of it. Because in this tree of God's planting is found sin and death undone, and life restored and unassailable. Here was faith, as the reverse of man's departure from God, and restoration thereby. Wonderful and righteous are the ways of God, full of grace and mercy and truth! This then is the way of "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." And, this being accomplished, it is given to man to wait for his being taken in again to a higher paradise; and therefore it is said, "to wait for the Son from heaven." To as many as receive him he gives power to become the sons of God; even to as many as believe on that name-the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Now, being sons, it is needful, in order to obedience, to know what confession we are called to as waiting for the Son from heaven. All the remainder of the canon of truth lies here. The Lord is coming to take to Himself His great power and reign; in which time the earth shall be subject, and a king shall rule in righteousness, and princes in judgment, and we as sons of God, and therefore heirs with Christ, shall reign with Him. It is nothing therefore but the present knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that will afford a rule of confession and obedience. For the whole frame of the world, its order and objects, can be no guide, since it is in independence still, and not returned to God; and under its present rule never to return. The believer is in Christ and the world is not. The child of God waits for the Son from heaven-who is Lord of all: and the world awaits but the doom of its final-departure from Him. "The iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full," therefore God did not bring His people into their inheritance. So it is with the world now. We see Him at the right hand of God, as Lord of all, according to the will of the Father; though the time is not yet of all things being made subject to Him. The external form of our obedience is in acknowledgment of Him there, and to come: sanctified, or separated, not only out of our once lost state, but sanctified to Him and justified in the grace of our God, out of the world which lieth in condemnation and in the power of the wicked one. It is not a question of being morally better than

the world around us (though this is the case essentially by grace) in an external respect: but of being separate as subject to Christ, who is at the right hand of God: -and subject for suffering in obeying Christ; and in the intelligence of Christ, subject to the authorities that be, yet taking no part, in ordering the world, which is in disobedience, as are all that connect themselves with the world. We are "called unto the kingdom and glory" to be revealed. I speak of the regenerate, by the faith of the Son of God. To these things the gospel of the grace and the gospel of the kingdom are the introduction. For, though the proclamation must be grace, it is the kingdom of God that is specifically preached. God now establishes the way of grace, and it is by faith, that it may be by grace. This would conduct us through the epistle to the Romans; the church being only touched upon at the very close; and it is to a considerable extent the force of those to the Thessalonians, though not exclusively, as the interest of the saints in heavenly places is appealed to. The epistle to the Hebrews, of Jude, and James and Peter are confined to it. The specialty of the Church in heavenly places, and her union with Christ by faith of His name, as Son of God, and the revelation of the power of resurrection to the believer was reserved to Paul. The character of the grace is everlasting and indefeasible; its place the place of communion; and its hope the being taken before the trial; walking with God in the judgment of the world and loving the coming of the Lord. The divine life, and the practical result in blessing given to communion, is the department given to John. The canon of truth can bear no omission but with damage to the perfecting of the saint in his relation to God, and to his confession in the world of Christ and His glory. To lay stress on any of these things to the exclusion of the other, is an evil choice in order to clothe oneself with the peculiarity of the doctrine, and it is not subjection to truth. If I take the kingdom, and leave out the Church, I deprive the saint of the highest consolations, and lower the ground of his affections, and alter injuriously the character of his hope. If I leave out the kingdom, and take the Church as my exclusive theme, I render the walk of the saint unstable on the earth, and cut off all the doctrine of godliness, to be exercised while in the body, in subjection to the Lord. If I adopt the divine life as the sole relict of truth, I leave the saint to be absorbed by the frame of the world and to a defective conscience, which sanctification to God in the world can alone sustain.

If the character of the service of the divine life was revealed last, it has, nevertheless, without doubt, its appropriate fullness within itself; but I speak of the evil of the heresy of excluding what preceded it, and is necessary to complete the chosen one in Christ. The divine life and attraction to it creates a fund to the soul in an evil day, which the ruin around makes needful, and God, in the wonders of His grace, has not left us without. But "there must be heresies that those who are approved may be made manifest." The internal man is not the same as the external man as confessor of the Lord. The new man is the risen man, the healed leper of the eighth day. Where the blood has cleansed there the Spirit can follow. When death has worked there is life; and the saint becomes the living sacrifice, and by faith advancing continually in the divine character lives in the atmosphere of the love in which God lives, and bears testimony of it.

Part of the "canon of truth," and indeed very much, may be at times in the world in abeyance, by ignorance and corruption, and the revival of truth (which is the work of the power of God) makes the saint very responsible; as also the preaching of the good tidings makes the world so. The knowledge of righteousness, before the reformation, and the peace wrought for the believer, were forgotten, and were brought to light amid the darkness. The truth of the Church and of the functions of the Holy Ghost were not reached by the reformation. The truth of the kingdom has

been perceived; but its place and importance for practical ends in the saints, being heirs in a country not yet their own, but strangers in it, though under their Lord, has been but little apprehended. It is a kingdom of which the saints are expectant heirs; and where they receive the reward of present faithful confession, and reward of service and duty, at the coming forth of their Lord in glory. I believe this confession is often referred to under the name of "the faith." See the end of I Timothy; and " the good confession of Christ that His kingdom was not of this (present) world, else would His servants fight. To wait thus-serving the Lord that is looked for-severed from the order of the world, and returned to God and dependent upon Him, is "the faith" in this respect. (The Gentile Church neither stands in goodness nor in faith in the living God by faith.) Christianity either says, " Lord, Lord," and does not; or denies the Lord to whom glory alone belongeth. Nations are, often, a mock Israel; but they shall come into the tribulation and judgment; and the Lord will be magnified with His saints in the day of His appearing. The kingdom of our Lord which, with the virtues and grace that are appropriate to it, is the distinctive confession of the saints on earth, forms the conscience on earth, keeping them for the Lord. The affections as well as the knowledge of the risen Jesus cast a gloom on any part the saints take in the world. Whereas the place given them as expectant heirs marks easily the present things (except as immediately ordered by the Lord) as in the hand of the enemy; while the love of God shed abroad in their hearts glorifies Jesus as Lord and Savior, and, in a good confession they overcome by His blood and their testimony, and shall sit on His throne as He overcame and sits on His Father's throne.

Vol 02 - The Dispensations of God From the First Adam to the Revelation of the Second

The Dispensations of God From the First Adam to the Revelation of the Second Read Hebrews 9:1-28 In a preceding paper on the 10th and 11th of Romans, there was presented the reconciliation of free grace to the whole race of man-be it Jew or Gentile: man under law, or man without law-all being brought in on the level of sin-all being received on the ground of free sovereign grace-with the special and unconditional promises which God had made to the Jews. My thought now is to enter a little more in detail into the Lord's dealings in the dispensation in which we live. But first I would take a more general view of God's dealings with man from the beginning; and for this purpose I now read the 9th of Hebrews, as the 26th verse of the chapter is the great center truth on which it all hangs. " Now once, in the end of the world, (that is morally,) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

All that God had done up to that point was the bringing out of sin in the first man; but there followed immediately the the putting away of that sin in the second man. Then, passing over the present interval, he speaks of this second man appearing again a second time. Here, then, is the turning point of all God's ways-the death of Christ and its consequences, His coming again to take possession of all that His first coming had given Him a title to. They were His before, " For by him were all things created," &c.; but in His second coming He takes possession of all that which His blood had bought back again to Himself; " For he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

" And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The end of man is to die, or rather, we may say, he there begins for eternity; and it is terrible to think of beginning in judgment. But God in Christ has introduced another thing; for as the end of man, either Jew or Gentile, is death and judgment, so unto us that "look for him shall he appear a second time without sin unto salvation." The first time He came it was about sin, in the sense of bearing it, being occupied about it. He was made sin-Himself the sinless one-but having put away the sin, He comes the second time without sin unto salvation. In His second coming there is no question about sin whatever, but the full bringing out of God's purpose of blessing in consequence of the putting away of sin. Man's portion is death and judgment, as contrasted with the salvation Christ brings. But mark another thing, in the meanwhile; priesthood comes in. He is hidden from the world, as He said, " the world seeth me no more;" but He " appears in the presence of God for us." The word appears is a legal term, indicating Him as the One who represents His people. So He, as our high priest, is representing us in the presence of God. He has taken His place and, at down at God's right hand, having by Himself purged our sins. And we need such a high priest in our daily walk. But then, as regards His bodily presence, He is gone; therefore we have to walk as pilgrims and strangers in a seducing world, though not of it, with " our life hid with Christ in God."

Then comes out another thing, the veil being rent, He has sent down the Holy Ghost to be in us, and to associate us in heart and life with Him in heaven, thus giving us the proper exclusive heavenly character, of a heavenly people, now on the earth. For Christ being in the presence of God for us, our portion is in heaven. We are in the position of Stephen, who being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up into heaven through the rent veil, saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. The heavens were opened to his spiritual gaze, which is now always true to us; and all we are now waiting for is, that Christ may come and take us up bodily there. The crucifixion of Christ was the utter rejection of the second Adam by the first Adam. This was man's turning point; for man had been tried in every possible way, but all in vain. God says, "What shall I do?" I will send my beloved Son, it may be they will reverence my Son. But when they saw Him they said, " This is the heir, come let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." All the dealings of God with man, as man, ended here; therefore it is called " this present evil world." The rending of the veil, which closed all the previous dealings of God with man, opened the way to heaven, and while it condemned the sinner, it saved the believer. It condemned the world, but brought out full salvation to all that believe, associating them with heavenly things. For through the rent veil, (that is, Christ's flesh,) we have access into the holiest of all.

Then comes the question how far such saved ones (for I speak now of real Christians) have been faithful in maintaining, as a heavenly witness, their testimony to the world's condemnation, and of their own association, as a heavenly people on the earth, and their head in heaven. But instead of entering on this question now, we will go a little through God's dealings with the first Adam from the beginning up to the introduction of the second Adam. We will trace all the different changes in God's dealings with the first man, till we come to this new starting point, " created anew in Christ Jesus.' God has taken away the first that He may establish the second.

All God's actual dealings with man, till he came to the point of crucifying His Son, show how the patient goodness of God had tried man in every way, until obliged to pronounce man, on experimental evidence, to be utterly bad. Of course, God knew what man was all the while.

First, then, we will trace God's dealings with man as man. Secondly, with the Jews. Thirdly with this new man in Christ-for in whatever position man has been placed, it has only been to start aside like a broken bow, and to turn from God. This is a solemn truth, and one that Christians ought to know well; for never was there a time when man's thoughts of man were so exalted; when so many efforts were being made; so many theories maintained as at the present, that man as man may be turned to some profit. The great cardinal truth is, that there is no good in man. And it is most important that the soul should thoroughly understand this, as it gives both simplicity and stability. For the simple knowledge that man is thoroughly bad cuts at the root of ten thousand theories all based upon the notion that good is to be found in man. But all these deep-laid theories will drop off by thousands, like leaves in autumn, if it only be believed by the soul that in man good is not to be found. The death of Christ is the great and infallible contradiction to all assumptions of the contrary. " When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Thus on the cross was proved to the whole world that God could find no good in man. It is also given doctrinally in Romans, and historically in the Old Testament. The next point is, that it is God's work to bring man back. And mark the blessed way in which God works to bring man back. For after sin entered there was no rest for God or man, but in that rest which God hath prepared. So the only rest the poor sinner can find is in " God's rest." God works and then enters into His rest. Man rests

in God, and then works for the glory of God-for there is no rest now but that into which Christ entered; and we which have believed do enter into rest. The Sabbath rest was in connection with Jews as a sign of the covenant between them and God, which supposes that after the work of the week is done, then rest comes; and, doubtless, in connection with creation, it is a blessing to all. When Christ was on the earth the question of the sabbath was constantly raised; and when healing a man on the sabbath-day, they charged Him with breaking the sabbath. And how does He meet this charge? By saying, " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." A good and holy God could not find rest, or a sabbath, amidst the wickedness of man. There must be in such a state of things either judgment or working in grace. God's Son, therefore, came down to the earth, not to keep a sabbath in its polluted state, but to work in grace. And through communion in life with the second Adam, (God's rest,) believers get all the fullness Of the blessings of that rest. But now we will look a little into this working from the beginning. And for this, let us go back to the garden of Eden; for there we shall find man first put to the test in a state of innocence. And what do we find? A total and complete failure; for nothing could possibly exceed man's insensibility to God's authority, to His goodness, and to His truth! Man abandoned God to gratify his lust in eating the forbidden fruit. Nor was this all, for Adam sets up Satan as the one to be trusted in instead of God. God had surrounded Adam with every blessing, and Satan comes and says, "Ye shall not surely die." God is jealous of your prerogative, for He has not spoken truth when He said, " In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." And on this liar's and murderer's word man treats God as a grudging God. For Satan says, God has kept back from you that which is good. Thus man believes Satan and makes God a liar. I am not here speaking of the rejection of grace, but of the entire casting off of the authority of God and His truth, and of the open manifestation of sin. Thus there was an end, without a possibility of return, of man's innocence. It was gone, and gone forever. There could, therefore, be no return to innocence - no going back to man's Paraisaical happiness; and that he might not live on in his misery forever, God turns him out of the garden and sets the cherubim with a flaming sword to keep him from the tree of life. But what does God do in despite of this failure? He sets aside the first Adam and brings in the second Adam. In Genesis 3:15, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Mark, here, the seed of the woman is the second Adam. There was no promise to the first Adam, for he was in no sense the seed of the woman, though we may trust he was a partaker of the blessing. There was grace, but not in connection with the first Adam. Sin had come in by the woman; therefore Christ, the putter away of sin, came in by the woman also. All God's ways and purposes tend to the second Adam, " Who shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The turning point is the rejection or acceptance of Christ. Whenever the least morsel of Christ is apprehended by a soul and used, the Holy Ghost can come in and give power to the testimony, though in the midst of many mistakes. But when Christ is not received and there is dependence on the first Adam and his resources, though there may be the appearance of fruit for a season, perishing must be the final result. I see no signs of idolatry before the flood; but men being the children of the wicked one, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, corruption and violence filled the earth; and these two principles continue up to the end: as you get corruption in the mystical Babylon, and violence in the persecutions carried on by the beast in the latter day. Then in the garden of Eden we get the two trees-the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. The first of these trees shows man's responsibility. The second tree is connected with God's gift of life. And in these two trees are set forth the two great principles that have given rise to all the controversies that have

agitated the mind of man from the beginning. The simple truth is this, if man is put under responsibility-say the law for instance -- he fails; but Christ comes in and glorifies God by fulfilling man's responsibilities, and then God can freely give life. Thus, in the work and person of Christ, we get the perfect and eternal solution of every abstract principle. For the very weakest saint knows that Christ bears the whole responsibility, and that He gives life; and he wonders that men should find such difficulty, when to him all is simple. For the soul that has Christ within knows that it is not merely an abstract principle to be reasoned about. For how can the Christian reason about Christ's having borne the curse for him, while he himself is in possession of life in Christ? The saint owns his responsibilities, but having failed, Christ has come in, and life is given in grace. But now we will return to the double character of corruption and violence which became so insupportable that God was obliged to come in with the flood. Then we get Noah saved out of it, and with Noah God begins the world over again. Man is again put under trial, for God brings in a new thing. Government is added. Thus man is strengthened against the violence which had prevailed before the flood, and which man, not being altered, will still continue. That which is technically called the 'power of the sword' is given into man's hand. " Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Well, failure comes in again; for after awhile, Noah plants a vineyard and gets drunk with the fruit thereof, and Ham dishonors his father. Before the flood there was the prophecy of Enoch, (see Jude 1:14,) which was a mark of what God was going to do; and after his testimony, Enoch goes up to heaven. This is the Church's testimony now, to warn of the coming judgment which will take place when she is removed. Noah's testimony was quite another thing. " He, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house;" for Noah passed through all the judgment and begins the world again. He is the type of Israel in the latter day. But Enoch warned others and then went up to heaven before the judgment came.

Then we have another most terrible thing. After the flood idolatry comes in.

There were two great results of the breaking down in righteousness of those in the place Noah was set in. First, the association of man to get himself a name" let us make us a name"-and in doing this they were associating themselves against God. For, speaking of intrinsic title, God is the only one who has any right to a name; and the only name God will allow to be set up on the earth is that of the man Christ Jesus. Thus, in man's effort to make himself a name, we see the principle of pride brought out, and the very judgment they were seeking to prevent, by getting themselves a name, was the very judgment with which God visited them. " For the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the earth." Then in one man, Nimrod, who began to be a mighty one in the earth-" a mighty hunter before the Lord"-we have the individual development of will and tyranny in government, instead of righteous government. Then in Babel, in the association for a name, the principle of pride. Thus we get the two great acts of corruption.

Then devil worship comes in; for when men were scattered abroad on the face of earth, not liking to retain God in their knowledge, they began to offer to devils and not to God. (1 Corinthians 10:20.) They became conscious of dependence in spite of themselves; and therefore it is said in Joshua 24:2, " Your fathers served other gods." The scripture never speaks a word in vain, and now we can understand the meaning of the call of Abraham, and what he was called out from. God appeared to Abraham and called him out from serving other gods, to serve the living and true God. The world was sinking fast into idolatry, and there was not only man's pride, in getting a name and greatness on the earth, and tyranny and self-will in government, but, alas! the coming in

of Satan's power in demon worship: for it is in idolatry that Satan's great power comes in. And here it is important to mark that Satan's power must not be confounded with man's wickedness. Satan's power is altogether another thing, and quite apart from man's wickedness, though often most mischievously confounded with it. Now God is calling a people out; before it was only individuals whose hearts were successively touched with grace. But now God is distinctly separating a people to Himself. Thus Abraham is called the father of the faithful; and God has a special stock on earth called out of the surrounding idolatry, to be a depository of the promises of God, called the olive tree in Romans 11:1-36 In Abraham we find three great principles election, calling, and promise. Abraham did not get into the land until Terah his father was dead. He came into the land of Canaan, but God gave him none inheritance in it, no not so much as to set his foot on, yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession. Therefore " by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles, for he looked for a city which bath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

After this we get another think. A people were to be redeemed. Redemption was, in a figure, brought in when God -visited Egypt in judgment and with a mighty arm brought out a people to Himself. The blood of the pascal Lamb was the sign of their shelter from judgment, also of their separation to God Himself. Here we see the distinctiveness of His love in that it was to Himself that they were brought. As it is said, " How I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself." Then the Red Sea passed brings out the song of salvation. Then from the Red Sea to Sinai it was all grace; God dealt with them in grace. They murmured again and again, but they got the quails and the water as they wanted without any reproach. It was perfect unmingled grace. At Sinai another change takes place, another principle comes in. The promises which were given to Abraham without any condition are taken by the people on condition of obedience. "All that the Lord bath spoken we will do." This was entirely a new condition and principle. Man now puts himself under covenant with God, in which man is to perform his part and God His. Thus Israel put themselves under the Law, to obtain by their own obedience that which God had promised unconditionally. But before they get what God had spoken, the ten commandments, they had made themselves another god; for they had lost sight of' the man Moses and made them a golden calf and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel "-the very thing out of which Abraham had been called! Idolatry they had turned back to, the " serving other gods," and cast off the true God altogether. Thus all was gone. Then we have another change, another principle in action. The Mediator is brought in, and it is then in connection with a mediator between themselves and God. And the mediator Moses, in pleading with God, pleads His promises and comes in as mediator between God and man, to maintain man in the blessings in which he could not maintain himself. Moses was but a shadow of Christ, and not the very image. Aaron is the next, established to be priest in the temple and to offer sacrifices; but just as his consecration is ended, strange fire is offered by his two sons Nadab and Abihu. This is as we have ever seen the case with man. Though vengeance is taken, man goes on sinning, and the Lord goes on raising up saviors and deliverers, until the time of Eli, when not only his wicked sons were destroyed, but God's strength, the ark, was delivered into the enemies' hands.

Mediatorship and priesthood having both failed, and the ark, the very place of God's presence being delivered into the hands of the Philistines, where there was faith in Israel in the little remnant of that day, it could only say, " Ichabod," " The glory has departed." But before taking up David, we

will return to Abraham again, and take up promises made to Abraham, to show their distinctiveness from the Church. First, the way in which Abraham is the father of many nations, as in Genesis 12:1-20. The reasoning of Paul in Galatians is founded on Genesis 12:1-20 They were Jewish promises. All the earth had fallen into idolatry and Abraham was called out of this idolatry, that God might make him the stock of promise-the olive tree. (as in Romans 11:1-36) The 2nd and 3rd verses run thus:-" I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great. And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Abraham is the vessel, so to speak, in which the promises are deposited. (I drop the great nation, that being Jewish.) Then in the 22nd of Genesis, this promise is confirmed to the seed. Abraham offers up Isaac and receives him back in a figure; Isaac thus representing Christ in resurrection. Then God says, "By myself have I sworn that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed AS the stars of heaven and as the sand which is upon the sea shore. This multitudinous seed are the Jews. "And thy seed (Christ) shall possess the gate of his enemies." "And in thy seed (that is Christ) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." " In thy seed," that is the one seed, Christ. The promises that were given to Abraham were confirmed to him in (the one seed) Christ, for there can be no mixing up the two. For Isaac, being raised from the dead, though but in a figure, we know must keep the promises distinct. Therefore the apostle argues in Galatians 3:20, " If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Thus those who believe in Jesus are "heirs according to the promise," made not to the multitudinous seed, but to the one seed which is Christ. There are two sets of promises--those to Abraham's seed, as the stars of heaven for multitude, in connection with the land; then Isaac being offered up in a figure, confirming the other promises in which all the families of the earth will be blessed in the person of Christ the one seed. Mark that both of these sets of promises are unconditional. For thus Abraham was made the depository of the promises given to him unconditionally, both with reference to Israel and the nations. But in Exodus 19:1-25, where God says, " Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself," we have an entire record of simple grace, without any condition whatever, from the Red Sea to Sinai. But at Sinai the question of condition comes in. " If ye be obedient, ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." And Israel said, " All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." And how long did it last? It was gone directly. Whatever depends on man's stability is gone before he gets it. And so before the ten words reached Israel they had worshipped the golden calf, thus casting off God entirely. And thus Israel had lost their immediate connection with God, for it was then ordained in the hands of a mediator, having broken down in theirs. God says, Let me alone and I will consume them in a moment; and Moses says, " Why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought up. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thy servants," &c.; then goes on pleading the unconditional promises figurative of Christ, and says it is thy people. And God turns from His wrath and goes up with the mediator. " My presence shall go with thee"-not with the people. God calls the people the mediator's people. What beauty and grace there is in this. First, God says, I will consume them in a moment, they are so stiff-necked. But their ornaments are put off, and Moses pleads their very stiff-neckedness as a reason why God must go up with them. Thus was their stiff-neckedness counterbalanced by the grace. For the moment grace is brought in by the exercise of mediation, the very stiff-neckedness which prevented God's going up with them lest He should consume them, was the very thing pleaded by the mediator why God must go up with them. Then God acts on a different principle. Mediation is the grace which maintains people in the

blessing brought by redemption; and this principle brings in priesthood. Here mark, for it is important to see, that redemption brings in priesthood, and not priesthood redemption. Priesthood maintains the people in the presence of Him who redeemed them; for if I am to walk with a holy God, I must have that intercourse maintained. If God has redeemed us to walk in the light as He is in the light, we need the priesthood to maintain us in the light. But if you confound redemption and priesthood, you will never find settled peace, for you will be looking for acceptance from something to be done or interceded for. But priesthood maintains our communion with a holy God.

I now turn to the subject of man's failure-Israel failing under the law-mediation comes in; and priesthood failing under Eli-the ark is gone-then there is another, redemption by power. And now the link between Israel and God is royalty, sustained in the person of David the king. This was the last link between Israel and God; His patience still forbearing. And now we get royalty sustaining Israel under the condition of obedience. The temple was newly set up and filled with God's glory. But royalty fails in David, Solomon, and Rehoboam. The obtaining and enjoyment of promised blessings must not always be taken as a mark of God's approval. Jacob told a lie in order to obtain the promised blessing. Solomon had asked of God wisdom, and God added riches and honor, but then he obtains the promised riches and honor, by disobedience; for he multiplied to himself horses and chariots which God had forbidden. We require faith for the means, as well as the end. That is, we must wait patiently for God Himself to make good to us the very blessings He promised. Then again, Solomon loved many strange wives, and they turned away his heart from the Lord. In the very three things God had forbidden to a king Solomon failed. Let us ever remember that our one business is to walk with God, in the humble and lowly details of every day life, waiting on God to arrange everything for us; for God's ways towards us show out His character and His faithfulness, in making good to us what He has promised. For if we obtain the promised blessings through our own contrivance, they will be accompanied by sorrow and chastening; nay, the very blessings themselves may become the source of sorrow, because we always have idolatry in the heart. But God meets this failure in royalty by another and fresh promise, in Shear Jashub, " a remnant shall return." Isaiah 7:3. (See margin.) The nation was at that time cut off. "Make the heart of this people fat," &c. Now God promises another thing; a seed is promised to David. Before it was the seed of the woman, but now a seed is promised to David, to sit upon his throne forever. After this, God says, in Ezekiel 21:25, " Thou profaned wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end. Thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." After this God entrusts power in Gentile hands. The first was Nebuchadnezzar - power in one man - for man's vain thought is, if I could do all that I wish, I should make the world a paradise. Well, God tries him, and what is the result? The golden image is set up, and God's own people are cast into the fire, for refusing to fall down and worship it. Secondly, the impiety of Belshazzar follows, in prostituting the vessels of the temple to the honor of his false gods. And thirdly, Darius sets himself up to be the true God. Here are brought out three principles of evil, which will be fully developed in the latter day. Cyrus then comes in as the restorer, setting it all aside-typical of Christ. Then prophecy comes in to sustain the remnant until the Messiah came. Then in the rejection of Christ, it was not merely the manifestation of man's sin, but the utter hatred of man's heart against God. " They have hated both me and my Father." Thus the tree was proved to be utterly bad, and the more it was Jigged about and dinged, the more bad

fruit it produced." " Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Then Pontius Pilate being the governor of Judea was the representative of the authority which God had put into man's hand, and which the Lord owned when Pilate said to Him " Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee? to which the Lord replied, "

Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; thus teaching Pilate that having received the power from God, he was responsible to God for the exercise of it. And how did he use it? In condemning God's Son. Thus the very one who should have wrought justice in the earth delivers up Christ to be crucified, at the same time knowing Him to be innocent; as he said, "Take ye him and crucify him, for I find no fault with him." Thus was fulfilled that word, "I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there, and in the place of righteousness that iniquity was there." What comes then? The solemn sentence is passed. The world is condemned. " Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." "The world seeth me no more." The death of Christ closed the scene. Then the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. The very thing that brought out the judgment revealed a heavenly salvation, which was before hidden by the veil. The death of Christ is the end of the world morally. Man has been tried in every way, and failed, and sin in every shape and form has been brought up to a head, and met in this one act of rending the veil. For " once in the end of the world (morally) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." When the sin is proved, it is put away. " They have seen and hated both me and my father." The very act that proved their hatred of God, put away their sin. "If I had not come, they had not had sin, but they have seen and hated both me and my Father." That very crowning act of the utter enmity and willfulness of man, brought the sinner to God, without the sin. For the Lamb, without spot, by one act, divine in power (by Himself) put away the sin "by the sacrifice of himself." The veil being rent, we with unveiled face, behold the glory of the Lord. As to our bodies, we know they are still on the earth, but our position, morally, is in heaven, Christ being there. The high priest under the law stood, but this man, after He had once offered sat down forever. The whole work being accomplished, thus connects us with heaven. We are only waiting for the redemption of the body - we are accepted in the beloved. He is my life and my righteousness, and I want nothing more. All belongs to me now, by virtue of life in this heavenly man, now in heaven itself for me. We are only waiting His return, but our conversation is connected with Him up there now, for we are always confident while waiting, which may be in order to our ripening. There are three things connected with this position. First my life is hid with Christ; second if I die before He comes, my spirit goes up to Him immediately - "Absent from the body, present with the Lord;" thirdly, if He come and take me up before I die, then I shall return with Him. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory." But while He is up on high, we are members of His body down here, and cry, "Come, Lord Jesus." And consequent on our position, we ought to be as pilgrims and strangers on this earth, for we stand between the once offered and appearing Jesus. We have neither the world nor the glory yet; but we are identified with the rejected one. Christ's portion is our portion: we get it along with Himself, and we are to be conformed to Him now. We are member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones - His bride; and when that is made ready, He will come and take her up to glory. The Lord give us to know the wonderful grace of Christ, who, "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty might be rich" - "Who loved us and gave Himself for us," according to His perfect work, which has set us in the presence of His father in love.

Vol 02 - The Firmness of Love in Discipline

The Firmness of Love in Discipline Numbers 27:12-23

There is a firmness in real, perfect love which an easy, amiable nature is able neither to appreciate nor exercise. We see it in the Lord Jesus. He maintained His discipline or education of His disciples, (of Peter for instance,) and did not relax, as one who sacrificed their blessing to present gratification. And we see this firmness of love in the Lord of Moses at the opening of this scene. The Lord has Moses under discipline, and He will not abate the discipline. Moses had forfeited the land, and the Lord will not let him enter the land. In this He is peremptory. We see it further in Deuteronomy 3:24-29. "I besought the Lord at that time, saying, O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan." If saints incur chastening, they must go through chastening, Jacob is a wanderer at Bethel, and the Lord does not send him home again, but lets discipline take its course, so that Jacob shall wander still further. It is not the way of divine love, which is perfect love, to slacken the hand in such cases. The style of the Lord here is peremptory. " And the Lord said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin." (ver. 12-14.)

Moses then spake, and the excellent character of his words seems to be in this, that in a moment like the present, when he had been humbled and rebuked, and nature might have behaved itself sullenly, or at least been silent and reserved, Moses is all anxiety about the sheep of Israel. For Moses, as I may say, was no hireling, " whose own the sheep are not." He loved them as his own. He had an individual, personal interest in the flock. He loved them and their blessing, and could not bear the thought of their being left in the wilderness without a shepherd. Let another take his office. In meekness he will bear that, and rejoice in it-only let the flock be led and fed. Like himself on an earlier occasion, (see chap. 11,) His honor may be put on the Seventy, but Moses could say, "would to God that all the Lord's servants were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them." Let him be displaced, so that Israel be fed. " And Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and -which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd." (ver. 15-17.) This is very lovely workmanship of the Spirit in the servant of the Lord. This earnest care for the people, and this meek forgetfulness of himself, may rebuke our hearts. Moses does

not resent the disadvantage into which he was put by the hand of the Lord; he is quiet under that, so that others be blest. " For we are glad, when we are weak; and ye are strong," said another like him. The Lord then replies:-" And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation;" and perhaps more excellent than all are these words of the Lord.

He puts the matter at once into the hand of His servant. He commissions Moses to ordain his own successor, to lay his hand on Joshua. And He will have this done in a way to honor Moses-it shall be before the priest and in the sight of the congregation. And then, Moses shall instruct Joshua, give him a charge before the people, and constitute him (though not fully yet in measure) the head of Israel, as he had been, that Israel might be obedient. This is very blessed. While the Lord, as we saw, will not relax the discipline under which Moses had brought himself, or alter the word which had gone out of His lips merely to gratify His servant, yet He will let all the people know, and Moses himself know, how He loved His disciplined servant, what a chosen vessel He esteemed him, and what an honored man he would make him. Moses shall have the honor of ordaining Joshua, of endowing Joshua, of instructing Joshua, and of putting some of his own honor upon Joshua. But still more. He answers his wishes to the full, as well as honors him. Moses had desired a shepherd for the sheep, one that would lead them out and bring them in; and the Lord now undertakes that Joshua shall be all this and do all this in the presence and in the behalf of Israel.

All this is very lovely in the faithful, unchanging love of God. The Lord would not slacken the hand or the word that was chastening His servant, but His heart is as near His servant as ever, and His purpose both to honor him and to make him happy, just as perfect and fresh as ever. It reminds me of Jesus and Peter. " I have prayed for thee," says the Lord Jesus to Peter, " that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke 22:1-71) Was not that putting new honor upon a chastened, humbled Peter? As before, in the time of Matthew 16:17, it was a rebuked Peter that was taken up to the mount of glory.

What a tale of divine, perfect love all these things tell us! Rebuked Peter is taken up the hill; humbled, chastened Peter is commissioned to strengthen his brethren; Moses, who had lost Canaan, is to ordain, endow, instruct, and dignify his successor-to strengthen, more than strengthen, his brother! This is the way of perfect, divine love. It is firm, but it is unchanging in its favor and its objects-a mere easy, amiable nature, again I say, can neither appreciate or imitate it. Moses does as the Lord commands; (ver. 22, 23;) but that of course. It was his own joy and praise to do so. This scripture gives us a beautiful sample of, communion between the Lord and one of His servants.

Vol 02 - The Hope of the Christian

The Hope of the Christian Beloved Brother,

I have been occupied, for my own soul, with the inquiry what is the hope of the Christian, and I send you some points of the result, thinking they may be a means of cheering and encouraging some of God's dear children. The first important point which this result brings powerfully home to the heart and conscience is, that the source of this hope, and the only means of rightly estimating it, the only sure ground on which the heart can rest in appropriating it, is that all that I hope for is the fruit of the grace of Jesus, that in which His own heart finds its delight, in giving to us, because it is that of which He knows in Himself the blessedness, and because His love is perfect towards us, His interest in us as perfect as Himself. This is essentially characteristic of perfect love. All this, I need not say, is according to the counsels of the Father. "It is not mine to give," says Christ, "but to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." For it is what He takes as man, that He gives to us, and hence, as receiving it Himself as man from His Father, and delighting in it as the expression of the Father's love. This thought brings out another simple, but remembering who Jesus is, a most blessed and wonderful truth, that where there is perfect love on the one hand, and capacity of enjoyment through possession of the same nature on the other, love will seek to introduce its object into the common enjoyment of that which it possesses, and finds its blessing and happiness in. This is true of a friend, a parent, and every genuine human attachment; though of course in these cases, imperfection is attached to the affection itself, and to its power of accomplishing its wish to make happy. But the perfection of Christ's love does not, since it is love to us, make our introduction into the enjoyment of His blessedness a thing not to be hoped for because it is too excellent; but just lays the sure ground for this hope.

It is His own delight to make us happy, a part of the perfection of His nature, His own satisfaction. "He shall see of the travail of his - soul and be satisfied." It is to this I would first of all direct the attention of yourself and your reader. Christ is finding His own delight and joy in blessing us, and in blessing us with Himself, because He loves us; and this blessing must be according to the perfectness of His own nature, for it flows from Him, and is to be enjoyed with Himself, and as He enjoys it before and with the Father. What a scene this opens before us, if we have indeed tasted His love, and yet it is all dependent on His own free goodness, and the fruit and display of it: the happiness itself being dependent on His own excellency. That His grace is the source of it every Christian will recognize; but I think you will find, that in taking scripture to guide us in the details it gives of our future blessedness, this character of blessing shines out most evidently. And it is the elements of our future joy which scripture affords, which I would present to you, though surely grace is needed to give them their value, which will be just proportionate to our personal estimate of Christ Himself; that is, to our spiritual knowledge of Him. Our possession of the life of Christ, His being our life, so that it can be said of it, in its nature and fruits, "which thing is true in him and in you," is the basis of our hope, and that which makes us, in connection with His work on the cross, capable of enjoying it. He became a man, and having first wrought redemption, and glorified God in our behalf, and put away sin for us, and made peace, becomes, as victorious over death, and

entering risen and glorified into God's presence, the source of life to us, nay, more, our life. We are thus brought into the place of sons. All the old thing, with its fruits and nature, judged, condemned, and done away, whatever conflicts and exercises of heart we may have with it, and through it, while down here. As alive in Christ we stand before God, consequent on the accomplishment of redemption, and- in virtue of complete forgiveness. "

He has quickened us together with him, having forgiven us all trespasses." We are introduced in the place of sons with Christ, as the result and fruit of redemption, and as really partaking of the life in which He lives. See here the Spirit, in 1 John, (which specially treats of the existence, possession, and development of this life in Christ, and so in us. See 1:1, 2, and 5:11, 12, for the general principle,) connects us with Christ in life, position, and, consequently, hope. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons (children) of God,"-have, by adoption, Christ's relationship with God, yet as really born of God, possessing a nature displayed in the same qualities,-" therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not," (the true and perfect Son of God.) " Beloved now are we the sons (children) of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him (Christ) purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Blessed testimony in all its parts: born of God, we have the nature (morally) and position of that true, blessed, and eternal Son made man, that in His glory we may be with Him, and. like Him. We are children of God, unknown by the world, consequently, as He was. We shall be perfectly like Him in glory, seeing Him as He now is above in heavenly glory, and hence can bear no lower standard now. Having this hope in Christ, reaching to, and founded on Himself, we seek to be as like Him now as possible, in the inner man, and in our ways we purify ourselves as He is pure. What a picture of the moral position of the Christian is here, through His living connection with Christ! It is sweet to say it is ours, sweeter to say we have it in Him, and that He Himself is the perfection of it. If His life is animating us, through the strengthening grace and communications of the Holy Spirit, what a power and value will such a statement have for us, living by, and dwelling in Him. Here then is one great and blessed part of our hope, " we shall be like him, we shall see him as he is."

It is perfectness, in likeness to Christ, in ourselves morally, in its full result, for it is in glory; that is, all the full fruit of the power of this life as in Christ, produced even as to the body, while its internal excellence, likeness to Christ, is perfect, and no hindrance to its exercise, but, quite the contrary, a suited condition: and with the blessed consciousness that we are like Him, though we have it all from Him. We shall be like Him: but secondly, in this state we shall have the full blessed object in which this perfect nature delights, and in this state is capable of delighting in all its absolute and heavenly excellency before us. Its satisfying object, an object which can keep all its powers in blessed and full-exercise, can occupy it with perfect delight. And yet while I delight in Him as supremely excellent, the full display of heavenly excellence, I know that I am like Him. I could not, my desires being fixed on this, having tasted its excellence, be perfectly happy, were I not. Yet in us this excellence is a capacity to be occupied with its perfection in Him. However great our glory and excellency may be, it is only as being like Him. He is the thing we are like. He is it in its own proper and positive substantive being and existence. If I am adopted to be a son, am really born of God, a child, He is the Son. Hence all our excellence is the means of apprehending and adoring

His. We may remark that this is true, both in moral perfections and in relationship. God is perfect in Himself and for Himself. Love and holiness, as indeed every other attribute of God, have their joy in themselves, and of course perfectly and infinitely in God. But the creature needs an object to enjoy perfectly what this blessed nature is and gives, even when he possesses it. The new man delights in holiness, but the perfect holiness of God is needed for the perfect delight of our new and holy nature. The new man has a nature imbued with charity, and so can delight in its exercise; but the perfect love of God, manifested in Jesus, and known in communion, is His delight. So in our relationship we are sons with God; but I must learn in Jesus what it is to be a son, and what the power of that word is: "the Father loveth the Son." We share in the glory; but the glory in which we share is His. In the hope, then, presented to us in this passage, we have the Father's love presented as the source, so that we are already children of God, so as to know our position; but this flowing from our being born of God, from Christ being our life, and we as He, so that even the world does not know us, as it did not know Him; we are so identified with Him, that though what we shall be does not yet appear, we know we shall be like Him when He shall do so; seeing Him in the very glory in which He now is as Son, with the Father, viewed in manhood on high. It is not as this world will see Him, being blessed under Him, and seeing Him so far as He can be revealed to mortal eyes, but being like Himself, and seeing Him as He is. This leads to another part of the blessing, which is equally the joy of Jesus Himself. We shall be with Him. Evidently, if we love and delight in Him, this is needed for our full joy; and while He ministers this in us now, by being present with us in grace, it is the object of our hope in its full character and permanent fullness. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." Remark here, that the apostle, when speaking here of the Lord's coming, does not enter at all, as regards our portion, into the consequences in glory and dominion. That has its place; but what satisfies and fills the apostle's heart, when he has the revelation of the way in which God would call up the saints to their enjoyment, is, for his own feeling of joy and delight, all embraced in this, "So shall we ever be with the Lord." This is, more than once, brought before us by Christ Himself. "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." The connection of these last words, with what precedes, throws light on the value and extent of this hope. The Lord continues, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me." The Father had to decide, so to speak, between Christ and His disciples on one side, and the world on the other, for the moral separation was complete. What the Father was had been fully shown in Christ. The world could recognize nothing of it: There was no common principle or bond. The disciples had recognized, at least, through grace, that He came from the Father. He could not stay in the world. That was closed. His departure forms the ground-work of the whole chapter. Whether He or the world could be owned of the Father could leave no doubt. The Father, and necessarily so, had loved Him before ever the world existed; and if the world rejected Him, the hour was come for the Father to glorify Him with Himself. For the time, no doubt, the disciples were to remain in the world; but He had declared unto them the Father's name, and would declare it, that the love wherewith the Father loved Him might be in them, and He in them.. Hence He would have them where He was. They would be able to enjoy it, since they knew the same love, and He was in them to be the power of the enjoyment. It was not only their desire and blessing, but His. He would have them where He was, if He could not (and it was far better, surely) remain where they 'must be for the moment. Mark here, that this connects it with the knowledge of the Father's love, as it rests on

Jesus. He desired to have them with Himself. It was a part of His delight. He would show them His glory, who had walked with Him in His humiliation. But besides this, there was the capacity of enjoying what He enjoyed along with Him; for the Father's name He had revealed as He knew it, and that the love wherewith He was loved might be in them. What a hope is this, and, blessed be God, founded on a present blessing, only as yet in an earthen vessel, and known in present imperfection. And if we are with Christ, it is in the Father's house, where He is in the Father's love.

He is not alone, He is gone to prepare a place for us; nor will He be content to send and fetch us, He will come and receive us to Himself, that where He is, we may be also. This same 14th chapter shows that it is our present knowledge of the Father, as revealed in the Son, that is the means of knowing what this joy is, and coming to the enjoyment of it. We shall be there with the Lord, ever with Him. No interruption, no decay of joy, but rather ever increasing delight, as there always is when the object is worthy of the heart, and here it is infinite. And this in the relation of the Father's affection for the Son. We are with Him in that place, with Himself, and with Him in the joy, infinite joy, which He has in the Father's love, a love resting on Him as Son, but in His excellency as such, loved before the world was, and now the accomplisher of redemption. Some other passages will help to fill up the great leading traits here given, both as to the glory and our living with the Lord, showing our identification or association with Him, and the character of this blessedness. "The glory thou hast given me, I have given them," the Lord says, "that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and they in me." If Christ is in us now the hope of glory, He will be in us then the display of glory. He will be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe. It is not here mutuality, but manifestation, manifestation through the fullness and excellency of that which is, displayed, being in Him that displays it: the Father in Christ, and Christ in us. "Thou in me," says the Lord. The Father is in Him, in divine unity and fullness, and yet here mark, Christ is spoken of as one to whom glory is given, that is, though a divine person, He is considered also as man. And then, "I in them" so that as the Father is displayed in the Son, as in Him, so the Son, Christ, in us, as in us. I will now refer to two Psalms, which collaterally throw light on this part of our subject, the 16th and 17th. In the 16th, which is (with others) quoted in scripture as showing the humanity of Jesus, His taking our sorrows and position of dependence on and obedience to God, that is, our position as saints, it is said, "I have said to Jehovah, thou art my Lord, my goodness extends not up to thee; to the saints on the earth, in them is all my delight." That is, having the divine glory, He associates Himself with the saints on the earth, these excellent in God's sight. At the close He shows, that as one who is the head of these, the path of life is shown to Him. In God's presence is fullness of joy, and at His right hand pleasures for evermore. This then, in principle, is a part of our hope, as His "companions," though He be anointed with the oil of joy above, us. We are in God's presence where fullness of joy is. Where God's presence shows itself it fills all things and excludes all contrary to itself. It necessarily makes infinitely and perfectly happy. It sufficed to Christ's hope--His who knew it best and perfectly-surely, then to ours: and, as we have seen, we have a nature capable, without alloy or mixture, of perfectly enjoying that presence. Let me add too that we shall not lose the Holy Ghost by being in glory, loss indeed it would be. Our nature of joy will be the new nature, the divine nature of which we are made partakers; our power of joy the Holy Ghost who dwells in us. It is striking that even Jesus, after His resurrection, gave commandments to His apostles by the Holy Ghost. (Comp. Romans 8:11.) The 16th Psalm gives the fruit of dependence, the 17th, as God will be found as a righteous answer to Christ's claim, in virtue of His walk and obedience, to the beholding the Lord's face, and awaking after His likeness: of this we have

spoken on 1 John 3:1-24. The beholding the face of God, we find again in Revelation 22:1-21, only it is there, in a more general way, the glory. God and the Lamb are thrown, so to speak, together. It is not the Father and being with the Son. God and the Lamb that was slain are brought objectively into one point of view. The portion there shown to us is seeing His face, His servants serving Him, His name on our foreheads; that is, privilege in approaching, service as it should be, and the perfect and evident witness in us of whose we are. This is a more external part of the joy, but it is most precious, and not to be omitted.

Luke 9:1-62 will afford us light also, both on the glory, and living with Christ. It is, we know, a picture, a momentary manifestation of the glory of the kingdom. Moses and Elias are in the same glory with Christ. They are with Him in all the intimacy of familiar conversation; talking with Him. They are talking of what, necessarily, most interests Christ Himself, and man too -of His death, and that in connection with the great change about to take place in God's ways-His death at Jerusalem. They do so with a divine knowledge, for it was not yet come. The excellent glory too is there. They enter into it. Remark here, that Christ speaks of the same things with the same familiarity to His disciples on the earth. Another testimony gives what is more personal. For all we have spoken of is common to all saints. We shall have a white stone; that is the perfectly approving testimony of the Lord; and on it a name written, which no man knew but he who received it. That is, a joy and communion and personal knowledge of the Lord, which was for him alone who had it, between his soul and Christ. I have thus spoken of what is personally or individually enjoyed: there is, besides all this, the presenting of the Church to Christ; the glory of the kingdom, looking downwards, that is, towards that over which we shall reign. But these are not at the moment my object. But how bright and blessed is the hope that is before us, founded on the acceptance of Christ Himself; to see Him-be like Him-with Him in His own relationship with the Father-to converse with Him with divine intelligence-be before God with Him -enjoy unmingled unclouded blessedness of His presence-with and as Him-yet to receive it all from Him-to owe it all to Him. Another point in the transfiguration is worthy of all attention. They, that is Moses and Elias, enter into the cloud. Now this cloud was the dwelling-place of the divine glory-" the excellent glory," as Peter calls it. Hence, the three apostles feared, when Moses and Elias entered into it. But not so do we read of Moses and Elias. This, then, is another part of our hope.

If a voice comes out of the cloud for those on earth, it is the home of those who have their place in the heavenly glory. I may add, in connection with this part of my subject, that I do not doubt that the 145th Psalm gives us something analogous, on earth, to the intercourse between the Lord and Moses and Elias. If you 'look at verses" 5, 6, 7, what is, I doubt not, the intercourse between Messiah and the godly, in the excellent glory of Jehovah. But this by the bye. I would have the reader remark, how all this joy has its counterpart and commencement of realization down here, save the glory of the body alone. How the heart knows that, how sweet soever the common joy of saints, a necessary proof and accompaniment of the holy liberty of the Spirit, in a pure heart, yet that in joys and sorrows, there is a looking to Jesus, a communion with Jesus, a dependence of heart on His approbation, in which none can participate. On high it will be perfectly enjoyed and possessed, in the white stone and the new name. The heart that knows Him, could not do without this. Let us remark, too, how various the joy is-and so it is now-I delight in the nature of God-I delight in a Father's love-I delight in the glory of Jesus-I delight in my intimacy with Him-I delight in the blessedness of being with the Son before the Father-I delight in His being a man, with whom I

am, yet one divinely perfect-I delight in God. and the Lamb - the blessed and glorious display of redeeming counsels and divine glory-I delight in being like Christ-I delight in all the saints being like Him - I delight in His being glorified in them-I delight in adequate service, in a full and perfect witness, in a fit and heavenly worship--I in what is proper to God-1 delight in what is the glory of Christ Himself-as such, it is what is common to all, and what is peculiar to oneself. The Christian will remark, too, that in enjoying Christ in glory, he will not lose the blessed feeding on an humbled Savior; we know this also now, we delight in communion, and in hope in the glorified Lord; but we turn back and feed on Jesus, lowly and rejected, on the earth. If He is what we hope for in glory, He is what we need on earth; but our heavenly state will surely not diminish our power of delighting in the perfection of that blessed One. And as a pot of the manna, which had nourished Israel in the desert, was to be kept in the ark in Canaan, that Israel, in its rest, might know what had sustained them in the desert, so we shall eat of that hidden manna, which has nourished and fed our souls in our pilgrimage. But I close. May hope be as living in the saints, as the object of it is worthy of all their hearts. May they abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Let me recommend, as throwing light on this, the first chapter of Ephesians, where our position before God, our relationship with the Father, and the difference of our calling and our heritage, are very clearly- brought out.

Vol 02 - The Joys of Christ

The Joys of Christ

We ought to think of the joys of Christ, as well as of His sorrows. Nothing shows where a man's heart is, and what it is, more than, when oppressed, distressed, and full of sorrow, where his heart finds its joy, and if it does find a joy unreachd by it. We see these joys in Christ, a secret comfort in the midst of His sorrow. He had "meat to eat," which man knew not of. Besides, His communion with His Father there was this working of love to us. Paradise shone in upon His heart, in comforting the poor thief. "Go in peace" refreshed His spirit in the house of the Pharisee. "She hath done it for my burial" justified Mary against the reproach of selfish man. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes," was His joy in the sense of the heartless rejection to which the wickedness of man subjected Him. How blessed to the heart, besides learning where His joy was, to think that He found it in the working of His love to us!

I am not satisfied with the acknowledgment commonly made of Christ. It is not whether I am rich or poor, though the latter is the safer, truer, and better state. Sacrifice of convenience and worldly means is no way answering a character to God's glory, if the principle of the world's greatness is avowedly kept, though perhaps sacrificed to the dissemination of gospel truth.

Vol 02 - The Manifestation of Christ for Fullness of Joy

The Manifestation of Christ for Fullness of Joy

1 John 1:1-10 In Christ we have that which is perfect from God's own hand and heart; and what can we need more? and this is now in us by the Holy Ghost. The poor thief on the cross, when taught of God, knew all about Christ as if he had witnessed Christ's whole life. It was what his heart needed, and what God revealed. In the first verse of this chapter, we see the closest intimacy, but not leading to familiarity; for it shows us Christ's glory, and that produces adoration. The Holy Ghost is always ready to teach us about Christ; but it is astonishing what barrenness we bring into our hearts by admitting things which are not of God, and so grieving the Spirit, and hindering His teaching, and therefore our own joy, by having Christ manifested to us. They may not be sinful things that we admit into our hearts, but things all around us; things which are not our proper occupation. The proper occupations of life are no hindrances to our joy, nor any bar to our devotedness. Was not Christ a carpenter? Did not the apostle Paul show his devotedness in laboring night and day at his tent-making? Christ is for our joy in communion, as He is also our manna for daily strength; and we should learn in the common things of life His power and care, as Israel, by going through the wilderness, learned that God cared for their raiment, and their feet not swelling. But we should seek to walk unspotted, so that when there is a moment for joy alone with Him, we may be ready at once, and not have to retrace our steps and regain lost ground.

Fellowship is first presented, that our joy may be full. Then the nature of Him with whom we have fellowship. Relationship first, and then the nature made known. There may be attraction to Christ, but there can be no fellowship until full forgiveness is known-known on the ground of Christ's having done such a work that God cannot impute sin to a believer. In Hebrews 9:27, we see the common lot of all that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." But death and judgment are over in Christ for me. If one spot of sin is left on me, there can be no communion. If I think, on going into His presence, the first thing He will see is a spot-and if there is a spot, the perfect light must show it-I shall be afraid to go in. No spot can be allowed now; for God is not now behind a vail, which was the reason why Moses, because of the hardness of their hearts, could allow what cannot be allowed now.

Three things are true of our condition: we are in His presence without a vail; we have fellowship, and we are clean, Or there could be no communion. Where God has seen the blood He can never see sin, unless the blood could lose its value. But if I sin I am darkness, (for I am what my thoughts are,) and there can be no communion until my heart sees the sin where God sees it-on the cross.

If for one moment I do not watch the flesh, it will get into mischief, for Satan watches his opportunity. I have always an enemy to watch, but I need not get a bad conscience, for God is always able to keep me from falling. Having the Spirit of God to dwell in me, it is worth while not to grieve Him. Worldly thoughts show the state of the soul, that it is not filled with the Spirit, or there would be no room for them. We may be occupied with our daily work, and do our very best in it, in communion. If Christ were here, and you had to black his shoes, your heart would be full of Him

while doing it; and I need not say that you would do your very best to give them a polish. Do everything for the saints in this spirit, as doing it for Him; for communion, whether with Him or with each other, can only be in the power of the Holy Ghost. Therefore there is no communion when you grieve Him.

" Fellowship one with another," in verse 7, is the communion of saints. To say that " we have no sin," in our nature (verse 8) would prove us to be no Christians at all, as much as if we said " we have not sinned." But we ought not to sin. It is inexcusable failure, for He has promised that we shall not be tempted above our power; and this is true of the weakest as well as the strongest. So that there is no excuse for any, even if ever so weak; for He always provides a way of escape.

People plead sudden temptation-and it may be true that the temptation is sudden-but the unmortified heart, that causes the temptation to have power, is not sudden.

We must look to the cause. Rain may come in at the roof of the house, but show itself lower down, and we must look to how it came in. Christ dealt with the root of Peter's sin. He did not reproach him with his denial, but with' his boasting self-confidence. The constitution of the ashes of the "red heifer " (in Numbers 19:1-22) shows God's holy jealousy about sin. The man who touched but a dead bone could not be restored to communion till he (in type) had a sense of the heinousness of that sin, in the judgment poured upon Christ for it. Christ has been consumed by the wrath of God for my sin, even if that sin were but the result of carelessness. Still the very "ashes" prove that the sin is put away -that it is all burnt up-that it no longer exists. The sin was put upon the victim, "made sin for us," so that even the ashes made him that touched them unclean.

Vol 02 - The Mercies of God: The Motive to a Living Sacrifice

The Mercies of God: The Motive to a Living Sacrifice

Romans 12:1-21 This chapter is a great division in this epistle. It begins with the expression of the full result due from the saint, because of all that has preceded it, in the grace of God, set forth in the epistle. " I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." What follows would also show us that however God acts first on individual souls, by His divine method towards them, yet He never sees them out of the connection of the body of Christ, and the building of it up together in the faith, by the varied spiritual helps and gifts of the members.

How we come, through the course of the epistle, to the point to which we are brought in chapter xii is full of interest and instruction. The epistle, it may be said, is, in its general aspect, the theory of grace and salvation, brought in by the mercies of God, on the depth of the ruin and the need of all, and of every man, as guilty before God; and on the way of final condemnation. The course of the epistle has been already marked out by another, so that some repetition will be necessary to bring us to our chapter, and place it in all its force. The guilt of all is the matter of the earlier chapters; and that it is by grace and righteousness alone, through faith, that salvation is given, is the next period in it. The summing up of the fullness of the dealing of God in grace we find in the last verse of the fifth chapter: " That as sin had reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The security of grace to the believer we find in the last verse of the eighth chapter: " For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." How blessed is the sense to our souls of the marvelous dealing of our God! Fullness and security of all grace in Christ, according to the purpose of God's own will, in the raising up of the soul out of its ruin and condemnation, to life eternal, and complete in resurrection; carrying with it all that the yearnings of the Spirit of God could teach the soul to desire! The last verse of the fifth chapter, quoted above, declaring the fullness of grace, is taken up in its proper result in the first verse of the eighth chapter: " Now there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," because the law of the Spirit of life made them free from the law of sin and death. This is the perfect deliverance wrought in such a grace. Chapters vi and vii are left to their proper functions, guarding the doctrine given.* (* The sixth and seventh chapters, being each a separate parenthesis, not hindering, but securing, the argument.) From the last verse of the eighth chapter we pass as distinctly to the first verse of the twelfth: " We beseech you therefore," &c. All these places, taken consecutively,* form an unbroken cord of divine goodness in the order of the fullness of grace; the first verse of the twelfth chapter being, as was said, the expression of the full result, morally and divinely, due from all that preceded. Such are the mercies! The believer is addressed now in life and capacity; and, as looking always to the fountain of the grace,** is besought to offer

his body " a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."

(* 9, 10, 11, being national chapters, and manifesting, as well, the consistency of the actings of God.)

(** There is an expression in the word, "Through the faith of him," which has not resolved itself to some minds. It is the faith of the person of Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily.)

It is the power of God, introduced through faith, that works the end of the desirous soul, and gives God the glory. How all the imaginations that would charge the way of God in grace, and His purpose to the saint, with failure, because it is of grace, in forming the soul in restoration to His image and separation to Himself, come to naught before such an exhortation! So made ours, and thus continue the blessings of grace, unto all fullness. "These things," saith the apostle, (1 John xiii,) " have I said 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 only begotten Son of God." We find the fruit of all the blessed dealing of God ever in the path of faith, from the enjoining believers to reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to the painful process of dying indeed, as a living sacrifice, and by dying, to live by God our life, and to God; for if we be dead with Christ, we believe also that we shall live with Him.

It is a great fault not to see how God is with us, and not to be using all the power of God by faith, (that it may be by grace,) till every thought is in obedience to Christ, and He lives, not we; having our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

It is difficult for human nature to learn-and it never does learn but by the teaching of God-concerning itself and Himself, that faith is now the only way of God, and that there is no other way that God may be known as all in all. This is evidently founded on the truth that we are under the last dispensations of God's dealings unto life. It includes the fact of the failure of man being total, and the reinstatement of man in new creation, as anything, to be purely in grace, and standing in the power of God. God, in His divine wisdom, saw that this must come in all clearness to men's hearts, and therefore the successive revelations still pointed thither, till this, the last of all, shone out without question. Whatever appointments were made, the living God was all in all; and the 'mystery, that faith in the method of God unto life and salvation, is the established point at which we are. If Paul sends an epistle (1 Tim.) full of the ordinances of order in the Spirit, the "mystery of godliness" is still "God manifest in the flesh," preached, believed on, received up into glory. Our consciences are set free from the dead works which were of old, whether brought out of the grave of Christ, or manufactured anew by men's vanity. It is the living God we have to do with, and therefore a living sacrifice we have to offer. " I arm myself with the same mind that was in Christ Jesus," " who was put to death in flesh, and made alive in the Spirit."

We who are alive from the dead are awake out of the grave with Jesus; we survey, in spirit, as risen men, the sinful tendencies of the old nature; (while we are still waiting with desire to be clothed upon from heaven;) and in the communion that grace by Jesus Christ brought me into, I judge it and find it judged; I confess and find cleansing. How precious is the manifold testimony and power of the blood of Christ! It is the testimony of death accomplished. The life is before me, shed forth, and the blood, now mine, is the cleansing of Him that is alive for evermore; the Spirit

serving to apply, through faith, all the grace in which I stand. From whence the Spirit came, thither must the Spirit tend and lead. Nor let any suppose that the action of the Spirit is sensibly separate from the conscience of the new creature. Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith. What is born of the Spirit is spirit. With the new creation, therefore, which is of God by faith, the Spirit of God finds a home, and sympathy, and intelligence; for it is of God. Now faith accepts nothing but what is of God; and whatever word of truth in Christ the soul accepts, as of God, bears its fruit. We are begotten again by it. He that has confessed and believed is forgiven. He that believeth on Him that raised up Jesus is quickened by the same Spirit; even as Abraham, given in type, was quickened naturally, being as dead.

If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, because (see margin) of the Spirit that dwelleth in you. All this is of grace by faith. All is of God and not of ourselves, yet of which we are made partakers. Infinite grace! We see how effectually it is ours when we read that the sufficiency which is ours by faith is of God, though we are happy in counting nothing as of ourselves, but rejoice in the hope of the glory of God by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

" Be ye not, therefore, conformed to this world," is still, as the rest of the epistle, the dealing of God with the individual; and " the world " is used in the sense of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride-the showy, glaring things-which the world delight in; and are all, not of the Father, but of the world. The world means also something more than this, as lying in its general condition in the power of the wicked one; but the above appears to apply to the individual condition of the saint, because the exhortation continues, " but be ye transformed in the renewing of your minds." In fact the image of Christ taking more and more room in our soul, the glory of this shall be revealed, not only as being clothed, (not being found naked,) but revealed " in us." Being a living sacrifice is the foundation to this; and blessed it is to be objects of such an exhortation.

Under such an order of blessing every exercise is to be fruitful of something, and to work such a subjection of our wills as gives to the Spirit the rule of our actions. But the constant sense of being His (and His we are) is necessary to our doing what we have to do to Him and not to man; while it causes the sense of service and of Himself to abide with us. It makes the saint act so as that the Lord will own the works, which shall meet and welcome him when received into the everlasting habitations of the heavenly kingdom, to the glory of God. But though this epistle is engaged with the dealing of the God of all grace with the individual, yet so large a portion of his character and service is to be formed as a member of the body of Christ (how vain to think to exercise these things in the world) that the apostle could not leave out the saints' place in it. Indeed it seems as if all had been preparation for this; and, if duly waited on, would save the Lord's interference in immediate reproof and discipline. It returns, in the 9th verse, to the personal grace; but it is a divine way on earth, and nothing short of it. The practical form of the injunction in the 10th "verse is much to be noted. The "kindly affection" there mentioned is given in a word applied peculiarly in the Greek tongue to natural and domestic affection. The brotherly love is of heavenly birth. The relationship is from above, and they are children of the Father; hut the family is still here, and the affections are in safeguard. Let each sentence be studied and seen as that which is the saint's way. I question the just translation of " condescend to men of low estate." We have to look to other portions of the word for the full expression of the relationship of the body. To him that overcometh the departure of Christianity, of his day and time, are the promises made. Affection to Christ and to

all that is of Christ, and from Christ, and is Christ's, will be a mark of faithfulness, carrying its sure blessing, (for have we not all gone astray?) and will return full of desire to Christ the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. And lastly, " be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," which is the fulfillment of the saints' place to the world.

Vol 02 - The Nature and Effect of Discipline Exemplified in God's People

The Nature and Effect of Discipline Exemplified in God's People No subject can be more deeply interesting to the saint, than the nature and effect of discipline, which our God, in the plenitude of His love and wisdom, administers to each of His people.

Interesting as the subject is, and one so necessary to the secret exercises of the soul, yet it is little understood; and the dealings of God are either counted strange, or there is no just or useful solution of them.

I propose, therefore, in the Lord's mercy, to present, in a series of papers, the peculiar discipline, its object and its effect, as detailed to us, respecting each distinguished witness for God on earth.

I am induced to do this, in order to accustom the minds of saints to study more a subject which of all others connects us with the secret, loving thoughts of our God about us.

I accordingly begin with Adam. Though not properly heading the life of faith, yet he was the subject of severe discipline, and is a remarkable illustration of its effects. Adam at one time needed no discipline, a state unknown to any since. When he fell the day of discipline began. He that was made in the image of God, that approached nearer to God than any creature, even he is now imbued with a spirit and a nature so adverse to God, that if he would live for God he must learn to renounce his own will, under the training of the mighty hand of God. To Adam this must have been a strange contrast to the once easy acquiescence of his mind with the will of God. Consequently he must have felt it the more; and as the rebellion of his heart was subdued, he could contrast the rule of God with the powerlessness of innocence. As innocent, he fell; as fallen, the hand of God exalts him. Not ignorantly, or passively, but in all the activity of anxious conviction. Innocence with him was a weak thing; the power of God subduing his nature, no longer innocent, was a great thing. He never would have sought the innocent state, for he knew how weak it was. He knew now that he was able to do more with the power of God in a fallen state, than in unassisted innocence he ever could aspire to. As innocent, he had no sense of life; as fallen, yet believing in the revelation of God, he could now name the only creature he had not named, the mother of all living. Under the sentence of death, he could speak of life; while as innocent, his fear and his penalty, (if disobedient) was the loss of it. Innocence had no charm for him now. True, it was a moment of wondrous bliss; but a flight so high only ensures precipitation to disgrace and dismay. Surely, then, he could not seek a return to it. He had been advanced to where he could not stand; but now, under discipline, he stands morally higher, though in condition he is lower. Adam was not deceived, but he was influenced. He early discovers the propensities of nature (no doubt in their best estate) which eventually led to his fall. Neither the world, nor its glory, nor any class of the inferior creatures, supply the craving of the sociable heart of Adam: for him there was not found an help meet for him, and it was not good for him to be alone. The instincts of his nature must be satisfied; but still more, when his wife was deceived, he yields to her influence, as he himself

admits, " she gave unto me, and I did eat." The first man disclosed this secret of his heart, that he was dependent on another; so that when Satan would not venture to beguile him, the object of his affections successfully tempted him. Now they are both naked, and both estranged from God, and hiding themselves from His presence, the first lessons of His grace are propounded to them. In discipline there is properly conviction of sin, as well as correction of it. With a saint it is never penance or compensation for wrong-doing. Chastening or correction is to make me a partaker of holiness, not a sufferer for sin. It is not to improve my nature, but to so convince me of its utter helplessness that I may be devoted unto God, which is the true and distinct meaning of sanctification, and without which no man shall see the Lord. There is exceeding pain in being convicted of sin; and if there be not a strong sense of the grace of God when we are convicted, there will be great depression, and a tendency to give up all in despair. Hence the exhortation, " faint not when thou art convicted [Greek] of him." God does not convict hastily. He likes that our cogitations on our own acts should convict ourselves. It is very little use to tell a vain man of his faults; it generally only urges him the better to conceal or extenuate them. It is very hard to induce a person in ill health and unconvinced of it, to adopt the necessary regimen; the more you remonstrate with such an one, the more strenuously will he endeavor to prove you mistaken, and you exasperate the malady you would assuage, while the really sin-convicted soul, like the patient tremblingly alive to his danger, is ready to receive every true palliative and remedy offered. When Adam had perfected the devices of his now estranged and corrupted heart, when the aprons are on and he behind the trees, the voice of God searches him. We are continually allowed to run to the end of our own plans, and thus to learn how futile they are. Many a weary hour and long day is squandered in the execution of plans which, when tested by the searching word of God, must be entirely abandoned. What is the nature of your plans? are they to distance and conceal you from God, or are they to bring you nigh unto Him, and to unfold to Him the minutest secrets of your heart? You may thus test your plans. Adam's were to cloak himself and to escape the eye of God, and God allowed him to complete his schemes. Oh, how well each of us knows what this is! The poor prodigal tries the far country, but returns to his father's house a really humbled man. The many inventions are all tested and found to be as husks, and then the soul listens to the gracious tones of that voice it would fain escape from. It is a terrible question to answer, "Where art thou?" when you find out the insufficiency of all expedients to screen your conscience from the action of God's word. Did the prodigal like to answer it when feeding the swine? Did Peter like to answer it when enjoying the cheer of his Master's foes, when warming himself at their fire? Did Adam like it when he remembered the position which he occupied in contrast with the one he had forfeited? The answer to that question tells his state. The voice of God searches the conscience, and if it has not learned that it is with God it has to do, the history of it must be, "I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." Concealment is the first effort of a suffering conscience. You neither like to see yourself, nor that any one else should see you, as you are; and when God's voice reaches you, you hide yourself; while concealment betrays distance as well as evasion. There must be some activity in the conscience when concealment is resorted to, especially when no penalty (but the fact of your guilt being known) is attached to it. The babe who breaks a toy conceals it! Concealment is, in fact, resorted to in order that we may appear better than we are. If we were willing that every one should see us as we are, there would be no concealment. A disguise was never yet adopted but for self-exaltation. A lie was never maintained but to give us credit we did not deserve. When God deals with us we learn that " all things are naked and opened unto the

eyes of him with whom we have to do." The word (see Hebrews 4:1-16) acts on our conscience, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" but it conducts us to God. It is with Him, and not the word merely, "we have to do." The voice of the Lord penetrated the soul of Adam; and though girdled with fig leaves, which satisfied his own standard of morality, yet when the word came it tried him, and he was afraid because he was naked, (naked before God,) and he hid himself. It is important to study those two actions of the conscience. They give rise to much exercise and trouble in the soul, because they are confounded; that is when one has satisfied his own conscience, has adopted some system which conceals from himself and others the real state of his soul, he floats for awhile on peaceful waters; but no sooner is the voice of the Lord heard, but all the elements seem to him involved in a mighty tornado. His sleep is broken; he is another Philippian jailor, "he is afraid." The fact that he is naked and opened before God flashes fearfully before him, and so much the worse because he had deceived himself, and his reputation with others had helped it on. The action of the word of God would be desperate and overwhelming to the soul if we had not a "great high priest passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God." His sympathy, on the ground of His atonement, in full effect before God, sets the convicted conscience at rest, and at the throne of grace, too, to receive the grace and the mercy it needs. This is just what Adam had to learn; consequently the voice pursues him to his hiding-place.

It is in vain that one seeks to escape the eye of God. When He determines that it shall search you, if you take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there He will reach you! Oh, how the conscience that seeks escape from God overshadows itself within the foliage of this world! It engrosses itself with man's leading and most ambitious pursuits, but in vain. The "watchers" will cry aloud, "Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves." The refuge of lies shall be exposed, and the soul must have its account with God. It must answer, "WHERE ART THOU?" and all the answer needed is the tale of the plain and simple facts, "I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself!" The moment the soul of the saint is in full confession, he is in the region of forgiveness and restoration, and the Spirit expostulates with it as man would with his fellow. Adam tried his own expedients, and they were vain and profitless; now he will be a listener to the grace that tells of the sure and perfect remedy. But mark, he first discloses the true and full tale of the condition of his soul; he confesses his fear - his nakedness - his effort to hide himself! Discipline had effected this. Now God instructs him. Adam is "meek," and God will teach him His way. He has learned that innocence was no protection against an undue influence, and that the absence of evil motive is no guarantee for true moral action. He, of all men, knew what this was preeminently, and yet it was no safeguard. He was tempted, and he yielded to it. Conscious, indeed, that innocence was gone, and evil motive could rule, he still trusts to himself to screen and rectify his disgrace. The expedient he adopted satisfied his own moral sense, and, what was infinitely more delusive, the moral sense of the one whose good opinion he loved to secure, and whose satisfaction was a bulwark to his own. This is a snare that few, even godly men, escape. It is, in other words, the reputation with one's friends; pressed on the conscience as the verdict of the last court of appeal, and conclusive to it on any recurrence of anxious inquiry. There is a reciprocity in this kind of reputation. What you admit to me, I in return admit for you. If a girdle of fig leaves measures the demands of your moral sense, and you accept it as sufficient for me, I in return do the same for you. This is the essence and true character of all human and religious reputation. But the voice of God sounds, and Adam is troubled in his

deceitfully serene and false position. That voice probes the entire condition, and at last he finds himself "naked and opened before the eyes of him with whom we have to do." He confesses all, and he is on the uppermost form for instruction with a humble and a contrite spirit. To the divine challenge he admits (though with an excuse and mitigation) that he was tempted and had eaten. His justification lowers him morally more than the charge he seeks to justify. Yet it is a confession, and it is accepted as such; and our God enters on the gracious work of unfolding His counsels. To each actor in this wondrous scene is now meted the judgment due to the part he has played in it. Satan's sentence is first pronounced, and while his doom is fixed, the deliverance from his power and the eternal remedy of the gospel is declared to the listening and convicted Adam.

It is the divine way, in restoring a soul, to establish it first in the power of God, and in His grace. The draft of the fishes and the words of Jesus taught this to Peter. It is the ground work for all godly improvement. When the heart is established, as David's was, ("the Lord has taken away thy sin,") then it can bear to hear what is the discipline necessary to correct that in him which sin could act on. It is important to carry with us the process by which the Lord reveals to the soul the discipline which He will impose. Whatever has provoked our failure is denounced, not in general terms, but in the proportion, and in the order too, of its guilt; at the same time commanding and promising the true mode of deliverance. Satan is not only sentenced, but the effect of his malice retribution. Man shall be avenged of his enemy. The serpent is not only assigned, as a signal judgment, to crawl and eat dust, in perpetual hostility to the lord of the creation, but its "violent dealing shall come sown on its own pate;" its head shall be bruised. The next brought up for judgment is the woman. She was the proximate cause of Adam's failure; but as the principal had received his sentence, she must now hear hers. She is condemned to times of great sorrow on every addition to the human family which she has been instrumental in subjecting to the power of death; with unconditional subjection to her husband, the want of which bore its firstfruits in her own fall, and led to Adam's also. Each transgressor is not only sentenced to a penalty corresponding to his guilt, but the relation in which that guilt has affected Adam is also markedly repaired. God's servant must not be touched with impunity, but he must not err himself. The righteous God will avenge his cause, but only in righteousness. He cannot overlook the frailty of His servant, though He will rescue him when the unmitigated sentence is executed. When God enters into judgment, evenhanded justice is dispensed. But acts are criminal in a greater or less degree: that which implicates God's witness in distance from Him being more so than the failure which that witness evinces by being drawn into distance. The one who misleads another comes under a severer penalty than he who is misled; though he is not exempted because he discovers moral feebleness. The infliction of penalties are not necessarily for correction, nor is the discipline. There was no hope of amending Satan, but yet severe penalties are inflicted on him because Adam had suffered from him. Man was God's representative on earth; injury to him was treason against God. Hence in divine discipline there is always a correction of the evil principle of nature, and also correction for the trespass we may have committed on our fellowman. This is exemplified in the sentence on Adam. His sin was yielding to his wife's request in opposition to the word of God. Probably he did not do so with intent; that is, not after weighing both he decided in favor of the former. But the word was not hid in his heart, and did not control him; for if it had been he would not have hearkened to the voice of his wife. But having surrendered his place, he is to bear the penalty of it, and become the great slave and laborer on the earth, of which he was the ruler and prince. Everything on it would bear indications of insubjection to its rightful master. To assuage the evil, he should spend

his life and live thereby; but in the end return to dust, as dust he was. There is deeply instructive teaching in all this; even that if we surrender the position in which God places us in any relation, the one we retire to will inevitably notify to us, in fearful reminiscences, what has been our forfeiture. The smallest thorn and briar reminded Adam that he had surrendered his lordship in hearkening to the voice of his wife. If David retires from the duties of the king, he must surrender, in a painful way, the honors of one. He is reminded how lightly he regarded them by the successful rebellion of his own son. "Cursed be he who doeth the work of the Lord negligently." All the influence of Barnabas would not induce Paul to take Mark who had returned from Pamphylia. The refusal of the apostle reminded him how he trifled with and abandoned the post once his, but easier lost than regained. This is the nature of Adam's discipline. He is reminded by everything of what he surrendered, and the less carefully and diligently he labored to subdue the numerous reminiscences of his failure, the more they increased, and the less able was he to sustain himself against them. By the sweat of his brow he regained his position for his own need. David returned, after a severe campaign, to the throne. Mark was profitable for the ministry after the discipline had produced its effect. Faith always walks above discipline, though walking under it. Adam hears the sentence on all, and, in faith consenting to it, rises above it, and calls his wife's name Eve, because she is "the mother of all living." Faith reaches unto God, therefore it can submit to the position which judicially and correctively falls to an erring soul, and looks to God for His own time and mode of deliverance. It accepts the punishment of its iniquity, not as retribution for it, but as correction. Discipline has in fact produced its greatest effect where the soul submits to it as trusting in God. Adam shows this in making amends to his wife (in thus naming her) for his former reproaches; and what was, in unsubdued nature, the agent of harm to him is now, in the eye of faith, the channel of life. Adam, disciplined in faith, God clothes him, yet discipline must not be arrested nor reprieved. God drives out the man, and sends him to till the ground from whence he is taken, to find out what sort of a man he was, and to learn how his faith would sustain him.

It is in our immediate relations of life, in the innermost circle, where there is least reserve, we most truly disclose ourselves. A man who cannot rule his own house how shall he take care of the Church of God Power is more effectively applied immediately than at a distance. If Adam is learning from his discipline, it ought to be seen in his power to avoid the evil for which he was suffering. It does not appear that he does; for Eve assumes the place of naming his eldest son, again losing sight of her own place, and again, beyond doubt, filling her firstborn (which his name alone would suggest) with aspirations which led to his fearful contradiction of it, as well as the painful evidence of her own misapprehension of God's promise. The introduction of death where life was expected; the fact that one child was murdered and the other the murderer; the one in whom their hopes centered must have been a trial to Adam that we can little conceive—a discipline which had its effects—for though it is said that Eve named Seth in the first instance, yet it is also written that Adam called his name Seth, showing, as it appears to me, that he at length had learned what the discipline was sent to teach him, namely, to act for God, above all influence, and not to allow any influence to distract him from the path of faith. He appears to have learned this in the last recorded act of his life, a very pleasing consummation, showing the effect of discipline; and a very fit and happy finale to his history. To sum up, we learn from this history that innocence or absence of evil motive is no safeguard against influence. That satisfying our own moral sense, or the moral sense of any one else, is no proof that we can answer, or have answered, to God's claim on us. That if we cease to maintain our divinely appointed place, we are sure to fall, and the word of God, which

would have preserved, us in our place, does not act on the heart outside that place. But that learning to follow our own inclinations, our discipline will always be of a character to correct our failure, and to remind us, in very minute ways, (as did the thorns to Adam,) what our frailty has reduced us to.

Lastly, when discipline has effected its object, our history closes.

Vol 02 - The Obedient One

The Obedient One Read Luke 4:1-32. In the sixteenth Psalm we find the Lord taking His place with the remnant, the excellent of the earth, in whom is all His delight. And we see, in chapter iii of this Gospel, that after His baptism, He was anointed as minister of the circumcision-the Holy Ghost descending on Him-and then His genealogy is traced up to the human family; " the son of Adam, which was the Son of God." His genealogy is not here traced up to David, that being in Jewish connection. Jehovah having anointed Him to preach the gospel to the poor, and the Lord having taken the form of a servant, (I speak not now of His power in Godhead,) he must fulfill the place of one: and so we find Him calling God His master: saying, in Psalms 16:1-11, " O my soul, thou halt said unto the Lord, (Jehovah,) thou art my Lord, my goodness extendeth not to thee;" or, in other words, " Jehovah, my Master," &c. As a servant, therefore, we never find He did His own will; for a servant is doing his own will, he is a bad servant. A servant is to do exactly his master's will, and not his own.

Then again we find Him as the dependent man, praying and waiting on Jehovah for deliverance; and never using His own power to deliver Himself; as in Psalms 40:1-17, " I waited patiently for Jehovah, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry." So likewise, when the multitude came " with swords and staves," to take Him, He said, " Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" It was not merely that He did not have the twelve, legions of angels, but having taken the place of lowly dependence on Jehovah, He would not even ask for them. And as the trials thickened, even to the drinking of the bitter cup, He said, " The cup which my Father giveth me shall I not drink it?" If when everything that might have stopped a man in this path of obedience, y in His way, He went steadily on doing His Father's will, His obedience to the last must also be put to the test. He had presented a perfect God to man, for He said, " He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"; and He must, to the end, present an obedient man to God. " Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." It was not in His will that. He had to learn subjection-that was ever perfect - but He had to learn all that obedience cost, and all that it meant, even unto death. Moreover, if we walk in this same path, beloved friends, we also shall find trial, though we shall find blessing also. For 'we shall find it refreshing to our souls to tell of His love and grace to others, just as He found it blessing when He said, " Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest, and he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." Thus His joy is fulfilled in yourselves. In all His trials He had no friends to stand by Him; but He was surrounded only by those who were like unto bulls; as He said, "strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round." Still it was His meat to do His Father's will-" He must needs go through Samaria," although He knew it was the path of rejection.

Thus, as " a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," He went steadily on in the path of obedience. Not like the first Adam, who went out of the path of obedience; but, although tested in every step He took, He traveled on through every difficulty, till at last He bore God's wrath for man's disobedience. In this fourth chapter of Luke the Lord's path of obedience begins; and it

begins at a time when Satan had the mastery over man uncontrolled. For man had become the slave of Satan, as well as the slave of his own lusts, and so Satan had power over the bodies and over the souls of men. Satan had power over man in two ways, first, by allurements, and second by terror. By allurements in the way of man's lusts: by terror, as having the power of death. As the tempter he acts on our lusts; as we see an instance in Judas. The spirit of covetousness was in him, and then Satan presented that which met it; and this he is doing with man every day. Then again he has power over man by terror, for "he that hath the power of death is the devil," and through terror he led Judas to hang himself. Therefore if the Lord came down to deliver man, His obedience had to be put to the test, in these two points in which Satan had power over man. In the wilderness Satan presented himself to the Lord as a tempter trying to allure him out of the path; but in Gethsemane he exerted all his power of terror, to frighten the Lord out of the path of obedience. Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, but we are led by our lusts; and therefore it is that Satan has power over us.

Mark here, that not only was Jesus led of the Spirit into the wilderness, but after being there forty days tempted of the devil, He returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. Then again the Lord goes to be tempted by the devil in far different circumstances than Adam was in, in paradise. Everything there spoke of the goodness of God; but in this wilderness, the Lord was tried on every hand; and there was no spiritual help, not even a John, but He was surrounded by wild beasts, and was hungry with nothing to satisfy His hunger. But amidst all, with everything against Him, He stood firm in this obedience to God His Father.

Then observe that He met all the temptations of Satan just in the very same way that we have to meet them every day, that is, by the written word of God. He did not say to Satan, 'I am God, and you are Satan, and therefore go away immediately;' that would have been no help for us if He had. Neither is it the archangel warring against Satan; but the Lord meeting him as a man, with the written word of God, and all His quotations are from the book of Deuteronomy. If the Lord came to deliver man, He must put Himself into the place of temptation and trial, and as man overcome where man had failed, and where he was lying under the power of Satan. It was not possible that Jesus could fail. If He could have done, it would have been worse than ever for us. But we see Satan tries to introduce into the heart of Jesus what he had too successfully introduced into the heart of Adam, but He could not, blessed be God! Satan said, "all this power will I give thee, for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it." Jesus, who had walked in the constant joy of God, was to be exercised by temptation forty days in the wilderness, and to know what it was to have Satan working at Him for forty days.

It is a great comfort for us to know that Christ thus measured the whole power of Satan; for Satan put out his whole power against Him then, save the power of death, the time for which was not then come. But here was the strong man armed, keeping his goods in peace; but there was a stronger than he to overcome him, and take from him his armor wherein he trusted, and divide his spoils. While it was in so lowly a house as the human body, that Jesus overcame the strong man, it proved who Jesus was. Any other man had nothing to do but to go along with Satan, for Satan goes with him; but here Jesus had to get into the circumstances and to take this body, to visit Satan; and that proved that the person who was there was stronger than the strong man. You never find that any other man needs to be abstracted from men to be tried by the devil; for men are at home with Satan, while they are strangers to God. If man would be in communion with God, he

must, like Moses, go up into the mountain; but Jesus did not need to be away from the conditions of human nature, to be in communion with His Father. He always was this. In grace He served men, but His true place was always with His Father. He took a place lower than Moses, but His person was higher. He took this place in order to meet Satan, which was the strongest proof of His divine love. While other men are at home with Satan and strangers to God, this emptied, humbled one would give full proof of His love, and as a stranger with Satan is met by him in circumstances abstracted from the ordinary condition of human nature, neither eating nor drinking, but afterward He hungered. Christ would not have His way in anything. Though tempted by Satan to command the stones to be made bread, He would not; for He came to show what man's obedience was, and virtually says in answer, I have emptied myself, and now I must wait for the word of the Lord, for man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The written word of God has authority over man, and it is also wisdom to guide man. Here I am the Son of man, and under the authority of the word of God, therefore I will do nothing but by the word.' I live by the Father and speak by the Father, as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.' "By the word of thy lips, I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." (Psalms 17:4.)

Here we see the amazing importance of the written word. If God ministers grace and life to us, it is through the word; and if He acts on our wills and thoughts, it is by the word. Jesus did not resist Satan by saying, 'I am God, therefore do you go away; but He withstood him with the written word; and so now should we. "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not;" for in the power of the Holy Ghost he takes up the written word, and then Satan is utterly powerless. The written word is the "sword of the Spirit," which Satan cannot grapple with.

If walking in the path of obedience, that is power, almighty power; for if walking in this path, I am going in a divine path, and nothing can take me out of it. The child of God, having the Holy Ghost, can quote the word when tempted. One single sentence will silence Satan; and here lies the secret of strength; it is not intellect, but the Holy Ghost keeping us dependent, and enabling us to use the right word at the right time. If some object, and say, "oh, I am so ignorant of scripture, and so weak," the answer to that is, "there has no temptation taken you, but that which is common to man, but God is faithful, (who is behind it all,) " and will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." Ignorance does not matter, if we are only faithful. The power and grace needed are there, to keep our feet from going astray.

It is by deceiving that the devil overcomes us. That which was a snare to Adam, was an occasion of obedience to Christ. "The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it. ' If any one says, what harm is there in eating when you are hungry? I answer, no harm: but the harm is in doing our own will. The question is not, where is the harm in doing it, but why am I doing it? Is it to please God, or to please myself? If it is to please myself, that is doing my own will, and that is sin. If I ask myself why I am going to do this or that, if I cannot say it is to please God, then it is sin.

Some will say, am I always to be under such restraint? Ah, there comes out the true state of your soul; you do not like to be under the restraint of God's will. The old nature hates the restraint, while the new nature will delight in it. "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." We are quickened by the word of God at the first, and then we are to live by it. Not as the law, which says do this, and do not do that, but having life, we are to live by the word, the expression of God's mind and will, and thus have His will, and not our

own, as the motive for all we do. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Thus living unto God, our reasons and motives being according to His will, it will not be like fencing the old man from the power of temptation, but it will be living in the power of the new man. Man was to live by eating.

Power was the next thing. All had been subjected to Adam, and now all was to be given to the Son of man. "And the devil taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me: and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine."

Now, Satan is openly detected, and hence the word, "get thee behind me, Satan." But mark the perfect wisdom of the Lord's reply: He says not a word about taking the kingdoms from Satan, or about prophesies relating to them, but takes up the first common principle of obedience: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

It is no matter who all the kingdoms belong to; the simple word is a fitting word. It was the heart's question of its relationship with God; and if my heart is right, I shall begin to thank and to praise God before I receive the blessing; and why? Because I have got the God of the blessing. Look at Eliezer! he would not be contented until he had the word that Rebecca was of Bethuel's family, although he had had a remarkable answer to his prayer; but before she promises to accompany him, he bows down and worships the God of his master Abraham; thus rejoicing in the giver of the blessing itself. To worship God is ever the highest thing, though it may seem to be less. It is the immediate link of an obedient heart with God, and it was this that, in the power of the Holy Ghost, made the Lord look not at whom the glory and the power really belonged, but to whom the worship belonged; and said, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Here the Lord is put into the place of Messiah glory; but what could be more subtle than Satan's quoting scripture promises when tempting the Lord to prove His Sonship? But why should He throw Himself down, before the time came? There was no command for that; and so the Lord replies, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." For tempting God is trying God before the need comes; not when it comes, as many have said. Christ could not listen to Satan for one moment; but, alas! we often do listen to him, that we may get a little bit of the world. Had God told Him to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple? He. Then He would not do it, to prove whether God loved Him or not. Israel did tempt God, by saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" After the Lord had been stoned out of Jerusalem He returned again; but this could not be tempting God, because it was His Father's will for Him to go there again. Therefore He says, "Let us go into Judea again." How different it was when the sisters of Lazarus sent for Him. He moved not to them, but "abode two days still in the same place where he was," though the sympathies of His heart would have led Him to them at once. But He waited the word from His Father.

Beloved friends, we want the word behind us, saying, "this is the way, walk ye in it." It is not what may be before us; but it is the word coming to me before I do a thing, and not afterward. If you

have not the knowledge of God's will as to any matter, never do it; for if you do not know that it is God's will you should do such a thing, you will have uncertainty, although it may be God's will that you should be doing it; and acting thus you will be stumbled at every step, instead of going on in happy confidence. You ought never to have to question the certainty of God's being with you. Remember also that the word is not power and strength if you are not in the place of obedience. " If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love."

Then mark another thing. In Luke we have ever the moral connection of things before God. Two or three sabbaths are brought together to bring out certain principles, and so the temptations are not given in the order in which they occurred. It is the moral connection in the human character, and with the human family, the Spirit, by Luke, gives; and therefore the most spiritual and subtle temptation is mentioned last, though in order of time it was second. In these progressive exercises of Christ, we get the progressive exercises in our souls. Promises suppose trial, and the Lord met Satan in every point which Satan could try us by, where we are; I say, where we are, for if Adam had been in paradise, there could have been no question about "the kingdom."

Christ put Himself into all the difficulties which man has made. The Lord has gone through all the temptations any saint can possibly be in. The saint wants the help of the Lord in temptation, while the sinner wants redemption. " The angels kept not their first estate," neither did Adam; and when Christ was here, He was tempted not to keep His first estate, but blessed be God He did; and the saints have practically in their walk to keep their first estate.

I am to reckon myself dead unto sin, and alive unto God. Are we doing this? If not, we are not keeping our first estate. It does not suppose a man led astray by his lusts; but the godly man wants help to walk in the path Christ has marked out for him, being constantly exercised by temptation; Satan ever putting something before him to try his faith. Satan did this with the Lord, but He passed through it all and bound the strong man; and now He enters into all our sorrows and keeps us in the power of God, as He will the remnant in the latter day; so keeping us by the power of the Holy Ghost "that we may be able to stand in the evil day." The Lord looks now out of Israel, and shows Himself ready to take up any poor sinner that will receive Him, as He says, " I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Therefore we are not always at the evil day work,-there is blessing for some days. If the gospel is being set forth by us in the power of God, it is not in detail an evil day to us; but a joyful one if souls are converted. Still, looked at in the general condition of man, it is an " evil day." It is of immense importance that we grieve not the Spirit, for this is the secret power of our life. The power of the Holy Ghost was as perfectly seen in the temptations of our Lord, in the wilderness, as when the Lord was casting out the legion.

I would just turn for a moment to say, that when Satan promised to give the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, as having a title to give, it was true in one sense, and false in another. Satan can give as far as men's lusts are concerned. He led on Pontius Pilate, and he led on Judas, and he still leads on people to seek riches, power, honor, and "greetings in the market-place;" but such "have their reward;" for God sits behind it all as judge. Still it is by men's lusts that Satan works. Yet, in another sense, power belongeth unto God, and He pulleth down one and setteth up another. The next moral fact in the chapter is, "Jesus came to Nazareth," working, laboring. He

was sent to preach, to present God by the power of the word. And mark where Christ came, when He had all this power-to the very lowest place-"Nazareth," where shame and dishonor were attached to Himself; for that is exactly where power is found, He hath chosen " the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." They say of Him, "is not this Joseph's son?" "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But will power be found by exalting the flesh? In truth it will not. He quotes from their own scriptures, and says, " the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." He is found having the Spirit of power, in this shameful place; neither was He ashamed of being called the carpenter's son. The first link of His soul with God was quite untouched by it; for He being full of the Holy Ghost, what was it to Him? and when His power is manifested and shed abroad, we find Him in the very lowest place in man's estimation; healing the " broken hearted," preaching the acceptable year of the Lord, " saying this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Here we find it at once. He does not reason with men about it, but says here it is, presenting at once what men want, and presenting it to such as need,-the poor, the lame, the blind, the halt. He presents Himself to man's need, whatever that need is; no matter whether He be more or less than the carpenter's son, grace has come down where grace was needed; for it is the character of grace to go down to the very lowest place. I would do that for my child, that I would do for no one else, because I love my child; and that is grace. "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." The prophets were not the gospel; man in his shame, sin and misery are met by God now. Such is the gospel; and behold here it is before your eyes; this day fulfilled in your ears; God is come into man's misery and finds him just where he is, touching the leper in his leprosy, and cleansing the unclean. This is grace. If I find grace meeting me in my sins, then it must be God meeting me. An angel could not touch me in my leprosy; he ought not, for it would stain his purity; but God can, and this is grace.

Now the reasonings of man's mind begin. "Is not this Joseph's son?" No prophet is honored in his own country. If Christ comes down to man, then man says, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

We get in the synagogue of that poor village the meeting-place of God and man. Grace had come down where grace was needed, but it awakens the slights of men, though they wonder; for they cannot help seeing the power of God, for He was God. But they take the very occasion of His humiliation to slight Him. Man despises grace, and then sovereignty in goodness comes out. "Do also here in thy country." What grace of the Lord to speak of it as His country! The men of Nazareth were amazed, that there is a way in which God's grace can reach outside themselves, the place of man's pretended title as held by the Jews. But God's sovereign grace is above and beyond it all-God says you are bound to me; I am not bound to you. His grace is despised and His sovereignty hated. The Lord comes to display His grace in Nazareth, and these despised Nazarenes hate Him for coming there; but God will act in grace in spite of them, and take up a poor widow of Sidon, and heal a leprous Syrian. " Then all they in the synagogue were filled with wrath and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong."

Thus virtually saying that 'God in acting in sovereignty is slighting us.' 'He is not making us of importance enough, and therefore He shall not be our God.' Christ goes on unmoved by it all, although He felt it, for reproach, saith He, "hath broken my heart." But He ever turns to God. If

Eliezer, at receiving the blessing, instantly turned to God, so Christ at every fresh trial turns to God. "Father" was the first word that came out of His mouth when in the garden of Gethsemane. So Paul was not cowed by all the trial at Philippi, although he felt it.

Moses fled when he slew an Egyptian, because flesh was in it, and that can never stand. Christ turns from the full scene of trial to the perfectness of the scene of grace, and He says, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you; how long shall I suffer you; bring him to me." That was God in grace. So here, when these Nazarenes would have cast Him headlong down the hill, He escaped from them and came down to Capernaum in His onward path of grace. I ought to "rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep," but, how can I rejoice with one, and sorrow with another? I cannot, I must be an hypocrite, if I have not the suppleness of divine love and grace which abides in Christ, and which can enable me to turn in a moment from rejoicing with one to weeping with another. How we get in Christ man perfect with God; and then turn and see all the blessedness of His grace to man.

What strength it is to my heart to say, there is one who has gone through every temptation for me. All Christ is, as a pattern, He is in grace, for those following that pattern, even now in this scene, where we are, down here.

Well, I have found God. I have heard the voice of the good Shepherd saying to my soul, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. If I say, O, but I am a wretched creature of Sidon-never mind, the Lord's grace goes even there! for the Lord having come, He will be to us all we want, even a rest to our spirits, and this we do want, and He can be this to us; for He was a perfect man with God, a perfect God with man.

Vol 02 - The Occupation of the Heart With Good

The Occupation of the Heart With Good

" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people' of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him cloth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."-Acts 4:8-12. Our boldness for Christ before 'the world, and the calmness of our spirits in the presence of opposition will always hang on the measure in which our hearts are occupied with the good we have found in Christ. In truth the proper occupation of the heart of a Saint is with good, and nothing but good. " Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Php 4:8.) The mind habitually thinking on that which is good, will, in result, find "the God of peace" will be with it; as the heart that is careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, making known its requests to God, will be kept by "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." This is beautifully exemplified in the apostle's walk, generally, and especially in the scene before us. The rulers are against the preaching of Christ; but the mind of the apostles, dwelling on the blessedness of Christ, and possessed and filled with the things which they had seen and heard, have peace within, and power without, so that their enemies are obliged to ascribe the effect, not to a natural source, but to companionship with Christ. "They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." (Verse 13.) This power resulted from their hearts being occupied with good. They did not occupy their minds in alleging the evil, much less with the wrong done to themselves; they simply said, " We know Jesus whom ye have crucified." Having known the value of Jesus, and being possessed with a deep sense of the power of the good, they discern at once what was the great sin of those before whom they are arraigned-" whom ye crucified." The apostle was occupied with the love of souls, and hence he did not for a moment trouble himself with the chief priest; but speaking of the good, he condemned the evil. If he says, " this is the stone which was set at naught of you builders," it is because his heart was possessed with the truth, " neither is there salvation in any other."

" Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." It is of the last importance, therefore, to attend to the injunction, "if there be any virtue, if there be any PRAISE, think on these things." We cannot feed our own souls nor the souls of the saints when speaking of evil. It is only when speaking of good that we get refreshed and God gets any praise. We are to be "simple concerning evil, and wise concerning good." When the soul delights in the good it is because it is regenerate and has tasted the goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Tell such an one that he was regenerated by baptism or any other figment, and he will know better. The soul having tasted the good

becomes master of the evil. A deep sense of the knowledge of the good will keep even the weakest saint from the deception of the evil. It is the knowledge of the good that gives the power. But this is not obtained by elaborate teaching, but the teaching of the Holy Ghost in what is good. If a man tell me I must not talk of the salvation which is in Jesus-must not speak to souls-all he could say would never prevent me. My answer would be as the apostle's-"I cannot but speak that which I have seen and heard." No praise can arise out of a soul dwelling on evil. The blessedness of being possessed with good is seen in Malachi 2:6-7 : " The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." The character of a soul filled with the spirit of Jesus is, that it must ever crave the good. All we want for every possible exigency is to be found in Jesus. If I want power, I look up to Christ risen and get it, in what he is there, " far above all principality and power." (Ephesians 1:21.) If I want love and sympathy, I get it in Jesus down here. I see God (in Jesus) on earth; I find divine glory developed in the lowest place on earth; for when Jesus was brought lowest, then we see God most; and in some circumstances nothing but God in Jesus could do what Jesus did when on earth. If I want the comfort of love, I must carry my heart there, and get my spirit imbued with what Jesus was on earth. For I get holy sympathy in Jesus down here-power in what Christ is at God's right hand.

Vol 02 - The Pearl of Great Price

The Pearl of Great Price Matthew 13:45-46. From high the Lord beheld, ere worlds began, As though it was the residence of man, This teeming earth, by sin and hate defiled Estranged from God, perverted, lawless, wild. But underneath the mass of sin and vice He saw a pearl of untold, matchless price, On it He set His yearning heart, and then Gave all He had and bought the peerless gem. Of it possess'd, His gracious purpose is To make it shine in everlasting bliss; To polish it is now His constant care, His image on its beauteous face to bear.

A. M.

Vol 02 - The Perfect Example of Faith

The Perfect Example of Faith

" Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."-Hebrews 12:1-29; Hebrews 1:1-14; Hebrews 2:1-18.

There is nothing that our hearts need more to be brought up to, than the practical exercise of faith. It is, essential to enable the saint to take his proper path and course through the world; and nothing in the way of light or instruction can ever supply its lack. The measure of my faith will determine the measure of my devotedness and the acceptance of my service, whatever may be my path, as to outward circumstances through the world. " Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God. must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." The dispensations of God may change, and the light of divine revelation may vary as to degrees of clearness, but faith is the essential characteristic of those who are owned of God in every age.

All those witnesses that are spoken of in the eleventh chapter of this epistle, are presented to us as examples of the practical power of faith, and are spoken of for our encouragement in the same path; and the Lord Jesus is also introduced to us in the beginning of the twelfth chapter for the same end. For the particular aspect in which faith is presented to us here is, that it allies with God in a knowledge of His ways, and in obedience to His will; and that in a world of evil, which has its course in separation from God and in opposition to His ways. But there is a difference between Jesus and these witnesses, and therefore the apostle singles Him out from them all, and says, " Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." I may see Abraham, who by faith left his home and kindred, and sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country: or Isaac, who by faith blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come: or the wrestler Jacob, who would not let the angel go until he had blessed him: or Moses, who by faith turned away from Pharaoh's court and all its ease and honors, to share in the reproach of the people of God: these all, and more than can be enumerated, have run their race before, and they are set for our encouragement; but in Jesus we have a far higher witness. They, in particular instances and in trying circumstances, are shown in the exercise of that faith which sets the will of God above the love of ease, or the world, or life itself. But in the Lord Jesus, we have a witness, that in the midst of the rejection of every claim to that which was His right, and in the face of Satan's malice and seductive power, and the unmitigated hatred of the world, pursued His course even to the end without one faltering step. But there is more than this in this blessed witness. In Him there is the needed grace to sustain us in our race; and in "looking unto Jesus," we get a motive and an unailing source of strength. We see in Him the love which led Him to take this place for us-" who when He putteth forth his own sheep goeth before them!" For if a race is to be run, we need a

forerunner in the course; and in Jesus we have one who did run before us, and has become " the author and finisher of our faith," so that in looking to Him we draw fresh and unfailing strength into our souls. But while Abraham and all the rest filled up their little measure in their several places, Jesus has filled up the whole course of faith; so that there- is no position I can possibly be in, no trial that I can be called to endure, but Christ has passed through it all before me and overcome." Thus I have got one who presents Himself to my soul in such a character as to know what grace I constantly need, and who will as certainly supply it. For having Himself overcome, He says to me, " be of good cheer, I have overcome." He does not say, "you shall overcome," but " I have overcome." Hence, we learn that however rough the storm may be, it only throws us the more thoroughly upon Christ; and so that which would have been only a sore trial to the flesh, serves but to chase us nearer to Christ.

Whatever, therefore, attracts our eye off Christ is but a "weight" and a hindrance to our running with patience the race that is set before us. When Christ has become the one object of our souls, we shall feel that whatever averts the eye but for a moment from Him is a weight and a hindrance in our Christian course, and must be got rid of. If we were to find a home in this world, instead of being strangers and pilgrims in it, nothing would be more proper than to gather around us the things of nature, in order to make ourselves a comfortable home. But if we are to be the followers of Christ, and to be running a race, the whole aspect of things will be changed. If I am running a race, for example, a cloak will not do; I must get rid of it. It is all very well at proper times, but now it is simply a weight, and I must get rid of it. It will hinder me in running, and entangle my feet, and that is just what I do not want; I must therefore throw it aside. It would seem strange in other circumstances to see a man throw away a comfortable cloak; but if he is running a race, it would be as strange to see him wrap it round him. Every bystander would tell him his cloak would hinder him, and make him lose the race.

Here it is that the effect of the Lord Jesus being thus presented to us is so encouraging. For whatever encouragement we may find in the history of the witnesses of the 11th chapter, it is only in the Lord Jesus that we find a source of strength. Hence our eye must be turned off from every other witness, and be alone fixed on Jesus, the true and faithful witness; and it is beyond all price to be able thus, at all times, to look to Him; it is above all price to know that there is not a trial nor a difficulty that I can pass through, that He has not passed through before me, and found the grace of the Father sufficient; and that He will, in looking to Him, not fail to supply all needed grace to my heart and conscience.

There were two ruling features that marked Christ's life down here: the exercise of constant dependence on the Father; and the undividedness of his affections. "I live (says Christ) by the Father;" and " that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment even so I do. ' The new man is always the dependent man; and the moment we get out of the spirit of dependence, we get into the flesh. When Christ was down here, He was the object of heaven; and hence the voice which said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;" and thus the divine person of the Lord is always being witnessed to, that He may become the object of our hearts. Christ, " for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame;" and this in dependence on the Father: and it is a comfort in running the race to know that we have all that He has accomplished, and all that he is as our resource.

Vol 02 - The Samaritan Leper

The Samaritan Leper The poor leper in Matthew 8:1-34, had that faith which discovered Christ. For it is the duty of faith to do this-to make discoveries of the Lord Jesus, veiled as He was under the thick covering of His needed and assumed humiliation. As he came to Jesus, we are told, " he worshipped Him," and called Him " Lord." And he appealed to Him as the God of Israel, the one who could heal leprosy-all this telling that this poor leper had faith which discovered the glory of the Son of God. But it is the business of faith to use Jesus as well as to discover Him. But in this second duty of faith, this poor man failed. He did not use the glory which he had discovered-at least, not in all that ease and confidence that was worthy of it. " If thou wilt thou canst," he says. And this is a very common condition of the soul. The passage from the discovery to the use of Him, is commonly made with some difficulty. The reserve natural to the conscience of a sinner-the wrong conclusions which the heart of man forms respecting God -the influence of mere human religious thoughts-and the advantages which Satan gains over the soul-account for this. This poor soul was doubtful in using the grace of Him whose glory his faith had apprehended. " Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean." The if was attached only to the will or grace of Jesus. But the Lord sets himself to verify this discovery of Him which faith had already made, and also to encourage that use or enjoyment of Him, which as yet faith was slow to make. He touched the leper. This was not needed. His word would have been all-sufficient. But He touched the leper; because (son of man as he was, very man as very God) he had God's own distance from all defilement. And then He dealt with him as the Jehovah of Israel, saying, " I will, be thou clean"-thus, not only healing the poor man, but encouraging him, letting him learn, in the simple effectual grace that was visiting him, how in a moment He would put from his heart all the spirit of doubt and of fear that was lingering there. This case, after this manner, has its own instruction and comfort for us. The other case of the ten lepers, in Luke 17:1-37, is very differently marked. The appeal of these poor sufferers was little more than the instinctive cry of misery. As the Lord passed by, they cried, " Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." They had doubtless heard of Him, and of His doings for poor sufferers like themselves. But they did not know Him by any divinely-wrought apprehension. They called Him only, " Master," and appealed merely to His " mercy." They did not acknowledge His person or His power, like the leper we have already looked at in Matt. Their cry for mercy was only that challenge of felt and conscious misery which appeals to any that pass by. But in answer even to such a call as this, Jesus stands and speaks; as, of old, the Lord God would hear the cry of nature in Hagar. " Go, chew yourselves to the priest," says the Lord, in answer to this cry; and then, as we further read, " as they went, they were healed." He took the place, and did the work, of the Lord God of Israel. The Samaritan that was among them then becomes distinguished. We read of him thus, " And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks; and he was a Samaritan." This was quickening. This was salvation. This was more than healed leprosy. " Arise," says Jesus, " go thy way, thy faith hath saved thee. ' (σεσωκε σε.)

These are our materials in this little significant narrative. Short and simple as they well could be; but they speak of divine secrets to the soul. For we have in this case two beautiful outshinings-an outshining of the personal glory of Christ, and an outshining of the hidden light and power of the Holy Ghost. This may be seen very clearly and surely.

It was both a doctrine and an accepted fact, in Israel, that none could heal a leper but Jehovah-as indeed I have hinted already, and as is well known. No washings of the temple could serve in such a case, no sacrifices could reach it, no priestly interference was even allowed. The healing of a leper must be accomplished, if at all, while the leper was separated from every one. It was a divine work. The ordinance in Leviticus 13:1-59; Leviticus 14:1-57, which intimates this, tells us, therefore, as I said, that it was a doctrine in Israel, that none could heal a leper but Jehovah. And the case of Naaman the Syrian, in 2 Kings 5:1-27, and the king's surprise and indignation that he had been appealed to, to cleanse a man of his leprosy, shows us that this was likewise an accepted fact in Israel. But here Jesus enters into the separated place. He meets the leper outside the camp, just as, and where, the Lord God of Israel had oftentimes met many a leper. He puts Himself between the leper and the priest, between the defilement and the cleansing-the very place which belonged to Jehovah and to Him only-and in that place He does the work which was Jehovah's and His only. He healed the leper. Ere he and his companions reached the place, their leprosy was gone. And this sealed the title of Jesus to fill God's place in the midst of His Israel.

Here, then, the personal glory of Christ shines out. This was the witness of a light in Jesus which, in its fullness, no man can approach unto. He answers the cry of misery as from the throne of God.

Then, the hidden work of the Spirit in the soul of this Samaritan shines out, in its way, just as brightly and fully. He had already been healed. He might have gone on with his companions, to the priest, and done the work, with them, which Moses had commanded. But now he is given faith as well as healing, the faith of God's elect. The hidden power of the Holy Ghost had not, till now, linked his soul with the Christ of God. The word of God, as we have seen, had testified in Israel that healing of a leper was a divine work, that none but God Himself could recover a man of his leprosy. This testimony this poor stranger was now given faith to receive. His soul, by the Spirit, was bound to the truth, and Jesus, having been his healer, shines before his instructed soul in the glory of the God of Israel. He falls before Him. He is on his face at the feet of Jesus. The mercy he had received was more than human compassion or the help of a fellow-creature. "I am God, and beside me there is no Savior," sounded in his ears. Jehovah-rophi, "I am the Lord that healeth thee," was before his awakened soul. And this, as we said, was salvation. This was more than healing. A revelation of Christ had been made to him by the Spirit through the word and through the mercy he had received, and he was a new creature now, as he had been a healed leper before. This was a fine outshining of the hidden work and light of the Spirit. And the boldness of his faith only brightens this the more. He had been commanded by the Lord to go forward to the priest, and all his companions continue on that road. But he, alone and without further orders, or further delay, turns backward to Jesus. This was a fine, bold, vigorous action. The Spirit reveals Jesus and presses Him home upon the undivided acceptance of the soul, though law and ordinances may seem to have their claims and stand in the way. And this action of our Samaritan reflects this way of the Spirit. He knows nothing but Jesus. The priest and the temple are behind him. All is gone, now that Jesus is come. In his thoughts, as in the mind of the Spirit, there was One standing there, "greater than the temple." He glorified Jesus as God, and was thankful.

Jesus Himself magnified the law, and served the old temple and priesthood, and therefore He would say to a leper, "Go show thyself to the priest and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." But as He magnified the law, the Spirit magnifies Him, and so does the faith of the elect. And boldness of faith like this of the Samaritan, which reached Him through any or every partition-wall, was ever welcome to Him. If it pressed through a crowd, or broke up the roof of a house, if it waited not for introduction, or refused ceremony, if it acted without ordinances or even, as here, contrary to command, it was only the more welcome. It was His joy to be addressed by a full, unquestioning faith. In the language of the Canticles, we may say, it was then, on such occasions, like the faith of the centurion, or of Bartimaeus, or of the friends of the palsied man, or of the Syrophenician, or of the Samaritan sinner at the well, or of the Samaritan leper here, that His soul was set as in a chariot, the chariots of his willing people. (See Song of Solomon 6:12.) The First-Born Among Many Brethren. Hebrews 1:1-14 The way in which the Lord Jesus is spoken of in the opening of this epistle is worthy of special notice; for it is in His human nature that He is here taken up, (for He was human as well as divine,) and this wreath of glory, composed of so many testimonies to the worth and excellency of His person, is bound upon His brows, as a lowly man. It is not the purpose of the Spirit in this chapter to speak of Him in His godhead-other scriptures abundantly do that-but that which is brought out here is, that all these passages speak about Him as a man down here, while, at the same moment, they show us the wonderful person behind the man.

Every Scripture has its appropriate subject; and our advancement in divine wisdom hangs on our discernment, by the Holy Spirit, of its distinct and various import. This portion, then, was not written to tell us about God, or that "the WORD was God," but to tell us that JESUS Is Goy; and that He, who once walked up and down on our earth, and breathed our air, and conversed with men, eating and drinking with them, and sympathizing with them in all their sorrows, and who wept at the grave of Lazarus and over the city of Jerusalem, was the very same glorious One.

Now there is an immense difference between the knowledge of this truth and a mere orthodox reception of the doctrine of the Trinity. Men may have this, and boast in it, and yet have no right apprehension of Jesus as God; and may even be seeking for other means than His precious blood to bring them to God, and for other mediators than Christ between their souls and God. Being at a distance from God, they naturally and necessarily are looking for something that is nearer to God than themselves. Hence it is that a mere doctrinal knowledge of the Trinity never draws out the affections of the soul; for it is that which most adapts itself to us that we most love. The person that my heart will be most knit to is the one to whom I can go in all my sufferings, and all my sorrows, and who can get from God all I want. But where shall I find this object of my affections -this supplier of my need-but in the Lord Jesus Christ? And it is thus the knowledge of Him sanctifies both in life and spirit. But while I get the one that can and does sympathize with me in every want and in every need, if that one were less than divine, less than God, it would not do.

Still that which is brought out in this chapter is not abstractly that He is God. The first chapter of John's Gospel does that; but this first chapter of Hebrews, though bringing out His divine nature, takes it up at the other end. And here it may be observed that the knowledge of the person of Christ is absolutely essential to the understanding of the Scriptures. For example, the Jews were looking for a king, for an heir of David's throne, and they knew that Messiah was to be David's son: but Christ puzzles them by asking them how it was, if He was David's son, He could also be

David's Lord? But this epistle brings out in these two chapters the very person they were expecting. For they take up not merely the divine nature, but also the divine nature in humiliation. In the first chapter, he speaks of the divine excellency that was in Him,- "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person;" and in the second chapter, how He was tempted in His manhood, like as we are, yet without sin. It was not merely the divinity of a person known in humiliation that they had before their eyes and their minds, but the carpenter's son, one "who was in all things made like unto His brethren," and that man was God. This changes every thought and feeling as to relationship with God. It changes not only my thoughts about God, but about myself. For I learn what God is to me, when I look at Him in these two chapters. I learn that He clothed Himself in human nature, and so came near to me before I was aware of it; and thus it is not merely an abstract truth that my soul receives, but "God manifest in the flesh." Christ was to be the manifestation of God to man, and the manifestation of man to God: and that, mark, with all the responsibility of our sins.

He introduces Christ in this chapter not only as the Son, but he also unfolds who this person is, that is now speaking among men. God was in communication with man in testimony from the beginning, and "at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, but bath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he bath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." This person, this Christ, is the appointed heir of all things; by whom also He made the worlds; so that He is the Creator as well as the heir, as in Colossians. He brings out what He was in coming out from God, and in returning again to God, "who was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of His power." (Compare Isaiah 6:1-13 with John 6:1-71; John 12:1-50.) When the Lord spoke from Sinai, His voice shook the earth, but now He speaks by His Son from heaven. Then comes in the blessed character of redemption-for He is the provider of redemption, as well as the upholder of creation. And here it is shown that redemption is a part of the divine glory. "When he had by himself purged our sins." He does not say, when He had by His blood purged our sins, (although it was by blood,) but it is by himself; and when it is himself, it necessarily brings in His glory; for redemption must be the display of divine glory.

Redemption is a divine act by a divine person, and yet by one who was truly a man like ourselves. He was a man who felt what the weight of sin was, when God laid it upon Him, and yet without sin Himself. None but God could have done this, else it would have been surpassing Him in excellence. It must be by Himself that our sins are purged. And then He sat down at the right hand of God; for He had a right to take His seat above. He had left it and come down in divine love, and now He has a right to return to it again, and sit down. But now He takes a definite and distinct place on the right hand of the majesty on high. How blessedly this comes to us; for now we can consider who this Christ is-this wonderful person who came down so low, and though now so high, yet is near enough to us to come home to our hearts continually. All this is not merely an abstract truth, but a man we know who has a divine nature. In the second Psalm we have His sonship in the world brought out, "Thou art my beloved Son, this day have I begotten thee,"-a thing in connection with time-"this day have I begotten thee." And again in Luke, first chapter, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." So also in John, Jesus says, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father." So in Colossians, the Spirit testifying of Jesus says, "who is the image of the invisible

God, the first-born of every creature." The very same one by whom He made the worlds, in His essential divine nature-" for by him were all things created,"-is the one who by Himself has purged our sins. But we still have this Christ; and it must be very evident how different a thing it is to the soul if I can think of Him and consider Him as one that I can eat and drink with, and talk with, to what it would be if I only knew Him as the heir of God, " seated at the right hand of the majesty on high." He was humbled to the very dust of death for us; for "now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth!" And " being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance a more excellent name than they." He had a title to the superiority over angels, by virtue of His name,-for here is one exalted who had a title to it by inheritance, being a Son then and heir. Consider the glory of this wonderful, this excellent man, who hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than the angels, and therefore put in a place above the angels, for His having humbled Himself. And " when God bringeth again the first-begotten into the world, He saith, Let all the angels of God worship Him." The Father is now looking at One who was His daily companion. " I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." Here God is giving to this Son of David, one born into the world, the condition and title of a son. " He shall be to me a Son." And we are associated in this, " I will be to him a Father," and Jesus says, " my Father and your Father;" thus bringing this relationship with God into the companionship of our daily lives. Jesus could take the place of first-begotten into the world; " this day have I begotten thee," which expresses that He was in the world as one truly born of God. He was the only-begotten, as the Son, but the firstborn of many brethren. It was the recognition of the Son of David as the Son of God, by the Spirit, when he says, " When he bringeth the first-begotten again into the world He saith, Let all the angels of God worship him." But He has a higher glory than this, for we worship Him; and I could not talk of Him in His full blessedness if I did not see Him in a glory beyond all this. Because as the firstborn of many brethren there is that which none other of the brethren can ever have; for behind it all there is the Lord that has saved: the blessedness of His eternal glory behind His humiliation. And this it was that the Jews could not bear; for as soon as Jesus had said, " Before Abraham was, I am," they immediately took up stones to stone Him. This eternal glory which was in the man Christ Jesus, had no glory in man's eye, because it was in man's nature. They had received the law by the disposition of angels. They would receive any display of power which would keep God at a distance from them. When it was merely the creature, they could sustain the natural glory of God, so to speak, because they could not in any way modify the nature of God to their understandings.

Here it is that He that ascended is the very same that first descended; for it was divine love that put Him in the low place, making exaltation possible.

"Unto the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." " But to the Son he says (still looking at Him as the Son) Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. ' And then mark how He lets us back again into His companionship with us. " Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, bath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." He calls us His fellows. He takes us up, and associates us with Him; because if He is addressed as God, the man who is up there is associated with His fellows. He was anointed above His fellows, for it will not do to be merely as His fellows. But it is doubly blessed to know that He is anointed above His fellows. On this ground he says, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." That is what He was as the

object of the Father's delight before the foundation of the world.

Now let us look at our blessed Lord when sitting down weary at the well. When the woman came to draw water, Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink, and the woman replied, How is it that thou askest drink of me? When Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that is dependent for a drink of water on such a wicked woman as you are, you would have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water. If you had understood that God had come so near to you, descended so low as to be dependent on you for a cup of cold water;-had you known God to have been in the lowly One that you met in the place of dependence, you would have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water. And now that He is exalted He calls us His fellows. When He is in the highest point of His exaltation, believers are His fellows, and when He is at the lowest point of His humiliation then Jehovah owns Him as His fellow. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts."

"And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth." Now He goes; so to express it, into His aboriginal godhead. "Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." This is a quotation from the 102nd Psalm. Speaking of His lowest humiliation, "Lord, cut me not off in the midst of my days," the answer to it is this, "Thou in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth." "Thou hast lifted me up and cast me down." For as a man Jesus was lifted up into the glorious place as Messiah, and then cast down into the dust of death. "He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days." "Of old thou hast laid the foundation of the earth." "Thou art the same and thy years shall not fail." Thus we find Him in the lowest point of His humiliation, shining forth as the Lord who laid the foundation of the earth. Thus it is we are made to see the eternal God in the dying man.

He who upholds all things by the word of His power, having by Himself purged our sins, returns and sits down on the right hand of the majesty on high. Thus the soul is given a resting-place in the official glory given to Christ. For the apostle says, "See how God has set this man on His own right hand!" "Sit thou on my right hand;" although in another sense He sat Himself down there. He brings Him into the place in which the Church may view Him as sat down there, because He has accomplished the work; has perfected them forever by His one offering, and so sat down. All is finished by one offering. And in another place it is said, He hath "made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ," as the testimony of the efficacy of the work of the Son. In the following chapter he speaks of the blessedness of His being tempted like as we are, yet without sin, so that He can sympathize with us in all the trials of our new nature and the difficulties through which we are passing. It is by thus seeing Him that we know the glory of His person.

If an angel leaves its first estate, it is a fallen angel. Any one leaving its first estate, except God, is a fallen creature. If man leaves his first estate, it is to exalt himself. "Ye shall be as gods." But if God leaves his first estate, it is in humiliation. We are now to know Him thoroughly, and so near to us yet exalted above us, and not ashamed to call us brethren.

Vol 02 - The Savior-God

The Savior-God " Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."-Hebrews 13:8.

Awake, my soul, to praise, Thou hast a rapturous theme! A subject, glorious and divine;

'Tis Christ-sing thou of him.

Come, and before his face, Low bow, with foot unshod; And with a thankful, happy heart, Adore thy Savior God.

Down to this earth he came, And loved, and wept, and died;

" Glory to God, goodwill to man!" His advent angels cried.

Divine, yet clothed in flesh, His own-made earth he trod.

He came to do the Father's will- To be the Savior-God. That will accomplish'd, now He sits in heaven above, The Church's representative,- Dear object of his love.

He bears the glory there, As here he bore the rod;

He died-yet lives for evermore, Victorious Savior-God! And soon He'll come again, To take His church to heaven; That church, redeemed by precious blood,- By grace alone forgiven.

How loud her song will be!

How sweetly will she laud, Through one eternal, blissful day,- Jesus, her Savior-God.

A. M.

Vol 02 - The Secret of Happiness

The Secret of Happiness "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, [therewith] to be content." (Php 4:11.)

There is a secret of happiness which none but a Christian possesses, and which a Christian possesses in its full power only when he is living in communion with God, in the region of faith. "I know," says the apostle, "both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things, I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." Now, this principle depends for its strength on the certainty that God's will cannot be defeated, and that His will arranges everything for the best for those who commit their way to Him. It also depends on the apprehension of the resources of our happiness being all in Christ, independent of all the circumstances which may affect the Christian in this world. Things in the world may be all confusion, and things in the Church may appear to be but little better, but this is not sufficient to destroy, or even to neutralize, the power of that principle of happiness of which the apostle speaks. God's counsels cannot be defeated - the ends of Christ's death cannot be frustrated - and the springs of the happiness of a risen man in Christ do not ebb and flow with the changing circumstances which may checker his earthly course. If outward prosperity makes me happy, it is plain my happiness does not spring entirely from the will of God; if, on the other hand, when things go contrary, I lose my enjoyment, it is plain that all my happiness has not been based on the will of God, which is always perfect. Christ's love never changes; His relationship to His Church never alters; the hope of His coming abides till His coming makes it no longer a hope; and, more than all, His present care of me, and of all that connects itself with the eternal good of His Church, is daily exercised.

Then why am I unhappy? Why am I downcast? Is it not because I want things, through my own selfishness, either in the world or in the Church, different from what Christ wills them? For, if Christ be the object of my heart, I have the certainty of God's eternal counsels concerning the glory of Christ for the ground of my assurance that I can never fail in the object I pursue.

It may be a hard lesson for such hearts as ours to be satisfied with this "secret of happiness;" but as there is no other for the servant of Christ, so is it unailing where the heart is committed to it, and to it alone.

People little suspect that all the secret of their unhappiness is in their own hearts, and not in the circumstances through which they are -called to pass. If the world or self occupies any place which belongs to Christ, this principle of happiness will always be weakened, since no theory of the truth will ever keep the heart happy, without the power of the Holy Ghost. But Christ, and not the world, or the cravings of nature, or the pride of life, is the staple by which is produced in the soul the joy of the Holy Ghost.

I must learn to be dead to the world, if I am to live the life of Christ. But this is not the happiness of indifference, it is but the allowing God to have His place in wisdom, in goodness, and in the

immutability of His counsels of grace in Christ Jesus. There may be exercises of soul with regard to the service of Christ in His Church or in the world; but then these exercises, so far from destroying my happiness, only carry me to Him who gives me rest in the knowledge that it is His care and His power that accomplishes everything; and that I have nothing to do but to follow His will, which can never fail. Christ was so sufficient for the apostle's soul, amidst dangers and difficulties, and wasting labors, and apparent discomfiture, that he wanted nothing else, and He is equally sufficient for you and me. And if we cannot in a moment leap up to this position practically, because we have been living at such a distance from God, and because Christ has been so little the object of our souls, and the power of our walk, it is, nevertheless, a great thing to see clearly where the "secret of our happiness" is, and where the "secret" of our weakness and unhappiness lies.

Vol 02 - The Way of God's Blessing

The Way of God's Blessing

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."-2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

Wherever there is blessing it draws to God and to one another. Our natural state is separation from God and from one another. The spirit of selfishness-the effect of sin-is always separation. If God calls unto unity, He must separate us from evil. Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. It is not a union only in sentiment, but a vital union-a separation from evil, for God cannot bear evil. The great God cannot be where there is unrighteousness. It is unity in God and separation from all evil,-God drawing us into communion with Himself through the Lord Jesus. It is no matter where it is, but there must be separation from evil in cleaving to that which is good. In verse 18 we get the way in which God reveals Himself to us when separate from evil: " I will be a Father unto you;" and then the position into which we are brought: " Ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

What I would press is the essential character of the position into which we are brought. We find ourselves associated as children in His family. In our everlasting character, in the life we have received, we are sons. We are not servants, but sons, being of this family. We cannot be children of two families. We are children of one family. Being thus children of God, we have no association with anything else. In this way the Christian must be a separate person.

Note the specialty of the character in which He is a Father to us "saith the Lord Almighty." In looking to Him as our Father, we look at Him as Almighty. Our blessing flows from our experience of God. All the exercises of the Christian bring out to him the trustworthiness of God, the certainty of His interference in all things. As regards all the details of life, we ought to bring in the faithfulness and Almightyness of God; in every circumstance to recognize the Lord (Jehovah) Almighty.

Vol 02 - The Word of Exhortation

The Word of Exhortation

I propose to consider the exhortations of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as suggested by the passage in Hebrews 13:22 : " I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation; for I have written unto you a letter in few words." In this passage the whole epistle appears to be designated, "the word of exhortation;" and the peculiar structure of the epistle is confirmatory of the thought. The ordinary form of the epistles of Paul is the presentation, in an orderly and consecutive way, of, first, the doctrine of the epistle, and then of the practical exhortations. But in this epistle it is otherwise, as exhortation runs throughout; and there is not an important doctrine stated, or subject introduced, without having grafted upon it its appropriate exhortation. There is only one exception to this, connected with the subject of the priesthood of Christ, which is pursued from the seventh chapter to the middle of the tenth chapter without a break, or the introduction of any exhortation at all, until the close of the subject. This exception is striking and full of instruction, as will be seen when we reach that part of the epistle. As to the general subject of the epistle, it is God's exposition of the grounds of the setting aside of a religion of ordinances, which had originally the divine sanction, by the introduction of that which is distinctive of Christianity. It is therefore addressed to the only people who were ever possessed of a ritual service and a priesthood and ordinances appointed by God. This truth is thus briefly stated, Hebrews 9:1 : " Then, verily, the first [covenant] had ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary;" and it was with regard to the establishment of this that Moses was thus admonished: " See [that] thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."

Now a divinely established ritual - a worship which had, in every respect, the sanction of God - could not be rudely and arbitrarily set aside, and those who possessed it be called upon to leave it all, without any ground for doing so but simply the divine command. The grounds of this subversion must necessarily be presented in order to afford the basis of faith for the worshippers; and the mind must be satisfied that the introduction of that which was new was but the accomplishment of that which, up to this time, had claimed the obedience of the worshippers; and was thus but the full exhibition of the counsels of God, to which the dispensation which was now passing away pointed as an index in the way of shadows and types. The apostle says, "The law was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things." This is important; because whenever man seeks to set up a religion, or to establish a worship, which has not a risen Christ for its center, and the Holy Ghost as its power, it is invariably composed of these very ordinances, or the like, which by the coming, and work, and sacrifice, and priesthood of Christ, the Spirit of God by this epistle shows to have been forever set aside. If ordinances, which had a divine sanction, are thus set aside, and called "beggarly elements," what must be the folly and sin of men who seek to set up a system of ordinances without any divine sanction at all, or to return to those which, under the solemn teaching of God's Spirit, are declared to have forever passed away? Every attempt to set up again the efficacy of ordinances, and the power of a priesthood, which is the essence of Popery and Puseyism, is in direct contradiction to the whole purpose of

God's Spirit in this epistle, and a virtual denial of the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice and heavenly priesthood. But there is another general remark which may be necessary in order to the right understanding of those solemn warnings presented in the sixth and tenth chapters of the epistle: namely, that the epistle to the Hebrews was addressed to a body of persons who had ostensibly left Judaism, and were under the responsibility of the profession of Christianity. Now if a body is addressed in connection with a given profession, it is plain that there may be departure from it in the way of apostacy, and which thus may open the door for the most solemn warnings against such a departure, but which nevertheless were never meant to weaken the grounds of individual salvation, which rest entirely and absolutely on the finished work of Christ. For example, in connection with the warnings of the sixth chapter, the apostle says, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things which accompany salvation, though we thus speak." And again, at the close of the warnings of the tenth chapter, he says, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward;" and again, verse 39, "We are not of them which draw back unto perdition, but of them which believe unto the saving of the soul." But see especially Hebrews 6:16-20, " For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us which [hope] we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, [even] Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." A body may be apostate from the truth, and may therefore come under the threatening of excision and judgment, while the individual believer is built up in his "most holy faith:" see the epistle of Jude. Moreover, in these warnings, that passage of scripture is accomplished, "The prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on and are punished." In other words, believers through grace heed the warnings, and escape the consequences of the neglect of them, while others remain in security in "the forms of godliness without the power," and perish. But they perish not unwarned.

Moreover, it must be remembered that the epistle is not occupied in unfolding, for the first time, the primary truths of Christianity, like the epistle to the Romans; but is rather designed to fortify the faith which was failing, and to restore the footsteps which were already slipping back, as is seen in Hebrews 10:32 : " Call to remembrance the former days in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions," &c.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

Vol 02 - The Word of Exhortation

The Word of Exhortation Hebrews 1:1-14; Hebrews 2:1-18; Hebrews 3:1-19; Hebrews 4:1-16

It is not the exposition of the doctrines of the epistle that is here pursued, but the exhortations founded upon the doctrines. The deductions from scripture and practical exhortations of the most devoted and spiritual may sometimes be wide of the mark, or at least may fail to present that which is the real point of importance; but in the exhortations and deductions we are about to follow, the Spirit of God has, in each case, without question, presented the very point of truth it is of the deepest moment for our souls to heed, and the absolute practical use which should be made of each of the various statements that are presented in the epistle. As to the exhortation itself, it commences at Hebrews 2:1 - "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" This exhortation naturally flows from the subject of the first chapter, which is the presentation of the dignity and intrinsic glory of the person of God's Son, by whom the mind of God is now communicated. For He "hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son." But it will be observed that all that is here ascribed to the Son is ascribed to Him as the man who had been known here on earth in humiliation, and sorrow, and death; but who in truth was the Prophet from among their brethren, whom God had raised up unto them. It is the opposite point of presentation to that which is given in the John 1:1-51. There it is what He was essentially from the beginning, before He was manifested in humiliation. Here it is the ascription of all that was true there, to Him who was known as sojourning here on earth; whose glory was hidden when here below, but is now unveiled, that we may know WHO it is by whom God has spoken, and by whose faithfulness and worth the glory of God has been accomplished, and the salvation and blessing of His people eternally secured.

Formerly God had spoken by His prophets, and their message was invested with all the authority of the word of the Lord; but now it is the SON who takes the place of Prophet, or communicator of God's mind. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." "God has in these last days spoken to us by his Son." One who was far above prophets, and above angels (as is argued in the chapter) the appointed heir of all things, as He is the maker and upholder of all things, the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His Person. He it is by whom God now speaks, and His dignity and glory, as well as the subject of His communications, demand for Him a solemn and heedful attention. It is not of judgment that God now speaks, as in the days of Noah, nor of the requisitions of His holiness, as in the fiery law which was given through the mediation of Moses, but it is of accomplished salvation that He speaks by His Son. For it was " when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high;" thus attaching all the dignity and

glory of His person to the work He has accomplished, (so giving eternal rest to our souls,) as well as to the message He delivers, and thus investing it with supreme authority. "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard." There is a double principle of responsibility here, that which belongs to all men who have heard the gospel - for God has spoken by His Son, and man's carelessness cannot undo that - and He will hold them responsible for the acceptance or rejection of the message He has delivered. "For how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by THE LORD." But there is also that which belongs to those who have believed, that they give a heedful attention to the things which they have heard, that they may retain, in all their brightness, and in all their force, by the power of faith, the things which they have heard, and which have been thus communicated. Let the one and the other think what they are doing if, either in whole or in part, they are neglecting this great salvation. A salvation, as it is insisted on, which first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed by the apostles, God also giving His attestation, and the Holy Ghost setting His seal to its proclamation, by the wonders that He wrought.

Let me ask, Is there no need for this exhortation? What can be thought of the fate of the man who neglects what God, by His own Son, has proclaimed? What the condition of him who neglects a salvation that could alone be accomplished by the mission, and sorrows, and sufferings, and death of God's Son? What also the folly of the believer who, through negligence, or worldliness, or the indulgence of the flesh, allows these bright and blessed revelations to escape from his mind? Does not the condition of those who profess the gospel merely, and in great part of those by whom it has been received, through grace, proclaim aloud the deep necessity for this exhortation to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip?

God will vindicate His word when spoken by angels; but much more will He visit for the outraged dignity and the rejected love of His Son; for the despisal of that grace which flows alone from His glory, His sufferings, and His death!

It is a serious thing for men to neglect their own salvation, and it is a legitimate thing to reason with them on the hopelessness of the condition, which such a neglect involves. But there is something deeper than this presented here; it is the neglect of God's salvation; the neglect of that intervention of mercy, which can alone render it possible for any sinner to appear in the presence of God. This is another idea than the neglect of my own well-being. It is the neglect of God, of His glory, of His holiness, of His authority, of His grace, of His love, of the provisions of His mercy, the neglect of the salvation accomplished in sorrow and suffering, by His only begotten Son, and is now proclaimed, through the testimony of the Holy Ghost, sent down from above. But if the dignity of the Son, as the communicator of God's mind, forms the basis of the exhortation to give a more earnest heed to the things which He has spoken; the grace of His heart, in associating those with Himself of whom He is the Captain of salvation - their rightful deliverer - is the ground of the exhortation, to consider Him who sustains for them the offices of Apostle and High Priest.

He who, in the world to come, or in the habitable earth in a future age, is to be set, as the Son of man, supreme over all the works of God's hands, reaches this place of exaltation, through suffering, and humiliation, and death. Not that He personally needed this, but if He is to associate others with Him, if He is to bring many sons to glory, He must, as the Captain of their salvation, be made perfect through sufferings. For there was that to be met, which the holiness of God and the

claims of His justice required, as well as the accomplishment of the results of grace, in bringing many sons to glory. Hence it is said, that "he who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." He so accomplished His work that the sanctified are brought into the same position as Himself, who is the sanctifier. There is one sanctification for Him and for them; for the holiness of God's presence could admit of no other standard. He is the accomplisher of this sanctification; believers are the participants of it; but it is the same sanctification, or setting apart, and on the same grounds. Hence the Lord says, in John 17:1-26, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be truly sanctified." Wondrous position! Wondrous grace! But "it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Thus alone it is that He can call them brethren. He came down in grace to their condition that He might raise them to His. The children were partakers of flesh and blood; and He partakes of flesh and blood. We were under the power of sin; and He Himself purged our sins. We were under the power of death, and He submits Himself to that power; and in the very domain of death conquers for us; and by His resurrection delivers from the fear of death those who were subject to its bondage. In grace, He who, as the Son, was all that the first chapter declares, "was in all points made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God." It behooved Him to take this place, that He might maintain our position before God, and, in sympathy, minister the needed grace to us here below. On all this is based the exhortation, "wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." This title of "holy brethren" is thus bestowed on all believers, and its force is seen by a reference to the 11th and 12th verses of the chapter, where it is said of Christ, that "He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren." This declaration of God's name, by Christ, to His brethren, is presented in, its wondrous bearing by the Lord when, after He was risen from the dead, He said to Mary Magdalene, "Go tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God." This is the blessed title of the relationship which God bears toward every poor sinner saved through the grace of Christ. It is no place of assumption for believers, nor is it a title to which attainments may give a claim. It is the place and title which Christ's grace establishes for those who know Him in the reality of His sufferings, His humiliation, and death. The position of Him whose calling they obey gives its character to theirs, whether viewed in relation to their inheritance above, or to their sojourn here below. It is not an earthly, but a heavenly calling that believers are brought into by Christ. Called from earth to heaven, they are to know the place of Him who is the Captain of their salvation and the firstborn among many brethren. The exhortation is to consider Christ in the two offices which are here expressed, the apostle and high priest of our profession, offices which are shadowed forth by the position toward Israel of Moses and Aaron. The profession of Christianity, in distinction from the law, is based upon the fact that God has spoken to us from heaven, through Christ, who is the apostle of our profession; and that we have a High Priest in heaven who accomplished eternal redemption by His own blood-shedding while here on earth. The point of the exhortation is to consider who it is that sustains these offices, and how competent He is to the discharge of all which they imply. He was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as Moses was faithful; but He was as much above Moses as the owner of the house is higher than he who is but a servant, though faithful, in the house. Christ was the builder of the house, and thus has more honor than the house. He was the builder of all things; and "He that built all things is

GOD." Thus, by the simplest human footsteps, (if I may so speak,) are we led upward to see this blessed lowly One, who was not ashamed to call us brethren, sustaining the office of apostle, or communicator of God's mind, and the High Priest of our profession, as bringing us into God's presence by virtue of His accomplished sacrifice, not merely as "a son over his own house," the Head and Lord of that house; but as the sovereign Creator of all things, the eternal God!

These offices were familiar to the Hebrews; they had their typical presentation in Moses, the prophet of the Lord, and in Aaron, who was the consecrated high priest; but they are now sustained by Him who is at once in grace the first-born among many brethren, and in intrinsic glory the Son of God, and Creator and upholder of all things.

Christ having been thus presented in these offices, of which Moses and Aaron presented the illustration, believers are at once viewed as morally in the wilderness, and on their journey to a future rest, as Israel, under the leadership of Moses and Aaron, were traveling through the desert to the rest of Canaan. Redemption from Egypt and the passage of the Red Sea, in their immediate effect, only put the people of Israel in the wilderness; however they were journeying toward the promised rest. So the Hebrews are reminded that this higher redemption, by the blood of Christ, and His taking the place of immediate authority over them, in its present effect, is but to make them pilgrims through the world, in the hope and expectation of a future rest, of which Canaan was but a type. Thus the whole wilderness history of Israel, with its temptations and provocations, is made to bear on the position of the believer in the world; and lessons of practical warning, in the contemplation of that history, rise up at every step. For "these things happened to them for ensamples, and are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come." But the two special points of exhortation here selected are against unbelief and sin; and unbelief comes first. These were the two evils which shut Israel out of Canaan, and caused their carcasses to fall in the wilderness. The effect of unbelief is noted in the core of its baneful effect, as leading the soul to depart from the living God. It is the evil heart of unbelief which departs from the living God. It is not said, an evil heart of unbelief which will hinder your progress, which will weaken you in conflict, which will bring leanness into your souls,-all these things will indeed result from the master effect of unbelief, - but that effect is described as leading to a departure from the living God. Israel's whole strength in the desert was that God was with them; but unbelief lost sight of this great truth, and lost all the springs of strength which flow from its recognition; and it left its victims, as to their carcasses, to fall in the wilderness, instead of entering upon the pleasant land. But unbelief prepares the way for sin; for if the sense of God's presence be lost, where is the check to the unbridled indulgence of the desires of a heart that is in its very character enmity against God.

"In thy presence we are happy, In thy presence we're secure, In thy presence all afflictions We can easily endure. In thy presence we can conquer, We can suffer, we can die, Wandering from thee we are feeble, Let thy love then keep us nigh." But mutual exhortation is introduced in connection with the danger of the heart being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. "Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." The reason of this is plain, for if Israel be the congregation of the Lord, then each person of that congregation is responsible to guard against the power of sin. An Israelite cannot sin alone. Achan may alone be occupied with the golden wedge and the Babylonish garment, but all Israel has to bear the consequence of his sin.

God's redemption and Christ's leadership set believers in a mutual relationship to one another; and it is this which gives its force to the exhortation, " exhort one another daily, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

How correctly does the word of God delineate the effect of unbelief, in leading away from God's presence; and the character of sin as deceitful in its approaches, insidious in its advances, and, when yielded to, preparing for worse results by its hardening effect upon the soul! It is not the effect of sin merely that it deceives the heart into that which is contrary to God and its own peace, but it blinds and hardens against all that which the power of divine grace and the ungrieved Spirit of God would make it impressible to. In the wilderness, then, the two great dangers are, unbelief and sin. Unbelief which carries out of God's presence, and sin which hardens the heart against all that is according to God, and necessarily brings His judgment. But as the end of Israel's redemption was not the wilderness, but Canaan, though the wilderness must be passed through to reach it; so it is not in this world that the believer is to find his rest, but his hopes and his aims are to be directed onward to the rest that lies beyond. Hence, because there is this rest, which God has provided, we are led to the exhortation, (iv, 1,) " Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." There is a promise left us of this rest, and the exhortation is designed to bring the heart so under the power of this promise as to induce the believer to be always journeying onward, until he reaches its accomplishment. As the apostle says, "one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Israel formerly were those who had the promise and the tidings of this rest - the rest of Canaan. Believers now are the persons that are entering upon this rest. As it is stated, "Unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them;" or, more properly, "we have been evangelized of a rest," "or have had the tidings announced of a rest, as well as they." In a word, believers have displaced Israel, as to the wilderness and Canaan, which were but types, and they are admonished not to follow Israel's example, who when they heard from the spies the tidings of the rest, refused to believe their report, and to go up and possess the land. "For we who have believed do enter into rest, as he said, I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest."

It is plain that it is not about the gospel of salvation that the apostle is arguing in these verses, but is drawing a parallel between Israel's position and the believer's, in relation to a rest of which Canaan is taken as a type. But it is God's rest that is now in question; a rest that is worthy of God; a rest, not only for the believer himself, but in which God will participate. The sabbath rest, at the close of the works of creation, presented its first expression, though man through sin had never reached it. Still "the works were finished from the foundation of the world," and the intimation that God intended to associate those whom He blessed with Himself, in this rest, is expressed in the institution of the sabbath. Of Israel, in consequence of their unbelief, God swore that "they should not enter into His rest." But their not entering in did not set aside the rest itself, nor God's purpose in relation to it. Hence it is added, "seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief. Again He limiteth a certain day, saying, in David..... to day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." This plainly shows, that Israel not only did not enter God's rest, however Canaan might be a type of it, but even Canaan itself is to be held, by the elect nation of God, by another tenure than that by which

they possessed it as brought in to the land by Joshua. For there is a double bearing in the words "If Jesus (or Joshua, as it should be) had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day," as He does by David, many ages afterward, in the Psalms. The issue of the argument, thus pursued, is this, that it was not the rest of creation that is in question, nor the rest of Canaan, but a rest that is still future, as it is expressed, "there remaineth therefore a rest (a sabbath rest) for the people of God." The great sabbath keeping of the people of God is yet future, and is thus set before us as the inspiring object of hope. It is God's rest that is before us, and the thought of that rest may well quicken our course onward, through all the difficulties and dangers of the wilderness which is our present portion.

It need hardly be asserted, that the believer has not yet entered into God's final rest in glory; but the passage before us is often obscured by the introduction of the thought of there being more than one rest spoken of in this chapter. So far from this being the case, except as the sabbath and the rest of Canaan are used as prefigurements of it, the idea throughout is simply one, namely, that the believer has a future rest with God to be entered upon, as Israel had the hope of the rest of Canaan to animate them through the toils of the wilderness. Hence the consequences of Israel's want of faith, in regard to the hope of Canaan, are urged upon us, as a reason for never losing sight of that hope, which is given to encourage us in our course through the world. That the rest is future is argued from the very condition of the believer. For if we had already entered on this rest, we should have ceased from our labors, as God rested from His works in creation, when the sabbath was come. But, instead of this being the case, we are in a condition to need the exhortation to diligence, in ever pressing toward it. "Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

It is not salvation, or the rest of the soul in the finished work of Christ, that is here spoken of. For he says, "we who have believed do enter into rest;" that is, believers are the persons who are now entering upon that rest. The people of God are to be the possessors of it. Therefore, he exhorts the Hebrews, as believers, to labor toward that rest, and not to repeat the sad history of their fathers, who though called out of Egypt to the rest of Canaan, through unbelief came short of it.

"We are saved by hope;" and the believer, whose course is not animated by its constant operation, in regard to the future rest of God, will assuredly in his course "seem to come short of it." Would that there were less that is equivocal in our course, as to its final object! for, in very truth, the salvation of the soul may, through the grace of Christ, be secured; and the hope of heaven, as to individual happiness, may not be altogether absent; while, with regard to this final rest of God, there may be so little of the power of hope, that many a one may seem to come short of it. But if unbelief and sin, and the effects of them, in Israel's coming short of Canaan, be noticed, and a warning raised for us on this foundation, it may be asked, by what means is such an issue to be avoided, in regard to those who are now in question? God has provided the means to prevent this issue. The word and the priesthood of Christ are introduced, in this connection, as God's instruments for bringing His people through the wilderness. The word reaches the very springs of unbelief and apostasy, and lays the soul bare under the all-searching eye of God. The priesthood of Christ is God's provision to meet the condition of those who are thus searched and convicted by the word, from the edge of which nothing can escape. The law was sufficient to detect Israel's overt acts of apostasy, and to condemn that idolatry which was the expression of their departure from God; but the word, now, in its searching power, does not stop at the outward act, but reaches

to the detection of every secret spring of action, every departure in heart or affection from the Lord, from which apostasy takes its rise, as it is written, " thou halt forsaken thy first love."

Believers have now to do with God's final revelation of His grace and holiness, and hence nothing that is contrary to the perfect light of God's presence can be allowed. "All things are made manifest and reprov'd by the light." The law demanded holiness from man, in whose flesh dwelt no good thing, but as it did not minister righteousness or life, which man's condition required, in order to his having to do with God, the demand could not be met, and the curse of the law was the only possible result. But now the ministration of grace is in truth a ministration of righteousness, in order to deliverance from condemnation; and the ministration of life, through which we have not alone deliverance from death, but the participation of a nature from which holiness must be the issue and the result. "We are made partakers of the divine nature." Christ is our life.

Hence the word is presented in its absolute searching power, penetrating to the hidden recesses of the heart, dividing between the soul and spirit, discerning the very thoughts and intents of the heart. This is what the word of God is; and this is its action on the soul of the believer. It is the expression of God's living thoughts; it is the instrument by which He makes His own presence felt. Hence the transition from the written word, and its searching power, as expressed in Hebrews 4:12, to the immediate eye of God, in verse 13, where it is said, "neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Now if this be the province of the word, and this the range of its searching power, plainly its detections will be such as to cast the soul into utter despair, if there were nothing found in the ministrations of grace to meet that which the word discovers in the soul. For what is this inquisition in the soul? It is the unmitigated demand, not only that there should be no wrong action, but no wrong affection, no thought of the mind, no intention of the heart, no affection in excess, but that all in the motives, and purposes, and aims of the soul, shall be such as to accord with the holiness of Him of whom it is said, that " God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." The edge of this sword pierces through every subterfuge, defies the vain attempt which the heart often makes to disguise its motives, and, like the sacrificial knife, separates the very joints and marrow, and discovers every latent spring of action, laying bare every feeling which the heart would never have the courage to confess even to itself. But this searching inquisition of the word, this inexorable scrutiny of the soul, in order that there may be truth in the inward parts, is the very ground for the necessity of the introduction of the priesthood of Christ. This is the moral connection between the word and the priesthood of Christ, viewed in their practical bearing on the believer's walk in the presence of God.

It will be remembered that when the law had condemned, and when Israel's departures from the Lord had brought them under His judgment, and there seemed no other possible issue to their murmurings but, either the entire withdrawal of God's presence from the camp, or their destruction, that God introduces the rod of Aaron's priesthood, which was the symbol of living and efficacious grace: as is seen in Numbers 17:10 "And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not." For as Moses, the representative of the law, did not bring them into possession of the inheritance; but Joshua, the type of Christ as Captain of

salvation; so neither was it the rod of power - even of God's power, which Moses wielded - but the rod of priesthood, Aaron's rod which budded, in which grace has its special exercise - that brings the people, in spite of all their provocations, through the wilderness. So is it now. It is the priesthood of Christ that gives practical power to walk with God in the requirements of His holiness, as well as imparts the grace that is needed to meet our unnumbered failures, as brought to light by the power of that word by which we are searched.

Most interesting is it to see the difference of the two exhortations based upon the two aspects of Him who sustains this priesthood. Hebrews 4:14, "Seeing that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." Verses 15, 16, "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

It is the greatness of the High Priest, and the place of the exercise of His priesthood, that are presented as the ground of the exhortation, "let us hold fast our profession." The high priest who sustains the ground of this profession is "Jesus, the SON OF GOD," who has passed into the heavens, to exercise His priesthood for us, in the immediate presence of God. "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins..... So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee..... Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec." (Hebrews 5:1; Hebrews 5:10.)

It has been shown that it is God with whom we have to do, and that it is in His presence, from which nothing can be hid, that we have to walk. And when the light of the word has shown us what we are, and what is in our hearts, and at the same time discloses the presence of God, before whom all this is made manifest, there is nothing left for the soul but to shrink back from the light, and throw up all profession of having to do with God. It is felt, and must be felt, when searched by this light, if there be no other link of connection, association with God is impossible. For "what fellowship hath light with darkness?" But to meet this conviction the mind is called to think of the greatness of its resources and the sure ground of its confidence, in the greatness of the high priest of our profession. He on whose sacrifice this confidence is based is the Son of God, who by Himself has purged our sins, and in all the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice, and the virtue of His blood-shedding, has passed into the heavens; and on the ground of what He is in Himself, and what His sacrifice has accomplished, He maintains our position in the presence of God. Allow that the word will not pass by the least shade of sin in my soul without condemnation; allow that it makes me feel that "in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing," and that I am in the light where nothing can be hid, - is that a reason for seeking to evade the light, or for the despair which would lead me to throw up my profession? If, indeed, I were left under the naked dissection of the word, when it had done its work in my conscience, I might, and must, be thus hopeless; but when my eye is turned to what Jesus is, and what He has accomplished, and what His position in heaven for me before God is, then I feel the force of the exhortation, "let us hold fast our profession." For well can He sustain the ground of that profession, since it is based alone upon what He has accomplished: "He suffered for sins once, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Self-aborrent as may be my feelings, when viewing what the light of the word has discovered - for I must say with Job, "now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself, and repent in dust

and ashes" - still, when it is turned from what the light has discovered in me to what that same light shows to be in Christ, in the presence of God for me, my heart is reassured, and I learn practically on what ground it is I can alone hold fast my profession. But if the greatness and the position of our High Priest forbid the letting go our profession, because He is able to sustain the ground of it, there is also the other side, namely, His personal acquaintance with our condition, and the sympathy of His heart, which are presented in order to give boldness under every discouragement. We are encouraged to come to Him, not to soothe us merely by His kindness, or to comfort us by the power of His sympathy, but as to the head and source of all grace, to draw from Him those supplies which will enable the soul practically to walk in the light, as God is in the light. His sympathy and knowledge of our condition - "for we have not a high priest which cannot be touched by the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" - are presented to view, not as in themselves to be rested in, but as the certain ground of His ability and willingness to exercise toward us all that active grace which He knows our condition and circumstances require. There is not a single evil that the word detects in my heart for which I cannot find in Christ the very needed grace that shall enable me to overcome it; and it is on this ground the exhortation is presented, "let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" - the pity which His heart alone can adequately feel, and the help which His love is ever ready to bestow.

"To come to the throne of grace" is a phrase that is often used, as if it applied only to the act of ordinary prayer. It is true that when prayer leads me to call upon the Lord, I do find that He is seated upon the throne of -grace; but the thought here expressed is far different from that which is suggested by the use of the ordinary phrase. It is not merely that God is gracious, and will hear our prayers, and therefore we may wait upon Him with confidence; but it is the presentation of Christ as the head and fountain of sovereign grace and goodness to communicate, combined with all that perfect sympathy which results from the place He took in redemption, and which reigns eternally in His heart, in order to draw our hearts constantly and with confidence to Himself, that we may find the blessed springs of mercy ever flowing, to cheer and strengthen us amidst the difficulties, and temptations, and sorrows, of our course. The boldness with which we are exhorted to come springs from the character of Him through whom we draw nigh to God; and the very office He sustains has its fitting exercise in the communication of the gracious help we need. The sympathy that knows exactly how to meet my necessities, and that encourages my heart, because of the relationship which, through grace, He who feels this sympathy sustains towards me, is the very provision which God has made for what His word and holy presence make manifest in our hearts: the whole effect of being thus searched by the light resulting in a practical acquaintance with the infinite grace of Him who for us sustains the office of a merciful and faithful high priest.

I do not come to Christ to exercise His sympathy toward me, to make my conscience easy in the continuance of that which the light of the word condemns, but to derive from Him the very grace and strength to overcome all that by which my conscience has been oppressed, as searched by that word which is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

(Continued)

Vol 02 - Try the Spirits - Christ the Test Try the Spirits - Christ the Test

1 John 4:1-21 When this scripture was written, it was not any more than with us, merely, the setting forth of the grace and goodness of God in a world that knew Him not-in a world of sin and misery -though it was a blessed privilege to be the channel of such a testimony as the gospel, the messenger to bring in the wondrous message of love to this wretched world; which of course met with opposition, but was a wonderful and sensible blessing to man. The Spirit had another service to perform-another truth to unfold. " Ungodly men had crept in unawares," and it became necessary to warn against evil,

Now it is far more difficult to preserve blessing when it is brought in, than to testify of it at first. So we find in Jude the exhortation given "earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints:" not merely to publish the tidings of the blessing that had been brought in, and so testify of the common salvation, but earnestly to contend for the faith, that they might preserve the blessing, that had been thus brought in, pure and uncorrupted. And here we read, "Believe not every spirit." It is far happier to have to say " Believe the spirit," but because of error it had to be said " Believe not every spirit." The mystery of iniquity, which was to come in, and was already in the world, required it. All the apostles had to warn thus against the evil which had come in; and John more especially, as being the last of them. " Try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. ' Men had slept, and the enemy had sown tares. Satan always seeks by violence and opposition to resist the coming in of truth, and to hinder its reception; and if he cannot do that, then, when it is come in, he will corrupt the truth.

Evil men have crept in unawares, false prophets or false spirits are gone out into the world; holy kind of men it may be in their way, but false prophets, who attack true and simple souls with great apparent power, and with the mingling of much real truth with their error. But error must be put down in the heart and conscience.

It is a great mercy to have orthodoxy professed. By orthodoxy I mean the cardinal truths of the gospel, although of course the profession of orthodoxy is not life. There may be orthodoxy and not life, especially in these days; and we have to come back to where the Spirit of God will keep the soul in the profession of the truth. There may not be salvation, though there may be orthodoxy of profession. The Lord may allow intellect to work, and then the question may arise as with Pilate " what is truth?"

We find in men two things, skepticism and infidelity. The skeptic doubts all truth; the infidel denies the truth altogether, and says, there is no truth, no knowledge, no doctrine. That is what infidelity always will do. But there is difficulty in every truth. The consequence is, when men get tired of their sins, and think about giving them up, they begin to inquire about truth, turn very serious for awhile, and attend to their religious duties as they call it; but, finding it difficult, they tire and soon grow weary of it, and seek to get hold of something that promises certainty, and at the same time saves

them the trouble of knowing truth for themselves. So they look for something established on human authority, and lean on the judgment and opinions of men. This is authority in a bad sense, man's word. God exercises true authority over the conscience. The truth is authority. But men want something that will save them the exercise of their hearts and consciences before God. In human authority the conscience is not with God, and man would be independent of God. Now this degrades man beneath what he was intended to be, for his true position is to be dependent on God. This is man's true glory. The conscience must be brought into contact with God, into the presence of God; and that which accomplishes this is true ministry. Whatever ministry fails to do this, or has not this for its object, is not of God; because it is putting something between the soul and God. If ministry be real, it brings God directly to the conscience through the word; whereas that which is false, stands between God and the conscience; and this will enable us to detect the difference, and to discern at once whether ministry be false or true.

God has promised to guide the humble, and He will secure the humble soul against false prophets. The word of God never treats man's mind as being competent to judge it; for it would be the judge itself of what is authority over the conscience. People have confounded the power of the word to work in the conscience with a competency to judge the word; and it is an awful thing. Man's mind is incapable of judging God's word. If it were capable, the word would not be God's at all, for that would be supposing man's mind to be equal with God, and there would be no God. The natural conscience may judge of individual commands, such as, "Thou shalt not steal," &c. I am capable also of judging so far as to know that it is good, when it has acted on my soul. It is like taking food. I may be entirely ignorant of the processes of nutrition and digestion, yet I may know the full value of food, and be conscious of the invigorating effect produced by the food when eaten. There are many things that may be estimated when they have acted on me, though I may have no competency to judge of them but by their effect. God's word tells me that I am thus and thus, the soul receives the effect by divine power; that is the word judging me, not my judging the word. But the word can produce in me the competency to judge, and these are often confounded in reasoning. Where am I to find the competency? That is the question. It is in the word, because it comes and approves itself to the heart by acting with power on the conscience. "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God," it begins with power.

"Believe not every spirit." It is not simply the truth and man's mind are at work: there are false spirits acting on man's mind. While poor man thinks himself independent, there is a spirit working which is either of God or the devil, either bringing truth or error to the soul. "False prophets are gone out into the world." The confession of "Jesus come in the flesh is of God." That which puts all to the test is the real acknowledgment of Christ come in the flesh. It proves the truth of the person; it is the proper faith of him who speaks, and not a mere confession. Because if I have faith in a thing I am subject to it; that is, confessing Christ, I am subject to Christ. No evil spirit is that; it would not be an evil spirit if it were. "Try the spirits." Unless Jesus Christ is owned as God manifest in the flesh it is not of God. "Many false prophets are gone out into the world," and the owning the lordship and authority of Jesus is to be the test of everything. You will find a thousand things set up instead, but whatever spirit does not bow to the Lord Jesus Christ is not of God.

"Ye are of God little children." He had no thought of putting them on their own competency or ability to judge, or on the authority of other men, but on the Spirit of God. "And have overcome them, for greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." It is as though he said, if the Holy

Ghost is in you, it will overcome, if not, Satan will surely get the better. The Church of God is, as it were, the great prize between Satan and God. So with Pharaoh and Israel when he refused to let the people go. " Thus saith the Lord, let my people go." Immediately the answer is, who is the Lord that I should obey him," though there it was to bring out the manifestation of the power of God in His judgments upon Pharaoh that He might prove Himself the mightier, as Jethro said, " now know I that the Lord is greater than all Gods, for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them. (Exodus 18:1-27; Exodus 11:1-10.) By and by He will skew this out more fully when the Lord appears and Satan is bound. Then there will be an end of this conflict; but now it is carried on in our individual walk; and God would now exercise men's faith and consciences, and manifest His power in keeping them.

We get here the power of walk, " greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." One of the most alarming symptoms in the world, the religious world, in the present day is the idea that there is power in the truth to preserve. There is power in the truth to preserve; but the question is whether the soul holds fast the truth. Unless my thoughts and my heart are in the truth, there will be no power in the truth to me. It is very certain God will keep His truth, but is my heart kept? if not, the expectation of being kept is the mere confidence of man's mind. " Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." The only power of victory is the power of the Spirit of God on the affections and consciences of the saints, and then the heart will be set on Christ and the things of Christ, to love Him, enjoy Him, and serve Him better. The conflict and difficulty are rather when the truth is brought in question, than when it first goes forth in power. If I am not kept by the Spirit of God, I shall not be able to resist the daily solicitations of sin.

Man may grow tired of his sins, and tired of the world, for he has long been in bondage to them, and desire sincerely to break off his sins. He is attracted at first by that which promises him deliverance, and is glad to close with the offer, and so breaks off from his sins for awhile, and is very religious, and seems devoted too; but his soul does not continue; he does not like the trials and tribulations which arise; he cannot bear to lose his friends, and his prosperity and his place in the world; and then error is found. the easier thing, and there must come a falling away, and so it will be but a little flock. False religion might make a monk, but can never put the conscience into the presence of God. Error quarrels not with men's passions, for false religion, in the main, ever ministers to the passions, the thoughts, the feelings of men: and thus it is false religion which suits the world better than truth, because it suits itself to man, and the mass will ever follow error. So Paul had to say, " All Asia is turned away from me." The apostle did not expect that truth would have power over the world, but plainly declared that error would. So we see when the Lord allows the sifting of a large body of people on a point of truth, the greater number will adopt the error. " They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them." " But ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them." If God were in them, they were kept; if not, they would fall away from the truth. We must rely on what has been declared by the Spirit of God, rather than upon what is the expectation of man. The apostle himself believed in the power of truth as much as any now, but he had not the vain expectation that the truth had power to reform the world. " Ye are of God, little children." This is the guard, not of the power, but of the means.

" We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us." It is not said 'he that overcomes,' but he that heareth us is of the truth. He had the spiritual power of discerning what was truth. The means of ascertaining truth from error was the recognition of the word; whosoever did not submit to the

written word was not listened to. Though they speak like angels, it was not of God, it was of themselves, " He that is of God heareth us." I could not say, you must hear me or you will be lost; but I could say this, if you do not hear the message of the gospel, which I speak to you, you will perish, because it is the truth of God, and you are to search for yourselves and see. I am no guarantee of truth; I have it from God; but in the apostles I get the guarantee and the test of truth. They could say, a man must hear them or be lost: they were, so to speak, the depository of truth. One may come to me and say, it is difficult; well, I reply, be humble, be patient, and you will learn. God has given something that is to be the test of truth; if you are of God you will believe it. But if any one hindered any from hearing an apostle, he could say at once he was not of God; for " he that is of God heareth us." Their immediate testimony is the test; God was telling of truth and error. No man now is the immediate vessel or guarantee of truth.

Mark further. The moment I require anything to establish the authority of the word, I take away the authority of the word: for the thing rested on is of course that which is supposed to establish the word, and not the word itself. If I take anything as proving the word of God, and so believe it, that is not believing the word. The Spirit of God and the word of God must go together. The word will not do alone; for I may attempt to judge of the word by my own private judgment, and so get wrong. The Spirit of God will not do alone either, for I may mistake my own fancy for the Spirit; they go together. Then the moment the word reaches my heart, it is absolute authority, and the word judges me. When they are both received into the heart, when thus in complete possession of me, Satan cannot touch me, because they will allow nothing of the flesh (self-will, &c.) to work. Is there evil in me? They will enable me to judge it in myself, and in everything around me. Such an one is guaranteed against all error. He has the Spirit and the word. These are the comforting, peaceful, blessed means of guarding us from all evil. The effect of a man's being regenerated is, he is brought to God, having perfect peace; brought into an entirely new world, where God. is revealing Himself in His word; and he has his soul constantly delighting in the word. There all the wisdom of God is brought out for my soul to be exercised in, (endless and safe!) learning all that God is; and what we have all to seek is to be occupied with the truth, every day knowing more and more of Christ; delighting in and feeding on Christ as the true God and perfect man, subject in all things to His Father: and all this not so as to be able to write an essay, but as the Christ in whom I know God and man; loving Him every day; living by Him every day, as He lived by the Father; depending on the Father. Then everything that is not of Him strikes upon my soul; it is THAT CHRIST who is touched, and it affects the whole harmony of the soul. Be sure of this, if it is not the living power of a living Christ, known and enjoyed in your soul, you cannot with. stand error. It must be truth held in communion with the person of Christ, or it will not guard you against error. The mere truth is no match for Satan. I would not venture to meet Satan on the truth, if I were not called to do it to serve the saints and for the glory of God, because I should be afraid. I know God will keep me when in His service, but I do not therefore cast myself down from off the pinnacle of the temple because it is written in His word, " He will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

We get the traits of the two families set forth in Cain and Abel; in Cain, hatred, violence, and wickedness; in Abel, suffering, righteousness, and love. The eternal life which was with the Father is communicated to the Christian, producing in him Christ's ways, thoughts, and feelings. "Every one that loveth is born of God." " He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, for God is love." Love is the inner development of the divine nature. As I cannot enjoy or exercise the faculties and

affections of a man if I have not the nature of a man, no more can I enjoy God's affections unless I have the nature of God. It is an old remark that "knowledge cannot love;" you must have this nature, you must be born of God, for God is love, or you cannot love. Man's searching gets nothing. Unless he knows the love of God in the Lord Jesus Christ, he cannot love. Suppose there is a general notion of God, and that His eternal Godhead is seen and acknowledged; if I have knowledge and try to understand things I shall be confounded; for when the state of the whole world is looked upon what do I see? Why, three-fourths of it given up to idolatry, worshipping the devil; and oppression, degradation, and misery overwhelming all; aye, multitudes even in this great city: (London:) and the mind gets into confusion. Men may try to say that it is all needful for the general government of man, but this will not do for those who are suffering. If it be said, sin is the cause of it all, then I say, if sin has come in, what can I, as a sinner, have to say to God? how can I meet God? It is of no use to tell me that He is good: He is that; but I am responsible to God; and the more I get into the truth, the more I am confounded and thrown almost into despair. Neither skepticism nor authority will do anything for me here. But the moment I get Christ, the whole thing is clear; Christ clears up all. I have not got something now that can deal with it, but God who has dealt with it. God is seen in Him as dealing with this creation in all its sin and misery. Then I say, sin has ruined us; all are guilty; I am guilty; but He has met me in the very way I wanted it. When I was in perplexity and despair about my sins, and when I found no way of meeting God, then it was God who met me, and showed me how He had settled it all to His glory in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who met all for me, coming into the world to be a propitiation for our sins, coming into all the misery to put it away and give Himself as the source of life and putter away of that sin which would hinder the enjoyment of God; and then for the perfecting of this love to introduce us into that which is above. He came down that He might take us up with 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." " Herein is our love (or love with us) made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world." I get the love manifested in His coming to me and taking me up into the presence of God perfect in Himself. The communication of the nature gives the power to love; and then we get the object, "Not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Thus we get the object for our love to rest upon and be occupied with; always elevating, always satisfying. It is not the mysticism that delights in its own exercise, working on itself; but there is an infinite and blessed object, and we are brought into association with, and likeness to, that blessed object; not allowing in us the least fear, all being taken away by His divine work, and we at rest perfectly and happy with God.

Whatever does not make our hearts know God as perfect in love to ourselves and in ourselves is not the whole truth; whatever does not set me in the presence of God without a single fear remaining so that I can enjoy His love, is not adequate to His love to me. The Lord make us of quick understanding in His fear, and direct our hearts into His love, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

Vol 02 - What Is Death?

What Is Death? For the unbeliever, nothing can be more terrible than death. It is justly and scripturally called "the king of terrors." It is the judicial close of the being of the first Adam. What is beyond? It is not merely so for the animal nature, though that be true, but the more it is considered in connection with man's moral nature, the more terrible does it become. Everything in which man has had his home, his thoughts, his whole being employed, is closed and perished forever. "When his breath goeth forth, all his thoughts perish." Man finds in it an end to every hope, every project, to all his thoughts and plans. The spring of them all is broken. The being in which he moved is gone: he can count upon nothing more. The busy scene in which his whole life has been, knows him no more. He himself fails and is extinct. None have to do with him any more as belonging to it. His nature has given way, powerless to resist this master to which it belongs, and who now asserts his dreadful rights. But this is far from being all. Man indeed, as man alive in this world, sinks down into nothing. But why? Sin has come in; with sin, conscience; with sin, Satan's power: still more; with sin, God's judgment. Death is the expression and witness of all this. It is the wages of sin, terror to the conscience, Satan's power over us, for he has the power of death. Can God help here? Alas, it is his own judgment on sin. Death seems but as the proof that sin does not pass unnoticed, and is the terror and plague of the conscience, as witness of God's judgment, the officer of justice to the criminal, and the proof of his guilt in the presence of coming judgment. How can it but be terrible? It is the seal upon the fall and ruin and condemnation of the first Adam. And he has nothing but this old nature. He cannot subsist as a living man before God. Death is written on him, for he is a sinner, he cannot deliver himself.

He is guilty withal and condemned. The judgment comes. But Christ has come in. He has come into death, - O wondrous truth, the Prince of life! What is death now for the believer?

Now mark, reader, the full force of this wonderful, unspeakable, intervention of God. We have seen death to be man's weakness, the break up of his being, Satan's power, God's judgment, the wages of sin. But all this is in connection with the first Adam, whose portion, because of sin, death and judgment are. We have seen the double character of death; the failure of life, or living power, in man, and the witness and conductor into the judgment of God. Christ has been made sin for us; He has undergone death, passed through it as Satan's power and as God's judgment. Death, with its causes, has been met in its every character by Christ. The judgment of God has been fully borne by Him before the day of judgment comes. Death, as the wages of sin, has been passed through. It has, as a cause of terror to the soul, in every sense, wholly lost its power for the believer. The physical fact may take place; for so wholly has Christ put away its power that that is not necessarily the case. We shall not all die though we shall all be changed. Desiring, says the apostle, not to "be unclothed, but be clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life." Such is the power of life in Christ. But death has much more than passed away. Death is ours, says the apostle, as all things are. By the blessed Lord's entering into it for me, death and judgment too, is become my salvation. The sin, of which it was the wages, has been put away by death itself. The judgment has been borne for me there. Death is not terror to my soul; it is not the

sign of anger, but the blessedest and fullest proof of love, because Christ came into it. The very power of the law against me, I am freed from, for it has power over a man only as long as he lives; but in Christ

I am dead to the law already. God has, by death, met sin and judgment already. In a word, Christ, the sinless One, having come in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, my whole condition, as in the first Adam, has been dealt with; dealt with so that all its consequences have been righteously undergone; and by death, the old man, Satan's power, sin, judgment, mortality itself, which are connected with the old, or sinful, man, are passed and done with forever. I live before God now in the one who is risen, after enduring all that belonged to the old for me. God has dealt with the old man, and all its fruits and consequences for me, in the new, who has taken even the natural consequences attached to it, and gone through its power as in the hand of Satan. Death has freed me forever from everything that belonged to, and awaited the old man, as alive. First, condemnation and judgment are entirely over, as a question of the soul's acceptance. The dreadful ordeal is passed; but by another-so that it is my deliverance from it according to' the righteousness of God. The floods which destroyed the Egyptians were a wall to Israel on the right hand and on the left, the path of safety out of Egypt. The salvation of God was there. Egypt and its oppressive power were left behind them. Death is deliverance and salvation to us. Secondly, what is it become in practice? In the power of Christ's resurrection, I am quickened. He is become my life. I can dispense, if I may venture so to speak, with the life of the old man: I have that of the new. But He who, now risen, is my life, passed through death. I reckon myself dead. Hence it is never said that we are to die to sin. The old man does not and would not; the new man has no sin to die to. We are said to be dead, and commanded to reckon ourselves dead. Romans 6:11,-" Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Colossians 3:1-25,-" For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God;" and then we are directed to mortify our members which are on the earth, in. the power of this new life, and of the Holy Ghost which dwells in us. I have the title, then, to reckon myself dead. What a gain is death to me in this respect, if really the desires of the new man are in me! yea, what deliverance and power! What is dead, for faith, is the old, hindering, harassing, sinful, man; in which, if responsible to God, I was lost, and unable to meet Him." "When," says the apostle, "we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." (Romans 7:5.) But Romans 8:9,-" Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." The flesh is not our place of standing before God. We have acknowledged ourselves lost and ruined in it. That was the standing of the first Adam, and we were in it. Law applied to it, death, judgment. But I am not in it now, but in the second. So as regards ordinances, the apostle says, "If ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments of the world, why as though living [or alive] in the world are ye subject to ordinances?" For faith, we are dead, not alive, in the world. Hence, also, everything that practically makes us realize this-trial, suffering, sorrow-is gain. It makes morally true, and real, in our souls, that we are dead, and thus delivers from the old man. " In all these things is the life of the Spirit." It is disengaged and delivered from the obscuring and deadening influence of the old man. These sorrows and breaches in life are the details of death morally. But of the death of what? Of the old man. All is gain. Thirdly, if death comes in fact, the death of what? Of what is mortal, of the old man. Does the new risen life die? It has passed through death in Christ, and this has been realized in us. It cannot die. It is Christ. Hence, in dying, it simply leaves death behind. It quits what is mortal. We are absent from the

body and present with the Lord. It was previously outwardly connected with what is mortal. It is no longer so. We are absent from the body, and present with the Lord. We depart and we are with Christ. It is true faith looks for a greater triumph—we shall be clothed upon—still this is God's power. The old man, thank God, never revives. God, because of His Spirit that dwells in us, will quicken even our mortal bodies. The life of Christ will be displayed in a glorious body. We shall be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren. This is the fruit of divine power. But meanwhile death itself is always deliverance, because, having a new life, it is our being disencumbered from the old man which hindered and hemmed our way. It is our being with Christ. How sweet and refreshing is the thought! When once we have seized the difference of the old and new man, the reality of the new life we have received in Christ, the death of the old will be known and felt to be true and real gain. No doubt, God's time is best, because He alone knows what is needed in the way of discipline and exercise to form our souls for Himself, and He may preserve us to know the power of this life in Christ, so that mortality should be swallowed up without our dying. But if death is the ceasing of the old man, it is but the ceasing of sin, hindrance, trouble. We have done with the old man, in which we were guilty before God: righteously done with it, because Christ has died for us—forever done with it, because we live in the power of the new. Such is death to the believer. "To depart and to be with Christ is far better." As judgment, Christ has taken it; as to the power of sin, it is the death of the very nature it lives in. As actual mortality, it is deliverance from it to be with Christ in the new man which enjoys Him. Who, as to the proper gain of it, would not die?

If we live to serve Christ, the sorrow of this world is worth while; but it is not the less sorrow in itself, whatever blessing may cheer us through it. To us to live, is Christ; to die, gain. It is but the old man that dies; our misery first, our enemy afterward. Of course this supposes divine life, and in practice the heart to be elsewhere than in the things the old man lives in.

Vol 03 - A Man in Christ: Part 1

A Man in Christ: Part 1 2 Corinthians 12:1-21

There are some chapters in Scripture which contain so full and blessed a statement of some great truth of God that they acquire and retain a peculiar hold on the believer's mind. And though all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and has the same authority, yet this exceptional effect of peculiar passages cannot be blamed, because it is always found to be produced by some chapter which contains a special revelation of God and His ways, or the love of Christ towards us. The chapter of which I would now speak can scarcely be said to have this character, but it contains so complete and remarkable a display of the extent and wondrous heights and deplorable depths to which saints may go; of the mighty principles for good or for evil which are at work in those natures in which they have part in the highest associations, on the one hand, and in the lowest degradation on the other; and of the way in which grace acts to give predominancy to good in us; it presents such a view of the whole working of divine grace to give the perfect result in good and in blessing of the spiritual conflict now going on in us, through the knowledge of good and evil which we acquired in the fall, that I think it may be fruitful to your readers if I unfold it a little practically. The way in which in this one chapter we find the highest state to which a Christian can be elevated, an exceptional one, no doubt, as an experience, and the lowest condition to -which he can fall, and all the practical principles on which the divine work is carried on between these two extremes,` is very striking. In the beginning of the chapter we find a saint in the third heaven, in Paradise, where flesh could have no part in apprehension or in communication. He knew not was he in the body or out of the body. There was no consciousness of human existence in flesh, so he could not tell, nor could he utter what he had heard when he returned to the consciousness of flesh again. Such is the saint at the beginning of the chapter. At the end we find one, perhaps many, fallen into fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness, and unrepentant yet of their sins. What a contrast of the highest heavenly elevation and the lowest carnal degradation! And the Christian capable of both. What a lesson for every saint, though he may reach neither extreme, as a warning; and how suited to give the consciousness of what natures are at work and of the elements which are in conflict in him in his spiritual life down here. Another part of this chapter will show us where power alone is to be found to carry him along his path upon the earth in a way consistently with the heavenly good to which he is called.

Paul uses a remarkable expression as to himself when speaking of his elevation to the third heaven: "I knew a man in Christ." A few preliminary thoughts as to the law will facilitate our understanding this expression. The law gave to man a perfect and divine rule for his conduct upon the earth. But it never took him up into heaven. Heavenly beings, indeed, such as the angels, act upon the abstract perfection of this divine rule as it is stated by the Lord Himself: they love God with all their heart and their neighbor as themselves. This is creature perfection. But that is their nature in which God has maintained them. To prescribe feelings and conduct by law is another thing. Christians often forget this. The contents of the law are perfect. It tells us what the right state of a creature is, and it forbids the wrong that flesh is inclined to. But why prescribe this? No doubt

obedience is a part of perfection in a creature. Mere doing right would not suffice for a being subject to God to walk righteously, because God has absolute authority over him. Thus God can, and we know does, prescribe certain particular acts of service to angels and they obey. But when a state of soul is prescribed-why is that? Because it is needed. It becomes necessary because of the state of the person to whom the command is addressed. He is otherwise inclined, in danger from other dispositions of doing otherwise. To command a person to do a thing supposes that he is not doing nor about to do it if without a command. If we add to this that nine of the ten commandments forbid positive sins and evil dispositions, because men are disposed to them, or there were no need to prohibit them, we shall find that the very nature and existence of a law which prescribes the good on God's authority supposes the evil in man's nature which is opposed to it. This is a deplorable truth, take either aspect of the case. You cannot command love, that is, produce it by commanding it, and you cannot put out lusts by forbidding them to a nature which has them as nature. Yet this is what the law does, and must do if God give one. It proves that what is forbidden is sin, and that it is in man to be forbidden; - but it never takes it away. It prescribes good in the creature but does not produce it. It shows what is right on earth in the creature, but how far is it from taking man into heavenly places! It can have no pretension to it. Man has now by the fall the knowledge of good and evil. The law acts on this amazing faculty, of which God could say, "the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." But how? Man is under the evil and it requires good in him which is not, and shows him all the evil which is in him. It presses the evil on him and its consequences in judgment, and as to the good it requires in him, it only gives the consciousness that it is not there.

Further, it shows no good to him as an object before his soul. I repeat, to make the distinction clear. It requires good in him, loving God and his neighbor for example. But it presents no good to him. There is no re-revealed object to produce good nor be man's good in him in living power. It works therefore wrath. Where no law is there is no transgression. Now, grace works quite otherwise; it does not require good where it is not, though it may produce it. It does not condemn the wicked, but forgives and puts away their sin; it presents to us an object, God Himself; but God come near to us in love. It does more, it communicates what is good. It is not a law. It does not require good where it is not; it produces it. It does not condemn the wicked, but it forgives and puts away their wickedness. It does not lead us to carry on the conflict between good and evil by pressing the evil on us, and making us feel it a burden not to be got rid of, and ourselves slaves to it, which the law does, making us feel "this body of death" as that under whose power we are, sold to sin, and, supposing we are regenerate, making us only feel more truly and deeply that even this does not make us meet its requirements, so that we should be righteous by it, however much "to will is present with us," but the contrary. In a word, grace does not, in the knowledge of good and evil with which it deals, lead us to carry on the conflict by the sense of the power and dreadfulness of evil to which we are subject, and its consequences, but by the possession of perfect and divine good through which we judge the evil as raised above it, by the possession of an object perfectly good, and which is our delight as well as our life, by the possession of Christ; being in Him and He in us. "I knew," says the apostle, "a man in Christ." But this we must a little explain and open out. It is often very vague in many a Christian's heart. In paradise, without law, under the law, and through the presenting of Christ to him, man was responsible for his own conduct as a living man, for things done in the body. He was viewed as a child of Adam, or "in the flesh." He stood, that is, before God in that nature in which he had been created, responsible for his conduct in it, for what

he was in the flesh. The result was, that in respect of every one of these conditions he had failed: failing in paradise, lawless when without law, transgressor when under law, and last, and worst of all, the closing ground of judgment, when Christ came, proved to be without a cloak for sin, the hater of Him and His Father. Man was lost. In a state of probation for four thousand years, the tree had been proved bad, and the more the care, the worse the fruit. All flesh was judged. The tree was to bear no fruit forever. Not only had he been proved to be a sinner in every way, but he had rejected the remedy presented in grace, for Christ came into an already sinful world, and He was despised and rejected of men. It was not all, that man, fallen and guilty, was driven out of Paradise; but Christ come in grace was, as far as man's will was concerned, driven out of the world which was plunged in the misery to which sin had led, and which He had visited in goodness. Man's history was morally closed. "Now," says the Lord, when Greeks came up, "is the Judgment of this world." Hence it is we have, "He appeared once in the end of the world. But now comes. God's work for the sinner. He who knew no sin, is made sin for us. He drinks graciously and willingly the cup given Him to drink. He lays down the life in which He bore the sin, gives it up; and all is gone with it. The very life our sin was borne in on the cross was given up, His blood shed. He has put away sin for every believer, by the sacrifice of Himself, has perfected them forever. He that is dead is freed from sin. But Christ died, He then is freed from sin. But whose? Ours, who believe in Him. It is all gone, gone with the life to which it was attached, in which He bore it. The death of Christ has closed for faith the existence of the old man, the flesh, the first Adam-life in which we stood as responsible before God, and whose place Christ took for us in grace. What the law could not do, in that it was weak, through the flesh, God sending his only Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. In that he died, he died unto sin once, in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Faith anticipates the judgment, as regards the old man, the flesh, with all its ways. Upon the ground of its responsibility we are wholly lost. We may learn it experimentally by passing under the law becoming hopeless of pleasing God, as being in the flesh, or we may learn it by finding our opposition to and indifference to Christ. But the whole thing is done away with for the believer on the cross. He is crucified with. Christ, nevertheless lives, but not he, but Christ lives in him. If the cross has proved that in flesh there is nothing but sin and hatred against God, it has put away the sin it has proved. All that is gone. The life is gone. If a guilty man die in prison, what can the law do more against him? The life in which he had sinned, and to which his guilt attached itself is gone. With us, too, it is gone; for Christ has died, willingly, no doubt, but by the judicial dealing of God with the sin which He bore for us. If we are alive, we are alive now on a new footing, before God, alive in Christ. The old things are passed away; there is a new creation; we are created again in Christ Jesus. Our place, our standing before God, is no longer in flesh. It is in Christ. Christ, as man, has taken quite a new place that neither Adam innocent, nor Adam sinner, had anything to say to. The best robe formed no part of the prodigal's first inheritance at all; it was in the father's possession, quite a new thing. Christ has taken this place consequent on putting away our sins, on having glorified God as to them, and finishing the work. He has taken it in righteousness, and man in Him has got a new place in righteousness with God. When quickened, he is quickened with the life in which Christ lives, the second Adam, and submitting to God's righteousness, knowing that he is totally lost in the first and old man, and having bowed to this solemn truth, as shown and learned in the cross, he is sealed with the Holy Ghost, livingly united to the Lord, one Spirit: he is a man in Christ. Not in the flesh or in the first Adam. All that is closed for him in the cross, where

Christ made Himself responsible for him in respect of it and died unto sin once, and he is alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He belongs to a new creation, having the life of the head of it as his life. Where he learned the utter total condemnation of what he was, he learned its total and eternal putting away. The cross is for him that impassable Red Sea, that Jordan which he has now gone through, and is his deliverance from Egypt forever, and now he has realized it, his entrance into Canaan, in Christ. If Jordan and the power of death overflowed all its banks, for him the ark of the covenant passed in. It is just his way into Canaan. That which, if he had himself assayed to go through, as the Egyptians, would have been his destruction, has been a wall on the right hand and the left, and only destroyed all that was against him. He was a man in the flesh, he is a man in Christ. Amazing and total change from the whole condition and standing of the first Adam, responsible for his own sins, into that of Christ, who having borne the whole consequence of that responsibility in his place, has given him, in the power of that, to us, new life, in which He rose from the dead, a place in and with Himself, as He now is as man before God. It is to this position the apostle refers, only that he was given in a very extraordinary manner to enjoy the full fruit and glory of it during the period of his existence here below. His language as to this truth is remarkably plain, and therefore powerful. "When we were in the flesh," he says. Thus it is we speak, when we refer to a clearly bygone state of things, in which we are no longer. When we were in the flesh, that is, we are no longer in that position at all. "But," he says, "ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you." We are now alive in Christ. "If ye be dead," says he elsewhere, "to the rudiments of the world, why as though living (i.e. alive) in the world are ye subject to ordinances?" "For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." The reader will forgive me, if I have dwelt so long upon the first expression -of our chapter. I have done so because of its vast importance. It is the very heart of all Paul's doctrine, the true and only way of full divine liberty and the power of holiness; and because many Christians have not seized the force of this truth, nor of the expressions of the apostle, they use Christ's death as a remedy for the old man, instead of learning that they have by it passed out of the old man as to their place before God, and into the new in the power of that life which is in Christ. Ask many a true-hearted saint what is the meaning of, "When we were in the flesh," and he could give no clear answer-he has no definite idea of what it can mean. Ask him what it is to be in Christ-all is equally vague. A regenerate man may be in the flesh, as to the condition and standing of his own soul, though he be not so in God's sight; nay, this is the very case supposed in Romans 7:1-25, because he looks at himself as standing before God on the ground of his own responsibility, on which ground he never can, in virtue of being regenerate, meet the requirements of God, attain to His righteousness. Perhaps finding this out, he has recourse to the blood of Christ to quiet his uneasy conscience, and repeated recurrence to it as a Jew would to a sacrifice, a superstitious man to absolution. But he has no idea that he has been cleansed and perfected once for all, and that he is taken clean out of that standing to be placed in Christ before God. But if in Christ, the title and 1 privilege of Christ is our title and privilege. Of the full and wondrous fruit of this, Paul for God's wise and blessed purposes was made to enjoy in an extraordinary and special manner. In that, flesh and mortal nature has no part, nor ever can, though we as alive in Christ have while in that nature, whatever be the degree of our realization of it. Paul was allowed to know it, so that while enjoying it in the highest degree in the new man in his life in Christ, "the life hid with Christ in God," the "not I but Christ living in him," he had no consciousness of that other mortal part which yet burdens by

its very nature (as well as by sin if its k will works) the new and heavenly man in us. He could not tell if he was in or out of the body: he knew on reentering his ordinary state of conscious existence that he had this body; but he could not tell if he was in or out of it when in the third heaven: he was unconscious of it altogether. The reader will remark too how carefully the apostle distinguishes between the man in Christ and himself, as he had the practical experience of himself down here, having indeed the life of Christ and the Spirit which united him to the head, but having also the flesh in him, though he was not in the flesh, Of this Paul, of which he was practically conscious down here/ he would not glory, but he had been given to be in the enjoyment of his place as a man in Christ with entire abstraction, as to his consciousness of it, of anything else-of such an one he would glory. And so can we, though we may never have been in the third heaven to realize fully the glory and privileges of the position we are brought into, yet we are men in Christ, and we have known enough-the feeblest saint who knows his place in Christ has known enough of that blessing to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. He glories in the position of the man in Christ, which is his most surely and fully in Christ; and he may realize it too so that at the moment he may not sensibly feel the working of sin in him, though he well knows it is there. We may be filled with the Spirit, so that the Spirit is the only source of actual thought in us. Indeed this is our proper christian state, not always with the same activity, it is true, of the Spirit giving the sensible apprehension of the glory and the things of Christ so as to elevate the soul to that which is above; but so that there is no consciousness of anything inconsistent with it in the mind.* There may be indeed even then when there is no conscious evil, the effect of obscure apprehension, an apprehension obscure perhaps even in a way which implies fault, negligence, want of singleness of eye, spiritual laziness, swerving from the path in which a single eye would lead us: (though there uneasiness naturally follows in the soul because the Spirit does dwell in us and is grieved:) still there may be no present disturbing element in the conscience.** The being, as men speak, in the third heaven is not always our place and portion. It is a mistake to think it would puff us up. A creature is never puffed up in the presence of God and with Him before the mind. It is when the eye is off Him, when we have been in the third heaven, but are no longer there that the danger begins. We are in danger of being puffed up about having been there when we have lost the present sense of the excellency of what is there and in which we lose, the sense of self. This is what we find in Paul's case. The man in Christ has Christ for his title and is entitled thus to all that Christ enjoys, to joys and glories which mortal apprehensions cannot receive and language formed by mortal thoughts and ways cannot express, that are not meet to be communicated in this scene of human capacities. They belong to another sphere of things.

(* This is the state described in the Epistle to the Philippians-the true christian state.)

(** The fact, it is important to remark, of sin being in the flesh, does not make the conscience bad. When it becomes the source of thought or action, then the conscience is bad and communion by the Holy Ghost is interrupted. But our chapter leads us further into this.) But wonderful as that is into which we are brought, the question of good and evil, the knowledge of which we have by the fall and cannot get rid of, nor is it desirable or meant we should, must be thoroughly and experimentally gone through by us. It has been as to acceptance. In respect of that it is finally and forever settled before God by the death and resurrection of Christ. But we have to learn to judge the evil and to delight in the good. The law, as we have seen, makes us learn the evil as looking to be judged for it. In grace we are first put into the position of perfect blessing in Christ, and then we

judge what is contrary to it. This is the difference of bondage and liberty. Still we have to judge it and grow in our apprehension of good. In the instruction of our chapter this, as in all God's ways with the apostle, who was to be both quickly and fully taught in order constantly and deeply to teach others, was done in the strongest and fullest contrast of the extremes. The third heaven, if it did not set aside the flesh in fact forever, must show what a hopeless unchangeable thing it is. And so it did. Paul had entered into the third heaven with no consciousness of the hindrance of the body, still less with any working of the flesh in any way. But he must return into the practical state of existence in which he had to serve Christ with the consciousness of what he was as Paul. And here the only working of the flesh, the only way it took cognizance of Paul's having been in the third heaven, would have been, if it had been allowed to do so, to have puffed him up at having such wondrous revelations. It was unchanged in evil. Paul must learn this practically, even by a visit to the third heavens, instead of this amazing privilege taking away or changing it. It was not allowed to act, but he must learn truly to judge it in himself. Note this difference. It is not necessary when we are in Christ that flesh should act in order that we should learn to judge it in ourselves. Alas, it is often in that way we do learn it, but it is not necessary that it should act even in thought. By God's ways, and through communion with Him, we can learn to judge evil in the root in us without its bearing fruit. If we do not learn to judge it in communion with God, where there may be very real exercise about it, (and a very great conflict of will against God. if it has acquired any head,) we learn it in its fruits through the giving way to the temptation of Satan. When it is not judged, we learn, no doubt, the evil-not yet indeed the root, but Christ is dishonored, the Spirit grieved, and but for the coming in of grace, sin will in such case have acquired deceiving power in our hearts.

(To be continued.)

Vol 03 - A Man in Christ: Part 2

A Man in Christ: Part 2 2 Corinthians 12:1-21 In what has preceded we have found three important points brought before us in this chapter. First, the man in Christ; secondly, the gross evil of the flesh if our members be not mortified; thirdly, that this same flesh is not at all corrected in its tendencies even by a man's being in the third heaven, nor by anything else. Paul needed a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be puffed up. There is another collateral point indeed, which I would here briefly notice; the difference between our abstract position as men in Christ, (and we are entitled to consider ourselves as such; it is our true position as Christians according to grace,) and our actual condition with the consciousness of the existence of the flesh and all our bodily circumstances and infirmities down here. Into this actual condition we have now to follow Paul in our chapter and to learn where power is to be found to walk rightly in it. The flesh exists unchangeable in its nature, a pure hindrance.

First, we may remark that no extent of knowledge, even where given of God, is in itself spiritual power in our souls. We cannot doubt that such revelations as Paul received in the third heaven, strengthened his own faith, made him understand that it was well worth sacrificing a miserable, life such as this world's is, for it, and gave him a consciousness of what he was contending for a sense of the divine things he had to do with, which must have exercised an immense influence upon his career in this world. But it was not immediate power in conflict in the mixed state in which he found himself when he had to speak of "myself Paul." He had, and so have we, to walk by faith and not by sight. The wickedest man would not sin while his mind had the glory of God Himself before his eyes; but that would no way prove the state of his heart and affections when it was removed. Like Balaam, he would turn to his vomit again. So in point of fact the Christian, however strengthened and refreshed by times on the road by what is almost like sight to him, and by communications of divine love to his soul, has to walk by faith and not always in these sensible apprehensions of divine results in glory. Not that he is to walk in the flesh or lose communion, but he is not always under the power of especial communications of the glory conferred on him and of divine love to his soul. Paul knew a man fourteen years ago-not every day in that state. He could rejoice in the Lord always. Some Christians are apt to confound these two things-special joy and abiding communion, and to suppose because the first is not always the case the discontinuance of the latter is to be taken for granted and acquiesced in. This is a great mistake. Special visitations of joy may be afforded. Constant fellowship with God and with the Lord Jesus is the only right state, the only one recognized in Scripture. We are to rejoice in the Lord always. This the flesh would seek to hinder, and Satan by the flesh. Here we find first the privilege of having a title to hold ourselves dead. We are not debtors to the flesh. It has no kind of title over us. We are not in the flesh. We may reckon ourselves dead and alive unto God, and sin shall not have dominion over us. It is all-important to hold this fast. The flesh is unchanged, but there is no necessity of walking in it; not more as to our thoughts than as to our outward conduct. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and of death; sin in the flesh is condemned by the death of Christ; the power it had over us when under law (if not lawless) it has no longer. When

we were in the flesh the motions of sin which were by the law wrought in us all manner of concupiscence. But we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us. We are delivered from the law, having died in that in which we were held. Our whole condition is changed. What the law could not do just because it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin has condemned sin in the flesh. But if the flesh be not changed, how is this realized in practice? It is this which is taught us here. It is first the giving conscious nothingness and weakness in the flesh. This is not power, but it is the practical way to it. We are entitled, as to our standing before God, to reckon ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and in practice to hold ourselves, as in this condition, not debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh; and sin shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under law but under grace. But our chapter goes further than this: it shows us power so to walk. The flesh is then practically put down. The measure, as stated by the apostle, is this, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body." His object was not to gain this life. Alive in Christ we have it; but he held every movement, thought, and will of the flesh under the judgment of the cross, and so the life of Jesus was left free. Such is our path. Admitted into the very presence of God into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, we judge in its roots in communion with Him according to His infinite grace everything that is not of Christ in us, and the grace we meet and are made partakers of in this communion carries us along our road in lowliness and grace. Our fleshly tendencies are thus only the occasion of receiving the grace which keeps us safe from their power.

I may be humbler than ordinary men if I have dealt with God about my pride, and so of every danger. The present power of Christ keeps the evil out of our thoughts. We have brought God into our life in this respect. It is not merely the absence, comparatively speaking, of a particular character of evil. The flesh-evil-is judged according to God, and I am lowly in spirit, and walk softly and safely. But where there are real dangers, God helps us in this. Not only do I bear about the dying, but we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake. God works; some messenger of Satan is sent; not sin, far from it; God cannot send that; but some humbling process which prevents sin and pride working; unpleasant to the human heart, but needed for it. All self-activity of the flesh is sin; the body is dead because of sin if Christ be in me; that is, if alive, it is only sin; and if Christ is my life, "the Spirit is life." My body is not counted as alive, or to be so in its will. What is of me in will and nature-me as a conscious living man, a child of Adam in this world, is annulled, or is a hindrance; it has no connection with God; a man in it cannot please God. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me."

We find in Philippians this confidence in the flesh (not lusts of corruption) judged by the apostle. All that made Paul of undue importance to himself or to others, and so reflectively to himself, was rejected. It would have been confidence in self. Our part is to be in the presence of God, that all that is of self may be judged. But God, as I have said, helps us. Here God had, by the abundance of the revelations given to Paul, given an occasion which the flesh could use. In His mercy He meets the danger for Paul, which he might not, surely would not, have rightly met; for God does not afflict willingly. He lets loose this messenger of Satan at him, but to do His own work, as with Job. And Paul has some infirmity which tends to make him despicable in preaching. "My temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not," says he to the Galatians; a natural counterpoise to the abundance of revelations. What can the flesh do with this then? Well, it would

be spared what seemed a hindrance. To whom? Why, to Paul. Just right. Paul had to be kept down - terrible truth for us. Must we be made weak and inefficient in order to be blessed and used? Yes, if, wretched worms as we are, we are in danger of leaning as man on the flesh's efficiency and strength. The works that are done upon the earth, God doeth them Himself, and above all spiritual work. He gives the increase. if He puts the poor vessel in a certain sense in danger, and in many a case where it puts itself, He meets the danger by striking at its root in self. He makes nothing of self, renders the incapacity of nature to anything not only apparent, but apparent to ourselves, and this is what we want. That self should feel self nothing or a hindrance, is a most divine work. Though it be a shame to a man who has been in the third heaven, to think himself something in respect of it: but flesh is incorrigible. But as to the instrumentality used, a mean and miserable process, such as becomes making nothing of flesh. If death is our deliverance from all sin, we must taste it for our deliverance practically. The bitter water of Marsh must be 49, tasted when the salt waters of the Red sea have delivered us from Egypt forever and ever. Put the wood of the tree, the cross of Christ, into our cross, and all will be sweet. "Crucified" is terrible work-crucified with Christ, joy and deliverance; reproach is cruel, the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. But there are cases where the will and natural reluctance of the flesh to suffer are in question; there are also those which are characterized by the danger of positive evil working, as pride or vanity in the case of Paul. As to all, death must be tasted. The nothingness and incompetency of all flesh must be felt where it would be disposed to think itself competent. It must find its pretensions arrested and set aside when it has, or would be disposed to have, such; it must find itself consciously weak where it might hope to be strong or capable of something. As to what self would lean on, it must find itself a hindering flesh where it would pretend to be a helping one. It is really nothing in the work and path of God; but when it would be positively something it must be made to feel itself a positive hindrance. This is not the end, but it is the way. We must be humbled when we are not humble, or even in danger of not being so. This work may come in preventively. But the flesh must be nothing if we are to have blessing; and in order that the new man which is content that God should be all and knows its power is in Christ only, may be free and happy and God, as it desires, may be glorified. The power of Satan and the power of death concur in ministering to our usefulness in Christ, because Satan wields this power to kill practically the flesh, and we have another life which lives in Christ and lives for Him. This question is first settled as regards righteousness, as we have seen. We are dead and risen again but it has to be practically settled as regards life and power of walk also. So that we may say, whatever our little measure may be, "to me to live is Christ." But the fact that the flesh is thus practically mortified is not in itself power, we must be positively dependent on another, glad to be so, if our heart is in Christ's service and that we find His help only can make us to serve Him. To have Him is joy in every way. This is what follows: "I will glory in my infirmities;" not sin, but what broke down the flesh in its will and hindered sin, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Here is positive power capable of everything, of rendering us capable of everything in the path of obedience, giving no power at all out of it, but of fulfilling in power all the energy of love in obedience. For the Christian path is not mere legal obedience which submits to a will which arrests and stops our will, but an obedience which serves with delight in love and in which love is positively and energetically active in doing good. This path is regulated by the Lord's will and fulfilled by the Lord's power, but that power can have no adventitious aid. It must be the strength in us of a dependent nature. In this is the right condition of the creature, obedience and conscious

dependence, and both delighted in, on one who has title and alone has title to all the praise, who loves us and on whose love we lean. In the path of service, the energy of Christ's love impels us, Christ's power sustains and enables us. Flesh, only a hindrance to that, must be put down, and practically annulled, that Christ may work freely in us according to the blessing of that love. We then say the love of Christ constrains us. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me, the only true abiding state of the Christian, be he babe or father in Christ; only the thing he may have to do may be different and his temptations too. God in all cases is faithful not to suffer him to be tempted above that he is able. When a man is in Christ then, redeemed, quickened, and united to the Head, accepted in the Beloved, the work of God in order to power is to break down and bring the flesh to conscious nothingness wherever it is needed; not by mending, using, ameliorating, but if needed by its will to be something, breaking it down, yea, making it for man's capabilities of acting a sensible hindrance. That is all that God makes of man as to his flesh and competency, but there is a deep lesson of blessing in it besides being the path of power in source. We are emptied of self, and Christ, that is, purity, and love, and blessing-God known to us in grace becomes everything to us, the mere unhindered joy of the soul, made practically like Him. But we become now sensibly dependent, as Christ our power, I do not say sensibly power; for though there may be a consciousness of His strength, the service and work is done indeed, but done without any conscious strength. It may be done with joy in communion with Christ, and thus with joy in the service itself. It may be done with fear and trembling, and hence with no joy, though with confidence. That depends much upon how far we have to meet the sensible power of the enemy, always in weakness as to self, always in confidence as to Christ, that it is His work, and He the doer of it, though He may use us as instruments. And this operation is not merely an effect in us, though there be one, it is the positive power of Christ, ' a real acting and working of His power, for which the sensible putting down of flesh was only preparatory, that it might be evidently not the power of flesh, and that there might be no mixture of the two in our minds. Hence the flesh is turned into positive, sensible weakness. But the power of Christ rests upon us, so that it is joy to the soul because He uses us, connects Himself, so to speak, with us; deigns to make us the instruments and servants, willing and rejoicing servants of this power. It is His power, but it rests on us. This is not the man in Christ, but Christ with the man-His power resting on Him, emptied of self. The path of strength, then, is the being made sensible of our own weakness, so that divine strength, which will never be a supplement to flesh's strength, may come in; thus there is entire dependence, and the positive coming in of Christ's power to work by us. If Paul's bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible, and there was something which tended to make him despised, by whose power was it that such wondrous blessing for the whole world flowed forth on all sides, from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum?

One or two remarks more, and I will close my imperfect suggestions on this chapter. First, remark, that the humbling process with Paul was no depriving of the abundance of the revelations, or weakening the consciousness that he was a man in Christ. This would have been positive loss. These were fully maintained and gloried in. The use the flesh would make of them when consciously down here in the body, in the world, was met by all necessary humbling process carried on in the flesh itself. Next remark that it is not merely power which is gained by this process. The discernment of good and evil, in its more subtle characters, is greatly increased; the judgment and knowledge of flesh greatly strengthened and deepened. Hence the liberty of the new man with God, confidence in Him, the sense of the careful and gracious interest He takes in

us, and intercourse founded on this confidence, are greatly increased. Further, remark, that dealing with self, our own spiritual condition is the secret of power, not the quantity of divine revelations we have to communicate, valuable as that may be in its place. For power Paul was dealt with in his own soul, its own dangers and state, and then Christ's power rested on him. Lastly, that our glorying in our position in Christ is all right. "Of such an one I will glory; yet of myself I will not glory but in mine infirmities." When I think of my place in Christ, of the "man in Christ," of such an one we ought to glory. This is no presumption. It cannot be otherwise, whenever we know ourselves in Christ. Do you think I can do anything but glory in being in Christ, and like Christ in glory? Of such an one I will. Let no pretended humility deprive us of this. It is legalism. Of myself, of that of which I have the living consciousness as a man down here, I cannot glory, unless it be in those sufferings for Christ and infirmities, of whatever kind they may be, connected with them, which are used to put the flesh down, that the power of Christ may rest upon me would add to these, one collateral observation. The Lord can unite discipline with positive suffering for Christ, though the two things are quite distinct. When Paul was subjected to contempt in his preaching it was for Christ's sake he suffered, yet the form of it was, we have seen, a discipline to prevent his being puffed up. This may be seen doctrinally stated in Hebrews 12:2-11. In 2,4, we suffer with Christ, striving against sin, even to martyrdom and death. In 5-11, the same process is the discipline of the Lord, that we may be partakers of His holiness. How wise and most gracious of the Lord's ways to turn our needed discipline into the privilege of suffering for Christ's sake, so that we can glory in our infirmities. There is chastening which has not this character, being for positive evil. In this, doubtless, we have to thank God, but it is another thing. In fine, before God we have the "man in Christ," - blessed position, - and which is perfection where we want it; and as to our place before men, besides Christ in us as life, the power of Christ, where we practically want it, in weakness and imperfection down here, resting on the man for walk and service before men. The first is the basis of all our walk, but it does not suffice for power. This is had in daily dependence in which we walk, as humbled in ourselves, that Christ may be glorified, and the flesh practically annulled.

(Continued from page 311.)

Vol 03 - Adam

Adam From whatever point the history of Adam is viewed it seems calculated to leave only an oppressive weight upon the mind. From his history the cloud in which his sin enveloped him never seems to pass away. In him we see the height of creature happiness for a moment, followed by the continued sadness of one who kept not his first estate. Fallen from the place of authority and honor, and become the drudge of toil in exile from an =laborious paradise, his altered external circumstances presented a daily protest against his sin, and told him in daily reiterated language that none " can harden himself against God and prosper;" and " There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death!"

Alas! that man's biography should almost immediately begin with the history of his rebellion against the hand that had formed him in His image; and that, instead of the record of his gratitude and praise, we should read only of his distrust, with its bitter fruits, of the God whose goodness was poured around him on every hand. His happiness and honor are his own, but they spring from a bounty and goodness which he neither acts nor counsels. In the scene of enjoyment in which he is set he is but a quiescent receiver. His fortunes, his glory, his high estate, own nothing in the way of self-achievement. They are the spontaneous gifts of that God who gave him life, and blessed him, and called him to intercourse with Himself and set him over the works of His hands. He is created-blessed-set in authority -the tests of responsibility and life put before him-and what is the result? He is tempted-sins-and forfeits all!

Brief and passing is the bright picture of Adam's happiness, as the head of creation, in innocence and intercourse with God; though every feeling of his heart and nature then was that which God had directly implanted or which was awakened in his bosom by the knowledge of His goodness. Soon in the prosecution of his history far other scenes arise, and other objects and other thoughts arrest the mind. In Adam and Cain sin is presented in its perfected forms: in Adam, sin against God; in Cain, sin against man in the image of God. Sin in Adam bore the stamp of distrust of God's goodness. Cain's sin is hatred of grace and of him who is the object of that grace. Both are seen in full character in man's hatred and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ: " They have seen and hated both me and my Father." In Abel and in Enoch, on the other hand, blessed be God, are presented the full and perfect redemption from sin by the power of divine grace. Abel is the first exemplar of righteousness by faith, now sin had destroyed man's innocence; Enoch presents the perfect triumph over death, as the consequence of sin; thus bringing into full relief "the hope of righteousness by faith." But hope does not spring from any change wrought by grace in Adam, in his condition or his estate. In the ways of God "light arises in darkness;" but it is seen only as the eye is turned away from Adam to rest upon the mystic promise of "the woman's seed." In the history of the first man, as the head of disobedience, whatever his personal sense of restoring mercy, we read in the broadest characters this solemn truth-which is yet the test of all true obedience and the basis of all real blessing-" Let God be true, but every man a liar!" For, be it observed, that the hope of redemption through "the seed of the woman" comes not to us through any promise made to Adam, as is sometimes wrongly assumed; nor does it present to us the

unfolding of Adam's restoration, who never regains his first estate. It is rather his utter setting aside as the keeper of others' fortunes, or the depository of others' blessings, who had so signally ruined his own. In him we see sin dealt with directly by the Lord, and consequences attached to it, in the government of the world, of which every age affords its attestations, while it leaves the solution of the enigma, of an almost universal scene of corruption, and misery, and death, in a world which a God of goodness made and rules, for the history before us to supply-inexplicable on any ground but that which revelation here unfolds. The chief elements of Adam's moral discipline, as it appears, are to be found in the history of God's dealing with his sin, which the third chapter of Genesis presents; and it is in this scene alone that we find any direct intimations of his intercourse with God after the fall.

There was, doubtless, restored intercourse, but it is unnoticed in the word, because another lesson is impressed on his history, by the wisdom of God, than that which Abel's, or Enoch's, or Noah's presents. It marks the omissions of scripture to be as striking as its declarations, that, whatever may be inferred, nothing is stated concerning Adam's salvation and restoration to God. Nothing is said about the reality of his faith; neither is it anywhere stated, as of Enoch and others, that "he walked with God." There is no attestation, as in the case of Abel, that " he was righteous," on the only ground of righteousness, for man, now sin had come in; but he takes his place in scripture after the fall only as the progenitor of a race involved in the ruin of his sin, and as the head of disobedience in contrast with Christ, the obedient one. He carries with him through the world the consciousness that he had sinned away everything and that recovery was utterly beyond his power. He is never seen in any sense as one who was trusted anew. He begets sons and daughters, and at length dies; but the effects of God's dealings on his soul can be little gathered from any direct statements of the divine word: The reason of this is plain, and not a little instructive to us. The distinctive principle of God's dealings with Adam appears to have been to impress upon him a deep and lasting conviction of the truth and certainty of all that he had distrusted, the absence of which had been the occasion of his fall. Hence his exile from paradise, his preclusion from the tree of life, the sterility of the earth and his consequent incessant toil, the throes of childbirth which he is obliged to witness, as the race is increased, and finally, his familiarity with death before he himself is absolutely its victim, are all arrayed in evidence of the truth of the character of that God whom he had distrusted and disobeyed; while in Cain he sees sin suddenly ripening and assuming another shape, and telling his terror-stricken soul that the heart once uplifted in rebellion against God, but prepares for the murderous uplifting of the arm against all that bears the stamp of His image and favor in man. What pregnancy does this thought give to the simple statement of a later revelation-" This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God loveth his brother also!" It is the law of the divine nature, in opposition to the corrupted nature of man. It is not, however, in Adam's history, but in the unfolding of grace in the promise of the woman's seed, that the traducings of the enemy are met, and the God who was maligned as grudging to man the easy gifts of His creative bounty, is seen to have so loved as to give His only-begotten Son. But we have said that the elements of Adam's future discipline were lodged in his soul, while God was dealing with his primeval sin. And first as to temptation, or the source and spring of evil in man; he was practically taught that truth which is given to us in the way of precept, but which received its embodiment and illustration in Adam's living experience, " Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil,' neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted when he is drawn aside of his own lust and enticed. Then

when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." Then how effectually does he learn the folly of his aspirations after knowledge apart from God, in order to raise his condition or gratify his pride, when he sees that their only issue, as to himself, is a discovery of his own nakedness! " Their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked." As to guilt, also, he learns from his own hasty retreat to a hiding-place, amongst the trees of the garden, that man under its power instinctively flees from the presence of God, even before divine justice expels him thence; while the echo of that terrible question, " Where art thou?" continually reminds him that there is no darkness nor secret place where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves that the Lord will not see them. And further, the reason he gives for his fear-" I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself "-, is his own acknowledgment of the worthlessness of his fig-leaf coverings, when once the presence of the Lord is reached, whatever their estimation may have been in his own eyes or the eyes of others apart from that presence. And lastly, " Who told thee that thou wast naked?" makes him sadly aware of an inward voice unheard before, and reveals to him the birth-time and birth-place of conscience, henceforward, to be his companion and the inward witness of his sin. But there is the other side of the question to be considered in his experience, and the effects of discipline on his soul. In his history we may note his entire submission to God, whether in the judgment of his sin, or in its terrible consequences, and the altered condition to which, by it, he is reduced. From this subjection -which is the first mark of grace-nothing in his subsequent history leads us to believe he swerved. As a sinner, he submits himself to the judgment of God. He consents to be set aside himself, and to look to the woman as the divinely appointed channel of life. He himself "calls his wife's name EVE, because she is-the mother of all living." He refuses not the coats of skins which divine goodness provides as a covering for them, instead of the aprons of fig-leaves, the work of their own hands. He rebels not against his expulsion from paradise, but submits to the toil which his sin had brought in, nor seeks to turn aside the edge of the curse. In his after-history we do not find him, like Cain, building cities, or engaging in any worldly enterprises, but submissively pursuing his toilsome path, until his earthly course is done. That he participated in the disappointed hopes of Eve, in the birth and after-history of Cain and Abel, there seems but little room to question; but the divine appointment of Seth in Abel's place is noticed as meeting the full recognition of his heart; and then his history is closed with the brief statement that "The days of Adam, after he had begotten Seth, were eight hundred years and he died."

Nothing is more calculated profoundly to impress the mind with the eternal truth of God and of His word than the thoughtful contemplation of Adam's history. If we look, no farther than to the government of this world, as exhibiting the consequences of his sin, how do the records of six thousand years bear witness that not one word of all that God has spoken, as to these consequences, has fallen to the ground! And who, with this record in his mind, can fail to be impressed with its attestations, as they start up in his daily pathway, in the labor, and toil, and misery, and death, which abound and increase on every hand? And who, without this history, could have conceived or predicted that such consequences, and so lasting, could by possibility have hung upon a single step in departure from subjection to that word'?

Vol 03 - An Ear to Hear

An Ear to Hear

I would note what a great thing it is to have an ear to hear. It was the grand mark of distinction between the corrupt mass of Israel and the true followers of Jesus. And Revelation 2:1-29; Revelation 3:1-22 show us that it is still the distinguishing feature between the dead and the living.

Surely it is the gift of God. " Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." But, like every other gift, we must prize it if we would enjoy it. " To you that hear shall more be given." Now the subtlety of Satan is seen in this, that he seeks in every way possible to steal the ear from God. He well knows that if he can but get our ear, he has access to the heart; that if we but enter into temptation we have no power to resist it. Moreover, we are no match for his wiles. Eve listened, and she was undone. Now it is not merely positive error that is seductive: everything that is not Christ, everything that is not linked with Christ, everything into which I enter without Christ, tends to draw away from Him. If I listen, without Him, I have no power to judge or to exclude the lying vanity which would draw away from Him. If I open my ear to what is not of God, His word will lose its place and power, and I shall judge by the sight of my eyes and the hearing of my ears. " When the woman saw that the tree was good for food," &c., the word of God lost its hold over her heart, and she became a prey to the deceitfulness of sin.

O the divine wisdom of shutting the ear to the ten thousand vanities which would steal the ear from Christ, and divert us from walking as partakers of the heavenly calling! And everything that is of man -- science, politics, literature, amusement--will thus divert. Everything that occupies the heart --without Christ is an abomination which maketh a lie. It corrupts the affections from Him. What is of the world keeps in the world. If called to a thing by Christ, He will be with me and keep me in it; but whatever I am connected with else will drag me down into death. Hence the great blessing of having an honest calling in which we can serve the Lord Christ; and the danger of those who have " fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness," and who strengthen not the hands of the poor and the needy. The house may be swept and garnished, but it is empty; and if Christ is not in, there is no power to keep Satan out.

Hence the unspeakable preciousness of the word of God. Coming from God, it leads to God. By it He gave us life at the first, and by it He nourishes the life He has given. Nothing else can feed the new man. It is by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God that man lives. If it abides in us, we shall abide in the Father and in the Son. It will maintain the soul in known communion in the midst of seduction all around and all deceivableness of unrighteousness. For there we find Jesus the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested Unto us. It is the mirror in which His glory is reflected: and beholding in this glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image. Thus is Christ formed in us in truth and power.

Now nothing will compensate for this personal fellowship with Jesus in the word. However profitable the gleanings of others may be when led by the Spirit, nothing can make up for individual

conscious communion with Christ Himself through the word. Alas! that our hearts could live a day without it. How lovely is this in the song! The Bride cannot do without her Beloved. He is everything to her. It is true she is slothful at one time, and at another secure; but she has no other Beloved. And When she has for a moment lost Him or grieved Him away, there is no rest until she finds Him again-" Him whom her soul loveth." It is these living affections towards the Lord Jesus which we so much need. And it is by the revelation of His towards us in the word that they are begotten, and when there, satisfied. Then precious to our souls are the words of His lips,-more precious than gold and silver, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.

Here comes in the great importance of an ear to hear. "For doth not Wisdom cry, and Understanding put forth her voice?" But where is the opened ear? The Queen of Sheba came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." And He has said, in that same 8th of Proverbs, " Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For he that findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord." (Comp. John 20:31.)

God grant to us, as the earth drinketh in the rain which cometh oft upon it from heaven, so to thirst for His precious word, that we may know Him, and grow up into Him in all things.

Vol 03 - Aphorisms

Aphorisms

Faith in the body uses the power that is in the Head. It is the province of faith to recognize what is in Him, and to act upon it.

If our hearts are not constantly reckoning on the present love and power of Jesus to be exercised towards us, the memory of the past will never help us; for memory is not faith.

Faith is a present dependence on God.

Whatever faith looks to Christ for, faith will get.

We use the goodness of God today: to-morrow comes, and We throw ourselves back on our own resources through unbelief.

Vol 03 - Earth and Heaven

Earth and Heaven

Psalms 73:1-28

What a difference there is between being on the earth and in heaven! In Luke 15:1-32 we get it for a sinner; it is the far country or the Father's house. Here we get it for a saint. In the beginning of the Psalm, all his judgments are astray, for his heart has got on the poor things of earth. "I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.... They are not in trouble, as other men; neither are they plagued like other men." And herein is seen the deceitfulness of riches -they detain the thoughts and affections on earth. What are they in heaven? What is the estimate there of everything in which man, as man, can boast? God writes death on him and on them. (See Psalms 49:1-20) Being in heaven enables us to put the true estimate on earth and everything in it. The only true use of riches is to use them for God. Every other use will make a man carnal, but this will lead the affections heavenward, whilst being to God's glory. Matthew 6:19-21 : "Where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also."

See how the light bursts in upon him when he gets into the sanctuary! Instead of judging God and His ways, (as in verse 13,) he now judges himself; and he abhors himself in His presence. "So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee." But immediately he adds, "Nevertheless, I am continually with thee." In the joy of restoration he blesses the grace that was deeper than all his failure. Here we have no long process, as some prescribe, but the heart finds God in all the fullness of His grace, when it turns to Him in truth-when the will is broken, the soul finds rest. "A little faith goes further than a great many tears." But in truth, restoration is God's work. "He restoreth my soul." When his foot was slipping, it was His mercy that held him up.

Now, God gets His place, and there is light upon everything. The joy of relationship with Him liberates the soul, and everything else fades in His presence. "There is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." His flesh and his heart fail, but God is the strength of his heart, and his one and eternal portion. The love of Christ to His Church and to sinners is the very element in which spiritual joy lives and thrives. There may be knowledge and service, but if the love of Christ is not sensibly the moving spring, there will not be edification. "Knowledge puffeth up" him who has it, "but love edifieth" those to whom it ministers. I have always found rest, however troubled before, when in the fellowship of Christ's love to His people, however feebly enjoyed.

If I fall back into the life of nature, and live it and feed it, I shall also fall back into its responsibilities, and get troubled about past sins and present corruption-and rightly so-troubled so as to have a guilty conscience, and pro as not to feel separated in spirit from the whole thing. Only "as alive from the dead" can I know or enjoy the freedom wherewith Christ makes free; and this is entered into by faith, and maintained by fellowship with Jesus. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20.) But in order to this

fellowship, obedience is essential. (See John 15:1-27) "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love." Hence, devotedness to Christ, hearty hearing of His voice, and following Him, is the very element in which the new man enjoys the liberty of resurrection. It is liberty from sin unto God.

There is danger in putting the girdle off. While it is on, we are braced for service and happy, but when some service is over, there is often a feeling of weariness, it may be of the body; but the danger is in letting the mind too slip down into nature for rest. It is a great thing in resting to have Christ with us. The "rest" of the disciples after their mission was to be with Him and one another. "Come and rest awhile." If I seek rest in reading the word, or prayer, or singing, or visiting the poor, or fellowship in person or by letter with the saints, it will but strengthen for God; but if in self-indulgence, it will open the door for Satan and the world. "Being let go, they went to their own company."

It is a great thing to minister what the soul is fed with by God. It may be but one thought, but then it is the channel between Christ and the soul. The Christ who feeds one can feed a thousand. Moreover it is in breaking the bread that it is multiplied, not before it is broken. It is not many thoughts that make a good meal for the soul, but Christ ministered; and a little in the spirit goes a great way-joy is ministered and strength.

Satan seeks either to give confidence apart from Christ, or to hinder from confidence in Christ. He well knows that if a soul is looking to Jesus, he has no power over it, and so cannot use it for his own end; nay, that such an one has power over him. The great thing is to remember that we are nothing, God is all, and to consent to it. There is no trouble or anxiety then, for there is only God for it; and more, the heart seeking only His glory, can count upon Him to maintain it. His will is ours, and we do not want things to be otherwise; but inasmuch as He is active in His love in the scene that is, even so are we, through His grace, and then we find rest.

Christ did not come to be occupied with the ten thousand vanities filling the hearts and minds of poor sinners down here; but He came from His Father's bosom, to tell out all His Father's love, that He might occupy their hearts with the joys of the Father's presence. "If thou knewest " was ever on His lips. It is in this spirit alone that we can rightly pass through the world; our own hearts preoccupied with the sense of His loveliness and grace, and so unattracted by all that glitters here, longing to attract away from these things to Him who alone is lovely.

It was in this spirit that Paul went to Corinth. Jews required a sign, and Greeks sought wisdom, but he brought neither the one nor the other; he preached Christ crucified. He well knew that Christ crucified was to the Jews a scandal and to the Greeks foolishness; but he also knew that to the called, the same Christ was the power of God and the wisdom of God. Therefore he determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ, and Him (as) crucified.

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Faith Working by Love

Galatians 5:6 The world cast out the Son of God in the day of His tender, personal diligent love, waiting, as He was, on all the need and sorrow that were around Him. For His love they were His enemies. They took, also, the occasion which His humiliation afforded them, (a humiliation assumed for the salvation of sinners,) to cast reproach and indignity upon Him. "When He came," as another has said, "to reconcile, to display, the tenderness of His sympathetic love, then nothing would, do but they must get rid of God. When He comes into the very midst of the sufferings and woes of a world lying in wickedness, they refuse to have Him. They used the opportunity of His humiliation, to heap indignity and scorn upon Him."

If this were so with the children of men, if this were what the Lord of life and glory had to find in the world, the faith which apprehended Him (workmanship of His own Spirit) was the more grateful to Him. And we have good reason to know that it was so-blessed be His name. He not only relieved the need that was brought to him, but He took: delight in the faith that brought it. That faith, however, distinguished itself differently. It worked by different passions of the soul. It worked at times, I may say, as by a spirit of reverence, at times as by a spirit of liberty. For it was not only that the Lord met instances of strong faith, or of weak faith; He met faith having very different characteristics in its approaches and appeals to Him. For instance, it was forward in the company that brought their palsied friend to Him; it was reserved in the woman who touched Him in the crowd. In Bartimaeus, it was marked by a strong, unquestioning apprehension of grace; in the centurion it worked by a worshipping apprehension of His personal glory. Bartimaeus knew Him in the grace of the Son of David, who was to make the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and he would cry, and cry again, and make his sorrow to utter itself aloud in the ear of Jesus, in spite of the multitude. The centurion, on the other hand, judged himself unworthy to approach Him, and his house unworthy to receive Him; and would scarcely allow his sorrow to be heard above the measure which necessity put upon it.

Here surely was a difference. The one was all forwardness, knowing the grace of Christ; the other all reverence and reserve, knowing His personal glory. And yet we cannot say which was the more acceptable to Him. Each of them, with like sureness and readiness, gets the blessing he needed; and evident it is, from the whole style of the narratives, that He was refreshed by the faith of each, though it made its approach and appeal in so different a spirit. And we see this diversity among the saints now. The spirit of reverence, like the centurion's reserve, prevails in some, the spirit of liberty, like the boldness of Bartimaeus, in others. We, through infirmity, may misunderstand one another, because of such differences; but happy is it to see that the Lord, after this manner, can and does appreciate each and all. But if faith thus worked in the presence of Christ in His day, it had worked by other passions of the soul before that day. "By faith, Noah, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." The word to which Noah listened and which he received was such as naturally awakened fear. Faith in it worked by fear: it brought solemn tidings

to his ear, and fear of God and of His word was the fruit of faith.

Rahab tells the spies of Joshua that what her nation had heard of the doings of the God of Israel for His people had caused a panic, and she, believing the tidings, received the spies. This was another instance of faith working by fear.*

(* The law worked in that way. Fear was the end of it, as Moses tells the people. "God is come to prove you," says he to them, "and that his fear may be before your faces." (Exodus 9:1-35) Moses himself trembled, saying, "I exceedingly fear and quake.")

All this is so. A spirit of reverence, a spirit of liberty, fear, and other passions may be the form of that power in the soul which faith works by. But the apostle speaks to us of love, as being the due power by which it now works. As he says, "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love."

If faith, at this day, take up fear, it has taken up its wrong instrument. The Lord can comfort the feeble mind, and meet the tremblings and uncertainties of the heart; but let us confess them as unworthy of His grace in Christ Jesus. He would be sullyng the brightness of His own way, if He could admit that faith in Him could work by fear. God apprehended, as I His glory shines in the face of Jesus Christ, must inspire confidence and liberty; and that is faith working by love. The Epistle to the Galatians reads for us the title of faith to work in this way. The Son of God. has borne the curse of the law that we might get the blessing of God. The Son of God was made under the law, that we might be brought from under it into the adoption and liberty of children. Confidence, liberty, the conscience and heart at ease, love answering love, must be the fruit of faith in such facts as these. It is, therefore, but the conclusion of all this to say, that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love." But I must add a little on the fruit both in the soul and in the life of this fine principle, this "faith which worketh by love. And here I say, what a difference between blessedness and religiousness! The Galatians passed from the first to the second. Sad, dishonorable journey! In their first estate, they would have plucked out their eyes for Paul, the witness and minister of Christ among them, just because they were so happy in Christ. In their second estate, Paul stands in doubt of them, and fears they might, through biting and devouring, go on to consume one another. They had become much more religious than when he had known them before; but they had lost their blessedness. They were observing days and months and times and years; but where were the eyes that were once ready to be plucked out for others?

What a difference! And so at this day. Souls we know who are in the sweet personal enjoyment of Christ, and by which they gain a state of strength and victory; while the whole scene around us bears witness of the easy natural combination of religiousness and worldliness; of the observance of ordinances, and yet of full subjection to the course of this present evil world.

Now, "faith that worketh by love" is the spring or parent of this state of "blessedness," of which we are speaking, and which the apostle describes in Galatians 4:15, "Where is then the blessedness ye spoke of; for I bare you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me." The apostle himself, as the same epistle shows us, had experienced this same blessedness. When he first received the gospel, he went down to Arabia; for he needed not Jerusalem or apostles, or anything that all could do for him or give him; he had

his treasure with him, the Son was revealed in him. So afterward at Antioch, he did not fear. Peter: the creature, however honored or above him in some sense, did not command him; his happy spirit was feeding on the love of the Son of God." (See chaps. i. and ii.)

These are touches of the spirit of the apostle, indicating indeed that state of "blessedness" which waits on the "faith that worketh by love." The Hebrew saints give us another sample of the same. In the day of their illumination or quickening, they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and became the willing companions of them who suffered and were reproached for Christ's sake. The Church at Jerusalem in Acts 2:1-47 shows us the same. The saints there were together, and had all things common. No man called anything he had his own. They ate their bread with gladness, praising God. And so the eunuch in Acts 8:1-40 He went on his way rejoicing, able to lose Philip, because he had found Christ. Surely these knew the "blessedness" of the "faith that worketh by love." But time would fail us to tell of all such cases then those days, and now in our days-blessed be God for it!

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