

# SERMONS OF GEORGE V WIGRAM

by George V. Wigram

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*Wigram's writings including letters on conscience and spiritual discernment, examining how true conscience must be enlightened by God's revelation and warning against self-confident vows and fleshly confidence.*

55 Chapters

## Table of Contents

1. S. A Gospel Address.
2. S. A Letter on Conscience, etc.
3. S. A Marriage Address.
4. S. A Practical Question
5. S. A Song in the Desert.
6. S. A Song of Degrees.
7. S. A Study of the Psalms
8. S. Devotedness and Separation
9. S. Doing
10. S. Exo\_3:4
11. S. Extract from Letter.
12. S. Extract from a Letter.
13. S. Extract from an Unpublished Letter.
14. S. Fragment
15. S. Fragment
16. S. Fragment
17. S. Fragments.
18. S. Fragments.
19. S. God's Inheritance in the Saints
20. S. God's Object in our Trials
21. S. God's Provision for the Wilderness.
22. S. God, Who Is Rich in Mercy
23. S. Has Christ destroyed the works of the devil?
24. S. His Name shall be in Their Foreheads
25. S. His Servants shall Serve Him
26. S. In Heaven
27. S. Inside the Veil
28. S. Living Christ.
29. S. Man's Thoughts or God's Thoughts:Which am I Occupied With?
30. S. Notes of a Gospel Address
31. S. Paul as a Pattern.
32. S. Paul's Gospel: Do You Preach It?
33. S. Php\_3:1-21.
34. S. Rest at Noon
35. S. Rev\_1:1-20.
36. S. Rich in Mercy
37. S. Shall I ever die?
38. S. The Bright and Morning Star.
39. S. The Broken Sabbath.

40. S. The Call and Faith of Abraham
41. S. The Character of Our Testimony
42. S. The Coming of the Lord.
43. S. The Father's House
44. S. The Hope of His Calling
45. S. The Judgment-seat of Christ
46. S. The Lesson of Sorrow
47. S. The Lord in the Midst of His Disciples.
48. S. The Love of Christ
49. S. The Peerless One
50. S. The Prayers of Saints
51. S. To Me to Live is Christ
52. S. Two Letters on the Marriage of an Evangelist
53. S. Waiting for God's Son
54. S. Was Balaam Converted?
55. S. Weakness and Strength.

## S. A Gospel Address.

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A Gospel Address.

2Co 4:1-18; 2Co 5:1-21.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 8, 1881, p. 197.

I have read these chapters together because they present the gospel in the way in which Paul learnt all the leading points of it. There was a certain man very remarkable for his self-righteousness — Saul of Tarsus. He thought he could put forth his power mightily to vindicate God's cause against One whom he thought an impostor — Jesus of Nazareth; and when he saw the light of the glory shine down on Stephen, it had no effect on him whatever; it only stirred his heart up to go to the high priest to get letters to Damascus. All the hard thoughts he had about Christ had a response in the heart of Christ. He looked down and saw that man with those clothes laid at his feet; and He said, "That is the man I will take up; and I will put him into Stephen's place, whether he likes it or not" The Lord called him as he went down to Damascus "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul's answer was, "Who art thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." What gentleness of the Lord Jesus! The next word is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord put that man for the first time into the place of an enquirer about the person of the Lord Jesus. He says, "The first time I ever asked the question, 'Who art thou?' was when I saw the divine glory shining down, and heard the voice of Him who I thought was an impostor calling me by name; what could I do but give up all to Him?" He gives up all his thoughts, and says, "I know Him, and I am at His disposal." Peter, James, and John did not know the Lord Jesus in this way till He was risen from the dead. Both Peter and Paul had to learn what was the main object for which Christ came into the world; and they got the light of it after He rose from the dead. The revelation of Christ as being gone into heaven had to be made known to Peter. Now, how many of you can say, I know Him? Do you know Him? After what sort of fashion? with any sort of intimacy? When I was nineteen, if friends talked to me about Christ, I knew nothing; but when the Lord came and introduced Himself to me I thought that a person was close to me, and that everything I had done was out in the light; but instead of coming to condemn me, there was nothing but love in Him. I could have told you who Jesus Christ was, and who Caesar was; but as to knowing Himself, I was utterly ignorant. But as He made His passages of love into my heart, out came the confession of what I was. I have had forty-seven years' apprenticeship under Christ; and of all the things on which my heart dwells as to eternity, I say, "I have got One who is gone there before me."

God says, "Let there be light." (2Co 4:6) The One who spoke light out of darkness could speak light into darkness, as He does into the heart of the poor sinner. I want to call attention to what Paul had to learn. Peter learnt it too, that it was not what men did to Christ in crucifying Him that contained the full meaning of His death, but there was a "determinate counsel of God." He let men run their whole course, because He could not be a just God, and the Justifier of him that believeth,

without the blood of Christ. They had God in the world, and they would not have Him there, and now the blood is in heaven. They say, We will not have that either. It is the world, not the earth, spoken of here — the world, the system man has set up to make himself happy without God. God comes into the scene, and man says, "I will not have you." "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." He did not come raking up their transgressions. God saw that reconciliation was what was wanted. He saw that unless He could take that enmity out of my heart, we could never come together. And now Paul says, "He has committed unto us the word of this reconciliation." The unconverted say, "I cannot admit that I need reconciling to God, or else I should be lost." "Oh," says the Christian, "that is just where I get my rest!" Even a child very soon displays will. What does God say? "Very unlike my Son; I cannot get on with it." Does He turn away? No; He says you want reconciling. "You are in a path of 'I will' and 'I won't:' it leads to hell. My Son went through the world, and only said 'I will' twice, and that when it was My will." Does God deal with will in man? Yes; He sent out the apostles and others with this word, "Be ye reconciled to God."

Let me say a word about the need of this reconciliation, because I knew so much about it for nineteen years. When I learnt I was going down a sloping path to hell, I set myself to work out righteousness, and worked myself nearly to death, having no idea of doing things by halves. And what did I see all this come to? God says, "I must do the work." What! that no one but God was to have the credit of salvation? That I was to come as a poor sinner? Why that will let me down so very low! It just proved that I wanted reconciling. I was saying, up to that time, "I don't like Thy way." Perhaps some of you are saying to God, "I don't like Thy way; I must do something." God says, "I did it eighteen hundred years ago. My Son died. I shall not do the work again. If you come into My presence, saying, I am going to do everything for myself, I say, I do not know you." Are you going to displace every thing in heaven? Are you going to undo the work of Christ, and bring in a new way? That work has stood before God for more than eighteen hundred years, and are you, an upstart creature, going to say, No; that work must be set aside, and a way must be made for me, to let me figure out and show what I am? In 2Co 4:18 we get the basis of it all. If we pause on 2Co 5:21, we shall find how different God's thoughts are from man's thoughts. "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." Very well put by the apostle in a few words, because we cannot say, Who can this be? for we know there was only One who "knew no sin." It might be placed over the Lord Jesus in heaven, "This Man hath done nothing amiss;" but more than that, "He knew no sin." "Holy, harmless, undefiled," etc. God made Him to be sin; now what does man think about that? I heard it said, "I don't think there is any justice about that;" but man, when he undertakes to judge God, is in the dark. It would never have been just or righteousness if He had been made sin contrary to His will. I just remark, that in all these infidel reasonings men take things for granted that are not true. Had not God a right to do as He liked? Had not He a right to sit in heaven from all eternity? Yes. Had not He a right to leave that place, and take His place on the cross? Man must keep his own place, or else he comes into judgment. Who can say to God, Thou must not be here? All that it brings out is, that when the gospel is presented to man, he says, "I do not like God, or His ways." It shows another thing, that the wisdom of God was such that He knew how to take the absolute ruin of man, and make that the means of the greatest glory to Himself. Look at man in the garden; he turned his back upon God, and followed Satan. How did He remedy it? Could man? No; God says, "I will step in there, and turn that very ruin to My own praise." How did He do it? His Son comes

down to drink that cup of wrath for sinners; the Son of God was made sin. He is the only Person yet who has ever tasted the wrath of God against sin, and I am bold to say He was the only One who could taste it fully. Take a man who goes to "his own place:" he knows what it is to be separated from God; but how can a finite being learn what is infinite? But when the Son of God came into the world He took the cup of wrath. Who will measure what He went through? the thought of God hiding His face from Him? Many a believer has tried to measure sin, and he says, "No, I cannot; I find the measure in the cross which I cannot measure." He was forsaken of God; that is the sort of God who sent Peter and Paul with this message to poor sinners. "I have made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for you."

Then you get the other thought brought out in the latter part of the verse, "That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." God hid His face from His Son, just as the Jews and Gentiles were mocking Him; but He did not mean it to end there. He says, "Now come to My right hand, and let Me show the world what I think of You; and every one who comes to Me in Thy name shall receive a hearty welcome." It is as simple as possible. Suppose I had been into a foreign land, and saved the life of some man out of a river. I return, and I want a favour of some of you who are akin to him; I come to you; you say, "I do not know you." I reply, "Have you heard from your son lately?" You tell me all that has passed, and I say, "I am the man who saved him." "Oh," you say, "what will I not give you! Come and sit down, and make my home your home:" Just so with God and Christ; if you come in your own name He does not know you, if you come in His name you get a hearty welcome. The thing is as clear as possible, and you have firm ground to go upon if you come in His name.

What is the connection between this and human righteousness? Human righteousness is, I do this and that, and when I have done, God forms the judgment of it. God's righteousness is God saying, "I have done something, and I want some one to recognize it, and to come in His name." That is heart-work when we come to know a loving Saviour; faith-work when we come to think of what God has done. Then there is conscience-work; you cannot look into my conscience, or I into yours. We see a beautiful conscience-work in the apostle. He says we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; not the great white throne — that is at the end of the thousand years. Those who appear there will never appear at the other judgmentseat. Here it is like a man who has been away from home; he comes back and settles up his accounts in a loving way: good servants like their masters to keep short reckonings. When Christ gathers all His people together there, it is a question of how He shall place them in the kingdom. If I speak of appearing in a place, I mean I shall be manifest. Paul says, My doctrine is manifest, and we must all be manifested. People do not like that: what, all come out there? I will tell you why they do not like it, they have not been manifested to themselves yet; but you cannot escape it if you mean to be in the glory. But stop; what are you afraid of? Who are you going to meet there? The Lord Jesus Christ. No mistake about His having known you as a sinner, and as a failing saint He does not expect you to be just like Himself. He expects a poor sinner saved by grace Will it be a very painful thing to be there? He will say, as He did to Peter, "I had not a bit of faith in you, but you had a bit of faith in Me, and that is what brought you here." Will it be painful if He says, You owe it all to Me; do not go and say, that you did it yourself. Are you afraid to appear before Him there? What does God think about me? what do saints of God think about me? what do I think about myself? If I have not weighed myself up in God's presence, no wonder I am not at ease at the thought of being at the

judgment-seat. Is your thought about yourself anything but the blood of Christ as to acceptance? I would rather come cleansed by that blood than in my own righteousness even if it were possible.

What do I think of all that blessed favour into which I am brought? Christ is gone into heaven, and I am to go in there. It is what I think of Christ, not what I think of myself; it clears out every thought of myself. Where are poor sinners who do not know they want cleansing by blood? Lost! lost! lost! No matter who you are — either a poor sinner with a Saviour, or a poor sinful man cleaving to his sinfulness. Paul says, I do not come to teach you human righteousness, but Jesus Christ who is revealed to you and me. The eye of that Lord looks down on us now. When He was on earth He looked down on a little company like this; He knew Nicodemus at the first glance, and He knew the woman of Samaria at the first glance. As He looks down on us, does He see one who knows His blood, His finished work, or one who cares nothing about Him? I am connected with One who is the centre of all God's purposes; I know that all that is true of a believer, and a great deal more. It is wonderful, God's way of setting aside all that is of the flesh, and making a way that lets naughty sinners down in self-abhorrence, and makes them say, "My trust is in the Lord." Who else should ruined sinners trust in? Everything in connection with sin about me makes me loathe myself, and cling to Him and say, Christ for me. G. V. W.

## S. A Letter on Conscience, etc.

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A Letter on Conscience, etc.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend vol. 16, 1889, p. 24. My Dear -, What is commonly called a vow (that is, pledging yourself without or with penalties if it is broken) is, in itself, the fruit of self-confidence and energy in the flesh - two things which mark fallen men, and which God abhors.

Conscience is a natural thing, and came in with the fall in Eden; for, till then, all in man was right, and he could not think God had anything against His own unmarred handiwork - which man was. I notice conscience here because with it comes the question of honesty and uprightness, which are of great moment to the Christian. But if conscience is the knowledge which a man has before God, as to God's thoughts of this or of that, the unconverted man has no light of revelation in his soul; and the light which comes in at conversion makes everything manifest. A conscience must be placed in the light and have the teaching of God ere it can rest satisfied that it knows what is right.

Many men have vowed to commit a sin, and used the vow as the excuse for doing it; and yet had anyone said to them, Dare you say to God, "Thou wouldest that I should commit this murder," or whatever the sin be, they would reply, "Certainly I cannot. Even nature tells me it is sin." If a man vowed to be an apostle, or to convert many people, or not to marry, etc., let him confess his sin, and leave himself in God's hand. He has assumed power to be in himself, and it is not there. As to the other question, it is I think merely the result of the departure from the truth of the apostles' teaching. Children of God by faith, because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of adoption to you, crying, Abba, Father.

God puts all in Christ, and makes it ours through faith and by the Spirit; and many want to get up a form of experience - a school examination of the believer. The result is, that many who are glibly proclaimers of themselves, boast that they have the Spirit of the Son, must have it because they profess to believe, but remain hard and dogmatic in their spirit; and others who in secret cry, Abba, Father, are made to mourn, because they are told they are not able to prove their having the Spirit of adoption. G. V. W. (1873).

## S. A Marriage Address.

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A Marriage Address.

Gen 2:18-24; Eph 5:22-33.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 13, 1886, p. 235. An immense sphere, if one looks at the scene laid there in the garden, and, on the other hand, that scene in which the last Adam, life-giving Spirit, will present to Himself a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. It surely is part of the special grace of God to His people on an occasion like this that He presents before us so distinctly what, in His mind, this relationship in which many of us stand, and into which this day our brother and sister are entering, points to, not merely as Adam at first, with Eve as a helpmeet, but to that amazing counsel of God brought out since Pentecost, how the Lord Jesus Christ, the last Adam, will present a Bride to Himself without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. I feel the immense importance of this at the present time because all relationships are made so little of amongst men - no natural affection. Therefore, on entering into any new relationship, it is very important to look to it, whether or not we enter into it and stand in that measure of grace the word of God presents to us as a privilege to those who love the Lord in sincerity and truth. We get the word in Genesis about the man leaving father and mother and cleaving to the wife repeated in Eph 5:31. "As the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." Oh, what a word that is! God subjected the Church to Christ, chose her in Him before the foundation of the world, and subjected her to Christ, not only for the wilderness, but for eternity, even for the paradise of God, where the Lord Jesus Christ will take her to Himself. She has nothing whatever apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has beautifully put forth what He felt as the responsible One. He has done, He does, and will do every thing. His thoughts have not changed in the least during the 6000 years of man's rebellion. He has done and won all for us; and with the same large heart that took us up He gives us promises, declaring that the same glory which the Father gave to Him He will give to us.

We have found Him the One whose thoughts always are characterized by "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;" and in the good pleasure of His will Christ became the shelter of the Church. That is a solemn word, when one looks around the world on all the miseries of domestic life, and sees how little the husbands know how to be the shelter of the wives; how little, as individual Christians, we know how to walk like Christ, to say, "This must be done because it is the will of the Father. That must not be done because it is not the will of the Father," and at the same time to be the perfect shelter. The wife should have to recognize, "This is the Father's will." What a change it would make with wives if we that are husbands could take that ground, able to say, "My wife sees I am will-less: as to all unimportant things, let her have her own way! "If I am in the intelligence of Christ, I see how He connects this relationship of the human family with His own relationship to the Church; and I am sure, if I can lay aside my own will and take up His only, I may reckon on having the constant flowing of the water of refreshment. My arm ought to be like the wing of the hen for

her chickens, the place of shelter. Of course with that comes authority, but that is not burdensome. She would say, as he, in all unimportant things, where the glory of the Lord is not concerned (there she would have to stand firm as a rock), "This is but a passing thing, and an opportunity of being subject."

I feel a great difficulty and sorrow in looking round at all relationships. Husbands, parents and children, masters and servants, and friends - there are difficulties in them all, even in friendship. (Who can have walked with a friend twenty years and not found it out?) I cannot say that the state of them in practice is to the Lord's glory. I believe that in every case, when there is anything painful and wrong, we shall find that it is in the higher member the failure comes in first. The first to look at is the one God puts forward as being responsible; yet whatever a husband, a father, a mother, a master, or a mistress, may be, if there is grace in the subordinate members, they will be able to accept the place of subjection to the superior members. The wife must not say, "Oh, but I have not a shelter in my husband!" Have you no Father in heaven? Cannot you bring His power to bear on him? Cannot you put your will aside, so as to be able to bring in the power of a higher relationship? If you can get that thought, you will be able to get strength and power to meet all.

Child and parent, are you not, as a believer, a child of God? Have you not your Father's ear? You have only to show to your father and mother what Christ showed out towards His parents. Yours will know and own the power, if you are walking with the Lord Jesus Christ and God your Father. The same with servants. We who are masters and mistresses have a very solemn sin lying at our door for not knowing how to form in our houses homes that those who are with us might feel to be places that they covet, and to which, when they leave, they love to turn back, and to look to us for counsel. I ought to be one whom they knew (be they Christians or not) as having a Master in heaven, one ever a master for their blessing. If a servant complained, I ought to say, "Have you been to the Lord, and have you spread out all before Him, all before your Father, and have you found nothing to check complaint?" Of course there are difficulties in every relationship; but, oh, to know what the setting is in which the two jewels are locked together! It is pure gold - gold, not of Ophir, but the divine antitype, Christ, in heaven. Marriage is like a finger pointing to the union of Christ and the Church, and what a poor-hearted thing he must be who, with the arm of a wife pressing on his own, has never thought of it as pointing to the love of the Lord Jesus Christ for that Church for whom He gave Himself, and which He is to present to Himself without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. G. V. Wigram.

## S. A Practical Question

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A Practical Question.

Now let me ask you a practical question. How much today have you prayed for the Church of God? How much have you prayed for the saints of God? and how much do you pray every day of your life? How much is it upon your heart as a burden, because it relates to the interests of Christ and the glory of Christ? How much do you seek solitude with God, and retirement with Him, and long to be at home with God, to shut the world out and yourself in, that you may be there with God about those wonderful interests of Christ, because you have got communion with His mind about that which is so dear to Him on this earth? I tell you, the lack of all this is simply the result of the want of separation; and it is not merely a person being separated outwardly. It is possible for saints to satisfy themselves if they have outwardly escaped from the wreck and the corruption that is all around. They say, "Oh well, I have escaped from the corruption that is outside; my body is not in it." But the question is, Is your heart outside the world, and is your spirit separated from it as much as your body? Do you think, if I may speak strongly (though I do not apologize, for I speak before God I trust), do you think that what the blessed God wants is a number of individuals brought together into a place before Him, but whose hearts are far away elsewhere? Do you think it is a mere question of what is outside and seen? Beloved friends, what He is looking for is the affection of a heart and the earnestness of a soul that has found His own Son in heaven. If it is merely a question of your bodily presence, while your heart and affections are outside, what I say is, and I say it with all gentleness to-night, "My son, give me thine heart." This is where the febleness is; it is this want of separation. Inward separateness would lead to outward separateness; but outward separateness will never produce inward separateness. If your heart, and affections, your intelligence, your inner man, are separated to God, then your body, as a vessel, will soon follow that which controls it. W. T. Turpin.

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God would have you absolutely without a will. The moment you are in subjection, you have the consciousness of being just where God would have you.

G. V. Wigram.

## S. A Song in the Desert.

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A Song in the Desert.

"They journeyed toward the sunrising And the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it." Num 21:11-17.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Rom 13:12.

"I Jesus am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Rev 22:16.

NEARLY now the last stage trodden Of the desert way;

All behind them lies the darkness, All before-the day. But some hearts were weary travelling, Murmuring at the road;

Half forgetting their deliverance By the mighty God.

"Nought," they said, "there lies around us But the desert sand;

Oh to see once more the rivers Of Egyptia's land!"

Then God's heart of deep compassion Sent the message free "If the people look for water, Gather them to Me."

Forty years of desert wandering, Proving man was vain;

Turning back in heart to Egypt When a pressure came.

Forty years of desert wandering, Mercies sweet and new Every day their path surrounding, Proving God was true.

Now the journey almost over, Trial well-nigh past, He would have them, as when starting, Raise a song at last.

Nought but desert sand around them, Not one spot of green; But the glory of His presence Lighting up the scene.

Desert weariness forgotten By that mighty throng, As around that springing water Voices rise in song. Not a song of "victory" only Now their voices fill; But the deeper blest experience "God is with us still."

Nearly now the last stage trodden Of the desert way;

All behind us lies the darkness, All before - the day.

Wondrous day of glowing promise, Dimming all beside, When the One who died to win us Comes to claim His Bride. And while watching for His coming, Waiting here below, He would have us in

the desert Find the waters flow.

Streams of sweet and deep refreshment Gladdening all the throng, Giving us, when gathered round Him, Blessing and a song. A. S. Oliphant. The secret of all blessing and progress, after a soul has been brought to taste of blessing in Christ, is the being led into intercourse with God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture, knowing Him as the living and true God in action in Scripture. Standing then face to face with Him, we see what poor things we are, and what the blessing for us in this book - called truly God's library. G. V. Wigram.

## S. A Song of Degrees.

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### A Song of Degrees.

"As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting-house, and His banner over me was love." Song of Solomon 2:3-4. This scripture may very fittingly be accepted as a song of degrees in the early history of the soul of a believer; and we say its early history, because there are other and deeper truths which follow; but here we have a little outline of truth suited to babes in Christ who are not yet equal to the strong meat of the word of God. We hope then our few remarks will prove useful to that deeply-interesting class of readers who have but recently come to the knowledge of Christ, and to that much greater number who, having for years, some of them for many years, known something of His grace, have never yet learned the wondrous blessedness of their present portion in Him.

We are firmly convinced that there is a very wide circle of souls (and the circle is widening every day) who need to have the eyes of their heart enlightened to know the character of their calling, and above all to know what Christ is for them and to them, did they but appropriate by faith His fulness. We feel sure we need only mention it to secure a ready admission, that there are hundreds and thousands of persons having divine life in their souls who know what it is to have Christ for their sins, but who have not the remotest knowledge in any practical way of what it is to have Him for their hearts.

This, then, is what we would specially draw out from the scripture before us. First of all the quickened soul is attracted and charmed by an object outside of itself, and is enraptured by its supreme beauty, and its inviting fragrance: "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons." Surely this answers in a divine way to the soul's first sight of Christ by faith; we do not say it is the meaning of this scripture, which doubtless in its real interpretation refers to the intimate relations of the remnant of Israel and the Lord Jesus to each other in a later and a different day. We simply use the illustration in its adaptation to the believer personally, and as such we accept this word as the soul's first discovery for itself by faith of the peerless beauty and attractiveness of His blessed person who is "over all God blessed for ever." The apple-tree in its blossom appears to be suggested; and of all trees, surely this in its early bloom is the most beautiful and attractive to the eye of man. Now this is just what Christ was not (and is not) to the world; for the word of the prophet was fulfilled: "When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." But it is what He is, and ever will be, to faith, even "the chiefest among ten thousand;" "yea, He is altogether lovely." The eye that has fully opened upon Christ has beheld a sight for eternity, has looked upon an object above the brightness of the sun, and may well be blind to everything else by reason of "the glory of that light." (Acts 22:11.) Compared to that Tree of Life which God planted for His own glory, who would venture for a moment to speak of the trees of the wood? As well might we compare the sickly yellow hues of an expiring rushlight to the pure and brilliant rays of an electric light. It is Christ in His divine supremacy and heavenly beauty as an

object to meet and win the affections of the heart. Beholding Him, I am attracted to His feet like the woman who was a sinner (Luk 7:1-50); the eyes of my heart feast upon His divine perfections as I am irresistibly drawn to Him. Little, it may be, do I know, and far less could I disclose to another, what I find in Himself, or derive from Him; but I am spell-bound, riveted with His transcending excellency; I cannot divert my eyes from so commanding, yet so winning, an object. Before Him everything else retires, and the brightest object upon earth pales in its lustre.

Thus delighted with Him, I sit down under His shadow with great delight. This is the second degree, and so we may read the verse (see margin). The soul having discovered something of His worth, would tarry and abide in His presence. As John's two disciples lost sight of the Baptist when the Lamb of God passed by, and asked of the One who had become the magnet of their hearts, "Where dwellest thou?" and in response to His own invitation, "Come and see," abode with Him for a full day, or perfect period of time, so here the soul rests permanently in the presence of its object. The One who has entered the arena of the soul is more than enough to fill and satisfy it for ever. The soul is enraptured; the heart is charged with untold delight, and would never depart from under the covert of His wings. She takes her place beneath His benignant, overshadowing arms, and finds as much her safety as her shelter there. Not now is He an object only eliciting admiration, but He is the One who stands between me and every evil thing. Once my sins were between me and Him, now is He between me and my sins; they are gone for ever, and His everlasting arms embrace me in eternal security. But more than this. As in eastern countries the burning sun is our fiery enemy, so is an overshadowing tree, or a great rock, the most welcome intervention between us and his terrible blast. This also is seen here as a figure of Christ. Under His shadow I find not only my security for ever, but that refreshing shade which is afforded by His eternal wings. As the strong quills of the bird shield her brood from every foe; and her downy breast at the same time affords warmth and comfort to her tender charge, so does His mighty wing stand between me and the enemy; and while on the one hand I experience security from everything without, on the other I learn what it is to be pillowed in spirit already upon His bosom, to enjoy there the eternal security of an assured place in His heart, which nothing shall nullify or disturb. This, then, is what it is to sit down with exultation beneath the tabernacle of His presence, the sanctuary of His shadow! But there is a third thing - "His fruit was sweet unto my taste." The apostle Peter says, "Unto us who believe He is precious," or more correctly, "is the preciousness." The more we find out one another, the more we discover imperfection, failure, and defect; the more we find out Christ, the more we discover His suitability, His sufficiency, His excellency, and how replete He is with everything calculated to feed and delight the soul. If of all trees no tree so beautiful in its bloom as the apple, so of all trees is none so valuable for its fruit, affording wholesome food for the hungry, and refreshing drink for the thirsty: it feeds, nourishes, and refreshes. How much more so is Christ all this, and infinitely more, for the needy soul! "His flesh is meat indeed, His blood is drink indeed;" as He said, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." To the soul that has found its all in Him, how true and how forcible are these simple words, "His fruit was sweet to my taste!" "all, all I want is there!"

Dear reader, are these the experiences of your soul? Are you personally attracted and enraptured by this blessed object, this sight for eternity? Well, that, then, is our first degree. Are you consciously under His shelter - His blood between you and God? Himself between you and your sins? Further, Are you housed in the eternal security, and happy in the eternal serenity, which is

found only in one sweet and sacred spot, even under the covert of His wings? That is our second degree. Again, are you feeding upon Him? The wave-breast and the heave-shoulder are for you as a believer; all the tender affections of His heart, and the resistless might of His upholding arm, are yours for faith to appropriate, use, and enjoy. This, therefore, is our third degree. 'Now mark whatever He is for us He is for ever. (1) His cloudless beauty can never fade, His surpassing excellency never depart, His peerless perfections never be sullied. Before Him I am less than nothing; yet attracted to Himself, my eyes are filled with the revelation of His person; and my heart enraptured for eternity. (2) His wing of power and breast of love alike are mine; and the security and the shelter they afford me I can, through grace, lay claim to for ever. (3) His fruit is sweet to our taste now; the antepast is ours already; and the full fruition is at hand in the Tree of Life, and the hidden manna, our living food for ever and for ever. But there is yet another degree or two more - "He brought me to the banqueting-house." (margin, "house of wine.") Oh, who shall declare to us the blessedness of being inside the house, at home with Him there! Yet do not we know something of that anticipated bliss already? If we have indeed passed the three degrees, we shall surely not be blocked at the fourth. Let faith plume her golden wings, and rejoice in those precious words as she soars upward, "He brought me," Himself the doer of it. Surely He shall have His own unhindered way soon! But ought He not now? And, if we would but let Him, here He tells us what His loving heart would lead Him to do. He would conduct us to His house of wine, the wine of joy and gladness; and His blessed heart would unbend itself, and He would joy over us with singing. Let the reader here pause, and ask himself how much of this divine, this heavenly joy, his heart has experienced today in company of spirit with Christ. Is your joy His joy, and His joy your joy? Have you thus proved that in this at least you are "one spirit with the Lord?" Do you cultivate the joy of Christ and of God as your joy, and thus make manifest that you have taken your eternal place in His house of wine? Alas! how very few of the dear children of God know what it is to joy in Him through our Lord Jesus Christ; many indeed know not what it is to have peace with Him. They have never then sat down under the inviting shadow of Christ; but even of those who have that settled peace of soul, how few have final rest of heart in Him, sitting down together in His house of wine. It is the fourth step in our series, and with the next we conclude our song of degrees. "His banner over me is love." Have you reached this crowning degree, this climax of all? It is the eternal triumph of His love. On His unfurled banner, waving for ever over our heads, shall be read, "The love of Christ which passeth knowledge," as immeasurable as it is inexhaustible; "He will rest in His love."

Surely these are degrees in the achievements of grace which enter into glory, and tell of it beautifully and blessedly! But they are for faith now; and, dear reader, if you have never yet done so, let me invite you to take your degrees. Each is a step onward in divine blessedness for the soul - an inviting, cheering, inspiriting step, to which the Holy Ghost would lead the dear children of God. These picture-lessons about Christ, with which the word of God teems, are drawn by the pencil of God to rejoice our hearts, to increase our faith, to develop our growth by the Holy Ghost - "From glory into glory changed, Till we behold His face." The Lord do it for His own sake. W. R. (D). My fellowship with the Father is my taste of the delight He has in the only-begotten. G. V. Wigram.

## S. A Study of the Psalms

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### A Study of the Psalms INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

It has pleased the Most High to reveal Himself to us (in that which men call the New Testament), under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Mat 28:19). In this we learn redemption eternal and for Heaven. Of old, in the Creation of the world, He had revealed His eternal power and Godhead (Rom 1:20). After the deluge, He made a fresh revelation of Himself in another glory, viz., as in the patience of long-suffering goodness in Providence (Gen 8:21-22; Gen 9:8-17); the rainbow the memorial of it. Then, again, He displayed Himself and new glories in Government upon the Earth, as the alone One to be worshipped, and as the King to be obeyed, of Israel-His own peculiar nation, which He redeemed for Himself out of Egypt. As the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, was not made known in those times, neither was heaven His dwelling-place thrown open to faith; nor was this done until the Holy Ghost came down on the day of Pentecost, a witness of Jesus, the earth -rejected, -that He was Lord and Christ, and upon the throne on high. The peculiarity of the light vouchsafed to us must not be forgotten, nor the power which has been given to us. The church was not revealed in Old Testament times, nor referred to, nor had the Holy Ghost come down to dwell in it.

Creation, providence and government upon earth were three spheres, each giving its own distinctive testimony; but the testimony of none of them was that which the Son brought forth: He was the truth. Life and immortality were brought to light through the gospel. All the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily; and His alone it was to say, "he that has seen me has seen the Father also." Man now, and from that time to this, stands under the light of eternity and of heaven opened. The revelation now is of the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Eternal redemption, as taught us in the epistle to the Hebrews, had been foreshadowed by a temporal redemption of Israel out of Egypt: but the types and emblems of Old Testament times pointed on to that to which they would have to give place when it came,-whether, first, as applied to the church now, or as, secondly, to be applied hereafter, in its second covenant to Israel. In both applications the leading Personage is one and the same, the Lord Jesus Christ: yet, as presented to us now, while in His present position in heaven, it brings out to light the value and import of His higher divine and heavenly associations in a way that it will not, when it is applied to the House of Israel in the land. The Psalms contain the proof of this when the subjects of any of them are carefully set in the light of the epistles. Compare the subject opened up in any Psalm with the counterpart of it now, and with the counterpart of it when Israel is restored to the land, and what I have said is clear enough. The principles connected with forgiveness of sins, as laid down in Psa 32:1-11, for instance, are the same as those laid down in Romans chap. 4, and in the Scriptures which tell of Israel's forgiveness; but the light of Heb 10:1-39 -Christ upon the throne of the Majesty in the Highest (and the throne of God thus made the mercy-seat)-and my conscience brought there through faith and by the Spirit-transcends infinitely the light found for Israel in the last eight chapters, of Ezekiel -when Jehovah and His restored temple will be known to Israel

dwelling in the city Jehovah-Shammah. So again, compare Psa 103:1-22.: and Eph 1:15-23; Eph 2:1-10, and who will not see that our light about mercy and grace altogether surpasses both David's, and that of the Nation Israel in the day of its glory.

Let me now ask my reader, whether he ever noticed the order in which the Psalms stand? It is, so far as I know, the same in all Hebrew bibles. If you examine it, you will find that the Psalms are not placed in the order of the events which they describe, or to which they refer. In the order in which the events occurred, the cross took place before the resurrection, and before the ascension of the Lord to heaven. But Psa 2:1-12, which describes that which was after (compare Acts 4:25-26) the cross, is placed before Psa 22:1-31, which gives the crucifixion. The crucifixion, I say, occurred before the Holy Ghost charged man with the sin of rebellion against the Lord and His anointed, heaven-honored though earth-rejected: yet in the order of the Psa 22:1-31 is after 2. And if this is true, when things are looked at in principle, it is only still more obviously so when results in detail are considered; compare Psa 2:9, in principle true in Acts 4:25-26, but in full result exhibited in Rev 2:27. Again, Psa 22:1-31; Psa 40:1-17 are atonement Psalms. The latter is largely quoted in Heb 10:1-39; and the former is a divine description of the sufferings endured by Messiah when on the cross; at least from ver. 1 to 21. Yet these Psalms are placed, among the Psalms, after 2 and 8, the one of which gives us the recognition in heaven of Messiah when Israel on earth had rejected Him, and the other presents His title of glory as Son of man. Peter, and James and John show us the import of Psa 2:1-12., in a result of the cross; Paul, in the Hebrews chap. 2, uses the 8th Psalm as describing, what has resulted from the cross. Take again, Psa 16:1-11; Psa 17:1-15, and compare them with those which precede and which follow them, and then examine the New Testament for the historical order of events; and the same result appears. I need not trace out here this, which I have in study done, as to each of the Psalms.\*

(\*In the above I bring forward only that which seems to me unanswerable: a Psalm is commented on in the New Testament and so far explained; it has a place assigned to it by the inspired writer, so has another and another Psalm; and the location of the Psalms in the Psalter are thus shown to be other than that of the order of events to which these Psalms refer. I do not now refer to the titles at the head of the Psalms. Yet I know of no question raised as to their being integrally part of the inspired text: the Hebrew Bible,-not the Septuagint, nor the Syriac, nor the Arabic, nor the Vulgate-being considered as the Volume of Inspiration. Rationalistic objectors I need not answer.)

" Lord, why is this? "-is more according to faith than are the efforts to re-arrange the collection, made by some according to the order of the things predicted, and by others according to the times of writing. Faith would take the book as God gave it, though humbly owning man's wretched unfaithfulness as the keeper of it. Faith knows right well that God's order and man's are not the same. In God, counsel and plan went before work and before revelation too. With man in his fallen state God deals according to the moral condition in presenting truth; and the order in which He dealt with the Apostle of the circumcision was different from that in which He dealt to the Apostle of the uncircumcision.

Thankful as we ought to be for the Authorized Version of the Bible, it is not part of its excellency that the very names used and the various characters under which Divine glory is presented in Scripture-those of Elohim, El, Jehovah, Jah, Shadday, Adonay, etc.-at times each found alone, and at times in combinations together -have not been marked: and, perhaps as a natural result of

this, headings have been put to chapters which lead to confusion between the Church and Israel, and between the Gospel to us and Mercy to Israel hereafter. See the headings in Isaiah to chapters 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45; and, in the Psalms the word Church forced into the headings in Psa 20:1-9; Psa 44:1-26; Psa 45:1-17; Psa 46:1-11; Psa 48:1-14; Psa 50:1-23; Psa 51:1-19; Psa 68:1-35; Psa 76:1-12; Psa 80:1-19; Psa 83:1-18; Psa 87:1-7; Psa 89:1-52; Psa 97:1-12; Psa 114:1-8; Psa 122:1-9; Psa 124:1-8; Psa 126:1-6; Psa 129:1-8; Psa 147:1-20; Psa 149:1-9.

It is the persuasion that if any one searched out the force of these-names and read the book of Psalms in the light which these names cast upon it, light would arise to them such as they have not now, which has led to the present paper. And let me say that to read Scripture in the presence of the Divine glory is a very different thing from reading it in the light of our own private feelings and experiences. All light is about the Lord Jesus, in one or other display of His glory. We cannot degrade ourselves in holy things more than by putting ourselves as the center or end of the testimony of the word. Lower the Lord in reality we cannot; but lower ourselves by false views of Him and of His Father and ours, and of His God and our God we can; and how many do so through a want of intelligence in the Psalms.

None but He Himself had the right to say, " Go, tell my brethren, behold I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and to your God." None but He could give power to any to enter, through Him, into these two relationships: Himself the revealer of the Father, and Himself God manifest in flesh. These things He did according to His own personal glory and work after His resurrection. Jehovah alone can have the right and the power to renew Jehovah covenant with Israel upon earth; He alone can have the power to do so. The same may be said as to the Elohist position and blessings for a people or peoples upon earth. The same may be said as to the titles Adonay, Shad-day, etc., even as to all the titles and characteristics found in the Roll of the glories of the Messiah. Is the Anointed dear to me? Do I need to know more about Him? I must take Scripture then as I find it, and if I cannot give up out of the New Testament (John 20:17) " Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and to your God "--as the essential and distinctive portion of the believer now--yet must I let Scripture stand in the Old Testament as it was written, and I shall then find through it further testimony to His glories and to His grace.

"The Hebrews divide the Psalms into five Books: of which the first three end in " Amen and Amen," namely, Psa 41:1-13 last verse; Psa 72:1-20 last verse but one; Psa 89:1-52 last verse. The fourth book ends with Hallelujah, Psa 106:1-48. last verse. The fifth in Hallelujah, Psa 150:1-6 last verse."

Bythner's "Lyre."

I have tried to give, markedly, this subdivision, because when each Psalm is studied under the light of Scripture in general and of the New Testament in particular, it seems to me that internal evidence assigns it in its grand fulfillment to one of five positions in which the blessed Savior, who is the great subject of all testimony, will be known to stand as to Israel.

These five positions are:- Istly. Messiah earth-rejected but heaven-honored; yet the object of faith to some Israelites in the land and in Jerusalem.

2ndly. As occupied with some who in the land have been rejected for His (Messiah's) sake.

3rdly. As occupied with the ten tribes, who never actually dipped their hands in His blood like the two tribes.

4thly. As coming into the world to take the kingdom and bring Israel into blessing in the land and the Gentiles into blessing under them.

5thly. As acting and regulating everything so as to get His own earthly people, in heart and in mind, into readiness for, and fellowship with Himself of, the blessing in the land on the millennial earth. The translation is strictly that of the Authorized Version; only the original names of Elohim, El, Jehovah, Jah, Adonay, etc., as found in the Hebrew text, are retained. Also occasional explanatory matter (sometimes taken from the original edition of the Authorized Version, namely, King James's Bible, 1611) is inserted in [ ] brackets. Again, I have added at the foot of each Psalm a running analysis\* of the contents of it.

(\*In these " contents " of a Psa., I may oft use "the faithful" -where others have used " the remnant." I do so intentionally, as the former expression includes all that are such, and leaves the question open as to how many remnants there may be.) As to the respective meanings of these different titles and names of the Most High, and of the glories which attach to them, I would now say a few words. I shall endeavor to find light about them in the Scripture use of them.

●1. Elohim is the name used by the Spirit in giving to us His description of the creation, from " In the beginning God [Elohim] created the heaven and the earth" (Gen 1:1-31; Gen 2:1-3) to " And God [Elohim] blessed the seventh day," etc. Paul also helps us in Rom 1:19-20 -" that which may be known of God is manifest in them [men]; for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."\* Here the origination of the world, attributed to Elohim, is declared to be a manifestation and proof of His eternal power and Godhead.

(\*The word rendered Godhead here is θειοτης (theiotees): there is another word θεοτης (theotees) in Col 2:9, where in writing about the Lord it is said: " in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Here the question is about the person "Christ," ver. 8. Each of the words occurs but once in the New Testament, They are not to be confounded as though they were one word and not two.) The word Elohim may be derived from El, power: probably enough: but the important thing is that He, Elohim, displayed, in a given scene, creation, the eternal power and Godhead which is the revelation of His title of Elohim. Supreme power, as its meaning, would suit the use of it in Scripture as applied to the Most High Himself. It suits, too, its application in a secondary sense, either to angels of heaven as being powers that excel in strength to do His commandments; Psa 8:5 and compare Psa 97:7 and Heb 1:6; or to judges in government down here, as in Exo 21:6; Exo 22:8-9; Exo 22:9; Exo 22:28 marg., and 1Sa 2:25; or to those to whom the word of Elohim comes, compare John 10:34-36 and Psa 82:6. Our translators retain the same idea, when it occurs, as they judged, adjectively, as in Gen 23:6, which they render not "a prince of God," but "a mighty prince;" and see also Exo 9:28 and 1Sa 14:15.

●2. The word Jehovah is first found in Gen 2:4-15, but not alone; it stands here in combination with the title Elohim, which we have been considering. Man's distinctive position as the head and center of a system in the presence of, and in relationship with, Elohim is what introduces Jehovah-Elohim; term by which He is called on to the end of chap. 3: 24.

Exo 6:3 helps us, however, here, " but by my name of Jehovah was I not known to them " (the Patriarchs). To them He appeared as God Almighty (El-Shadday). I cannot doubt that the display which reveals the glory of the compound name of Jehovah-Elohim differs from that which reveals the glory of the single title Elohim, and from that which reveals Jehovah glory. Let anyone examine the three scenes-the character of man's relationship with the Most High and blessing under Him in Eden (Gen 2:4-15), in the land as redeemed out of Egypt (Exodus), and, as hereafter, when in the land under the second covenant -and he will see how well Jehovah-Elohim, Jehovah, and Jehovah-Elohim-Shadday respectively suit the three displays. The term Jehovah is never applied to any other than the Most High; it may be derived so as to imply essential existence-the existing one.

●3. El.-Its first occurrence is in Gen 14:18-20 : "Melchizedek... priest of El-Gnelion" [or of the Most High\* God].

(\*The word rendered here, "Most High," is translated, Isa 7:3, "the conduit of the upper (or high) pool" (see also 36:2, and Jer 36:10), "the higher (or high) court," etc.: some would render it, in Dan 7:18-27, saints "of the high" places; and some would prefer in this passage, God "of most high" places.) Might or power is the meaning of it when used as a common noun; mighty when the adjectival use of it occurs. The spring of the Patriarch's strength was not in himself but in another; his ability to use that strength was in his own separation to that other individually and in every way. The name is one (how well known to us all) in that cry, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani." He was the power and the wisdom of God, yet was crucified through weakness. His title, too, was Immanuel (the mighty one with us, Israel). And how could He be that and hide His face from human woe, or from that which lay at the root of all man's woe-sin and guilt before God.

●4. Eloah. This is the singular number of the plural form Elohim. He it is who in Genesis, chap. 1, is revealed as the creator of heaven and of earth, the arranger and disposer of that which He creates. The singular form occurs but fifty-seven times, the plural 2,700. In many of the occurrences of the singular form, the context presents more a contrast between the thought of one God and many gods, than between the who the one only true God is, and the what the so-called many are. And thus the abstract notion of Deity, which necessarily excludes plurality, is set in sharp contrast with the absurdity of having many "one firsts" and "one lasts"; and the eternal power and Godhead, traces of whose power and beneficence are still seen in the wreck of creation and in providence, are set in contrast with demons and demoniacal characteristics. The first occurrence of the word will show this. Deu 32:15-17 : " Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook Eloah [God] which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked him to jealousy with strange (gods), with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto Devils, and not to Eloah; to gods [elohim] whom they knew not, to new (gods) that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not."

Again, Neh 9:16-19, " Our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks... but thou art a God [Eloah] ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not. Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God [elohim] that brought thee out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations; yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness." The three words Elohim, Eloah and El

are from one root, and seem, each of them, to convey the idea of power in their meaning. Judging from their use, however, I think three shades of meaning can be traced: that He whom alone we adore has (1) creatorial power, (2) victorious power, and (3) thus, in His very being, stands in contrast with all that are called gods.

●5. Adon, Adonim, Adonay.

I give these three words together,-though in use they are very distinct, as we shall see.

A. Adon (lord) first occurs in Gen 18:12, where Sarah speaks of Abram as " her lord "; and 1Pe 3:6, says " Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." This sense-viz., that of acknowledged deference to a party addressed-whether the superiority be in position under a relationship, as of a husband addressed by a wife, or of a landholder to a foreign prince, of a servant to a master, a subject to a king, etc., etc., is the common use. But it is used with Elohim-as in Exo 23:17, thy males shall appear before the Lord [the Adon] Jehovah (read by the Jews here as Lord God): just so, likewise, in chap. 34: 23. In Jos 3:11; Jos 3:13, we have the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth. Psa 97:5, at the presence of Jehovah, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. See also Psa 110:1; Psa 114:7. In Isa 1:24, thus saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts; so in chap. 3:1; so in chap. 10:33 and chap. 10:4; but in Isa 3:16 the Lord, Adonay of hosts. In Mic 4:13, their gain to Jehovah and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth; so Zec 4:14; Zec 6:5 and Mal 3:1 the Lord... even Jehovah of hosts.

I have given what occurrences I have found of its use in the singular in connection with divine titles. From Acts 2:26, " made lord," and Php 2:10-11, " every tongue shall confess to him that he is Lord," and Heb 1:2 " appointed heir of all things," we know how the man, God manifest in flesh, Christ Jesus, has been owned on high as owner and Lord of all. Made Lord of all He has been as a man. Jehovah, no one could be made;-that He ever was and is and will be according to His essential divine being.

Adonim (Lords) is the plural of Adon (lord). In Gen 19:2, Lot addresses two angels as " my lords," so also perhaps in ver. 18; but, here, our translators have not attended to the points, for they give " my lord": now it must, according to the points, be either " my Lords " or " Adonay." It is, however, habitually used in the plural for an individual. In the following places it is used in the plural of the Most High:- Deu 10:17. For Jehovah, your Elohim, is Elohim of Elohim and Lord (Adonim) of Lords (Adonim), the great El, Neh 3:5. the work of their Lord (Adonim).

8: 10. holy unto our Lord (Adonim):

10: 29. Jehovah, our Lord (Adonim), Psa 8:1; Psa 8:9. O Jehovah, our Lord (Adonim).

45:11. He is thy Lord (Adonim); 135:5. Jehovah is great...our Lord (Adonim) is, etc. 106:3. Give thanks to the Lord (Adonim) of Lords (Adonim): 147:5. Great is our Lord (Adonim), Isa 51:22. Thus saith thy Lord (Adonim) Jehovah, and thy Elohim, Hos 12:14. his Adonim (Lord) shall return unto him.

C. Adonay, with a long a in the last syllable, is what is called a plural of excellence. The Hebrews would consider it as a sacred name-to be used only of the Most High. The translators of the Authorized Version, in about 430 times that it occurs, render it as if it were not always a plural of excellence but sometimes as a noun and a pronoun. In twelve places they give it as a noun and a

pronoun, namely:- Gen 18:3. My Lord, if now I have found Exo 4:10.....said to Jehovah, O my Lord, 13. and he said, O my Lord, 34: 9 O Lord, let my Lord Num 14:17. let my Lord be great, Jdg 6:15. Oh my Lord, 13: 8. O my Lord, Ezr 10:3. according to the counsel of my Lord, Psa 16:2. Thou (art) my Lord:

35: 23. my God and my Lord.

Isa 21:8. My Lord, I stand continually 49: 14. and my Lord hath forgotten me.

But, noun with a pronominal affix-this, according to the form of the word (the place in which it occurs in the sentences cited not being at the close, so as to put it in pause), it cannot be. Adonay [or Lord] it had better always be rendered; and I doubt not but that careful students of Scripture will trace a fullness and a weight in the word as used by the Spirit in Scripture which will separate it, in their minds, from Adon the lord, master, proprietor, etc., and perhaps from Adonim the possessor.

It never has a pronoun, nor the article-but is, in this respect, just as the word Jehovah-and I believe is only used of the Most High.

If the translators of the Authorized Version had not appropriated " lord, Lord, Loin" to other uses, I should have been satisfied to have used lord for Adon, in the singular; Lord for Adonim, in the plural; and LORD for Adonay. But as they have bespoken these terms, it may be better to mark the three words in question in some other ways.

●6. Jah.-This word occurs forty-three times in the Psalms, and only six times besides, viz., Exo 15:2; Exo 17:16; and Isa 12:2; Isa 26:4; Isa 38:11; Isa 38:11; in all of which it is printed LORD, just as the word Jehovah ordinarily is, though not so in Isa 12:2; Isa 26:4, where it stands as Jehovah.

Exo 15:2. Jah is my strength and song, 17: 16. Jah hath sworn that Jehovah will have war [Note this expression.] Isa 12:2. For Jah Jehovah is my strength and song;

26: 9. Trust ye in Jehovah forever: for in Jah Jehovah is the rock of ages:

38:11. I said, I shall not see Jah, Jah, in the land of the living:

●7. Shadday.-It is always rendered in the Authorized Version by the term, " the Almighty;" and I note also that the Hebrew word, Shadday, has no synonym; so that " Shadday" is not only always the Almighty, but also " the Almighty" never represents any Hebrew word but " Shadday." In the Psalms it occurs but twice, viz., 68:14, and 91:1. Of the forty-eight times it occurs, thirty-one are in the Book of Job. It is only used of the Most High, and the Almighty is a sufficient rendering; or, as some derive it, "Almighty in sustaining-resources" (as the mother's breast for a babe); this I prefer.

●8. Gnelion occurs fifty-three times, of which twenty-two are in the Psalms. As an appellative it means high -" the high gate" (2Ch 23:20; 2Ch 27:3), " the high pool," " the house that is high" (1Ki 9:8). Though I have referred (see above) to the desire of some to change its application in Daniel (in a note under El), myself I see no reason for not being satisfied with the good old English, " the Most High," as its rendering for Him who is The High One. It may be well for me to mark those places in the Psalms in which the Hebrew word maroom (exalted) is also Anglicized "Most High," as in Psa 56:2; Psa 92:8. The order in which I have examined these names and titles is Elohim, Jehovah, El, Eloah, Adon, Adonim, Adonay, Jah, Shadday, Gnelion. I shall now, for facility of

reference, re-arrange them alphabetically according to the English, putting after the word its number, as in my examination above, and its meaning.

Adon (5/1), Lord in power.

Elohim (1), creatorial power.

Gnelion (8), the High One.

Adonim (5/2), Lord as owner.

EI (3), victorious power.

Jah (6),

Adonay (5/3), LORD as in blessing.

Eloah (4), used to mark off the individual who is the true One from all pretenders.

Jehovah (2), a name for relationship in blessing between the self-existent I AM and Israel.

Shadday (7), Almighty in sustaining-resources. As a rule I do not insert the before Elohim, yet I have left it in the English, in such cases as "the Elohim-of his salvation" (24:5)-" of my salvation" (25:5).

"O" before Jehovah and Elohim, etc., I leave just as it stands in the version I have adopted. The following verses present the word written in Hebrew (as to the letters of it) as Jehovah, but with the vowel points of Elohim:-Psa 68:21; Psa 69:7; Psa 71:5; Psa 71:16; Psa 73:28; Psa 109:21; Psa 140:8; Psa 141:8. In our Authorized Version we find the " Anointed " in the following places in the Psa 2:2; Psa 18:50; Psa 20:6; Psa 28:8; Psa 84:9; Psa 89:38; Psa 89:51; Psa 105:15; Psa 132:10; Psa 132:17.

I change the word Anointed to " Messiah," as being more conventionally correct for the Psalms. Messiah and Christ both mean "the Anointed." The former is Hebrew; the latter Greek. The anointing is consecration: in His case, 1st, as Prophet, for He is the bearer of the word of the Most High; 2ndly, as Priest, the conductor of divine worship; and 3rdly, as King, the conductor of government. " God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10:38). The following remarks on the meanings of the Hebrew words in the book of Psalms, which have not, in the Authorized Version, been translated, is taken from a paper in " The Present Testimony," vol. 1, No.3, page 46:- ●"1. AIJELETH- SHAHAR (Psa 22:1-31 title.)

"Aijeleth occurs only here and in Pro 5:19, 'the loving hind'; and Jer 14:5, 'the hind.' But there are many kindred words which confirm this meaning.

" Shahar occurs about twenty-three times; it means morning, e.g.Gen 19:15, when the morning arose;' and 32:24 (25), the breaking of the day;' and 26 (27), the day breaketh,' etc.

" The marginal reading for Aijeleth- Shahar, given by the translators, is, hind of the morning.'

" Query? Was this the name of an instrument; or of a tune to which the Psalm was to be sung; or was it rather a name given to the Psalm on account of its subject?

●" 2. ALAMOTH occurs in 1Ch 15:20, ' with psalteries on Alamoth '; Psa 46:1-11 title, ' A song upon Alamoth.'

" The same word Alamoth (which is only the plural of the word commonly used for Virgin, as Isa 7:14, 'a virgin shall conceive,' etc.), is, however, found, Psa 68:25, the damsels playing,' etc. Song of Solomon 1:3, The virgins love thee;' Song of Solomon 6:8, Virgins without number.'

" For the Virgins' (1: e. virgin voices) makes good sense, and accords with modern singing: as we say, for boys' voices.'

" It may, however, be the name of an instrument, or of a tune.

●3. AL-TASCHITH occurs in the titles of Psa 57:1-11; Psa 58:1-11; Psa 59:1-17; Psa 75:1-10.

" AL means not, and TASCITH, destroy, as the translator's margin reads Destroy not.'

" Observation must decide whether this was connected with the subject of the Psalms, or whether it was the name of a tune.

●4. DEGREES. Though anglicized songs of Degrees in Psa 120:1-7; Psa 121:1-8; Psa 122:1-9; Psa 123:1-4; Psa 124:1-8; Psa 125:1-5; Psa 126:1-6; Psa 127:1-5; Psa 128:1-6; Psa 129:1-8; Psa 130:1-8; Psa 131:1-3; Psa 132:1-18; Psa 133:1-3; Psa 134:1-3, a few words may not be amiss, inasmuch as Degrees' is nearly as unintelligible to some, as would Mangaloth be.

" The same word is used in Exo 20:26, for the steps of an altar, as in 1Ki 10:19, of a throne; 2Ki 9:13, the stairs, and 20:9, the degrees of a sundial; 1Ch 17:17, a man of high degree;Ezr 7:9, for a journey, began to go up; 'Eze 11:5, 'the things which come into your mind;' Amo 9:6, 'he that buildeth his stories in the heaven' (marg. ascensions or spheres). The word from which it is derived means simply, to go up-ascend.

"Luther renders it, in the higher choir', higher, either as to position in which placed, or, perhaps, tone of voice.

"Some have supposed these songs were sung on the steps of the temple; so the LXX., and Vulgate.

" To my own mind, there is an internal evidence in them, of their being written, in grace, for some such times of exercise as when, thrice in the year, the males were to go up from their homes and appear before the Lord. A few of them may also have reference to such goings up as Ezra's from captivity.

●5. GITTITH. Psa 8:1-9; Psa 81:1-16; Psa 84:1-12 "The word Gath, winepress, is by most connected with this word, as the inhabitants of Gath were called Gittites.

" Whether the vat; or Gath, the town; or an instrument of the name; or a tune is referred to; Query?

" Someone suggests that they are all joyous songs, suited to be sung on such an occasion as a harvest-home, or a vintage.

●6. HIGGAION. Thus once rendered in Psa 9:16. It occurs in three other places and the meditation of my heart,' Psa 19:14; ' harp with a solemn sound,'Psa 92:3; ' and their device

against me,' Lam 3:62.

"The humming sound of a harp struck, is supposed to correspond to the indistinct thoughts of musing; or the device against one who is hated; for the device, in this case, tells, but indistinctly, the hatred within.

" I do not see why meditation, or solemn sound, or device might not have been put for Higgaiion, and the verse anglicized with the addition of some words in italics, as (this was their) meditation, or device: or a solemn sound, (this).

●"7. JONATH-ELEM-RECHOKIM is only found Psa 56:1-13 title.

"Jonah means dove, as in Gen 8:8-12; or pigeon, as in Lev 1:14, etc.

"Elem means bound; the verb, is frequently used to mark silence;: as, I was dumb,Psa 39:3; Psa 39:10; but it is applicable to any binding: as, Gen 37:7, binding sheaves.

"The word Elem only occurs here, where it is commonly said to mean silence, and in Psa 58:1, where it is rendered Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation?' (1: e. mass of persons bound together).

"Rechokim, in Hebrew, is a distinct word from Elem; though, in English, sometimes printed as one with it; it is a participle of the verb translated (Psa 22:11), Be not far from me;' see also 5:19, and 35:22, and 38:21, and 71:12, and 109:17, etc.

" The dove of silence (among) strangers' is a common literal.

" The dove of-that which is bound-persons afar off-are its three representative terms in English.-Compare the Psalm itself.

●"8. LEANNOTH, see under 9.

●" 9. MAHALATH occurs alone Psa 53:1-6

" The dictionary says, meaning uncertain.' Why not, as others, sickness, or disease, taking it as the common noun of the verb (Gen 48:1) thy father is sick;'Psa 35:13, when they were sick,' etc.

" The 53rd Psalm is striking, concerning the diseased state of the nation, and its importance as a Psalm is seen in its being given a second time in the book, but slightly altered (see xiv).

" The word Mahalath also occurs with LEANNOTH, after it, Psa 88:1-18, which may be the plural of the word rendered Wormwood,Deu 29:18; Pro 5:4; Jer 9:15; Jer 23:15, &c.; and Hemlock,Amo 6:12 - unless Leannoth be a proper name, concerning the sickness of Leannoth; concerning the disease of wormwood (1:e. the deadly, bitter disease), which would suit the Psalm.

"The LXX divided Leannoth into le, the preposition to, and ὁδὸς sing, respond to; and consider Mahalath either a proper name, or the name of a tune, or instrument, ■περ μαελεθ του ■ποκριθ■ναι to sing on, or to Mahalath. I prefer the other.

●" 10. MASCHIL. Translated in margin, ' or giving instruction.'

" There are thirteen of these Psalms, viz.:--32, 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142.

"As the translators have given a rendering here, I say no more than that their side readings (as found in King James' bible) are as authoritative as their text, and of far more value than modern 'lit.' which are often worse than nonsense. As a whole, their translation is as wonderful as is the mercy which God has shown to this land, in connection with it, as above that of other lands.

●"11. The MIGHTAM Psalms are 16, 56, 58, 59, and 60.

"I know no better rendering than the common one, a golden psalm. The word Michtam occurs nowhere else; but the word rendered, in gold of Ophir, Psa 45:9; and golden wedge (Isa 13:12) is a kindred word, and occurs nine times, as gold, and in no other sense.

●"12. MUTH-LABBEN. Psa 9:1-20 title..

" Muth (Psa 48:14), our guide unto death.

" La, for the; ben, son. Concerning death for the Son.'

" The LXX. ■π■ρ τ■ν κρυθ■ων το■ υ■ο■ concerning the secret things of the Son.

●"13. NEGINAH, of which Neginoth is the plural. "Job 30:9, 'I am their song;Psa 69:12; Psa 77:6, song; solsa 38:20; and Lam 3:14; Lam 5:14, music;Hab 3:19, 'on my stringed instruments' (margin, neginoth) shows the meaning plainly enough. The verb is to strike the strings. Neginah occurs on Psa 61:1-8 title: Neginoth,Psa 4:1-8; Psa 6:1-10; Psa 54:1-7; Psa 67:1-7; Psa 76:1-12 Upon the stringed instrument, or upon the stringed instruments.

●"14. NEHILOTH. Psa 5:1-12 " The pipes, or flutes, as commonly derived from the verb, to pierce.

●"15. SELAH occurs seventy times in the Psalms, and three times in Habakkuk.

"All sorts of tortures have been inflicted on this word, to make it speak. Some take its three consonants as the first letters of three words, and render it as equivalent to our da capo, in music: let the musician return, But this is very unlike old Hebrew.

"Gesenius says, it is Silence, supposing it equivalent to the words, at rest,Dan 4:4; as if Shelah and Selah were the same. Though I desire to read with shoes off my feet (for the place is holy, and I dread conjectures), it might, according to kindred words, mean raising. And so silence, as the result of one's rising from singing; for the idea of weighing is found in ñìà Lam 4:2, in a good sense, comparable to gold; and also, in a bad sense ñìç Psa 119:118, troddendown.

"I observe that Selah is put often where a pause is natural, as after some peculiar statement; and thus, practically, I feel that it is pause, or silence, with Gesenius. More I cannot say.

●"16. SHEMINITH occurs 1Ch 15:21; Psa 6:1-10 title, 12 title.

"The translator's margin gives, on the eighth. It is the common ordinal adjective for eight, and refers to strings of instruments.

" Some render it Octave, as denoting that it is to be played an octave lower than it is written: so, I think, Gesenius. I prefer the margin.

" Observe that in 1 Chron. 20:21, Alamoth and Sheminith are in contra-position.

●"17. SHIGGAION. Psa 7:1-17, and Hab 3:1, upon Shigionoth in the plural.

" The verb is, to err, as in Psa 119:10; Psa 119:21; Psa 119:118; Lev 4:13, sin through ignorance. A wandering ode-an ode of wandering.

" Variable songs-songs with variations. But I prefer either of the former.

●" 18. SHOSHANNIM. The lilies, as in Song of Solomon 2:16; Song of Solomon 4:5, etc., occurs Psa 45:1-17; Psa 69:1-36, and in connection with Eduth,Psa 80:1-19

"Shushan-EDUTH (Psa 40:1-17) is the same word nearly, it occurs only 1Ki 7:19, lily. Eduth is the common word for the testimony, in Exodus, etc. The lily is supposed to refer to an instrument, from its shape: so, I think, Calmet. Others connect it with the name of a song.

"The word for upon, may just as well be rendered concerning, to, etc.

AJJELETB-SHAHAR .....The hind of the morning.

ALAMOTH ..... Virginals.

AL-TASCHITII Destroy not.

DEGREE To go up-ascend.

GITTITH.....The wine-vat.

HIGGAION .....Meditation.

JONAH-ELEM-RECHOKIM The dove dumb (among) strangers.

MAHALATH .....Disease.

LEANNOTH.....Bitter disease.

MASCHIL.....To instruct.

MICHTAM .....Golden (psalm).

GNAL MUTH-LABBEN NEGINAH.....A stringed instrument.

NEGINOTH.....The stringed instruments.

NEHILOTH .....The pipes.

SELAH.....Pause.

SHEMINITH .....Eight Stringed instrument.

SHIGGAION .....Wandering ode.

SHOSHANNIM .....The lilies.

SHUSHAN.....The lily.

EDUTH .....of the testimony.

" Psa 1:1-6; Psa 2:1-12; Psa 6:1-10; Psa 11:1-7; Psa 12:1-8; Psa 15:1-5; Psa 16:1-11; Psa 17:1-15; Psa 19:1-14; Psa 21:1-13; Psa 23:1-6; Psa 26:1-12; Psa 28:1-9; Psa 29:1-11; Psa 32:1-11; Psa 34:1-22; Psa 39:1-13; Psa 93:1-5; Psa 101:1-8; Psa 102:1-28; Psa 103:1-22; Psa 107:1-43; Psa 110:1-7; Psa 111:1-10; Psa 112:1-10; Psa 114:1-8; Psa 117:1-2; Psa 120:1-7; Psa 121:1-8; Psa 124:1-8; Psa 134:1-3; Psa 137:1-9; Psa 139:1-24; Psa 140:1-13; Psa 142:1-7; Psa 148:1-14; Psa 149:1-9; Psa 150:1-6 (forty-eight) have not àìcéí GOD.

" In Psa 43:1-5; Psa 44:1-26; Psa 45:1-17; Psa 49:1-20; Psa 51:1-19; Psa 52:1-9; Psa 53:1-6; Psa 57:1-11; Psa 60:1-12; Psa 61:1-8; Psa 62:1-12; Psa 63:1-11; Psa 65:1-13; Psa 66:1-20; Psa 67:1-7; Psa 73:1-28; Psa 77:1-20; Psa 82:1-8; Psa 114:1-8; Psa 150:1-6 (1:e. twenty) éââç does not occur LORD.

" Much of the force and beauty of the Psalms hangs upon the Divine names, titles, and glories used in them."

" The titles. Each Psalm, as the general rule, has a title. Those which have none, have been called 'orphans,' in number: twenty-three, viz.: 1, 2, 10, 33, 43, 71, 91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 99, 104, 105, 107, 114, 115, 116, and eleven more, making the number of orphans in all thirty-four, if the word 'Hallelujah' is not looked at as a title; viz.: 106, 111, 112, 113, 117, 135, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150."

" Acrostics are of interest in Scripture, as showing the condescension of God to man's ways, even in the style of composition. I know of none in the New Testament. In the Lamentations, each verse of the 1Jas 2:1-26 nd, and 4th chapters begins with the letters of the alphabet in their successional order. Chap 3 is in triplets; the first three verses have à; the next three have á, and so on.

"In the Psalms, the 119th is in octaves; the first eight verses begin with à; the eight next with á; and so on.

" Psa 25:1-22; Psa 34:1-22; Psa 37:1-40; Psa 145:1-21 also are in measure acrostic, though not perfectly so."

I may add that the same word which is rendered " hosts," e. g., Jehovah Tzeboath [the Lord of hosts],Psa 24:10; Psa 46:7; Psa 46:11; Psa 48:8, is so rendered also of the hosts of the heaven in 33:6, and 44:9, our armies; and 68:11, "the company of those that published it." It is used of armies, angels, and created things as sun, moon, stars, etc. In Num 16:30; Num 16:32-33, we read of the judgment which fell upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, when "the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up " (ver. 33). In chap. 26:11 we meet with this exception, which sovereign mercy made, "Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not." This is to be noticed in connection with the Psa 1:1-6 notice this in connection with the eleven Psalms " for the sons of Korah "-the 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 84, 85, 87, 88. A few general remarks, and I have done.

It is not a bad general notion of the Book of Psalms, which I have met with somewhere (though it be but a human notion, couched, too, in profane and not scriptural language), that the book is made up of " Fragments from the Drama of Redemption." Only, then, as redemption has its heavenly sphere and people, as well as its earthly sphere and people, I should have to add to " Fragments from the Drama of Redemption" the words, " so far as man under government upon earth is concerned."

Observe, the enigma is sometimes introduced; as in Psa 49:4, "my dark saying," and in 78:2, "dark sayings of old." The Hebrew word is rendered dark speeches, in Num 12:8; riddle, in Jdg 14:12-19; hard questions, 1Ki 10:1; dark sentences, Dan 8:23, etc.

Again, it may help some just to refer to the principles of the dialog, or of parts for different speakers, which at times is found in the Psalms. In 16:1, one prays; ver. 2, he speaks to himself; so in Psa 32:8-9 are from another speaker than ver. 1-7, etc. Such parts run through the Song of Songs: a male and a female converse together, besides addressing other parties; and neither male can be confounded with female, nor can "my sister " be exchanged with " my brother."

4. Again, there is at times an oracular voice, or an oracle that speaks, as in Psa 91:1 To which a distinct person replies in ver. 2, while ver. 3-13 are written of him who spoke in ver. 2, as indeed are 14 and 15; but here it is evidently the same person who speaks in ver. 1.

Thus it will be seen I do not accept it that a verse or portion of a Psalm quoted in the New Testament, as about the Lord Jesus, would appropriate all the rest of the Psalm to Him. Such is a very mischievous notion. The Spirit of God and of Christ is one; and it is the same Spirit as was upon Him when down here which is in His people now. Yet speech that became the Master did not become the disciple, and speech that becomes the Head of the body does not become the member; so speech that will become Messiah Himself, will not become, could not be put by His Spirit into, the mouth of the remnant; much less could language prepared beforehand by the Spirit for the Jewish remnant in the latter day be put into the mouth of Messiah. He holding one part in a Psalm may speak; His Spirit may in a remnant take up another part. The speeches cannot be interchanged and sense (not to say sound doctrine) be maintained. The connection, too, that runs on from one Psalm to another-see, for instance, the 48, 49, 50, and 51, etc., etc.-cannot be hid from any humble student of the book; but while I just advert to these points, if haply they may meet any beginner's eye, I may not follow them out, as being outside of the proposed scope and aim of this paper.

I print the Psalms as poetry; they are so in Hebrew.

G. V. W.

## S. Devotedness and Separation

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Devotedness and Separation.

Rom 12:1-2.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 7, 1880, p. 85. At different times we see that the testimony of the Spirit of God has been to some particular truths to meet the special need of the day. In our day it is a testimony to practical devotedness, and entire separation from the evil that is in the world. It has been through God's laying these two truths home on the conscience that anything like revival in this country has been accomplished. Notice the lever the apostle uses in this chapter to move the saints. Had he not a heart for the sheep? Assuredly he had. But there was another he had a heart for, and that was the Lord Jesus Christ. He begins, "I beseech," etc. (observe the claim which this emphatic love is led to use), "by the mercies of God." This is the motive by which he appeals to them. Mercies went up to the God of heaven, and down to the mind of the poor feeble Christian. Without a sense of the mercies there cannot be devotedness to God, and separation from evil. Holiness will not do it. If I am lingering in Sodom, it is because I have not learnt what mercy is. What do you think God ought to do towards you? Have you any claim upon Him, but that He should hate you? Are you just clay in the hands of the Potter, what no other potter could make anything with? Are you in His hand, for Him to mould you as He will, guilty and loathsome as you are in contrast with Christ? Christ is light, and you are darkness. God could do nothing with you but pick you up in mercy.

Observe what this mercy really is. It is not merely providential mercy as men talk, but the mercies are summed up in all the preceding chapters of the epistle; and the summing up does not even close at Rom 8:1-39, but after showing the dispensations in Rom 9:1-33; Rom 10:1-21; Rom 11:1-36, when He has opened and shut all that for the earth, etc., he breaks out, "I beseech you, by the mercies of God." What there is for man must be all on the ground of mercy. God does not want a testimony from us in heaven, but He does upon the earth; and He will have one. We must get into God's thoughts about things, and we see that God never brings any one into such a position as not to need mercy.

"That ye may prove what is that perfect, and acceptable," etc. The thought is, that we are to prove what the risen Christ is in one who has the conscience of sin in the members. We are told to "cease to do evil." Aye, but you say, I find evil is within me, and I cannot get away from it. But you are told to cease to do evil, not cease from evil. Satan may put things into my thoughts; but I am not to give heed to them. No; I have done with them, you say. But it may be suggested that your heart and mind are running upon the evil. No; I have done with it, done with it. John Bunyan vexed his soul for many a long year with what was afterwards his very joy. "Tell Him, tell Him!" was the tormenting word to him. But afterwards he found it was because Christ was his that Satan had vexed him; and when he could take things boldly for Christ, things went more easily with him.

Why is the Christian left here at all? If a man makes a clock, it is for a purpose. It has hands to show the time, and they are like the living members of Christ here — made for use, for service to Christ; or else why are you converted before you are just going to die? It would have saved God a great deal of trouble and much dishonour if He had not converted people till just before they died. God meant to get honour to Himself down here. As the clock is made to show the time, so God's people were intended to show forth His praises. A clock is never kept in order if it is not kept going; and you will never find a body in health if not in action; and in spiritual things, you will never find a Christian in a healthy state who does not keep his body a living sacrifice for God. A Christian ought to be full of joy and of the Holy Ghost. The second exhortation of the apostle is to nonconformity to the world, and this is a point which tests us all very closely. It is a most difficult thing to get the true test as to what worldliness is. There is one thing certain — you will never get it if you keep to the outside features of conduct; for worldliness may as nicely be fed in the heart with all the appearance of denying it. In Cain we see the selfishness of his plea — 'Lest any finding me, kill me.' What does He do when God sets His mark upon him? He goes and settles himself down nicely without God. It was self and not God he thought of. He had not the single eye, his thoughts all clustering round self, and not the God that had spared him; and there was his sin. If a man is grasping after something for self, he is not satisfied with God, and is wanting something else, and something by which he may exalt himself a little in the world. "It is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." All these deny that God made us for Himself. The moment Adam and Eve catered for themselves, all the mischief was done. With Christ Satan tried these three things, but could not get in, because Christ had no mind to cater for Himself. The world can creep in between the leaves of the thoughts of one's mind, and do more mischief than the bookworm in a library. Just as the worm does the harm in secret, so does the world in the heart: self is most difficult to detect. That form of worldliness which connects itself with feebleness of conscience is most deceitful. The body, soul, and spirit is for Christ. A man says, "I am not at liberty to eat meat." Well, he must not eat it against his conscience, and yet after awhile he may find it was just the world in his conscience that hindered his doing it. It might be his own great religiousness, and more light will show him this. How can you decide between conscience and feeling? In answer to this question, I would ask another: Do you really mean to say to God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Thou requirest this of me, and I give it thee"? Ah! I say, Take care you do not mistake feeling for conscience. If you walk like the world, you are no witness for Christ, and you have to pick your way out of Sodom as quickly as you can. Does the world come in where God should be? If I am seeking something apart from God, it is the world, lust, etc. The only power to sustain this pilgrim course is mercy. If you leave it behind you for a moment you break down directly. Nothing dissolves the ties to the world first or last but that which separated us at first. G. V. W.

Crucified to the World. (C.F. vol. 7, p. 84)

It can never be true that we are crucified to the world unless the heart is in constant communion with the cross of Christ. The cross comes in, in everything, as a matter of daily experience. How is one to pass into the old age of a Christian? How find one's self laid aside, no longer with any energy? Surely only by the cross. How can one meet difficulties with a word, and be kept in perfect quietness? Only by the cross. How can we keep under such flesh as ours? Does the "old man" ever get to be better? Not a bit! but you must learn to be able to carry the cross, saying of everything that is evil, "I have nothing to do with that, because my Lord was crucified on account of

it." G. V. W.

Inside the Veil. (C.F. vol. 7, p. 224)

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

People complain that there is so little outward power in their walk. Ah! that is because they are receiving so little from Christ. G. V. W.

## S. Doing

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"Doing."

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend vol. 14, 1887, p. 168.

There can be no question of doing till there is life in Christ. But, when converted, not only is the believer "ordained to good works," but to particular works. The Jew was to love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself; but in the epistles there is that which is far higher. I am not only to love God with all my heart, and my neighbour as myself, but to be willing to lay down my life for the brethren. If God in His grace is pleased to work in me to make me like Christ, I am to be the display of what Christ Himself was, and all my works are to spring from the root laid down in Christ. So far from bringing into bondage, works are the greatest privilege. Is a soul converted? It is the life of Christ given to that soul, and there is not a single occasion in which that life is not to be shown forth, even in the giving of a tumbler of cold water. In your house, in every little thing that occurs, the Lord looks for fruit. Everything may be used to express the life of Christ in you; and instead of its being bondage, it enhances our joy in everything down here, because of enjoying all in connection with Christ and with God. A believer is not justified in saying, "What can I do?" knowing that God in His greatness comes into every particular of his life. If it be the question of Christ being everything to a saint, Christ cannot let him off from manifesting it in all the outgoings of his life down here. What will you trade on? What will you put on the loom to weave - if it be not Christ? G. V. W.

## S. Exo\_3:4

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### Exo 3:4

How wondrous the condescension of God; He comes near, not to crush us, not to consume us, but to talk with us. Shall we not talk with Him about everything, even as He has to do with us in everything? The object God sets before us is Christ in death and resurrection; not only that, but it is God's estimate of Christ's work and worth, which gives us the privilege of coming thus near to Him, and that enables Him to come thus near to us and not consume us.

Moses says, "Who am I?" (Exo 3:11). He had not done with self; he had a great schooling before he had done with that, and was satisfied after that, to have to do only with God. What makes us fit for service? If we believe in God, we are as fit today as tomorrow. It is Grace, grace, grace. That's all we want from the first day to the last. The oldest can only the best tell the young ones, that we have nothing, are nothing; all is grace. Our power is the eye of faith being fixed by faith on God's object, not on our own faith; some make this sad mistake. Alas, alas, and turn their eyes on their faith, instead of Him Who died and rose again, God's object.

"This the token," (Exo 3:12) wondrous token, only for faith to apprehend; God cannot meet your own condition, but by His Christ. Obedience brings you into blessing. In Exo 12:1-51 we get people put under the privileges of the blood — their security perfect — He purposed to redeem, all contingencies provided for; everything concluded and included in Redemption, from the first movement of spiritual life, till we shout Hallelujah in glory. Of Him and to Him and through Him are all things; Hallelujah. See 1Co 5:7; Christ our Passover." That same night Christ was crucified, the shed blood was the protection of all under its cover — our true shelter this.

Christ's work remains in all its efficacy; but we do not habitually realise this, nor His dwelling in us. Trials, sorrow, sin, what not, overcome us. We must judge ourselves, that we be not judged of the Lord. Power to judge ourselves for evil, is power against it. In His presence we slay it He is near in every time of need — our very present help. Faith in God's word and power is our strength. 'Tis our place to make known our need; 'tis God's to supply our need. How apt are we to forget this. Properly taught in God's word and power, we should only be established by every trial, and so far from thinking it against us, we should see it to be for us. G. V. Wigram.

## S. Extract from Letter.

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Extract from Letter.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 13, 1886, p. 14.

"I used to think that I had lively faith, communion, and hope; but as I get older I find myself more like a babe, faithfully watched over by a mother's eye, and seem to get more satisfied to see what His thoughts of today are about me, and what His plans for the morrow. Less account made of my feelings, more of His; less notice of my faith, more of the fact that He died in my stead. More consciousness of the worth of His presence in heaven as a fact, than of the feelings which the knowledge of it produces in me - more counting on the certainty of His coming back in order to put the finishing stroke to what He has wrought, than of the flutter of expectancy. Not that the work wrought in us by the Holy Ghost has sunk in value in my thoughts, but that I look more at the outgoings of that work in me. 'To me to live is Christ.' 'The life I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Individual attachment of the soul to the person of the Lord seems of growing importance. He bare the wrath in our stead; He has confessed in heaven above His love to us; He means to come and fetch us home. How can I say such things, and not want to see Himself - His own very self? True, when He comes the scene will be surpassingly grand and blessed - Himself, the resurrection and the life, coming out from God to turn the low estate of those who have trusted in Him to an occasion in which to show forth the glories of His own divine person as the resurrection and the life. He will come, and call up out of the grave all that believed in Him; and then, standing on the cloud, will cause the life wherewith He will have quickened those that are alive, and remain to His coming, to burst forth; and then body and spirit shall be as instinct with His life as the souls of His people already are; and He will catch them away to be with Himself for ever in the Father's house. Most blessed as this, the doctrine of 1Th 4:1-18, is, my soul seems to find its deeper, more individual portion in 1Th 1:1-10. I appreciate Him, and do so in the very presence of God. He loves me, and I love Him; and I wait for Him to come from heaven. The individuality is so blessedly seen on the one hand, and the contrast on the other between this divinely-wrought love to Himself and the poor world all around. It is, too, one's portion for today just where we are now."

G. V. W.

## S. Extract from a Letter.

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Extract from a Letter.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend vol. 15, 1888, p. 48.

"How far is Christ practically formed in our hearts and minds? I mean not, as in Galatians, Christ formed in their souls, but formed in us so that His thoughts are our thoughts, His cares our cares, His subjects of interest our subjects of interest, and none other. So it was in Paul; and so it might be wherever His life reigns in us, although our portion and calling be not so Nazarite as were Paul's. I ask for more of this for myself in my remaining sojourn down here - one thing, and but one - that, standing and abiding in Christ where I am, my range of affections and thoughts may be in unison with His until He comes. I can think of nothing as more blessed than this reproduction in oneself of His life, already ours through faith, but needing the unhindered action of the Holy Ghostfulness of the Holy Ghost - in order to be practically seen and known of all around, as enjoyed by the soul in the secret of God's presence. The dust of the wilderness - one thousand and one little cares - would then drop off; or, if remaining, be but as the last year's fruits that have still survived the autumn blasts and the hard frosts of winter, and will drop off as spring returns and the fresh flow and sap come, and show what is and what is not virtually connected with us." G. V. W.

## S. Extract from an Unpublished Letter.

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Extract from an Unpublished Letter.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 10, 1883, p. 250.

"I see; in my late affliction no defeat from Satan in anywise. Contrary to that, I had been asking the Lord, and earnestly, for more practical separateness to Christ in heaven for myself and His people. And in taking from me to Himself her whom He had given me as a companion, and an ensample of unearthliness, I fancy I can see a lesson quite in harmony with the Father's love and ways. So far as I walk in heaven I am not bereaved; it is only when walking apart from the glory of Christ, or when the weakness of the earthen vessel is in question, that there is a void and a vacuum for me to bring Christ in to fill. But He guides me afresh, and will lead me Himself whither He wills." G. V. W.

## S. Fragment

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### Fragment

It ennobles a Christian immensely to know and to feel that he is a channel through which the life of Christ is to flow out. G. V. Wigram.

## S. Fragment

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### Fragment

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 10, 1883, p. 56.

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

## S. Fragment

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Fragment.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 11, 1884, p. 106. Do you indeed believe that you are part of the royal priesthood? (1Pe 2:1-25) — that you are a child of God, and waiting for God's own Son? Do you go through the wilderness musing upon all these wonders, knowing how to enjoy the blessings into which you are brought? When, for example, a little plan comes in, do you say, "No; I am waiting for Thee from heaven, Lord?" And then, do you know what it is to gird yourself afresh as one who has taken the attitude of expecting the Lord's return? Surely, if God is calling our attention to our varied positions and dignities which He has given us in Christ, and pours into our souls things of such a character and moment, it is not a marvellous thing that we should be called to show forth His praises. I must say, What a heart He must have! and I ought to be able to find water to satisfy my thirst, and have some for others beside. G. V. W.

## S. Fragments.

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Fragments. To grow in the knowledge of Christ is our life and privilege. The search after novelties which are foreign to Him is a proof of not being satisfied with Him. But he who is not satisfied with Him does not know Him, or at least has forgotten Him. It is impossible to enjoy Him, and not to feel that He is everything - that is to say, that He satisfies us, and that by the nature of what He is He shuts out everything else. J. N. Darby. Where living faith is in any soul, there has been the communication of the divine nature to that soul. God can look on us with the same delight as on Christ, because we are hidden in Christ. We cannot stop the flow of His love and delight in Christ, and it all flows through us, as being in Him. G. V. Wigram.

## S. Fragments.

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### Fragments.

Christian Friend vol. 17, 1890, p. 328.

If Christ is the Root and Offspring of David, there are certain glories; and those who delight in Him know that He will show forth these glories; and if His glory shall cover the earth as waters cover the sea, they rejoice in the prospect. Still, that would be nothing to satisfy the heart; and hence there is another thing - "I am. . . the bright and morning star." This is for a people who know the secret, not of being connected only with His manifested glory as the Sun of righteousness, but of being associated with Himself now, a people who have to watch during the night, looking out for the harbinger of day. His people see Him up there, and know they are one with Him, and long for Him to come, because they know there is no rest of heart save in Him. This is the only passage (Rev. 20:17) in which the Spirit is presented with the Bride. There is something very touching in connection with wilderness circumstances, seeing that the Spirit in this character speaks thus, "Come." Is the Bride for the earth? What has she to do with the earth, with the wilderness, save as Rebecca passing through it?

We have here, not alone, "I am . . . the bright and morning star," but also, "I come" (5: 20), presenting Himself with all the savour, all the attractiveness of what He is. Have not some of us known Him for years, and have we not found the attractiveness of His beauty deepening in our souls? But what is all we have learned of Him here, when compared with the thought of beholding Himself, looking on His face, seeing the One who died for us, the One who loves us with an eternal love? G. V. Wigram.

## S. God's Inheritance in the Saints

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God's Inheritance in the Saints, etc.

Notes of Reading on Eph 1:15-23.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend Vol. 4, p. 33.

All the blessings are revealed. (Eph 1:3-14) The apostle is saying, "All this future is before you. I want you now to know the basis on which it all hangs." He then takes them up (Eph 1:15) on their faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints. Whether in this epistle, where he is speaking of the heavenly status, or whether in the epistle to the Romans, where he is speaking of the old man, taken up as a creature down here, the point where they come together is in faith and love. Where you see the heart really trusting in God through Christ, and caring for His saints, there you can accredit as one of God's people. (Eph 1:16) Thanksgiving for them. (Eph 5:17) The special form in which the blessings that were revealed were summed up before God as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory. In the next prayer it is the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." We get things in the first persons.

Knowledge of certain blessings in Eph 1:1-23, and communion by faith Eph 3:1-21. You never get to the end of Eph 3:1-21. Eph 1:1-23 he brings out blessing in connection with the Son of man sitting at the right hand of God. Life comes down to you, and then flows out. It is not philanthropy. We get the Lord Jesus Christ, or Son of the Father, the Father's delight resting on Him. There are children by adoption, and the same love that centres on the only-begotten flows out through Him to the children. "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:26.) It is an immensely strong thing practically. I find the children in trial, in darkness. I say, "Never mind; the Father loves the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. The Son is before me. I cannot ask too great things. I will ask Him to bring all that really say, Abba, Father." The same with the difficulties we have to meet; we find a power in proportion as we bring in the love of the Father to the Son.

Mark another thing about faith. It is faith and hope in God. It comes through the knowledge of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ; but when you come to God you will be able to say, "He is for me today." You will not need to put any prayer between you and the blessing tomorrow. God is for me TODAY. The difference in prayer, when you are praying up to a certain point, and when you are praying from it, is immense. There is a great want of that repose in the Father's love in saints, counting on His being what He is for us. Because of all that He is, we take our place of seeking the things that are wanted for the people for whom He is; but if you seek the blessing because He is for you personally, you bring the law in underhandedly. If you got that, it would be testimony that He is for you? No; you must believe that He is for you, because of what He has done. He recognizes every groaning, every breathing after Himself; but that is not properly Christian prayer. There may be the groaning and the grasping for something, you do not know what, as in Rom

8:1-39; but, for a Christian, it is in the full confidence that He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; for He maketh intercession for the saints according to God.

Several of these subjects of petition I feel are too much forgotten; for instance, that He might give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. I suppose it is not the Holy Ghost. As a believer, I cannot pray to receive the Spirit, because I am in the place where the Spirit is; but if I am there, and know I am there, I must seek the spirit of wisdom from God.

"For the acknowledgment of Him." It is not proclaiming, but recognizing Him. It is remarkable in many places where he speaks of God, and when he speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, the "Him" is common to both.

"What is the hope of His calling?" You get two things — the place where Christ is, and the character connected with Him. The Father's house will be the place; but there is the having a character fit for Himself, and being irreproachable. It is that I, as an individual, am to be brought to Him so completely, that He can rest in perfect satisfaction on me.

"Holy and without blame before Him in love." In Christ we are it now; but when I get into communion with Him at the present time, I am perfectly conscious that being in the Beloved is one thing, and my soul being free in it is quite another. There are a quantity of elements which, while under restraint, are not brought out. The Father's house is connected with His coming to fetch us; but, when there, He will have subjected all that in any way produces a jar. If you get into close communion, you find in your communion how unfit you are for it. You cannot have the power of enjoyment that you will have when you are brought home. When we see Him we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. The external glory is one thing, and the glory of character is another. "His servants shall serve Him; and His name shall be in their foreheads;" two very different things from walking the golden streets. In Revelation you get external glory — manifestation; in the Father's house you get the thought of repose. Then, besides its being the Father's house (which by right and title belongs to the only-begotten Son), and my being brought there, I find that when with this one there I shall be thoroughly fit for His presence; I, individually.

He divides it into terms: "That ye may know what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ," etc. (Eph 1:18-19) This last is more connected with circumstances, circumstances which can only be occupied with blessing by a people of a certain character. "His inheritance in the saints" (Eph 1:18), not "the Lord's portion is His people." That is earth, not heaven. He meant to have a heavenly people with His Son, and there were two things in His mind — for God the Son to become a man, and He in heaven, then, according to God, to bring sons into adoption. God inherited the land through Israel. His glory will have to be in the house at Jerusalem; but He would have heavenly people become the medium through which Christ is seen down here on earth — all the Father revealed in the Son, all the glory shining out through the New Jerusalem; so that, wonderful as the earthly glory is, men shall have to say, "What things there are in heaven." The One rejected eighteen hundred years. His glory shines out there, to them. It will be the inheritance in heaven. The saints will not be the inheritance. It will be heaven according to God — God upon His throne, His Son in the majesty that He has won: saints with Him there. He comes out to associate His heavenly Bride with Himself. A relationship is so different from a question of property. A wife is not accounted property. It is not

association merely, but relationship. When all the pageantry of the kingdom comes out, when it becomes the manifested thing, God will have the very humiliation of the Lamb in view. God manifest in flesh as the Lamb that had been slain. He was crucified through weakness. Power could not step in there. He liveth by the power of God. I shall worship the Lamb.

God claimed Palestine as His land, and He took possession of, or He put His people into it. He claims me not for a millennial city, but a city in the heavenly places. He will bring in the children by adoption. The heavenly places form the character of the children. It is love taking possession of life. When you get the glory you get the manifestation. It is heaven, not earth, here. It is all that is connected with a certain man there who had been buffeted down here. He is shown there sitting quietly in the divine glory. Never a man on earth had had that place. "That man," God is saying, He "took the place of being my servant. He is my Son. As the Father of the glory, I will show you what my thoughts about Him are. Look up! See where He is! I have given Him glory surpassing everything. For you, saints, called through this rejected One." In the New Jerusalem there will be manifestation. "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Everything that is in the Father will be manifested, so that the people there will be able to say, "Well, there is no difference at all." The Father reveals Himself in the Son, the Son reveals Himself in the adopted children. God will shine out into this people, and will shine through them now. As far as I understand "the inheritance in the saints," it is God taking possession of heaven in His people. In Him the lot is fallen to us. It is not, as people have sometimes said, our inheriting Christ. The thought of inheriting Christ is not in Scripture. In Him we have a certain thing just as it is. A man of very large property marrying a person very poor — she. may speak of obtaining an inheritance in him. I should understand she had acquired estates. I could not understand a man talking of his wife as an "inheritance." The heavenly places are not taken possession of yet. The saints shall take possession of these places. Satan shall be cast out, and Christ come in. The title "heir" is dropped when a person comes into the inheritance. He is then possessor. Remark that Ephesians is in measure like Deuteronomy, strongly in contrast too. We get Israel brought into the land, and the church having it in glory. There is no sin at all in heaven; all evil is put out. If I bought a house, that would not be my "inheritance." I inherit from my father. If I had property entailed upon me, I should be heir until I came into possession. The power that wrought in Christ works towards us. (Eph 1:19) "If children, then heirs." I am a minor now. When you see me in possession, clothed upon with the glory, you will not think me a fool.

I have certain expectancies. Until I have seen the Lord, and been taken up by Him, I am not in actual possession. It is the difference between the earnest of the inheritance and the redemption of the purchased possession. All that glory of the millennial city. I shall be in it. The Holy Ghost will form it all, and He has taken up His abode in me, that I may know it all. If God has given me the spirit of the glory, it is no great thing for Him to give me the glory afterward. The Spirit will form the glory. He is the earnest now. You say to labourers working in the field, I will pay you so much in advance. It is understood that the compact is made. They have received part of the money, the master is pledged to fulfil the rest of the compact. In this case He does not give me part of the glory, but He gives me the Former of the glory, the Holy Ghost. The time will be when He will come gild appropriate to Himself the purchased possession "the thing treated about," περιποιήσις". It is a very peculiar expression. The earnest is the first-fruit of the inheritance, until the redemption of the thing treated about to the praise of His glory. I should not think it here more than the place. I

should define our inheritance "riches of the glory," distinctive to the mystery. The other might be quite true; but when I get Eve looked upon as the help-meet to Adam, it is a peculiar light in which it is shown. Other things might be true, but she is the confidante. "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

We lose a great deal in Scripture, if we want to make parallelisms. There are no "parallel passages." There is something that illumines each passage, and brings out peculiarities of mind. Losing that, we lose the thread; we lose that in the passage which brings out the finer touches. "When He raised Him from the dead." (Eph 1:20) The Lord waited in the grave; He was raised to His place at God's right hand. The same power that accomplished that resurrection works in us who believe. He unfolds it more in the next chapter. One power it is that carries us through this scene, and that binds us up with Christ in heaven. One power. Do you believe that literally in God's mind you are inseparable from Christ at His right hand? Not one in a thousand says, "God says I am." The same power that wrought in Him works now in us. A person needs to know that for his own establishment. Old Bishop Hall and Goodwin say distinctly, that unquestionably a man that is a believer in Christ ought to know himself inseparable in life from the Man at God's right hand. If there, they must know the Man who is there. It is the Man who in Php 2:1-30 was down here, and did not care what He did, if God had His way with Him. The great peculiarity of the Lord Jesus Christ here is this: He brought all His Sonship into His servanthip. Every part of His life here was the unqualified force of His Sonship expressing itself in service. If we know Him. The Spirit of God says, "Well, the same power that put Him there, puts you." Where are you with regard to the world, the flesh, and the devil? If the blessed Son, the only-begotten Son, when He came down here, expressed the whole of the Father — the whole of His Sonship in His servanthip — are you saying, "I am a son of God, and I am going to walk exactly as He did"? If you have everything in Him, are you living as He lived? He never made allowance for the flesh. He knew thoroughly all the weakness of humanity; what it was to be weary, no one to understand Him. The whole thing He was after was to express His Sonship in His servanthip. You must know that in God's mind you are so identified with Him that you walk in the spirit in which He walked.

What is wanted so much is the person brought to GOD. Eternal life always turns around the Father and the Son. What we have in Him is in assured grace, so that we are perfectly sheltered. Have you eternal life? Are you walking in it? There is exercise always. If it makes the wilderness very rough, it is the more bright for this. We find the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead.

It is remarkable the contrast between the terms used. Speaking about us, it is "the exceeding greatness, the surpassingness of the greatness of His power;" "according to the energy of the strength of His might."

I always feel that after all it was no such wonderful thing that He should take Him up, or that He, having left the grave, should go up to God's right hand. When I look at where we were, I say, Well this is a marvellous thing, that He should find me out, and set me in Christ who created it all. It ought to be far more our Habit to look at things as connected with Him up there. "Head over all things." (Eph 1:21) We have the category of what is in Him. Everything will be headed up in Him. All Adam's possessions were for the use of Eve. It becomes practically so, even where it is not that in which the wife would interfere. "Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the

fulness of Him who filleth all in all." Plenty of thorns to be driven into you. Satan to buffet you. Everything is in His hand to use for your blessing. Amazing revelation of what is His portion as Man at God's right hand. A portion wonderfully little thought of. You will find very rarely, if you live with people, that they have the thought of there being a Man up there. It changes everything. You delight in God, in all the thought of God Himself: I am down here, and I see groaning, trouble, sorrow. There is one Man in heaven, and the eyes of that Man are always upon me, and the heart of that Man always with me. The river of refreshing flows into one's soul. He is like a cool place on a scorching day. Generally there is a curtain drawn in the mind between what is up there and down here. "That is in heaven," people say. Scripture takes it for granted that you are in heaven now. One Person is there; the Man who down here never would have His own will. There He is, with a heart looking down on us, gathering now to the place where He is; and all the heart I have is with Him and upon Him there.

## S. God's Object in our Trials

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God's Object in our Trials.

Ah! has Christ ever touched the quick of your soul in solitude? Do you know the exquisite tenderness of His touch? He does not tear and lacerate. The necessities and trials of saints down here are created by God in order to show them what Christ is for them. If I have taken Him as Lord, I do not expect an easy way. God never meant us to have it as disciples. He takes us into a rough path to show what Christ is, and that in it His grace may be able to vent itself. There is a yearning in His heart up there to let this grace he displayed in a poor, needy people down here - a longing that His strength should be made perfect in their weakness. Do you know for yourself the grace of that living Christ? Do you know what Christ has to do with you, and you with Him? Do you know yourself as one of a flock that belongs to Him, that He is tending and guarding through the wilderness, and carrying on to glory to be for ever with Himself?

G. V. Wigram.

## S. God's Provision for the Wilderness.

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God's Provision for the Wilderness.

1Pe 2:1-25.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 10, 1883, p. 24.

We find blessedly brought out in this epistle God's provision for the little flock passing through the wilderness. In Ephesians all is found in heaven; but as passers through the wilderness, our feet really treading this earth, there is a goodly portion provided for us — all God's stores from everlasting to everlasting found to be what gives strength as we go on — a rich portion for the heart by the way. It is important in this day to know God's thoughts for His people in their hours of weakness. The end of 1Pe 1:1-25 brings out the thought of "all flesh is grass." So a Jew — Paul, looking at his lineage, privileges, etc., could say, "Flowers of grass." But there is something eternal — the word of the Lord — of eternal moment. Your position is now according to this gospel; not what "I think" — but what has the Lord spoken? tidings of good news, beginning with the "seed of the woman." For whom? Not Satan, surely? His head is to be crushed. Well, God wished His glory to be known, His enemies to be put down, and He found out the "seed of the woman" to do it. Don't you talk of yourself, "I am so bad; my faith is so weak." Don't you see another Person on the scene — God's Christ? Of course you will be proved weak; and didn't Christ show out all flesh was bad save His own — the holy, harmless, undefiled One? When a believer in the sense of his weakness gets talking about THAT, he is forgetting the glory of the blessed Lord! In the light I say, "Let God be true, and every man a liar." I remember Christ, and say, "I'll sanction no evil. I want to be just what I am before Him; for there is the Lamb on the throne for me, and what a sinner I must have been to need that blood!"

"As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word." But they were not as new-born, not as young believers; they had gone through a great deal, were as martyrs; but they and you are to desire as babes. I suppose one of the greatest mistakes in many minds is that mercy will do very well for any outside; "But for me who have passed out of babyhood, it's not mercy I want." That there are steps I don't deny — babes, young men, etc.; but the young man, IF overcoming, does not forget what he had in the nursery, and the father in Christ never could forget mercy; no, never!

"Washed from my sins," you say, "I must overcome the world." Very true. But when you have overcome, there is always something that still hinders; and when I get old saints I find them turning back with such sweetness to the blood, and they don't know why, making so much more of Christ in humiliation. Very natural. In the epistles I get the work of Christ bearing on my difficulties; in the gospels His word, beauties and perfection, the riches of His person, and the soul feeds there. For my part I do not ever expect to taste mercy as I shall taste it in heaven. Shan't I join the song, "Worthy," etc.? I shall not want mercy there, but I shall never TASTE it as I shall before the throne.

Another remark in connection with the taste of weakness and pilgrimage. Rom 8:1-39 is the roll-call of a believer's privileges; but you don't find such a taste of mercy as in Rom 5:1-21. Three things (Rom 5:1-2, etc.) — glory in tribulation, rejoice in hope, love shed abroad, not ashamed. The little band must drink of the brook by the way, mercy from first to last. Because the love of God is shed abroad, that is where the running of the stream is. The "brook" for the pilgrim is not in the mercies of the way, but in the love, in THE HEART of HIM who humbled Himself, and there the pilgrim turns back and drinks.

"Oh, but I want that love! I lift my eye, but I don't get the taste of that love." All very right; but where, I ask, is the stream the apostle presents? In Christ. He recalls to your mind what He did. He died for us "ungodly," and "without strength," and the soul going through the wilderness has the very same Christ up there who first met it in the extremity of its helplessness, and shut out for ever from God — getting back there to that love; that is, drinking of the brook by the way; not saying, "My leanness, my faith," etc. I am here in the wilderness, brought to my wits' end; but here is Christ. If Christ's death did something, His life does much more. People are always wanting to find a stream running along before them. He says, "No; go up to the source, and then you'll drink of 'the brook by the way.'"

If you talk of your deserts you are not fully matured in grace; you forget how He took you up, and that love is the same love that you still have to do with as you go on through the wilderness. What are you individually occupied with? Is it your leanness? Is it the providential dealings of God with you? Say even, is it disciplinarian dealings? Well, do they as they should — drive you out of your circumstances? And where? Do they drive you to despair, or to GOD? Look out of yourselves, that will give you lower ideas of self than looking at your low attainments. People say, "I find no love in my heart." If you only went a musing on what you were when Christ took you up, you'd find the love flowing in. Here Peter refers to it practically — "growing there by milk of the word" — "gospel."

What do I live upon, energy of my own? No. Has Christ spoken one word to me, and has He got no second word? Nothing more. Has the Lord looked once into my soul, and is it not natural for me to expect it again? How natural for any who tasted mercy — that He is gracious — to taste again that he "may grow thereby!" When unconverted I only knew God as a Judge, not as gracious; but I have found Him a Giver — "gave His Son" and "the Holy Ghost" I've known Him forty-seven years as a Giver. I say, Why does He give? Because it is like Himself; the whole place where Christ is answers the question. He is a Giver, and ought not God to bestow? Who is to be an open fountain if not God? In Eden man proved it; but now God has recast heaven, and put a Man there to be the Giver.

1Pe 2:4. "As a living stone" you can say to the world — that which characterises me before God puts me into direct contrast with you. I know Christ as "chosen of God, and precious." I know who this Person is — the elect corner-stone; and because I have acted on that, and owned Him as such, I see the peculiar place a soul gets into who does this; before whom? God. Christ precious to God, commands all the range of His affections; next precious to those who believe. The poor feeble believer in the presence of God finds he has a thought — the counterpart of God's thought (not as to volume — His is infinite — but as a tiny brook is to a large one) — God saying, "He is precious," and I looking at Christ, and saying, "Oh, He is precious!"

Precious, I say; do you say He is not? Not all God says He is? If Christ is not Son of God, yea, God Himself, then not only I am lost, but my life is lost also. Why for forty-seven years I have tried to string everything I have done on to Christ, as beads are strung on a string, and you would tell me He is only man. Then where is my acceptance and my life? Where should I be, passing through the wilderness, in all the deep needs, the little perplexities, even without knowing that preciousness as something one wants to stay oneself upon? Looking at the cross I say, "He bore that for me," though the Father only knows the Son — knows the full worthiness of the Son there. Still we say He is precious, and what a place that puts us in! Is any poor thing groaning here as to themselves or circumstances? What do you think of that, that you have got God's thoughts about Christ? What strength that gives the heart to say, "Come what may, God and I have the same thoughts about Christ; it puts me at once into the place of blessing — "Ye are a chosen generation, a peculiar people."

G. V. Wigram.

## S. God, Who Is Rich in Mercy

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### God, Who Is Rich in Mercy

" But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Such are the words of the Spirit of God by the pen of Paul the apostle. The contrasts which led him to use the little word "but" are remarkable. I will notice them shortly. At present, let me call attention to the words themselves. But God being rich in mercy is a more literal rendering; and it is, I think, a happier one too, as tending to throw the mind upon the character of God-of whom mercy is so distinctly a mark,-rather than upon His resources,- the resources by which mercy told out its own tale; it acted toward us in a truly astonishing way, according to an almighty love which found us even when we were dead in sins. We were parts of the first creation, as descended from Adam, the man who was made a living soul but who fell away from God his Maker ' we were, as to nature in our original state, without life as to any understanding of, or power to understand, thee things which pertain to Him who is the One that creates anew; and as to our own actual state when He found us, sins and not obedience characterized it. But God made us parts of that new creation which is yet to be fully displayed in the future new heavens and new earth wherein is to dwell righteousness. The Father works hitherto and the Son works, in redemption for the bringing out from amid the rubbish of the fall, whatsoever divine wisdom sees it good to bring and to make fit to be displayed in redemption-glory. And not only so; for the place in which the mercy here spoken of sets us, is a most peculiar one. It is peculiar in being in the heavens where Christ Himself is; and it is still more peculiar in that it is such a portion in the heavens as, unlike some other portions, cannot be separated either from the Lord Himself; or from Him in His life and the honor wherewith He has been honored in heaven. Quickened together with Christ; raised up together with Him, and made sit together with Him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus! The words " quickened together with Christ" show that we have the same life as He has; yea, He Himself is our life; our life is hid with Christ in God: He died and His body was laid in the grave,-He suffered in our stead; but He left the grave and afterward left the earth-(the one, the place opened for the sinner; the other, the place prepared at first for Adam, and) He ascended up on high; and we that believe are one spirit with the Lord Jesus, and are looked upon by God, and by the faith that is in us (which always sees things as God sees them) as one with Him. To faith and to the Spirit the grave and the earth are passed; we are gone up in Him. And not only so but we have a stable and abiding resting place in Him in heaven; in spirit in Him who sits there in His own peculiar place,-firstborn among many brethren,-Head of His body the Church. Who can separate between the only begotten Son of the Father and the children by adoption, whom the Father has entrusted Him to bring to Himself at His own proper cost and as His own proper workmanship? Who can separate Him from the members as to whom God says that this Christ Jesus at His own right hand is now the glorified Head? When we were dead and in sins, there was nothing in us to commend us to God as Creator; nor can any right or title be found in Saul, or in the Ephesians, or in ourselves, as ground why God should have

taken us up as individuals and left so many other pharisees, so many other heathens, so many others who like us had the form of godliness without the power of it behind. All that we can say is: "But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us ": this was, is, and ever will be, to faith, the starting point of the blessing:- "How shall I: meet His eyes?"

Mine on Himself I „cast,,-- And own myself the Savior's prize;

Mercy from first to, last." But mercy! What is mercy? And where is mercy? Mercy clearly is not the same thing as grace Grace is free gift, and does not necessarily raise the question of the agreement or disagreement of the characters of the giver and of the party given to: Free gift, gift without any-remuneration paid for it to the giver, seems to me to be the meaning of the word grace. But there is more in mercy than that; the term itself marks de-merit in the receiver, consciousness too in the giver or shower of mercy that the party to whom he shows it deserves a contrary kind of treatment: as -to merit harsh treatment was due, not kindly. Thus the two words are carefully distinguished in the use of them in Scripture.." Grace and peace to you," etc., are constantly (as has oft been noticed) wished to the Church by the apostolic writers: mercy is never so introduced. "Grace, mercy and peace" are- the expressed desires of the apostles when writing to individual believers, who in their individual conflicts and walk down here, are looked at as men in the body; while the assembly once taken up is looked at as being in the Spirit. Again the Son of God as Son of man was never the object of divine mercy. That could not be. He was the channel of it; and a perfect, competent and worthy channel too. But love divine does delight to trace out all the rich free gifts of God which cluster around Him who led captivity captive and took His seat on high. Poor sinners and feeble saints need mercy, and so does he who through faith would over-come and share with Him, THE Overcomer, all that He has. And this brings not with it to faith, any question. For He who in love has claimed me for Himself and given Himself, His own self, to me, will with Himself make, one way or another, all that He has mine: If I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, surely His sheep, His vineyard, His kingdom, His all is mine; and mine- forever all that is His: and He too will provide me with mercy and grace to help in every time of need till I come to see Himself. But whence is mercy? Whence could it be but from God? He giveth liberally and does not upbraid. He is good and doeth good, and loves to construct and form scenes of enjoyment for His creatures;-these very scenes are witnesses of and for Himself. " The Lord is merciful and gracious." Mercy is part of His character. "His mercy is from everlasting (eternity without beginning, before time) to everlasting (past time)": it is the blessed cord which hangs from eternity, across the dark vale we are now in, right across to eternity beyond. So His word, who cannot lie, declares. He Who was the enemy of God and became the enemy of man, loves to destroy and pull to pieces all that he can, and he is a liar from the beginning. But God had and has in Himself a character which enables Him to look upon that which is out of the way, which has a character of its own which is diametrically opposed to the character of that One man whom God delights to honor (the Lord Jesus Christ) and to look, in mercy and to propose to His Son to bring the self-willed rebel from under Satan and from out of this world and its judgment and to make of him a vessel of mercy.

If we turn now to Paul's epistle to the Romans, we shall find some profitable and some soul-humbling, but rest-giving instruction about this subject of mercy. In the course of the epistle he takes up the argument in three ways. First, as to the whole race of man in its present state: there is no possible ground for there to be blessing to any single individual of that, race other than

the pure mercy of God.

Secondly, that for a person saved by mercy, mercies are reserved in store by God for his portion.

Thirdly, dispensationally, nor Jew nor Gentile-the two classes into which God's ways, while governing the earth, and while waiting in mercy on sinful man, had divided the race-had any ground of blessing save mercy.

These are the first three parts of the epistle. After the introduction, Chapter 1:1-15, we have, first, Chapter 1:16 to 3:20, man's utterly lost and ruined condition shown-a state so far as he himself, with all his resources of power, is concerned, utterly hopeless; then, secondly, Chapter 3:21 to 7, the provision which God, who is rich in mercy, had made for this state of things, and Chapter 8 the portion provided for those who should own this mercy as their only ground; thirdly, Chapter 9, 10, 11, nor Jew nor Gentile had any ground to rest upon save mercy; and, fourthly, the character of walk consistent with the profession of having found mercy, been found in mercy. The introduction, Chapter 1:1-15, naturally enough also contains the whole outline of the truth which, at the moment of his writing, was pressing upon the mind of the writer whom mercy had found-as he writes of himself (1Ti 1:11-17), " according to the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief: Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory, forever and ever. Amen."

Such an one was made a servant of Jesus Christ, an apostle by calling, and set apart for the proclamation of God's good news: subject which told out what was the ground of that peace which is God's own peace, spite of all that Satan, or the world, or man can do to counter-work Him; subject on which He loved to occupy Himself and His prophets of old-His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. And this Jesus was seed of David according to the flesh, but marked off from every other as the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead. A man, and He the Son of God-set off with this distinctive peculiarity, He is the Raiser from death, the Raiser out from among the dead;-death being the wages of sin, and the end of man's natural course here-is plainly enough God's mercy. It is His putting forth-out of His own resources and to counterwork Satan, whom man has put in the place of power as to everything that man could dispose of-the Son of God. In result to man it is mercy or judgment to every individual according to his own conduct and state now with regard to this blessed announcement. And a worthy subject this to be that which was entrusted to Paul for the obedience of faith among all nations. When Paul begins his letter itself, as in Chapter 1: 16, he presents man as needing salvation and righteousness (ver. 17), and deliverance from the wrath of God revealed from heaven (ver. 18). And all this was contained in the glad tidings of Christ. That man's state and condition needed such a deliverance, he then proves in various ways. Firstly, creation has a voice and proclaims that there is power which has a spring in itself and that power is God's. But man kept not in his

place, remained not subject to that eternal power and God. Every part of creation around us still has this voice, a voice in direct contrast with that which man's ways and walk proclaims; for man's ways and walk do not declare man's owning that God is the source and end of his life and being (19-21); secondly, idolatry followed and man degraded himself, as to God and his fellows, below the brutes of the earth (22-32); thirdly, men on whom God forced the light of right and wrong, used this knowledge not for self-humiliation and correction, but for self-exaltation above their fellows. " We know and are able to condemn you " is a fearful word from one who is a hearer but not also a doer of God's righteous will, while on his way up to the judgment of the great white throne. To teach another and set at naught one's own teaching; to prohibit theft and be a thief; for the adulterer to prohibit adultery; the sacrilegious man, idolatry, etc., etc is what, but hypocrisy. And how distinctly, does the apostle's resume of the state inward and outward of man, prove that he knew of no foundation in man for acceptance before God, as he - writes. Chapter 3:9, " We have before -proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no,, not one; there is none that un derstandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is: none that doeth good, no, not one.. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongue they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood.; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes,. Now we know that what things -soever the law saith,, it saith to them who are under the -law that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

If by the law is the knowledge of sin, what remains for man in himself to trust to? Creation, in its, origin and the order it observes, points to One: whom man honors not, and it condemns him.. History, the expression of Man's conduct toward God in His patience and pro- violence and government of man, of man on the earth, condemns him, Can man bring out of himself an obedience if God give him a standard of right and wrong? No-the great thing which such standard can do for him, is to give him: the knowledge of sin.; knowledge of his need, as a ruined creature, of something clean out- side and above that which is found in the fields of creation, Providence and government of God around him, and of what is within himself too.

Secondly, the only remedy for- man under these circumstances is in God, God's righteousness without, man's works,: even that which is by faith of Jesus. Christ, which is towards all,, and is upon all them that believe: Note how these words "all have sinned" (ver. 123); "justified freely by His grace, through redemption which is in Christ-Jesus" (ver. 24); " for the' remission of sins that are, past through the forbearance of. God " (yen: 25); " to declare his righteousness that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth ". (ver. 2G), each and all of them proclaim mercy on God's- part. Just so (Chapter 4:, 3) " Abraham believed God,, and it was counted unto him for righteousness,," followed by that fine statement of Paul, " Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness " (ver. 4 and 5). And not only so, but David after his failure rejoiced " in the blessedness of the man unto whom, God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." And this way was according to

God as a promise-maker, through faith (ver. 13), by grace that it might be sure (ver. 16): of God who quickens the dead, and speaks of things which are not as though they were (ver. 17). " Now, what he has promised, He is able also to perform " (ver. 21). And faith knows this and stays upon it. Now, if any man say " Amen " to God's promises, God will say " Amen " to the establishment of that man in them. For " these things were written about not for Abraham's sake only, but for us also, to whom it shall be reckoned, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from, the dead." The fifth chapter shows how we have peace with God consequent upon justification by-faith, and rejoice in hope of sharing God's glory; how all of this life's troubles too are made to pay tribute to us; how the Spirit,, which is given to us, fills our hearts with. God's love. We were without strength, ungodly, sinners, enemies - when. Christ died for us; but now, reconciled by His death, we count upon being saved by His life, and we rejoice in God through Jesus Christ; and gladly do we own the contrast between the first Adam, who lost everything through disobedience, and the last Adam who won everything through obedience: " Grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus. Christ." The sixth, chapter gives us thee divine, way by which.

God welds into one the fortunes of the sinner that believes and of the Savior that died and rose again from the dead; and how, if God reckons that the Savior died in my stead and that thus I am clear of guilt and dead to sin, I am to reckon it so too and am to cease from sinning and to live unto God. Dead to the penalty, I am to be dead to the power,---of sin. The seventh chapter takes up afresh the question of law and shows how Paul judged that the only thing it could do for a man who was under it, was to convince him of his own utter helplessness. In the case which he portrays as under it, what was reaped from it? Great gleanings, (ver. 5) the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death: that was one lesson. A second was, " That I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet (or lust)" (ver. 7). Then came a third benefit, the discovery that "sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence (or lust). For without the law sin was dead" (ver. 8). Another discovery was, that " when the commandment came, sin revived and I died" (ver. 9). Then again (ver. 10), "the commandment which was to life, I found to be unto death." This taught him the deceivableness of his sinful self: " For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." And poor comfort was it to find that, all the while, " the law was holy and the commandment holy and just and good." But the application of this good thing to him made the sin that was in him to be exceeding sinful; and laid home upon him the truth that he was carnal, sold under sin. And what a picture of man's powerlessness is then given! Doing what I allow not. What I would that do I not. What I hate that do I. The law thus proved that sin was in the man that it was over. Sin; though there might be a good will, yet no power to perform. " For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not that I do." Sin my tyrant, despising all my wishes and all my dreads, and leading me captive! What a picture of the medicinal effects of the law when placed upon a man! Well might He cry out: " O wretched man that I am I who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Now note it, here the law takes notice of what a man should be before God. Quite right that: but if applied to a sinner, it brings out sin and self to light in every varied way.\* The I, a mountainous I (of the party under the law in that seventh chapter of Romans), is upwards of forty times heard to groan and cry out. But not till brought to the sense of wretchedness, and to cry out in despair, Who can save me from myself!-can it say, " I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Yes; and there is balm in that

Jesus Christ our Lord, to answer and set aside forever all the wretched experience of self-writhing under law and its requirements.

(\*This is quite natural. The law describes what I ought to be, according to the nature of myself as a creature, to God. If I am a sinner, I love myself more than God. This very sin may incline my heart to take up the law, to boast in the law. It may at first sight be commendable to me as being about myself, and yet about God. But when I come to stand under it, I find that God is everything in it and has claims over me which I cannot meet; and that those claims are, according to His nature, spiritual -while I am carnal.) The eighth chapter gives us the charter of privileges provided for those who own God's mercy as their only wellspring of blessing. Beginning with "no condemnation," it ends with "no separation." No condemnation in Christ, though we be still in the body down here; for He who loves us, died for us; no feeling of condemnation, if our obedience is after the spirit and not after the flesh, for we have the Spirit of God and of Christ: our life is there, and we know it, and that all about us is death. Obedience to our God and Father we render, knowing that we are His sons and heirs, co-heirs together with Christ,-therefore, we suffer now and look to be glorified hereafter. Our blessing is now by faith and in the Spirit. But our external bodies too will be glorified. Now, till then, the Spirit helps our infirmities, our ignorance-is a Spirit of intercession in us; One, as to whom we know that He who on high searches our hearts, thoroughly understands them. And we know too that all things work together for good to us. Called of God according to His purpose, His foreknowledge of us and predestination to be conformed to the image of His Son (that He might be the firstborn among many brethren), is our comfort. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (ver. 30). So we can say, "God for us, who against us?" The free gift of His own Son for us secures His giving us all things. Who shall lay charge against the choice ones of God? God is the justifier. Who the condemner? Christ died.-; yea, risen, is at God's right -hand in heaven, interceding for us. If Christ who is above loves us, shall any circumstance down here-whether arising from a physical world out of order or from men that hate Christ separate us from the love which He has to us? No: we voluntarily have taken up all that He had to bear. If sheep for the slaughter on the one hand, on the other we are in all such things more than conquerors through Him that loved -us. And this the rather because we know, the world of eternity being opened to us (a larger sphere than what this earth presents to us) (ver. 37 and 38), no creature is able to separate us from God's love to us which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.. There is no separation.

Thirdly, chaps 9, 10, 11 give us the instruction that the mercy presented as the only portion for any individual in the earlier chapters is the root of all God's past, present, or future dealings in blessing with man, when dealt with and blessed in The mass upon the earth. - Gathered now as individuals upon the earth, our massing in company is by faith, to the person of Christ in heaven. Christ, the head of the new creation, is now in heaven; we, as parts of it now, will all shortly be there too. In spirit we are there, now already. But Israel was as a nation blessed upon earth, and will be blessed upon earth hereafter; and, besides our individual heavenly calling and faith in an' ascended, glorified Lord, Gentiles now hear of mercy and are of the house of God down here upon earth; and when the nation Israel is finally blessed, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. We find these massed companies, blessed on earth, to be looked at in these three chapters.

Why was Israel made the channel of God's testimony here upon earth?

Why were the oracles of God committed unto them? (Chapter 3:2)

Why were they Israelites; why-had-they the adoption and the glory and the covenant and the giving of the law and the service and the promises? How came they to be connected with the family of which as concerning the flesh Christ came? They were not all the children of Abraham because they were his descendants? All had the promises in their hands, though all were not the children of the promise.. " God was so pleased to bless them," is the only answer which I can give. And " mercy-His only plea." But mercy for' time is not always among men mercy for eternity, and so He who would have a seed for eternity had to act, in His own right and title, and to secure an eternally blessed people in Isaac and in Jacob. " For- He saith to Moses I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Chapter 9:15). Yes, that is it: there is a God who has a right to do as He wills, and will do as He likes, -Satan and a wicked world and sinful man, notwithstanding. Or is God the only Being that may not act? Is He the only one that has no right to please Himself,-to do His own pleasure, to act according to His own thoughts? Let man now approve, or let man now disapprove, He chose to create this world and to make and set man on it. And He has chosen through nigh six thousand years to bear, with a patience altogether divine, man's incessant, -unmendably bad manners; and He chose Himself to come as Son of man into the world, and He means in the end to reckon with man and to judge him for all his high thoughts - and his ungodliness.. The verse I have cited sets His dealings with the nation Israel of old in a peculiarly striking light. " He saith to Moses, I will have Mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion." Israel had just cast God off- and made a calf (with Aaron's help) out of the trumpery and finery of the women, their ear-rings, etc.; - a calf of gold; had declared " These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord ' (Exo 32:4-5). This was the occasion, when on Moses's intercession with the Lord, the Lord says, " I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy " (Exo 33:19).

Why did the Lord not act upon what He had said to Moses (Chapter 32:, 9) " Let me alone, that my Wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation?" -why this change? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? " I will," if He says it, who can say unto Him, What doest Thou? "I will to whom I will,- and I will on whom I will." 'Tis blessed to know there is One that can and will and does say " I will,," and His " I will " stands firm and sure. He knew what His own grace and mercy and compassion prompted Him to do, and He here chose to let it flow out. But mark how Israel, about whom He chose in His absolutism and uncontrollable will so to speak, had lost itself everything, made shipwreck of all that had been entrusted to them, were a wreck themselves;-they had made other gods and danced and feasted before them. Jehovah had a right to act as He pleased, notwithstanding their sin, and He chose to act according to His own nature and to take care of His own character; so He said, " I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion"; consequently, Israel was not cut off, and He did not make a nation out of Moses.

Satan is not almighty; he cannot say, " I will," and his word stand fast. Otherwise universal destruction and universal delusion would be our portion. But God is almighty, and mercy and compassion are in His character, and He says " I will," and mercy and compassion are ours; and if made ours in Christ Jesus, then ours for eternity; for in Him is no variableness, nor the shadow of a turn. I do see and feel that all my blessing hinges upon this absolutism of God and His having a character of His own on which He, naturally enough, chooses to act and in which He has been pleased to act to me-ward, and upon which He has made me to trust and think and hope that He is acting as to myself. And mark it, too, if His mercy and His compassion are the ground of the soul's peace, the soul owns to demerit in itself.\*

(\*I remember once one who had not peace, but was sore buffeted, reasoning with me, and on my finding the word to be without effect, I proposed prayer, and in prayer took just that ground,-that there was no plea that we could present as connected with ourselves, why judgment should not take its course, but that God was absolute and had a character of His own, and we cast ourselves on that: and the dismay of my friend who said, " I will not pray with you again; I dare not cast myself as a sinner upon God and what he may like to do with me." Through mercy he did learn that there there was rest for him and none elsewhere, and he found it and rejoiced.) And Paul stops not with the broad statement of the principle, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion "; but makes the wholesome deduction an application to individuals: " So then' it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Chapter 9:16). What fountain in itself can a creature finite and ruined have? Is not God the only spring of every good gift? Did He not do the work of Christ according to His own plan and wisdom and in spite of man? Has not Christ been sitting eighteen hundred years in heaven before I was born? Was there not mercy in Him when I thought only of what I could do to please (not God but) myself? Was He not determined to break down all my thoughts of my power and of my might, and make me a debtor to mercy? And did He not do this, ere ever I was willing or running at all. It is not that willing and running are bad things they are Christ's gifts to all his people but the question is Do they come out of the old Adam nature or from Christ Himself? An absolute God, full of mercy is the refuge of a poor sinner. He that has fled to Him will never find fault with His absolute " I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion." If on the contrary men stand upon their rights and their own power, let them tremble. God is not mocked. Paul shows us that the absolutism of God, when resisted by proud man, is irresistible in judgment. If men will not have God and mercy,-they may find like Pharaoh that they have absolute judgment (read Rom 9:17-22). It is what man's " I will" when it comes into collision with a despised God's "I will" leads too. Better, surely, for a rebel creature that God should be occupied and guided by His own goodness, and not be guided with the badness of the creature, than that the rebellion of the creature should be the turning point, as the sinner wishes of the conduct of the Creator. But if Paul accounts for Israel's having been spared of God, through His mercy, the nation stood down here upon earth, as all does that is on earth, on trial; and when it had failed down here, mercy took a larger sphere.

" And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he bath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles" (ver. 23, 24). " That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith" (ver. 30). In chapter 10 He shows how

all is of mercy,-the door open to "whosoever believeth " (ver. 11),-to "whosoever shall call upon the name, of the Lord" (ver. 13); there is no difference when all turns upon this, " The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him " (ver. 12). Yet, thus, the Gentile comes in, upon this no difference ground; but comes in not so as to exclude the Jew on the one hand, for there is no difference, nor on the other hand necessarily into a company whose blessing will be more permanent than was the blessing of Israel as a nation; for there is, in this also, no difference. God takes up a position of showing mercy, of delighting in mercy in both cases; and His taking that position toward men on earth forms a company. But then in both cases He, at least, is truthful and means what He says; in this too there is no difference. He will have mercy. And this means not only that He will be upon the ground of mercy, but that He will have man also to be upon the ground of mercy. If He will give, man must receive; if He take mercy as the ground of His action towards man, man that comes to rejoice in the door opened to him of association with God, must know himself also to be upon the ground of mercy. God's position of being upon the ground of mercy towards Israel, was taken; and they were a people who had the oracles of God and the privileges of being His nation. When they would not be upon the ground of mercy themselves, and would not have the God of mercy (whom they crucified in Christ Jesus) among them upon earth, nor own Him afterward in heaven, when on Pentecost He proclaimed mercy "beginning at Jerusalem," they were set aside; and Himself in heaven (made Lord and Christ, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven) became a new position taken by God for showing mercy to "whosoever should call upon the name of the Lord." But with this new position a new company was formed, and to it the oracles of God were committed, a house of God upon earth. What lay at the bottom of all this was mercy on God's part. But as before this, if the blessing is to be permanent it supposes that he that is blessed takes the ground of being upon and living upon mercy. If God is showing from heaven mercy now, I, to be really blessed must also, my own self, stand upon and act upon mercy. For God here too is real. He means not only to make a show of mercy but to give it; and if He gives there must be (His name be praised-His own glory needs it and He will secure it and make it good) a receiver too of mercy. To see that God has taken a new position, that it is one open to the sinner, to every sinner that believes, for there is no difference whatsoever, is good news indeed; to be able to say " And I stand connected with that God and with that salvation " is blessed. But we must receive into our own souls and for our own selves that mercy, stand upon it, live under it and from it, if there is to be lasting blessing. Reader, can you say, " God, thou knowest that Thy mercy by. Christ Jesus dwells in my mind and that I love it and glory in it and try to live as one that has found it. Mercy is behind me as to my past; mercy is with me and in me as to my present; mercy is my hope as to all that is before me.' These are solemn truths: for Chapter 11 shows us why the nation Israel was cut off. They walked not in mercy's path. " Elias had to make intercession to God against Israel (for whom Moses had interceded!) saying, Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life" (ver. 3). The restraining power of God's hand had however, unknown to the prophet, been acting. " But what said the answer of God to him?" " I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal." What a blessed thing it is that the same One who said to Moses, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion," (at a time when Moses stood all alone for God) should have reserved, at a time when Elias thought he was left alone, seven thousand men. And why? It was the proof at once of His power and of His love of mercy. But the self-confident mass

who gave the character and stamp of things even to the eye and mind of an Elias,-they stood for themselves and for their competency and their ability to obtain righteousness by their own works. And where, I pray you, is the conscience and mind and heart of a ruined sinner who is occupied with what " / can, and I will, and I mean to do "? Is such an one set in mercy, a receiver of it, glorying in it and living in and from it? "I and my works among men and my difference from other men "-is it the same thing as " God's mercy to me the chiefest of sinners." And what if God really does delight in mercy-has set Himself for a display of mercy, and that a stream of mercy flows forth and they who profess to be connected with God and His throne and possessors of the privileges of being associated with Him,-what I say, if such lie and do not the truth; will not stand for mercy in and from God to man a ruined sinner, but claim and wait for the righteous judgment of God upon human works"? This was the case with Israel of old, in Elias's, in David's, in the Lord's, in Paul's days. Must God give up His mercy, or take a new position for Himself, and while carrying to it all that would have mercy, leave behind to providential judgments all that despised His mercy? That is: Is God, or is sinful man to take the lead, to have the upper hand, to rule? Blessed be God I though man tried, instigated by Satan, to put God out of the way, and killed the Son lest the Romans " should come and take us away," they in their blindness and dark sightedness were but putting forward God's mercy. They were giving the proof that mercy had no place in them, when they killed the Prince of life; and so they were justifying God's departure from themselves, yea, provoking Him to judge them according to their boasted measure of self-righteousness; and, so far as in them lay, too, they were thrusting Him whom they murdered into the new place, the new position which God would take; for Christ on earth was Messiah to Israel. Christ earth, rejected, heaven-welcomed, is Lord and Christ for " whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord." The sphere of Israel a nation on earth had rejected, renounced and denounced mercy: Alas! for it, then and there. But, blessed be God, mercy was as dear to Him as ever. -He felt that Israel's sphere was not large enough -for. Him for the display of - His mercy. Little was the mountain from which and small the sphere to which, through Moses' intercession, He had proclaimed mercy. Great the height of His throne in heaven and wide the range of the sphere to every human being under heaven, to whom mercy was now to be proclaimed, beginning at Jerusalem. And, not only so, but in the outsounding of mercy in this larger sphere, He thought to provoke Israel, that cared not for mercy, to emulation. What a love of mercy is His! " Have they stumbled that they should fall? God-forbid: but through their fall salvation is come unto the' Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness (ver. 11, 12)?" " 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 (ver. 13)?" Their fall was not of God that the nation should be lost; but that, they removed for a time, salvation might be proclaimed to the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy. If their removal from the place of honor for a time be for the enriching of a larger circle, what blessing will pertain to that larger circle when all the fullness of Israel's blessing is set forth? God's delight in mercy led Him to take a new position with such thoughts in His mind. How everything as to the revelation of mercy and the making of it good to any and in any, in every position which the God of mercy has taken, all depends upon Himself, His absolute power' and His delight in mercy! And this as surely for eternity as for time! But what as to this new position taken by God, and what as -to the position of those that gather down here under the preaching of it? are either of them permanent? God's mercy is permanent: that is clear. The position of God bidding His Son sit in heaven until He makes His

foes to be His footstool, is not to those who count the long suffering of God to be salvation His permanent' one; it is until. Until what? Until He make His foes to be His footstool. Until the Father bids the Son to rise up and fetch the adopted children to His house on high (John 14:1-31), to fetch the Church which is to be the Bride, the Lamb's wife, in' heaven,-to claim the land of Israel that it may be Beulah, married to Jehovah, and that from the City Jehovah-Shammah, the knowledge' of the'glory of the Lord may flow out to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. And Paul puts before us the other side of this truth, viz., Gentiles grafted into the channel of testimony and fruit-bearing down here on earth for a time (see -Rom 12:17-21) The Gentiles had been of a wild olive tree, but were made to partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree (ver. 17). What brought them there? God's delight in mercy. In mercy they might boast then, but not against the branches, when upon a root which was not theirs by nature. Fear, surely, becomes one who is brought into a place of responsibility out of which, for failure, another has been removed; and not high-mindedness. It is a place of responsibility and in time, and God is a righteous judge. If He spared not the natural branches, will He spare those who were made, because of the failure of these to be their supplanters? No: He is good, for He stands for mercy. But He does stand for mercy, and therefore He is determined and cuts off whatever receives not, abides not in, mercy. If He cut them off and grafted us in, why should He not cut us off and graff them in again if we stand not for mercy? They have the birthright in their favor, and the root is called by their name. If the Church, as the house of God down here, had received and stood, and walked and hoped in mercy. it would never be removed, shaken, cut off; but mercy, righteous judgment would find another way of fulfilling His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in Israel. But Roman and Greek churches, and all Protestant churches too, have failed, utterly failed in responsibility as to holding and living in and hoping in mercy, and nothing but mercy. is this my hard-hearted thought - or God's? God's it is most surely, who also gave it to Paul that he and all other true servants of God, might not be overwhelmed in seeing that as man had failed upon earth from Eden down to Pentecost, in every responsibility' put into his own hands to keep, - so would it be again from Pentecost onward. God has no faith in man's competency, or wisdom, or energy or faithfulness. " For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant 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." Then shall Israel, as a whole nation, be saved: " as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (ver. 26). For there is a covenant with them to this effect, when He shall take away their sins. Enemies they were to the gospel in its present form- and allowed to be so, that mercy's voice might sound out in the wider circuit of " whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord." But the promises to the fathers remain unfulfilled as yet, and God is true and knows not the shadow of a turn. Israel was chosen to be the earth's center of blessing, and endowed and called thereto. And though generations of them have refused to have this place upon the ground of mercy, this will not hinder the nation as a nation having it hereafter, "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (ver. 29). God is absolute, and He stands for mercy to the nation Israel. The Gentiles once did not know God so as to be able to believe in Him; when Israel disbelieved in mercy, the Gentiles obtained mercy; Israel disbelieved and rebelled against mercy to the Gentiles; God left them to their unbelief and to the judgments consequent thereon, that they might learn that they could not do without mercy (ver. 30, 31). For God has shut them up in their unbelief, left them to their own way, that so when He comes to bless them it may be clear to all that the blessing flows upon the ground, is received too upon the ground of

mercy-pure, free, unmixed mercy. The present house of God upon earth has been the birth-place of many a soul for heaven, part of the family of God the Father, part of that body of which Christ is the head: they shall all be removed to heaven. But the house on earth committed to man's building and care, man has defiled and it will come into judgment. And the eternal lover of mercy will return to Israel and mercy's streams shall flow forth thence to the uttermost parts of the earth, even to the extern nations-those beyond the four Gentile dynasties, and be among them in power too. The language of Paul, when he wrote on these things, well becomes us. " O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (ver, 33). And then he goes on with thoughts expressive of his own sense of the littleness of man; thoughts well calculated to make us see our own littleness. What searching questions these: " For who hath known the mind of the Lord?

" Or who hath been His counselor?

" Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?" Not I, surely each one must say,- " For OF Him, and THROUGH Him, and TO Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen" (ver. 33-36).

Into the fourth division of the Epistle to the Romans, it is not my intention at present to enter: I merely give the opening of it as confirming what I have said about the place that mercy holds in God's dealings, as set forth now, and as presented in this epistle.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service " (Chapter 12:1). But the whole of this portion (from Chapter 12:1, to the end of the epistle) is but the deduction of the fruits natural to the reception of the mercy and mercies referred to in the preceding parts -of the epistle. And, surely, the close of this part ought ever to be remembered by us:

" Now to him that is of power to stablish you," let us mark it well, " Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel and the Preaching, of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but is manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets [or by prophetic-scripture], according to the commandment of the ever--lasting God, made known to all nations FOR THE, OBEDIENCE of faith: to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen" (16: 25-27). And can any man who has rejoiced in mercy himself and known its suitability to man's ruined and lost condition, for a moment think that the practical life of persons professing' Christianity now-a-days, is the fruit of their having tasted mercy? Can he whose heart has had to challenge itself in the fear of the Lord, not know what the result of all the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye,, and the pride of life which now characterize Christianity (so called) must be? Or could any one that counts mercy to be a priceless treasure wish the present state of things to continue, or mercy to be limited to its present bounds and not to be, even through judgment, presented in a more boundlessly extensive way, and that too in man's day?. To return now to my thesis, "But God who is rich in mercy," I would call attention to the contrasts in the context which led to the introduction of the little word,." But." In the middle of the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians (ver. 15), Paul turns to the blessings which grace had provided for the saints in Christ Jesus, and, as it were, draws aside the curtain and shows us the Son of man, the faithful servant of God, seated in heaven in all His present glory. Raised from the dead and set at God's right hand in heavenly places,-exalted above every power and name named

in this age or that which is to come,-everything put under His feet and Himself made head of a body, for which He not only uses His power over all things, but which He himself fills in every part! What glory like that, all the excellency of God's ways set forth by Him. All the beauty of. God seen in Him. In contrast to this come the place and the state in which those; now the members of His all glorious body, were found, dead in trespasses and sins; their movement then, according to the routine of a place \* set up for sinners to be happy in without God,, out of His presence, the energy then working in them, that of the prince of the power of the air, spirit that energizes in the children of disobedience. Such had been these Ephesians to whom he wrote. Had he been better? no: lusts of the flesh, lusts of the flesh and of the mind, had characterized the Jews-children of wrath even as others (Chapter 2:13); what a contrast! Well might he introduce here the word " But." " But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.-"And mark well here, the height of blessedness and glory to which we were raised and in which set, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised up together, and made sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." If anything could add to this blessing so freely given, bestowed in so divine a way, in Christ Jesus,-it would be the explanation which follows of an object which was accomplished, to say the least, by God in so doing. For I like not to speak of it as His motive; that I suppose was higher still. But one object which was given was, "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus " (ver. 7).

(\*The world: see its origin in Cain and his family. Genesis, Chapter 4)

" For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God bath before ordained (or prepared, -works worthy of our being, each one, members of that body, or which Christ is the glorified head) that we should walk in them " (ver. 10).

Thus our creature working, to get into the place of acceptance and blessing, is excluded:-" We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus," that on the one hand; and on the other, the abuse of mercy and grace is guarded against, for our creation in Christ Jesus, is " unto good works," of a kind prepared by God that we should walk in them.

G. V. W.

## S. Has Christ destroyed the works of the devil?

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Has Christ destroyed the works of the devil?

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 9, 1882, p. 189.

"Can it be positively asserted that the Lord Jesus Christ has destroyed the works of the devil?" Not according to the scripture which states, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy (or loose) the works of the devil." (1Jn 3:8.) The word here rendered from the Greek into English, "destroy," occurs forty-two times in the New Testament, and is commonly and correctly rendered "loose" in most places, as in Mat 21:2, "Loose" the ass tied; John 11:44, "Loose" Lazarus from his graveclothes; Luk 13:16, "Ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound eighteen years, to be 'loosed'?" To "loose" a shoe string; "loose" the seven seals; "loose" the four angels, etc. etc. The One that wrote this was God the Holy Spirit; and, naturally enough, as God, the range of His view was God's glory. Men that have got away from God until God lays hold of them measure everything by its bearing upon man down here. If, however, individually God meets them, that stops, and the thought that supplants it is certainly, I am ruined, lost, and undone; what can I do to be saved? The hard, careless souls go on, arguing against the word of God as unintelligible, untrue, very difficult; but they seek not to receive from God the explanation of what is difficult. To me the meaning of the passage is very simple. Satan's works in the garden of Eden (and the same has been true ever since) have been to make God appear to man as niggardly — refusing to man, and, as a tyrant, seeking to reap where He had not sowed, and to gather where He had not strawed. God had made the world by His Son and for His Son, and Eden with everything in it suited to man's enjoyment was there; given it all freely, all to be his, until he set up in independence of God. (Gen 3:1-24.) Satan begins with the weaker vessel, suggesting that what struck him most in the whole matter was prohibition on God's part. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Gen 3:1) The woman replies — not carefully, answering according to what God had said to Adam. Satan suggests that God had told a lie. "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen 3:4), and then as a reason for it insinuates that God wanted to keep from man the privilege of full intelligence and of being as God, knowing good and evil. (Gen 3:6) Eve, turning to think of herself, falls under his power.

Here was the first work of Satan as to man — presenting God as a God of prohibition, untruthfulness, and jealousy of man, lest he should get what pertained to God alone. The gift by God of His Son, and that Son going down to death, the death of the cross, that He might break the bands of Satan's forging, and that whosoever might be free to follow Him, and share His throne and home, spoiled the work of Satan. The same thing has gone on over and over again, on Satan's part against God's character, and on man's part to his own deeper ruin; and so the interference of God through Christ and the Spirit have been renewed times out of mind. And is it a hard thing, or contrary to free gift, if God who knows that the blessing of every one depends upon His maintaining His own glory as the first thing to be thought of, and working thereunto by His Son

and Spirit, if He leaves to man to choose whether he will be of the seed of the woman, fight against Satan, and go to the glory in the end, or of the seed of the serpent? From the fall to the final doom of Satan "my Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said the Lord; and truly if Christ had not made you and me willing in the day of His power, we should both have been under Satan and the world, and in ourselves still.

Adam and Eve's stock were sold by them under sin and Satan; and they cannot say, while they talk of innocency, of not being worse than others, of doing God's will, of the value of souls, etc., that they subserve God's glory. But a Saul turned into a Paul, and an active agent in the war between God and Satan is so, and can say so. To measure everything by man's advantage is sin. I am sure you will say so. God's honour and character Christ came to vindicate. And men will to go down; He needs, and will have, and loves to draw to Himself for heaven. G. V. Wigram.

## **S. His Name shall be in Their Foreheads**

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"His Name shall be in Their Foreheads."

Borne aloft on the brow, that which is one of the most striking parts of the human face, Himself, and Himself in the power of the display of that day, telling out its own tale of the success of all His sufferings, doings, care, patience, prayers, workings, for us the people given to Him from before the foundation of the world. His name, the name of God and of the Lamb, will stand out aloft on each fellow-citizen. Blest distinctive mark this!

G. V. Wigram.

## S. His Servants shall Serve Him

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His Servants shall Serve Him.

"And His servants shall serve Him." We seek to do so now. We disallow in ourselves and other believers any and everything which we find either contrary to the walk which Christ walked in when He was here below, or which is superfluous to it. For the allowance of such a superfluity by us would be practically saying that His walk down here was not a perfect standard of what our walk should be. But how blessed amid all our known and confessed shortcomings is the firm and sure promise, "His servants SHALL Serve Him." I say it not as making any allowance for shortcoming now; but I surely judge that now I must glory in His being the only perfect servant of God, perfection's height secured by Him every step of the way; and till I see Him and am made like Him, my conscience, my mind, my heart, will, can never be satisfied with my service. May He be able to say of each of you as He did of one, "She hath done what she could!"

G. V. Wigram.

## S. In Heaven

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In Heaven.

Rev 4:1-11;2Co 12:1-21.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend Vol. 4, p. 117.

There are only two men, mortal men, who have been in heaven since the day of Pentecost. Paul was caught up to the third heaven, and the other was John. There is much instruction and profit to be drawn from the two accounts. In Rev 2:1-29; Rev 3:1-22 we have the messages sent to the churches from the Son of man, who appears in Rev 1:1-20. Then we find John invited up to heaven; and he saw the One who sat on the throne, the Lord God Almighty. He had a reserved book in His hand; and the challenge is sent out, "Who is worthy?" None was found; John weeps; the Lord takes the book, and worship immediately begins; this peculiar glory that is found in the Lord cannot be passed by, nothing is kept back from Him. He has a right and title to all the secrets of God. What is in the book when the seal is open? A certain governmental dealing is going on from the throne above, where the Lord is seen to be checking and overruling everything on earth; where Satan is acting in every varied form; where the flesh is rampant, and man in all his wickedness is developed. John is thus allowed to see what is going on on the earth. All sorts of horrid wickedness meet his eye; but he sees it all under the governmental power of God and the Lamb. The scene gives a lesson in connection with evil; we see the repose of the heart of the Christian amid it all; let everything else be shaken, such is the state of acceptance in which the believer now stands, that God can throw the gates of heaven open and bring us into His presence, even in our mortal bodies; as with John, our standing is in such complete acceptance in the Lord Jesus Christ. We may be weak, the weakness is allowed to come out. John weeps when he sees the great master of wickedness at work; but he sees too that all is kept in check by Him who is above it all: in the midst of this ocean of wickedness he is in repose. Let the devil, let the flesh, do their worst, God is above it. This is an important principle for the present time. Everything seems to be loosening. There is not a single ecclesiastical body on the earth but admits the need of reform, whether it be the Pope himself, the Greek church, etc. They are like barrels without hoops, no strength. If we look around we see many crowned heads without kingdoms. Such are the principles at work that the manifestation of any character of wickedness should not astonish us; we should be prepared for anything. But it is not to be with us, "Lo here, or to there;" like John, we are to look at it all in the counsel of God in connection with His government. All we have to do is to leave all alone, all with God; to say to one another, We are clean out of the world, we belong not to it. If you are not clean out of the world, you are in a wrong place. All you have to do is to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. John is thus privileged in seeing the glory of the Lamb; he is occupied with the Lamb, he is at home in His presence. All that Christians have to do is to take care they are in the place the Lord held when He was on earth — the place of rejection. Do we know this place? An individual with whom I was speaking the other day said, "I have just discovered that the Lord Jesus

Christ was rejected on earth, and that I have not held this place; do not let me hear anything but what would lead me to this place." Let us ask one another, Are we holding the place of the rejected One down here?

Paul was caught up to heaven. (2Co 12:1-21.) A different thing is taught here; it is more heart-searching. What is the principle by which Paul is to regulate himself in passing through the wilderness, and doing the work the Lord Jesus had given him to do? We get, too, here blessed instruction as to the intermediate state. Paul was perfectly conscious of the presence of the Lord; whether in or out of the body, he could not tell. When up there, he sees and hears most blessed things; but he is not allowed to speak of them. How often are passages which speak of peculiarity of communion passed by; and when this deep communion is spoken of, it seems some strange thing to them. If I were to give the character of my conversion, I should expect to see faces, the expression of which tells me they know what it is I am speaking of. When we speak about dealing with God, whether about ourselves or fetching out of heaven what others are needing for them, I should look for the faces of others to be saying, "I know what that is." The things of God need to be tasted to be understood. When the Lord looked into the heart of Saul of Tarsus, he could not question that there was a Man in heaven who knew all about him, and who was occupied with him. (5: 7.) Paul saw the glory of the Lord, and he saw what belonged exclusively to the Lord. He came down; but was this bright light the portion that belonged to him? No; the portion was the love of the heart of the Lord acting in His perfect wisdom for him. He had been up in the third heaven. The thought of the Lord was about His servant; of the danger he was exposed to through these revelations; that he had a law of sin in his members which needed crippling; and the Lord showed out the love of His heart in crippling His servant. The Lord kept all in His control — all in His own hand. Satan could not touch a hair of his head without His permission, just as we see in the case of Job. All self-complacency was spoiled in Paul. It was not, I am the man who has been where no one else has been; I have seen and heard unutterable things. Who are you, Paul? A poor cripple, with a thorn in my flesh. I am weakness itself. The Lord thus gave Paul the sense that, while he remained down here, he could not go through anything without the everlasting arms underneath him. You must have such a sense of your weakness, Paul, that you cannot go forward in anything unless my arm is underneath you, my strength thus made perfect in weakness. This was a very blessed character of love towards His servant. We are never called to go to warfare at our own charges; but it is ours to know there is One close to us whose arm will support us. What a contrast! On the one hand, a man taken up to Paradise; on the other, the thorn in the flesh, drawn into the flesh, perfect weakness; Christ in heaven, Satan down here; glory up there, flesh put to torture down here.

There was another thing that was humbling to Paul; he puts himself boldly forward, and says, "Take away this thorn, take away this thorn, take away this thorn; I know thou art the giver; I know thou hast an ear, and a heart to care; take away this thorn." There was no answer save, "No; my grace is sufficient for thee." Who sent the thorn? The Lord Himself. Who limited too what Satan was to do with the thorn? The Lord Himself. Who wants to direct the Lord, to show God what He is to do? Paul. I can't hear thee; my grace is sufficient for thee. I can't take away something of yours, but I will give thee something of mine. I am never tired of caring for you, of giving out from myself all you need. I am always ready to give. I'll give, give, as much as you need; grace filling all your circumstances, whatever they are. I am left to you; I am sufficient for you; my strength shall be

made perfect in weakness. Paul is not allowed his own way, walls are built up across his road. When Paul finds he cannot do as he will, when he becomes a prisoner, and is led whither he would not, before kings, and the great Emperor of the whole earth, we see the testimony he is permitted to bear for his Lord; he went in as bound, but proved what strength made perfect in weakness is. This principle is beautifully brought out in Jacob's history. Jacob walked for a number of years through the circumstances of his path, but he had never been crippled till this time. The peculiar feature of Jacob's walk was that he was always trying to carry out God's plan for Him. In the energy of his nature he always went forward to carry out God's purposes, as though God wanted help (this is the principle of the Roman Catholics); but we see everything fails. We come to Gen 38:1-30; there we see, from the time Jacob was made to halt, he can go forward and face anything. There is no difficulty; from this time he goes in the strength of the presence of the Lord, and finds His strength made perfect in weakness. Nathanael was "an Israelite indeed," etc.; he is a man who trusts to prayer, and not to his own wits. When God makes strength perfect in weakness, the question comes, Who is the doer of everything? This took place in Paul when he was first converted; this was the principle he was first put on: You are not to trust, Paul, to your own strength, or wisdom, or anything; but you are to trust me. Paul got locked up in prison, and despaired of life, but it was not God's thought that His apostle should be stopped. When he was quietly conning over it all, he says, "I had sentence of death in myself," etc. Paul had before him the God that raised up the Lord Jesus Christ. (2Co 1:9.) Was it a great thing for the God who had raised the Lord Jesus, who had shone down into Paul's heart, to open his prison doors? Christ was crucified by weakness; He liveth by the power of God: strength made perfect in weakness. The expression at the close of 2Co 1:9 is "tabernacle upon me;" the thought conveyed to my soul is a reference to God dwelling in a pillar of fire, and the cloud keeping company with people all through their journey. Paul was to go forth as one who had no strength, but as one whose weakness is used of God for the display of His glory; and there we find Paul singing a song over Satan. I glory in my infirmities; he finds he can bear nothing of himself, perfect weakness; but now he has got the secret of victory from the Lord, and he can sing a song over his weakness and over Satan; and he finds Satan's work has been turned into his good. The Lord has allowed it, all for his blessing. Now the question is, Will Christ's arm be, always underneath me? Will He ever tabernacle over me? Will He never fail me? Shall I be always able to sing this song? This is the principle of resurrection which quiets and gives peace. Paul was to wear it inside him all day long, through his whole course. Resurrection must be applied to our every circumstance. "Crucified together, quickened us together, raised us up together, seated us in," etc. Through all your life, Paul, you are to take this principle into your bosom: resurrection, strength made perfect in weakness.

One word, and it is not a strained word: I have often thought of the wilderness through which God brought Israel. His eye was on the wilderness. He prepared it. "I have made the place for a particular purpose in connection with my people. I have arranged it long ago." The wilderness was no accident, it was the very place He had prepared. No resources to nature; absolute dependence on God there. And God has made and marked out your circumstances, and has so made them that you cannot go through them without Himself. Some may say in reference to their path, "This thing came upon me through the sin of some one else." Never mind that, it came from God. Neither divine wisdom nor power could have added anything to the wilderness to have made it more impassable to nature or more easy to God. He allows a quantity of things in our

circumstances to make us feel we cannot go through them without Him. What an immense difference in saying, "This thing comes from God; He has put it there;" and, "All this is against me." If it is I and God, there is no difficulty; if we leave out Him, the way is impassable. Which would you rather have, a life without difficulty, or a life so full of difficulty that the blessed Lord Jesus is obliged to show His face every day, yes, every minute, obliged to keep close to me all day long? God so ordered the course of the apostle that it was impossible to get on without the Lord Jesus who raiseth the dead; and this does not merely apply to moral difficulties, but to everything. There is some one sick in the house; who do you turn to first, God or the doctor? When the doctor thinks it a serious case you take it as a decision; but the question is not what the doctor says, but what is God's purpose? Means may be used; but the Christian is not to use anything apart from God: the Lord first in everything. I don't think praise ever comes forth from us so purely as in connection with what is disagreeable. When we give thanks for mercies, it is not so pure as when able to praise for what we do not like: we should be dropping the sweet into the disagreeable. When we think of the Lord's love in it, it sweetens what is bitter. A man is thus taken up into heaven to show him every step of his way down here, from first to last — weakness in himself, but Christ's strength perfected in weakness — death and resurrection. The life of Paul was a wonderful life. "To me to live is Christ." The way he did run his course brought out the fellowship of the life of Christ; he had in Caesar's court the very life the Lord Jesus had on the Father's throne. It is wonderful, and all on the principle, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

## S. Inside the Veil

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Inside the Veil.

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

## S. Living Christ.

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

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

## S. Man's Thoughts or God's Thoughts: Which am I Occupied With?

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Man's Thoughts or God's Thoughts: Which am I Occupied With?

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend vol. 14, 1887, p. 9.

Everyone of the race of Adam is occupied with the one or the other. I would ask the reader to ponder Psa 119:113 in connection with Psa 139:17, noting that in the former psalm the word "vain" is an interpolation, and without any authority. Two things are contrasted here, it will be seen; viz., "thoughts" and "thy law;" that is, the word of God is the opposite to them, and is preferred by the writer to them.

Sin having come in, the value of the thoughts of man (spoilt as to everything concerning God, and himself too) comes before us very early in the history of this world. We hear it in Gen 6:1-22 from the mouth of God Himself. Let us notice it well. 'Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil,' and that continually. Nor did man change after the judgment of the flood, as the ages rolled away; for we read again God's mind unaltered as to him in Isa 55:8-11, recorded long after by that prophet. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Then He brings in (as in the Psalms) the word of God as corrective, and as that which replaces these thoughts of man. "For as the rain from heaven waters and refreshes the earth, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth." The word of God is given instead of the thoughts of men. When we come to Christianity, God's testimony as to the thoughts of men is still the same. From the lips of the blessed Lord, God manifest in the flesh, we are called to hear it. "For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." What a sweeping judgment of all the so-called good thoughts of man! And again, from the same authority, than whom none can be greater, we have, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts." (Mark 7:1-37.) Nothing good, mark, but only that which is evil; as long before recorded in Gen 6:1-22, "Only evil," and that continually. Such is man, my reader, and such is still the record of God concerning him for his attainments of intellect, wealth, power, science, or art, whatever they may be.

Well is it for us to have reached the same judgment of our thoughts as God has expressed, and in His word has so fully set before us; for then surely the less we encourage them the better. We shall then understand the meaning of the words as they stand, "I hate thoughts." (Psa 119:1-176.) But what have we instead of our thoughts? Psa 139:1-24 gives the answer, "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" We have God's thoughts to be occupied with, and it is the Word that gives them to us; for there only are they recorded. But God's thoughts now are not about us, but Christ. His thoughts of the first man we have already read in Gen 6:1-22 and Isa 55:1-13, as well as in the New Testament. He has not, and cannot change His judgment concerning them. There stands the record unalterable, because it is His. But there is

another imperishable record. It is of One who was the object of the thoughts of God long before man was created on the earth, and before the earth was created that man should dwell there. "For Him" (Christ), as well as by Him, "were all things created." (Col 1:1-29.) "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water . . . I was daily His delight" (Pro 8:1-36.) Here we have what occupied our God from eternity, and before the creation. God formed man on the earth (after He had fitted it in beauty for his dwelling-place), and, giving him his wife, set him as head over all things. It was but a picture of what He purposed for Him who was ever "His delight," and to and for whom He purposed to give a universal and wider dominion than Adam ever held. Adam and his wife picture to us that the thought of God was "Christ and the Church," when He formed this first creation. He will bring into subjection to this thought of His every opposing element and creature, whether in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth. (Php 2:10.) But if you have, my reader, as a poor sinner learnt the emptiness of your own thoughts, you have come to God, who has, first in the gospel, revealed to you His. But those thoughts were all about His Christ - "The gospel of God . . . concerning His Son." (Rom 1:1-3.) Receiving them by faith, you have passed "from death unto life." What are the thoughts that you are now to be occupied with? They are the same; viz., God's thoughts and purposes to be accomplished in and by and for His Christ. It is wonderful that God should choose to communicate His thoughts to us. Not to angels (servants), but to men, whom He takes as "friends" into His secrets. And thus we read this wonderful unfolding of His mind through the apostle as follows: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance." (Eph 1:9-11.)

God has one purpose, and that purpose is to exalt Christ. Christ is His object. He is calling out from the earth by the Holy Ghost a bride for Him. He has already crowned Him with "glory and honour," His answer to that work which He accomplished when He glorified God on the earth. God has said to Him, as the One rejected from the earth, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Nothing has been defeated of all God's purposes, and we as the redeemed, the bride, are a necessary part for His glory of those purposes. In the book of Revelation Christ is the accomplisher of all God's purposes in judgment respecting the earth, the only one found "worthy to open the book" containing them, or even "to look thereon." All these purposes He makes known to the Church - "Write in a book and send it unto the seven churches," "to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." Is then God's purpose and object, my reader, your purpose and object while you walk the earth? Have you accepted God's thoughts and given up all your own? The word of God (Heb 4:1-16) is a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," but even so it is as a sword; that is, it executes judgment upon them. This is important, for if a matter is corrected in the thought - that is, in its spring and source - the fruits are not seen, and therefore have not to be dealt with, as otherwise will surely be the case with us all. One may surely say, "Of what use is it to be occupied with anything else but God's thoughts, since every other thought must come to nought?" Well, this is surely the case; but we must not only talk, we must act. You will find that the thoughts you have are not always God's thoughts, that the thoughts of your heart are a frequent cause of loss of communion, trial, and discomfort to you. "Why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" was the question of our risen Saviour to His disciples; and

was followed by, "Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." And what did these give them? Surely GOD's thoughts of that moment through which they were passing instead of their own! It brought Him before them instead of themselves, and it showed them that God's thoughts were about Him. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning HIMSELF." If God does not occupy your thoughts, Satan will. It may be very subtle, but self is not Christ. "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel" (Luk 24:1-53), showed that they were occupied with their own thoughts. Let any Christian sit down, and, unless the Spirit furnishes him with God's thoughts, he will soon find he has thoughts unworthy of a Christian; and these, being not according to the Word, are his continual trial, unless he bring the sword upon them, according to Heb 4:1-16.

"Finally, brethren, 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 4:1-23.) The Lord give to us all to be mindful of this exhortation, and to be daily in the practice of saying, "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" Connecting too this verse with Eph 1:9-10, so shall we say, led into their depth as also was one of old, "He must increase, but I must decrease." H. C. A.

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What is my place and my power to walk? God has raised me up together with His Son, and given me the Spirit; and because of that I go on, and every thing that is not of Him I have to judge. The walk of the Spirit is one of separation from all that is not of the Father. Believers ought to walk as being dead, buried, and risen with Christ; as those who are espoused to their heavenly Bridegroom, saying, "We cannot do what He would not like." Nature may say, I should like that, or wish this; but the answer is, "No; you belong to Christ: and if Christ's wish is contrary to yours, you are not to have yours." By His blood He has brought you into the place where He is now, and you can say, "I will give it up; I will count that dead for which He died. It has death upon it; I give it up." G. V. W.

## S. Notes of a Gospel Address

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Notes of a Gospel Address.

Psa 32:1-11.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 7, 1880, p. 253.

It is remarkable how individual the experience given in this psalm is. The writer of it had been taken up by God as a shepherd boy, and put on the throne. There he committed three of the most awful sins that the law of God condemned — adultery, murder, and corruption. He used the very throne to which he had been raised from the sheepcote, the throne of Jehovah, not only to display his own shame, but to put dishonour on Jehovah Himself. But when his soul had passed through the process described in this psalm, with God, he was thrown down not only as a poor sinner in the presence of God, but right on to that great master-thought of God's mercy — His mercy and compassion. Have you been in the same class David was put into? in that place where the creature is under God's eye, and knows himself there, and finds all the hypocrisy and double-dealing of his evil nature trying to push off the mercy which is his portion for eternity? We must be in it in one way or another. Why? Because God the Holy Ghost makes a quotation from this psalm, when speaking of God's principles of dealing with man in His gospel now, and it gives out the principle of blessing at God's right hand. In Rom 4:1-25 we get Paul's statement of God's principles of blessing. He does not bless a man according to his works. In God's dealings with man, He finds all the positive evil in man, and not only says, "If I am to bless you, it must be without works," but the blessing is the very test of the character of the man whose works are bad. The mercy of God is the only pathway for Jew or Gentile into the favour of God.

Psa 32:1. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." What do we understand by being "blessed"? The primary idea of the word is "prosperous." A prosperous man before God is one who knows his sins, and finds the answer to them in God; such a man is marked by happiness. When we look at man, not only as in time, but for eternity, there is no man so prosperous as he who says, "I have nothing but sin in myself, but all my rest is in God." That man has something to sing of in which, whatever way he turns, he finds some fresh note of gladness and joy connected with it.

"Transgression forgiven" - "sin covered." Transgression is quite different from sin. Transgression is when a person has wandered from a marked path; sin is the principle of self-willed independence in the heart of man. David made discovery of both these things in himself, so that they did not suit the heart of the creature in the presence of God. Directly he got them forgiven and covered, then he could understand what prosperity it was, to find that all his wanderings might be sung of as connected with God who had forgiven them. Have you some knowledge of having come short of the glory of God? Has God come in and said, "I have nothing to reckon to you, nothing against you." Do you find in yourself the principle of selfwilled independence? It often

breaks out still in the child of God, though in a different form from what it did in David or Job. God says, "I know all about it; but I have put my hand upon it, and covered it. Your ground of confidence is not that I do not know about it." Does God know all about the transgression and the independence? Paul, all rapturous of Christ, and wanting to serve Him, had to go back and learn it all, though the sins were all forgiven and covered by God.

It is a searching question to put to one's own soul, How far I know that, as a creature standing before the Creator (apart from the work of redemption), there is nothing in the mind of God concerning me but iniquity - nothing fit for His presence? When the eye of God comes down on me, when I look at what my nature is, do I know what it is to say, "It is iniquity"? I ought to know it, if it is the Lord's pleasure not to impute it. (Psa 32:2) He does not impute it if I am a believer, but asks me what I think about Christ, who bore the punishment, being in glory now; would I rather have a good thought about myself? What a different ground for a saint to be on to say, "I know all; nothing can ever rise and startle me now. I know it, for it was all imputed to Him eighteen hundred years ago, and judged by God on the cross."

"In whose spirit there is no guile." (Psa 32:2) Guile has nothing to do with guilt; guilt is the condition of a man having transgressed who has not found an answer to his sin. Guile is artifice. While David was trying to patch himself up, he was forgetting that his sin was all exposed before his people. To think that he could try to be before God as an unruined creature, when he, the man after God's own heart, had taken the place of a model sinner! It would not do. God says, "I know all the iniquity, but I do not impute it; why and is at My right hand." Am I in this place? What further discovery can come out, if to my mind the blood of the Lord Jesus shed on Calvary is the measure of my sins and the iniquity of my nature? If God wants a people, whom does He choose? A righteous people? No; a people who, when all earth shall be under the power of darkness and sin, shall be able to slip Satan, and live for God in spite of what they are. God has a people who find they cannot get along unless they know their ruin, and how God has even turned that to His own glory, and know God as a refuge from their ruin. There is a height in Him altogether beyond the creature ken to measure. Who could have thought of such a thing as that the unruined God should come in and say, "I know how to turn your very ruin to my glory. I am altogether above you in the range of my thoughts. I shall do as I choose. 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.'" Who is to say to God, Stop? He is the only one who can say, "I will;" and it will stand. What else does it show? God as the God of resources! What seemed utterly impossible, has been accomplished. The attributes of His being could so blend as to meet the sinner. But He was a God of resources. He had one Son, and in Him on the cross all the rays of the character of God could be shown out; and God stands forth inviting, attracting, alluring, commanding the ruined creature not to stand out for the first Adam, but to come to God and give his sinnership, his sins, on the ground of the Person and work of Him whom God delighteth to honour. The beauty of the Lamb, who sits on the throne of God, is part of my felicity as a poor sinner. Is that a ground that will break down?

No. When the heart is simple in the renunciation of everything one has as a mere creature, and gets on the ground of Christ's work in salvation and redemption, Satan himself has nothing to say. If all the devils come, if my conscience accuses me, they can say nothing to what God has said against me when He put His Son on the cross. I can say, "What do you think, Satan, of that? That Christ bore my curse." I have boldness before God, when the Lamb is my boldness, ruined in myself, not worth speaking about; but my ruin is taken occasion of by God, because God wants a

people on earth who can speak well of Him, walk as His Son walked, and resist Satan. If this is to be, you must know your ruin, you must take God's experience of what His divine counsels were about the sin found in us, and you will find a standard of ruin, a standard of happiness for the Christian, that in the darkest, deepest pit in which he may be, he has the mercy of God, and the power of the Holy Ghost sealing on the heart the bright light of the truth, that God has found an answer to the ruin. G. V. W.

## S. Paul as a Pattern.

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Paul as a Pattern.

Acts 26:1-32; 1Ti 1:1-20.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 13, 1886, p. 69.

(These are notes of an address given as far back as 1861. - E.D.) The apostle Paul is the pattern of all who are called and converted now, though they may not come up to the pattern. All the feebleness of Christian life is traceable to want of perfectness of foundation - it is not according to the pattern. A great many saints who are wishing to get on and do not, would find out why if they would compare their foundation with the pattern. They are satisfied with an acquisition that meets their own necessities. That is a poor thing. I want to reach that which it is the mind and purpose of the living God to give me. Paul and Paul's gospel are the pattern of that. You become partakers of the grace that would make you up to the pattern, or you are not a Christian at all. That grace, if you did not hinder it, would work you up to it.

Turn to Acts and you will see what Paul was appointed to do - to be a minister and witness of those things which he had seen. On his way to Damascus a light shines suddenly round him, and Jesus was revealed to him in the glory. That is what he had seen - Jesus in the glory. Simple it is, but its reception involved the most wondrous consequences. We all admit that man is naturally at a distance from God, not on terms of intimacy, and that he ought to be. Nothing is so condemnatory to man, the first creature of God on earth. A conscience awakened wants that distance removed, and the first thought is that of Cain - "I must repair it." Of course the offender is the one who ought to do so, but man cannot. It must be done by one not under the penalty which is on him. God can do it through the intervention of Christ; but the intervention, even of Christ, must be from God's side, not man's. Do you understand the nature and object of God? Christ came out to declare it. Satan has been trying to darken the knowledge of God from the beginning. Until you know what God is in His own essential nature you are not on the right foundation. Having to do with God in His own nature is the only solid, unshifting foundation for a soul. "The only begotten Son, He hath declared Him" - disclosed an unknown subject, the heart of God. God in His own nature is essentially love. Who knew it? No one but His own Son, and He came to do His will, and He knew His heart towards poor, lost sinners in the world; and what was His will? That His heart should be set free to take His prodigals to His arms, to express itself in its own mighty love. He was found in fashion as a man, and as the exponent of the heart of God He carried out His love, which was a love for ever. Like the good Samaritan, he to whom he became neighbour needed no other neighbour after he took the whole charge of him. Now God is free in the strength of righteousness to open His heart.

God gives me the gift of eternal life. Not merely does He bring me to heaven, but that gift is the expression of the love of God. The glory is opened, and the one who has accomplished the

purpose of God in redemption is seen in it. God's satisfaction for sin altogether is thus revealed to Paul, and the glory shone out on Paul, and not a word is said of the sort of man he had been. Had he been under the law, that glory would have destroyed him; but in another place he says that the more he looked into it the more like it he grew. Remember, Paul is the pattern, and we have to look at Jesus as Paul saw Him. Every one of you who knows Him at all, knows Him in the glory, for it is there He is. There is not a particle of light that has reached the soul that is not the light of the glory of God. We ought to have the sense of it; but whether we know it or not does not change the wondrous fact. What is the gospel? Why, that you have a Saviour in the glory. Where will you get rest to your soul? Go to the glory. Where get full satisfaction for your soul? Go to the glory, for you have a Saviour there, and only there. If Christ had done only all that was required of me, it would have been but human righteousness. But He did the Father's whole will and finished His work. (See John 4:1-54)

It was God's work that Paul should be saved. We have such a low idea of what the gospel is. We think it is merely that Christ has come to save from judgment. That is not it; but God desired to have such as I am in the very nearest circle of glory to Himself, and none but Christ could bring it about, and He was ready to do it. After conversion Paul was a pattern still. (Php 3:1-21) He wanted to get back to the sphere of what he had seen - "I press toward the mark for the prize," etc. Where my history began, there it ends. The Lord grant that your hearts may be exercised to know what God is in Himself. His heart has been satisfied to the full by His own Son. It is easy for me to travel into all the regions of the glory of God if I have entered it from the right side - the love of God. All Christian truth is compromised if you have not the full foundation. The Lord rests in the magnitude of His love. G. V. W.

## S. Paul's Gospel: Do You Preach It?

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Paul's Gospel: Do You Preach It?

●INTRODUCTION. Is the Gospel of " The grace of God " as now usually preached, a presenting of the truth in the same form in which it was shown to Saul of Tarsus,-the very same form as that in which Saul, when he was called Paul the Apostle, preached it?

I have raised this question on various occasions; with various results, perhaps, as to details; but generally, if among those who were both acquainted with Scripture and observers of what is passing around them, with the distinct answer, No.

I have put the question to some, whom I esteemed Evangelists and men of God too,- and I have been told, often modestly and humbly, " I do not see what sense of need that preaching could produce in man. You must know yourself a sinner, ere you can feel your need of a Savior "; or again, " What is there in the heart of man down here which could respond to such a proclamation?" etc., etc. The diffidence and modesty of those that have thus replied, and the felt need which they have expressed for fuller light upon the subject, with the confession made by several of them, of a suspicion of a defect in their light (which, perhaps, left them to use what they did know, instead of the Gospel in its fullness) induce me to endeavor, God helping me, to present a few remarks upon this subject.

Before considering what the form of the Gospel was which delivered Saul, which Paul preached, and which I conceive is the form delivered by him for the evangelists who were to follow after him-and the questions incidental thereto,-I would make a remark or two on the two fold form in which grace may be presented, and on the reason why, of these two forms of grace, the one is better known now and has been more used in our day than the other. In dealing with souls we may begin with what man was and is, and has done, and go on from that to the answer thereunto, which God has provided in Christ, the Lord of all. Such was the form in which Peter presented grace on the day of Pentecost. He began with what had been seen down here, and then showed God and His thoughts about Jesus as Lord and Christ seated in Heaven. On the other hand, we may begin with what Christ is in Heaven and let that produce its own effect on the sinner; this was the form of grace in Paul's conversion and gospel. Our first impressions naturally take the deepest and most lasting hold of our minds. Subjects are then new to us, and they form themselves within us according to our first thoughts of them. Often, too, there are at those first hours of our acquaintance with the truth of God, peculiar circumstances which have arrested a former course of life and become turning points through which the outward life got, then and there, a new direction; often too dangers, needs, hopes of a new kind, have been then suddenly discovered, etc., etc. Account for it as we may, first impressions upon all subjects are, I think, in the very nature of things, the most likely to be the more lasting; and, in connection with this, I have remarked that the form in which the truth of God -is apprehended by a man at first, is the form in which the mind is most inclined, most disposed to retain it. This was the case with Peter, it was the case with Paul, it was the case with Timothy, etc., etc. But of this more anon. I have found one corrective to this, in

some respects and in so far as it is merely a result of human infirmity in myself and others, to exist in the consideration of the history of the way in which the truth was brought out into the form in which -God-now presents it to us in Hi written word.

There are two things to be noticed here. Christ is the truth. By Him, where, and as He is, we believe in God who raised "Him from the dead and gave Him glory; that our faith and hope might be in God: that is the first grand lesson; the Christ, Son of God and only begotten Son of the Father, is the medium by whom we believe in God, who raised Him out from among the dead and gave Him glory so as for our faith and hope to be in God. Himself, as He is, is our peace, our hope. But, secondly, there is the way in which God was pleased\* gradually to bring out the truth until it could be presented as -it now is presented by Him. This, rightly understood, gives the most abundant confirmation to the, Gospel as it is-and is that to which I referred as the good corrective, in some respects, to any imperfect view of the Gospel which may result from an undue cleaving in us, either to the thoughts of our day, or to first impressions of our own. So far as I understand the Gospel, it is Jesus Christ Himself,-seated on the throne of God, from whose face shines the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

(\*God was -pleased. In being and in nature, God was and is and will be. Being the source of all that has been or that is, He is necessarily above it all. Men speak of His sovereignty in this connection: on more accounts than one, I think the term an ill chosen one. I would prefer absolutism -sovereignty seems to imply relationship. As to good, and as to the disposal of what is bad, He, clearly, alone has the right to will. But He does so. I judge, always according to His own perfect character; and His counsel is perfect in wisdom; Himself the blessed center of the universe being the object set before Him. Man would make man, and alas! sinful man, to be the proper object of that counsel; but, thank God, such cannot be.)

A. Now, the first intimation about Him: was spoken\*\* in the declaration to the serpent: It (the seed of the Woman) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). " Himself, the head of a family or seed, the overcomer of the serpent and his seed; the Lord God pledging Himself thereto "- was the first announcement. In that declaration the Lord God put Himself forward, pledged Himself that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. This was God's first promulgated word or thought (and addressed to Satan) about the scene in which sin was ruling among men. Pass from that first word onward. Trace out, if you will, what may have instruction in it, but notice well as bearing the authority of God's stamp of type upon it (on New Testament authority too) the seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:7;15. 3, 5; 17:7, 8; compare Gal. 3:16-29, etc.), including, as it does, a view of heaven and earth in connection with the seed, etc., etc. Patriarchs (Psa. 105) grew into families; and families into a nation. The paschal-lamb, redemption out of Egypt, the feast of Pentecost and the great Day of Atonement; the mediator, High priest, prophet-the tabernacle, with its altars, etc., etc., all in the nation to whom Jehovah made Him- self God and King, were, according to the New Testament, types of Him that was to come.

(\*\*We must remember that while this was the first word spoken about Him, the first Adam and his position, possession family, etc., are declared in the New Testament to have pointed typically to the last Adam.)

Samuel the prophet that judged, and David the king that sat on the throne, were types too. And there were declarations of Moses in the law and in the prophets about Him which aided a man like

Philip (John 1:45) to recognize the Nazarene. The Lord God pointed onward to what He would do against the evil one. If any one hoped in Him he got faith in so doing and rest. In all this time, from Eden until Caesar,-hope took the lead. Some one was to come,-the Lord God had declared it to the serpent,-some one was to come, the' seed of the woman,-the son of a virgin (Isa. 7:14, and Matt. 1:23), the destroyer of the serpent and His seed. Hope, I say, took the lead, and where there was no hope, there was no faith and no rest. Promises to Messiah, promises in which Jehovah, God and King of Israel, would prove Himself to be with His anointed in blessings of deliverances on earth to Israel, fed the hopes of God's people upon earth. A person was looked for-the Hope of Israel. That was clear; and this was the position in which a Mary, an Anna, a Simeon were found at the time of the birth\* of Him who was the Hope. We wait, in hope; was faith's word.

(\*God's delight in Him who was to be this Hope to Israel on earth, in time.-the only hope for heaven in eternity, was such that, every detail and circumstance of His birth had been the subject of prophecy. The incarnation; His mother a virgin; the family of which she was to be, and he to whom she was betrothed; the birth-place; the persecution; the flight into Egypt, etc., all had been recorded.)

B. But when the babe was born, this was, to some extent, changed. The One waited for-the One that was to be the Worker of deliverance-there. He was! The second chapter of Luke's gospel tells us (ver. 7) of the birth of the child. " And she (Mary) brought forth her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." The angel of the Lord swiftly announced it to certain shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. Upon these, the angel came, and then the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and the shepherds were sore afraid. But the angel said, " Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord" (ver. 10), etc., etc. And a multitude of the heavenly host then joined the angel, praising God, and saying, 64 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward [or in, among] men." The shepherds went in haste to see and found the child-and "returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them" (ver. 20). Simeon is then an eye witness, one that embraces the babe, a rejoicer before God in Him. His word to Mary was of God-Behold this One is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed (ver. 34, 35). As though he said; " Himself is the. One who is our Hope!-but Himself has yet conflict before Him before victory." Anna, too, came and saw and gave thanks.

Note it, there is nothing said about the babe, such as mere human affection in nature would have said; but Himself, in all the attractiveness which. He is to faith was there-Himself the stay of their faith, their hope.

C. Hidden in retirement for a season-He in due time goes to be baptized of John; gets there a recognition from God on high, " And, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased " (Matt. 3:16,17).

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, stood thus confessed at His entering upon service. His gathering unto Himself (John 1:29-51); His going about doing good; His zeal for God, His readiness to do

anything needed by any one in Israel, His miracles, His instructions, etc., etc., trying to reconcile the world unto God,-seeking to gather the children of Jerusalem as a hen doth gather her chickens. What, in all the variety of the three years' active service of His, did faith see in Him? what stay was there in Him? what hope to any save the few that loved Him? But. He Himself was the great book that was open before man: all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily; Himself as a man, the presentation and declaration of the Father. Such was He in life here below.

D. But Israel would not be reconciled to God-would not take the promises under Him. He was there, willing and able to make good all the Messianic promises, all the Jehovah blessing to them,-in spite of all their ruin, if they would but have Him as the sent. One of God. But they would not; and Pontius Pilate, the representative of the Gentile power, concurred with them. He then set His face toward death, the death of the cross; baptism, which He knew all along He would have to pass through if that part of the will of God was to stand that Messiah was to Have: a kingdom and a people upon earth, although that kingdom and that people might in themselves have no heart to have Himself as Messiah. Who can frustrate God? who can escape from the blessing which God thinks to give?

Him crucified! His blood shed! Him put to death. Where were the promises,: where the rest, where the object of faith?

E. All was safe in Himself - the resurrection and the life, according to the thoughts of God and the Father, -though none on earth, none could follow out the thought. What mind, what soul on earth could say " It is well," even as to the counsel of God. Affection to. Himself was deeply tried; hope might be flickering; or to human feeling, even extinct. Faith might be baffled; love, however deeply agonized, still slave to Himself. Yea! His very death revealed the thoughts of the hearts of a Joseph with his tomb, of a Nicodemus with his spices. And dead, as alive, He was to Mary's heart her all. What? Whom had she but Himself? Her love met its reward. Awake from death when He spake to her and used her as His messenger, these were. His words:-

Go to my brethren, and say unto, them, I ascend unto my Father and your. Father, to my God and your God " (John 20:17.) The Lord is risen! what a thrilling fact! but what a new position was it which He had now taken, which He now held before them! Himself, however, their all still. What the results to them of His new state, they knew not: nay, all such questions seemed foreign to the hearts that loved Him, in the fresh intercourse they had with Him. His intercourse through forty days with them (Acts 1:3), and all that passed then, showed that their past, present and future was Himself-unfruitful as their understanding might be.

F. But they saw Him ascend-were told to wait for the promise of the Father, and shortly after at Pentecost the Holy Ghost came down and the assembly of God was formed. Himself made Lord and Christ in heaven, shed abroad that which was seen and heard-the presence, power; anti powers of the Holy Ghost,\* which nor Satan nor man could deny, though men there were hardy enough to resist it. Stephen was stoned. His martyrdom was the expression of Jerusalem's rejection of Messiah in heaven, God-honored, the Giver of the Holy Ghost; even as the Lord's own death had been the expression of Jerusalem's rejection of the Messiah when on earth.

(\*Here again, as in the first declaration in Eden, Divine purpose and power over evil were the leading characteristics (the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head). So, here, a man

dishonored, earth-rejected,-Jesus, is in heaven, Lord of all, and Christ, sender down of the Holy Ghost.)

Paul was converted, and began his labors-Apostle of the uncircumcision, as Peter was of the circumcision. Ere their living testimony closed,-

G.\*Truth was embodied in books, in the which we find all that God was pleased to reveal in writing of His own thoughts about the life, and death, and resurrection and session in heaven, and coming again, of His Son, whether to fetch His Church home, or to take up a new position of government and of grace in Jerusalem; or after that, to wind all up in the eternal state-a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness.

(\*These letters, A, B, C... G, mark the steps in bringing out to light of our subject.)

Himself who has triumphed gloriously, and ourselves called by Him to enter into His joy and into all the fruits of His victory as the servant and champion of God, -worster of the serpent, open manifestor of all this world's wickedness, and of the poverty of man as a ruined creature, - Himself filling heaven and earth with those that can unselfishly rejoice in His joy and in His triumph, - that is what I wait for to see in the end.

There will be the two spheres, heaven and earth, just as there are now heavenly glories which are His in the presence of God and His Father,-and there were in Him Messianic and Jehovah glories, which though man rejected then, will surely be made good upon earth yet when He comes again. I do not lay stress here upon the difference of the apostleships and of the truths connected with the apostleships of Peter and of Paul. I believe them to be recognized and held by those for whom I write. The truth brought out by Peter goes not into the wide compass of that which it was given to Paul to minister; for Peter teaches not the mystery, nor the union of members down here with a glorified and ascended Lord as Head of a body,-the truth of the assembly of God. Paul teaches all that Peter does, but goes on beyond to a truth which is peculiarly his own. His line includes also (in principle fully, I think), John's line and measure. So that, while Petaeon, Johannian, and Pauline\* truth may be spoken of, as referring to the portions the most connected with each of these servants of the Lord respectively, Paul's measure of truth in a sense included, I judge, both Peter's and John's. Peter, as the Apostle of the circumcision, had a measure of truth measured to him which hardly went beyond conscience formed down here for God and heaven, by the knowledge of the Lordship and Christhood of Jesus seated in heaven, and the Holy Ghost sent to His servants down here. The eternal life in man down here, is John's subject presented in his gospel in all its fullness, in Him who alone had eternal life in Himself, who was and is its source; in his epistles the stream of the river of life flowing in and through men down here, who are sons of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, is traced. The over-ruling governing hand of the Lord God. Almighty in heaven, disposing of everything on earth according to His thoughts of the glory of the Lamb upon the throne, both for the heavenly people down here now and the people that are to succeed us on earth hereafter, is John's subject in the Revelation. The mystery and its attendant truths is peculiar to Paul;-but his line includes, necessarily, in that "straightway he preached Christ (the anointed man) in the synagogues, that he is Son of God" (Acts 9:20), all truth.

(\*The power given to a Peter, a John, and a Paul, had but one source,-and, in the main, but one object. God's delight in Christ, and the interests of Christ down here were common to them all.

This, however, did not prevent Him, who distributes to every one severally as He will, from using Peter for the work for the which He had specially fitted him,-even to feed with heavenly stores the remnant flock of a risen but returning Lord. John had his calling too, and, having lain in the bosom of the Lord of life when down here, He was guided to trace the stream of eternal life flowing down here in and through the sons of God. Paul's grand subject was the anointed man in glory,-the head of a body down here: the One that should present the Church to Himself, a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, or any Such thing.

Each Apostle had his own place, his own work, his own service, and his own line;-and, thank God, all are ours, for we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. May we profit from each, and be profited by the writings of each of them. Under Peter, I learn that every sorrow of the earth is a remembrance of a blessing in heaven. Under John, that eternal life in me so gives me fellowship with the Father and with the Son, that I must walk as He walked. Under Paul, I pass up into the vision of the glory of the servant of God now glorified in heaven, the man Christ Jesus, -Head of a body, the second Adam to whom the Church belongs.)

It does not suppose much light for me to give credit to the disciple that he sees that the conscience of a man needs being made for God as a Creator, and for God as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ,-if the man is to be at peace and happy. The epistles of Paul are, some of them, as that to the Romans and the Hebrews, about the truth which can make the conscience of a man down here to be in peace before God. But Paul, in his own conversion, had another turning point, though he had to pass through that same truth, in soul afterward. The union of Jesus in Heaven, as Head of a body, with members down here, when revealed to Paul, led him to take the place of an enquirer both as to the Lord on high and as to what he was to show his subjection to Him in: " Who art thou, Lord?" and " what wilt Thou have me to do?" These were his first lessons, - viz. those, the answers to which he unfolds in his letters to the Ephesians and to the Colossians (in which latter epistle, those to whom he wrote were in danger of letting slip the truth of the Head). If quickened together with Christ, raised up together with Him and made to sit together with Him in heavenly places according to the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, justification, separation to Christ, acceptance, etc., etc., were all settled according to the Spirit and in the new nature given, and as parts of the new creation of which the Lord is the Head. This, however\* did not prevent his needing to learn justification, separation, acceptance, etc., according to the work of Christ, as for man on earth and as according to what a human conscience down here, with thoughts of what man has been here, and what every man in nature is, would want. Paul goes systematically through the whole question of man in ruin down here in himself, and God's answer to all that ruin by Christ's work, in the epistle to the Romans, in a way addressed to Jew and Gentile; and in the epistle to the Hebrews, in a way more particularly addressed to the Jew; as in the letter to the Galatians in a way more addressed to converts from among the Gentiles when judaizing.

(\*Note this, because it shows out pointedly the difference I refer to.)

If any man can see no difference between the sufferings and works of Jesus Christ in redemption and His own person as the Redeemer,--I can only say: "if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant" (1 Cor. 14:38).. To one taught in the word there is a difference and the all-important one.

(\* Id est, Plead that he is ignorant; take the place of being as men say, ignoramus.)

There is, as I said in commencing, a two-fold form in which grace is presented to us. The one is in the works and sufferings of Christ and in the position taken consequent thereon by Jesus in Heaven, as Lord of all and. Christ, shedder abroad of power to the people of God down here. In a certain sense, this may be called the more human side of the truth, in that it is, while in itself divine, truth for man as man, a ruined creature;- truth which enables him to know the relationship once denied but now made good for every believing man, relationship in which he can say " My God," and say it heartily and with intelligence. The other form of truth is more connected with the person of the Lord-as second Adam, life-giving Spirit, the one whom the Father of glory has exalted; according to which all that is true of Him as first-born among many brethren " is in a way true of them that are such. All that is true of Him as -Head of a body, the Church-is in a sense true of them that are members of that body of which He is Head. This is the more divine side, if I may so say, of the grace-the revelation of the Father of an only begotten Son.

Now, when I look back from our day to Pentecost, and see how the human judaizing spirit which so opposed itself to Paul among men, so grieved his spirit, has wrought,-and how it completely transformed the house of God down here as set up at Pentecost into a Jewish worldly thing as it was in A.D. 1500, I can say that I believe it was the grace of God, God in His grace, which took up man, afresh, where man had sunk himself down to. As Paul became all things to all men: with the Jew took his ground according to the furniture of thought that, before God, belonged to the Jew; and with the Gentile, according to the furniture of thought which, before God, belonged to the Gentile, (not compromising ever, yet always self-denyingly meeting each man according to God's thoughts about the man at the time being,) so I think it was God in His grace who did meet the Roman Catholics, Luther, Boos, etc., just according to where they were: and that he meets men, often, now just according to where they are. The ten commandments painted on wood have reduced the moral conscience of professors to a very low condition; but grace has met many there and gently shown, or forcibly pressed home, the truth that God's description of what man, as a creature, should have been and should be towards His Creator, will neither give him power to be what he ought to be, nor meet and clear all the arrears of what man has been and done contrary to what he ought. If intelligence sees this, or if the cursing power of the Law has killed any man, he may find to his wants so felt a full answer in Christ in His sufferings and present place on high. In this view of the subject, man begins with himself and finds in the Lord's sufferings and work, the full answer to every need. This is to me the explanation of the prevalency of the lower form of truth and grace. To them that are learning of God, in this form, the blessed work of redemption, I wish God-speed.\* And when they have learned the work of Redemption, yea! while they are learning it, may they learn not only what suits themselves in their needs, but also who the Redeemer is, and what sort of person He is.

(\*If any, having learned the suitability of the work of redemption to themselves as having been in a state in which they could not do without it-now refuse to go on and to learn about the Lord Jesus, whose work redemption is, and whom' they should learn in learning His work,-I would warn them that there is no standing still. If they will not go onward, they will find that they cannot retain even what they have learned. Where any have learned Christ and would turn back from Himself to His work, and there are such in our day (some who have learned about Christ and would now turn back from Himself and occupy themselves only with His works), I can only say their conduct is a giving up of Christ Himself, and I say it sorrowfully, yet advisedly, and I foresee the results.)

Still Paul's gospel was given to him as the one called' to be the apostle of the uncircumcision: and to this, the higher form of grace and truth, I now turn,' and to the truths incidental to it.

●PAUL'S GOSPEL. WHAT IS IT? The portions of the, word more especially to be studied in connection with this subject, are such as Acts, Chapter 7 and 8 and 9, which contain the history of Saul's conversion. Then, Chapter 22:1-23, which gives the account of how he, as Paul, put home upon the consciences of his Jewish brethren his own conversion; as in Chapter 26:1-23, he presents it to the king Agrippa. Also, 2 Cor. 4:1-6, in which he connects his preaching and gospel with his own conversion: that which converted him he preached.

1. As to the first of these portions, I would remark that where he says of himself, "sinners of whom I am chief\*" (1 Tim. 1:15), we must look for the explanation of what he means, in these chapters. Israel had rejected Messiah when upon earth, crucified Him. In the martyrdom of Stephen, they were resisting the Holy Ghost and the power which He in heaven had now shed abroad. Saul got a marked place in that sinful act: " the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul " (Chapter 7:58). " Saul was consenting unto his death " (Chapter 8:1); "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison " (ver. 3); and Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem \*\*\* (9:1, 2).

(\*Chief,  $\pi\rho\tau\omicron\varsigma$ , first.)

(\*\*Let my reader bear in mind, while he studies Paul's gospel, the thoughts and sayings of many an evangelist, "you must know yourself to be a sinner, ere you can need a Savior"; " the vision of Christ's glory in heaven can produce no sense of sin or of need in man "; "there is nothing in the heart of man down here, which can respond to the glory in heaven.") In the blindness of his heart he thought he did God, Jehovah of Israel, service, for he was alive without the law once; yet at this, the time of his conversion, he had no sore conscience, no suspicion that he was wrong, for he tells us (1 Tim. 1:13) " I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." What! be a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious (ver. 13) ignorantly? Yes, easily enough, when the vail is over the heart, and the mind is set upon the law of God and Jehovah and not upon Christ Jesus. As Paul says, and it is an awful word in its bearing upon the professed Christianity of our own days; upon the many who are " desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" (1 Tim. 1:7)-those who would., one way or the other, merge. Christ in the law:-" Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that thee children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished..But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament: which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart" (2 Cor. 3:12-15). This Scripture was not written in vain as to this day (1867) for those that have hearts to be warned. Saul knew it not; nor did he then know the next verse as he did afterward: "Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away" (ver. 16). The Gospel was hid from him, hid as from one that was lost: in whom the God of this world had blinded the mind as of one who believed not (2 Cor. 4:3,4). Occupied with the temple and religion of Jehovah, God of Israel, and full of zeal for

the law of Moses' etc., etc., his temper and tone were like one of old: "Come and see my zeal for the Lord." He had no sense of need of mercy, of grace, or of a Savior. But if he did not feel the need of a Savior, the Savior felt yearning as to him, and made known to him His needs of showing mercy and grace, and the mind of God and of Heaven as in contrast with the mind of man and of earth. This is the proper and true order of grace always and at all times: "I am the first and the last." But besides this it is the manifested order of grace now, under the apostleship of the uncircumcision; as Paul said of himself, quoting Isaiah in all his very boldness: "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me" (65:1, and compare Rom. 9:30). Saul did not seek Christ, yet was Saul found of Christ; Saul did not ask after Christ, but Christ manifested Himself to Saul. This, emphatically true of Paul and his gospel, is the order really of grace; for the lost sheep sought not the shepherd; the piece of lost silver sought not the woman. But by the lost sheep and the piece of lost silver (in Luke 15) the publicans and sinners who knew their lost estate, as saltless salt, were represented; in Saul's case, he had the conscience that he was all right, so far as confidence in himself and a ground for confidence in the flesh went: a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a Pharisee; full of zeal; "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. 3:5, 6); "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:8,9). But when Christ took up Saul to make a model man of him, "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern\* to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. 1:16); when it "pleased God to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen" (Gal. 1:16), when God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness (Gen. 1:3) shined into his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6), what discovery was then made to this Saul? Heaven and earth contrasted stood; Jesus, as He is, in His place on high, in His own character stood in contrast with Saul as he was in his place on earth and in the character natural to him. God and His ways stood in contrast with man in the world and his ways; Christ on one side, Satan on the other; the energy of Jesus working by the truth, and through the Spirit upon a man whose energy was as peculiar as the man was great among and above his fellows, -and yet at this moment detected as identified with Satan in work and way and character, against man and against God, and against one of the dearest counsels of God-the Church. Shut up in his own set of circumstances, as much as the woman of Samaria was in hers, he had only a human mind, and that a fallen one and one under Satan's deluding power, to act by. He leaned to his own understanding and consulted his own wisdom -and his wisdom, perfect in his own eyes, had no standard by which he could measure it. He, was nearing Damascus, his schemes well laid, his plan well prepared for, when suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. Fallen to the earth he hears a voice and has to converse with Him who spake.

(\*Some want to make this pattern to be of the Jewish people in the latter day. But will this stand? for the remnant get well plowed up by sorrow and conviction, ere Christ appears to them; suddenly as to Saul in the end, I admit, but not to put them under the same doctrine, or into the same position as He did Saul. Us He has put there, yea, into everything that Paul had as a Christian-apostleship and service excepted. The Lord.-" Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Saul.-" Who art thou, Lord?" The Lord.--" I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

(Then trembling and astounded.) Saul.-" Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord.-" Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou shalt do."

Three little sentences dropped from the Lord's lips in heaven,-what discovery did they make to Saul, think you, reader?

First. I must remark that when God, or the Son of God, speaks, it is the speaker who gives the word spoken its power. " And God said, Let there be light, and there was light," etc., etc. The word was God's and the power to accomplish its purport was God's. So was it as to the rainbow and the seasons (in Gen. 9:12, and 11: 21, 22); so was it in government as to Israel set apart from the nations; so is it with the word, looked at as the word of the living God always. If I preached law with the view of awakening, or if I preached pardon for the guilty sinner, everybody knows it would be just the same as I have said. They that heard my words as if they were the words of a man merely, might gibe and mock;-they that heard them as the word of the living God, would be pricked to the heart by them,-would know the power of God's word,-the two-edged sword, -sword of the Spirit-but they only.

Secondly. Though it is not for me to give an account of what did pass through Saul's mind beyond what is written, I may be allowed to show what may have passed through that mind.

Himself, Saul, surrounded by a light from heaven,-called by his own name, " Saul, Saul,"-and the present purpose and occupation of his soul, his purpose, his plan, his present business called in question by the One above, whose voice spake to him -as being about a business which told of a bitter zeal in Saul's heart against Himself.

" Why persecutest thou me? " (\*The connection of this with the mystery will be looked at afterward.) When opposite extremes seem to meet - the human mind feels it. One, an unknown One, in heaven, who had aroused Saul's attention by a flood of light from above; knowing him though Saul knew Him not, accosted him and repeated his name; and knowing what was in his heart, what his business, challenged him as to, the reason of his bitter zeal against Himself. Challenged him as one man might speak to another. " Was; there not, here enough to arrest me?" Paul might surely say. And Saul asked Him who He was, for he knew not, and then the awful discovery, " I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." The head of the Nazarenes,- Jesus, the Lord of all glory! yet in all the gentleness possible,, arguing-and talking with this mad persecutor,, this; apostle of cutting off of all the innocent Nazarenes. To Saul, at: least; it was as the word: of the living God. His lot was chosen.

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do,?" was word and to the answer he gave a practical reply, by-doing what he was bidden. And the Lord said, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And he went. The Nazarenes, whom as lion ravening for its prey, he had sought in pride and fierceness and bloodthirstiness, and in ignorant contempt of the Nazarene, now as a lamb he sought; he needed help from one of -them.; and had to be debtor to those that journeyed with him, 'and they led him by the hand and, brought him into Damascus (ver. 8), and-he went. The light was the discoverer to Saul of darkness within and darkness around-that is clear.

Thirdly. Nor, if the acorn contains the -oak-tree; if the moon that shone in paradise lightens: our nights still, if the sun which hid its light at Calvary shines, on us, there any difficulty in seeing how

the scene: just viewed suffice for: every poor sinner now.. First, how-did heaven stand forth.. 'M contrast to earth, and how did the light of the contrast then shine' out!

Heaven, the dwelling-place of God, had provided the Son of God, who came seeking fruit as the heir from His Father's vineyard. Heaven had received Him back again when earth rejected and cast Him out. Earth, had given to Him a cross, and then had rejected heaven's recognition of Him, and the Holy Ghost sent down from Him who was Lord and Christ there. Light and darkness stood in contrast. Did not Saul know when in that light, the darkness which had been, which was still, in him? Set heaven and its thoughts and ways as to Jesus in contrast with earth's thoughts and ways as to Him:- and are the openings in' the sieve too large to catch and' arrest a sinner? If heaven is wholly occupied with Jesus, what was I to think of myself, who never had had one correct thought, one right affection toward Him; who lived as though He were not,--and whose purpose, plan and business, when He met me, were all about myself and the world.

Fourthly. And this unknown Jesus, Lord of all and Christ in heaven, what His character and what His ways? As Lord, or Master of all, He had all power in heaven and in earth; and now, got back again from: among men, what sort of a person is He, and what does-He do? First, before He went nil high, He said that.

I mercy should he preached, the whole earth over, " beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). For this, too, He gave power on the day of Pentecost; and not only so, but He gathered out from the Jerusalem-sinners 3000 and 2000 unto God. These He made to be a house of God, through the Spirit. But the aggressiveness, the craving of His love toward man was not content with this, and He raised up witnesses and testimony still Jerusalem. Jerusalem would not have Him' with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and the bright promise of His return on their repentance; and they of Jerusalem stoned Stephen. Did this change the Lord's character, and stop the outflow of His love? His delight in blessing, and in making man blessed? No. The persecuted went everywhere. " throughout the regions of Judaea, preaching the word." Philip is sent to the city of Samaria, and preaches Christ unto them; and then to draw the bow and wing the' arrow that should go into distant lands, through the eunuch of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians; and then the Lord, that had looked down and sustained Stephen in his martyrdom, and had seen Saul there-Saul, a Goliath after Satan's own heart, whose mind was held as under Satan with a lie, so that he could not say, " Is there not a lie in my right hand?" and whose heart, in his blindness felt called upon to carry out Satan's love of destroying and pulling everything to pieces-that Saul, who had had no pity for Stephen, no power to appreciate Stephen's character and conduct in contrast with his own-that Saul who breathed destruction-to him spake Jesus, from His own proper glory all divine yet with a gentleness and a tenderness all worthy of Himself. [He wanted one to preach the gospel to every one under heaven, and Saul should be the one.]

Cannot this Person-Jesus, in His own place in heaven, acting according to His own character in contrast with us in our place on earth, and acting according to our own characters, be set forth in preaching? God manifest in flesh, in eternal glory in heaven, cares, and shows He cares, that we (who care nothing about Him or His glory) perish not under Satan. Is not this true? Is it not a reality? Has it no voice to sinful man, dead in trespasses and sins?

Fifthly. God and His ways stood in contrast with man in the world and his ways. His Son, the beginner of the new creation of God, was revealed; where and what now was the first Adam?

where and what the world that had crucified Him? where and what the serpent that had wounded His heel? All the wisdom of God, and His righteousness and His power, and His majesty and His love, all stood out in contrast to the folly, unrighteousness, weakness, frivolity, and hatred of men- all showed that God's ways were not as man's ways, nor God's thoughts as man's thoughts.

Sixthly. And not only so, but in this scene He showed how His principles in redemption stood in contrast with His principles in creation, in providence, and in government- By weakness and defeat, He trod the victor down;

Trod all our foes beneath His feet, By being trodden down.

Seventhly. Christ on the one side-Satan on the other. The energy of Jesus, working by the truth and through the Spirit, upon a man-upon men, whose energy, whose plans, purposes, objects, and motives are all selfish and darkness. Man on earth and in time is looked down upon by Jesus in heaven, and from His own proper eternity. Will man have that Lord Jesus? To the remark, "You must know yourself to be a sinner, ere you can value a Savior," I would only answer, " If you know Himself, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily-Him who is the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth-Him in heaven, according to the ways in which the heaven of heavens stands in contrast with earth-Him calling men down here to notice the light wherewith He has lighted up heaven's high throne-as the Lamb that was slain, but is alive again for evermore; I say, if you know Himself, you will know yourself too. Consciousness of things done down here, which are contrary to a man's duty to God and his neighbor, do give the sense of need of salvation from the just consequences thereof. But what is this compared to the discovery of the contrasts between Himself and myself? Himself, as a Man perfect and His will always, in times past, present, and to come, subject to God; and I, a willful one by nature, glorying to be willful, ere I knew Him, groaning ever since I did know Him, under this part of? my fallen nature, though fully hoping to see Himself soon, and knowing that then there will remain no more will in me. But it is not Himself, as a perfect Man only, that is there; He is God manifest in flesh-He is the faithful servant (though Son) of God, and that which leads Him to reveal His light is the desire that man may become part of the new creation, one Spirit with the Lord. And will any one tell me that if the curtain that did shut into heaven its light has been rent, and that the light now shines forth from the face of Jesus Christ-I say, will any one tell me that if that light can be brought to bear upon a human heart down here, that its vail will remain untaken away-that this light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus will produce no sense of light and blessing, no sense of sin and of need in man?\*" (\*Is the contrast greater or less between- What I have done and left undone, and what Adam was in his innocency; Or between-What Christ is as the last Adam, and what I was when He found me?

What I am, on the one hand, is the root of all that I have done and all that I have left undone-includes it and a great deal more. On the other hand, the last Adam, life-giving Spirit, what is He as to fullness and contrast to the first Adam, when he had become a perishing soul?

God demanding of me, a ruined creature, what, because of sin, I can never pay, is in contrast too with God, as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, showing to me what He has provided for Himself, in that last Adam-the fountain and channel of His grace and glory. What a contrast!) And will any one who has a human heart, a human mind, say that he can set Christ Jesus' ways to Saul of Tarsus in contrast to Saul of Tarsus' ways towards Christ Jesus, and find nothing to which he can respond?

Besides the giving of a new nature, making us partakers of the Divine nature, creating us anew in Christ Jesus, born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God, that liveth and abideth forever, one great result of the Spirit of God's presence with man is, that He enables man, and makes him, to see the things of God as he sees the things of man. They become real, have their eternal and their heavenly nature, as he looks upon them; and thus can a believer respond to the vision of the glory of God in the face of Christ most truly and truthfully in spirit and in truth. And this One-Himself-in all that He is-Himself in heaven, revealed the love that was in Him to Saul of Tarsus. Saul knew Himself-knew the interest which He had in himself in all his littleness-took a living interest in Himself up there, ere ever he knew one office of Christ, or what his own need of offices and the fruits of them was. I cannot doubt but that, like Abraham of old, the knowledge of the Lord Himself decided every question at once summarily to Paul.\* Nor can I doubt, with Paul's writings in -my hand, that the unsearchableness and the glory of the One that had revealed Himself to him, gave that vividness and that power to all Paul's thoughts about sin-bearing on the cross, atonement made in heaven, acceptance, etc. which is so peculiar to himself among the writers of the New Testament. Rom. 6, Heb. 9 and 10, and Eph. 1 are proofs of this. But Saul knew Who was in heaven, and what was in His heart, and mind, and ways, ere he knew any one office of the Blessed One, either down here or up there-past, present, or to come.

(\*He that has become the Rock on high, whence eternal life flows down to us, is the One who was smitten down here for our sins. In giving the new life to us, in putting a new nature into us, He does it in the full consciousness that He has met sin for us.)

I turn now to Acts 22:1-13, which gives the account of how he, as Paul, put home upon the consciences of his Jewish brethren his own conversion; for the facts which he had to record at once fully justified his own course and position, and, while they condemned their conduct and ways whom he loved, presented the only ground of escape, rest or hope for them. In passing through the history of his conversion I (with, I think, but one exception which I marked of in brackets [ ]) avoided everything which (though he knew afterward) Paul knew not at the time;--such things as Ananias must have told him and the Christians at Damascus; and perhaps some which were revealed to Luke when he wrote the Acts of the Apostles.

These things are now in our hands, and they enable us to set forth what the light is which shines now from Heaven upon a sinful earth. The Lord knew none could arrest Saul save Himself, but He will have His saints down here in fellowship with Him in His work. Himself prepares Ananias, and shows how watchful He had been over His praying yet timid flock. Ananias freely states his thoughts to the Lord. But he has to submit to have this honor put upon him and learns the Lord's own thoughts and intentions about Saul: ".He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," and the Lord adds " for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake " (chap. 9:15, 16). It was a large sphere the Lord meant the light of His glory and love to be proclaimed in, and He chose a special vessel for the work. Tis a new form of truth which Saul preached. " And straightway he preached Christ.... that He is Son of God" (ver. 20). " All that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is very Christ" (ver. 22, 23). Whatever heedless man may think, the powers of darkness were in this beaten back and

discomfited for a time, and angels in heaven owned the wondrousness of their Lord's unsearchable ways while they looked on, and learned about Him in His dealings as to the Church. And what comfort of love and encouragement was there to the Damascene Christians in that day, in all this. The Lord was with Saul; and the hearts of Jerusalem converts got strength and comfort - " Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (ver. 31), and cannot we see the brightness of Heaven's light and love as it thus shines out and down upon the earth where we still are? In reading Acts 21 we may well be struck with the unheeded admonitions which were given to Paul, at Tere - certain disciples said to Paul through the Spirit, "that he should not go up to Jerusalem " (ver. 4). Again (ver. 10, 11), there was a certain prophet, named Agabus, " and when he. was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said: Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." The apostle of the uncircumcision must live among. the Gentiles, - God's free man, or God's bondsman. " And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem" (ver. 12). Arrived there, he found first the state of James and all the elders there and of the Jerusalem brotherhood (ver. 18-25). The currents were too strong for him, and in the midst of the conflict, Paul\* has to admit: " I saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me" (22:18), and after -Paul had argued\*\* the point with the Lord - " Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles (ver. 21).

(\*All things working together for good, may be true even there where a man cannot say, That which]. did was what Christ alone did, With the Lord both were true. All worked for good, but He also was perfect in His stops and work.)

(\*\*Paul appears to me when he argued - (ver. 19 and 20) " and I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every Synagogue them that believed on thee: and when the blood of thy martyr, Stephen, was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him" - to have trusted to the natural weight of the evidence he had to present to the Jewish mind in his own conversion; and to have in measure overlooked the counsel of God and the power of the Holy Ghost.)

It is to be noticed that the uproar commenced in the temple with certain Jews, which were of Asia. These appealed to the men of Israel against Paul, then in the temple about his vow:

" This is the man, that teacheth all everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place," that was his first offense; his second was - " and further brought Greeks (Grecians not Hellenistic Jews) also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place " (ver. 28).

Carried off by the chief captain and soldiers to the castle, lie is there permitted to speak unto the people from the stairs.

What strikes one, first of all, in reading this his testimony, is the way in which on one side Paul is himself called in question, - his life threatened, for the truth's sake, as his Master's life had been taken. In life Paul was now one with that Master; yea Christ was his life, his life hid with Christ in God. If so be we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified together with Him. He had too passed through experiences in nature which hettett him to know and to understand thoroughly the

position and feelings of the Jews to whom- he had to speak. If Jesus spoke from heaven to Saul as seeing and divinely reading all the secrets of Saul's heart and life to him, Paul could speak to the Jews as one that knew by his own past experience (already judged by him), whereabouts they were to whom he spake. Peter could not have done this. Peter, after he knew the Lord, cursed and swore and denied that he knew Christ, ere he could be trusted to stand forward and charge on Israel that " 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: Him, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:22,23). The Lord upon earth, Peter, having known Him, had denied, whom they, not knowing, had slain. Paul, awakened to Jesus in heaven, got a thorn in the flesh, messenger of Satan to buffet him as his schooling as to himself. I cannot read Peter's life and not see his need of the lesson he learned: perhaps Paul's need of his lesson may be seen too. But again, Paul, one in life with Christ in glory, and as servant an ambassador for Christ, spake to his Hebrew brethren just that which Jesus had shown and said to himself. Mark this well. And mark too why his witness was that which he had seen and heard. Not a long argument and reasoning built upon it-but the facts formed his testimony. He had seen and heard something, and what he had seen and heard that was what he put forward.

First, he introduces himself: I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest cloth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders\*: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished (ver. 3-6).

(\*What a magnificent opportunity of confessing Christ was his! The high priest, the elders who had been identified with his mission to extirpate the Nazarenes, all (present or) at hand ',to be referred to, as, in the next chapter, to persecute him) Then secondly, comes his report of what he saw and heard.

Ver. 6. That it was "at noon " that the light shined, is noticed for the first time here.

Ver. 8. Our text gives here, " I am Jesus of Nazareth," the words " of Nazareth " are not named in chap. 9.

It is written in chap. 9:7, " The men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man." And in

Chapter 22:9, " But they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." That is, they heard the sound of a voice; but not the words of Him that spake.

Chapter 9:3, " Suddenly there shined about him a light from heaven."

Chapter 22:11, " And when I could not see for the glory of that light," etc.

Paul then adds, that when Ananias (a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews) came to him, he said:

" The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth".(ver. 15). " For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard".(Ver. 16). The revelation was made to him not only for his own salvation's sake, but also that he might witness unto all men-be His witness, who had shown Himself and who had spoken to him,-of what he had seen and heard.

And, thirdly, came that which to -the earthly mind of the Jew spoiled all; that which, on the, other hand, told out how the Lord knew Israel and would not close up His own bowels of mercies because Israel would reject, but contrariwise would take a larger and a wider range in which to make known His presence in glory, beauty, power and majesty in heaven; and how His voice there would speak to poor sinners down here about Himself and make poor sinners to know how He was their Savior, and to learn the contrasts too between God' and man; Heaven and earth; righteousness and mercy; deserved reward and free grace; the life of God, eternal life, and the life of man, perishing and all spoiled. And mark it, too, His herald was to be a Jew. The Lord of heaven and earth would show His rights over all on earth. Had He not the right to send a Hebrew of the Hebrews, one of the straitest sect of the Pharisees as His messenger sent in the foolishness of God to the wise Gentile in all his liberty-loving contempt of the narrow-minded Jew. The Jews, looking at Paul in his testimony to them according to their own pride, doubtless saw in him nothing but a renegade to the national glory, an enemy to their proud claims: had they looked at him according to that which was in God, they would surely have said, What grace in Messiah, when we had rejected Himself, to send one of our own people, one of His people according to the flesh to the Gentiles! Thus still showing His thoughts of and love for Israel. Paul must become the off-scouring of all things, yet be that part of the channel of testimony which was nearest to the Lord. Taught too by the Lord Himself in heaven-thoroughly taught-in spirit and in truth he loved the Head of the Nazarenes, whom he had seen and heard in heaven.

"And it came to pass, that, when 'I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and I saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles " (ver. 17-21).

Poor but most blessed Paul I Thy testimony is delivered to Israel. Thy Lord knew better than didst thou; His word, not thine, must stand as to the results also of the testimony.

" And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live."

I doubt whether Paul's love to his kindred according to the flesh had not led him, and that too against the word of his Master, to Jerusalem this time. But how blessed is it to see a man thoroughly whole hearted in such cause. And if his being here and his conduct in the next chapter is not fully acceptable-the beauty and the grace of the Lord only shines forth the more brightly (Chapter 23:11), "and the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." The bondage that follows onward, may have been needful for his too fervent spirit and I am sure it

threw out into relief the truth (when before kings and rulers he had to appear in bonds), of the Lord's grace, Paul, himself, the prisoner, was in spirit the free man,-the potentates before whom he appeared were to be pitied. Then all was in time, He was a pilgrim and prisoner down here, but the free man whom the Son had made free and for whom He had gone forward to prepare a mansion. In dealing with the Jew Paul put home first and foremost the ascended, glorified One, God, manifest in flesh, who had been seen by himself and heard by himself. And there was certainly more to cut to the quick the heart and mind of the Jew in this than there would have been in any preaching of Moses or of law.

"There He is, whom I saw and heard for myself when I was as you are. Himself, God-manifest-in-flesh, now in heaven, is the turning point of everything. I Paul saw, heard, obeyed Him, and am what I am. You, my Jewish brethren, are what you are, will you receive Himself and become as I am?" Where, at such an hour, in such a scene, are the questions of how far have I fulfilled, my whole duty of life as a man down here? how far have I done all that man by nature ought to have done, left none of it undone? Where the question, What will God think and say of my omissions and commissions as to law, when God's whole mind and heart and plan rolls around Jesus of Nazareth, a man glorified in heaven, owned there upon the throne, God manifest in flesh, Himself the answer to all that rebel man is. And will any one that pretends to common sense tell me that there is nothing in such a scene, nothing in such a testimony, calculated' to turn man upside down, inside out, if you please. Stupefied and stultified, altogether besotted the man that maintains such folly:-as ignorant, surely, of the things of man as of God.

Paul had to taste in his own soul as a man, what was that bitterness of man's heart against himself as a member of Christ, which he had shown against Christ Jesus.

Forty Jews made a conspiracy and banded together, and bound themselves under a curse that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed him: and they had the co-operation of the chief priests and elders (Chapter 23:12-14). He appears before Felix, Drusilla, Festus,-appeals to Caesar-which leads to Festus and Agrippa seeing him: that, after examination, had, they may know what to write about him.

Since Porcius Festus was seeking to learn what he should write to Caesar about the prisoner Paul, whom he was about to send to Rome as having appealed to Caesar's judgment (which a Roman citizen was free to do), I do' not think that my taking Paul's confession before Festus and Agrippa as a specimen of his testimony to the Gentiles, is any forced notion of my own. We find the account of this in Chapter 26 which is my third scripture.

Before Festus, Caesar's representative, and before the: king Agrippa, "expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews," Paul declares; First, That his manner' of life from his youth, at first among his own, nation at Jerusalem., was known to all the Jews'; they could testify' that after the most strictest sect of their religion, he lived a Pharisee. He stood now to be judged about the hope of the promise' made of God: to the fathers-a hope recognized by the twelve tribes in their -faithfulness-for the sake of which he was now accused by the Jews;- Secondly, That God should raise dead men should not be thought incredible; '

Thirdly,. That he too had thought it his duty to oppose Jesus of Nazareth-at Jerusalem he had imprisoned many saints and been authorized by the chief priests to do so; had punished them-

and compelled them to blaspheme; and, being exceedingly mad against them,, persecuted them to strange cities... But when nearing. Damascus, authorized and commissioned by the chief priests;

Fourthly, He had seen something wonderful, viz., at mid-day in the way, a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining about himself and those that journeyed with him (ver. 13);-

Fifthly, Fallen to the ground,. He heard something-astonishing, viz., a voice speaking to himself in the Hebrew tongue and saying: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (ver. 14).

Saul asked " Who art thou, Lord? " Taking thus, perhaps for the first time in his life, the place of being an enquirer, one that needed teaching about God at God's own hand, - though, " they shall be all taught of God " was an old promise. The answer was: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from: the people, and the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in me " (ver. 15-18.)

He saw a truly astonishing sight, and heard what-was altogether new to him; about the Son of God -(whose: Father was in heaven), and of the mercy and, grace, the long-suffering patience of that blessed One with sinners, of whom he was chief,-of plans too and purposes of mercy and grace in heaven to man on earth. And,

Sixthly, He was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Damascus, Jerusalem, Judea, the Gentiles heard of what he had seen, and heard;-and therefore the Jews caught him and went about to kill him.-To all whom he met he had, through God's help, proclaimed that himself had seen and heard that which proved that all that the Prophets and Moses said should come to pass had stood firm, and was in the way of its accomplishment: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first to rise from the dead and that He should show light unto the people Israel and to the Gentiles (ver. 19-23.) To Porcius Festus he seemed to be mad. To the better knowledge of King Agrippa, who knew what had of late occurred in the land and had read too the prophets,-the appeal of this whole-hearted man was searching. As he said, " Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (ver. 24-28).

" Would to God (was Paul's reply) that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds " (ver. 29). That which was seen and that which was heard from Jesus in heaven dwelt in the heart of Paul by faith, and was his and is our blessing for our own souls, and is that which we have to bear witness of to all around.- To Jew, to Gentile, to every creature under heaven, Jesus Christ, in the place which He holds on high, and the fact that He has let the light of His glory shine upon man down here and spoken to man, sinful man, down here is the all-important fact. It is a fact that He is on high,-and it is a fact too that men down here are living in the place on which has shined down the light of the glory of God in the face of that same Jesus Christ. In conclusion, the fact that he had seen the Lord is used by Paul (1 Cor.

9). Am I not an Apostle? am I not free? " Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? " He had, and he had seen Him in quite another position and place from where Peter, James and John had seen Him., To them He was still upon earth although risen from among the dead; to Paul he showed Himself after the day of Pentecost when the promise of the Father was made good, after that He had ascended up on high. To this Paul refers in writing to the Galatians (Chapter 1:), the Gospel which was preached by me... I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, etc But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, etc.; and again (in 2 Cor.) we read " we all beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit (3:18). For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake... For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, path shined in our hearts, for (or unto) the radiancy of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (Chapter 4: 5 and 6). The bearing of this chapter has been gone into by other children of God, I think, in The Present Testimony, so that I leave it. May God guide His children into a full and perfect understanding and taste of what the fullness of the Gospel is.

G. V. W.

●I Add A Table of the Three Passages - From a literal Translation

c. 9: 1 (et seqq.) THE HISTORIC ACCOUNT OF SAUL'S CONVERSION. But Saul, still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, came to the high priest and asked of him letters to Damascus, to the synagogues, so that if he found any who were of the way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. But, as he was journeying, it came to pass that he drew near to Damascus, and suddenly there shone round about him a light from heaven, and falling on the earth, he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me? And he said: Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said: I am Jesus, whom, thou persecutest. [T.R. adds, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And trembling and astonished he said: Lord, what wilt thou that I do? And the Lord [said] to [him'], But rise up and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. But the men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but beholding no one. And Saul rose up from the earth and his eyes being opened he saw no one. But leading him by the hand they brought him into Damascus. And he was there three days without seeing, and neither ate nor drank. And there was a certain disciple in Damascus by name Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision: Ananias. And he said: Behold [here am] I, Lord, And the Lord [said] to him: Rise up and go into the street which is called Straight, and seek in the house of Judas one by name Saul, [he is] of Tarsus; for he is praying, and has seen in a vision a man by name Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he should see. And Ananias answered: Lord, I have heard from many of this man how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name, And the Lord said to him: Go, for this [man] is an elect vessel to me to bear my name before nations, and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show to him how much he must suffer for my name. And Ananias went and entered into the house: and laying his hands upon him he said: Saul, brother, the Lord has sent me, Jesus that appeared to thee in the way in which thou camest, that thou mightest see, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he immediately saw, and rising up was

baptized; and, having received food, got strength. And he [T.R. reads 'Saul'] was with the disciples who [were] in Damascus certain days. And straightway in the synagogues he preached Jesus [T.R. reads 'Christ'] that He is the Son of God...

c. 22: 9 (et seqq.) Paul's Testimony To Israel -His Conversion. I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated according to [the] exactness of the law of [our] fathers, being zealous for God, as you are all this day, who have persecuted this way unto death, binding and delivering up to prison both men and women as also the high priest bears me witness, and all to presbytery, from whom, having received letters to the brethren, I went to Damascus to bring those also who were there, bound, to Jerusalem, to be punished. And it came to pass, as I was journeying and drawing near to Damascus, that, about midday, there suddenly shone out of heaven a great light round about me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered; Who art thou, Lord? And He said to me: I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom thou persecutest. But they that were with Me beheld the light, and were filled with fear but heard not the voice of him that was speaking to me. And I said: What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to Me: Rise up and go to Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which it is appointed thee to do. And as I could not see, through the glory of that light, being led by the hand by those who were with me, I came to Damascus, and a certain Ananias, a pious man according to the law, borne witness to by all the Jews where dwelt there, coming to me and standing by me, said: brother Saul, receive thy sight, and I, in the same hour, received my sight and saw him. And he said: The God of our fathers hath chosen thee beforehand to know his will, and to see the Just One, and to hear a voice out of His mouth, that thou mayest be witness for him to all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why lingerest thou? Arise and get baptized, and have thy sins washed away calling on His name. [T.R. reads 'on the name of the Lord.'] And it came to pass when I had returned to Jerusalem and as I was praying in the temple, that I became in ecstasy, and saw Him saying to me: Make haste and go quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said: Lord, they themselves know that I was imprisoning and beating in every synagogue them that believed on thee; and when the blood of thy witness Stephen was shed, I also myself was standing by and consenting [T.R. adds 'to his being killed,'] and kept the clothes of them who killed him. And he said to me: Go; for I will send thee to the Gentiles afar off.

e. 26: 4 (et seqq.) His Conversion-His testimony before the Roman Festus and Agrippa My manner of life from my youth, which from its commencement was passed among my nation in Jerusalem, know all the Jews, who knew before from the outset [of my life] if they would bear witness, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand to be judged because of the hope of the promise made by God to our [T. R. omits 'our'] fathers, to which our whole twelve tribes serving incessantly day and night, hope to arrive; about which hope, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be judged a thing incredible in your sight if God raises the dead. I indeed myself thought that I ought to do much against the name of Jesus of Nazarene. Which also I did in Jerusalem, and myself shut up in prison many of the saints, having received the authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my vote. And often punishing them in all the synagogues I compelled to blaspheme. And, being furious against them, I persecuted them even to the cities out [of our own land]. And as I also was engaged in this, I was journeying to Damascus, with authority and power from the chief priests, at midday, on the

way, I saw, O king, a light above the brightness of the sun shining from heaven round about me and those who were journeying with me. And, when we were all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice to me and saying in the Hebrew tongue: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against goads. And I said: who art thou, Lord? And He said: I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; but rise up and stand on thy feet, for for this purpose have I appeared to thee, to appoint thee to be a servant and a witness of what thou hast seen, and of what I shall appear to thee in, having taken thee out from among the people, and the nations, to whom now I send thee, to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive remission of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. Whereupon, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but have, first in Damascus and Jerusalem, and to all the region of Judaea, and to the Gentiles, announced [to men] to repent and turn to God, doing works worthy a repentance.

## S. Php\_3:1-21.

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Php 3:1-21. This epistle presents us with divine light ruling in the soul of Paul in all his labours as an Apostle, and his presenting it to the Philippians. Remarkable, in the third chapter, the way his own heart, as a man, experienced certain things; he presents the life of a Christian as to divine light, "To me to live is Christ," and in a more human way. Three things are presented; the ground of standing, the life, the hope of a Christian, quite contrasted with that of a natural man. Paul distinctly takes up the religion of human nature; God takes up the Jews, as those in whom natural religion was to be analysed; and it all ended with putting Christ to death. See how he addresses such, "Beware of dogs." Remark the contrast in three things; worship by the Spirit of God, boast in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. The heart never can rejoice in the Saviour whilst it has any confidence in the flesh, any righteousness of its own.

All that the religion of Christ brings comes into collision with natural religion. The question was whether the flesh could be bettered; Saul thought it could, Paul proved it could not be. If others thought to trust in the flesh, he could more than match them on that line, and he gives a long catalogue of things that were once the ground of Paul's trust, all connected with himself as in the flesh. All natural religion is about myself, and about something in the world. I am to be made something better, and if so it must be in this world. But he has now a new standing in Christ before God; and God and Christ in heaven are now his religion. The cultivation of the flesh in the world, and his standing in Christ could not go together. What distinguishes me in the world, directly I come to Christ, I shall find in the way. Offer what you would to Paul, it would have been discarded as coming between him and Christ: the two things could not go together. To thoroughly enjoy Christ, I must suffer the loss of all things I cultivated as a man down here, counting them loss. The difference between a man having his own righteousness, and having that of God by faith, is simple enough. Suppose I was to be weighed in a scale to see what (as a man) I ought to be; balanced with the ten commandments; and supposing I could say I had kept them all, (which would not be possible) that would be human righteousness. But suppose God says, "All are sinners, Saul of Tarsus above all, but my Son, Thou hast died and all are hidden in Thee; I shall treat Paul as I treat Thee, his righteousness is Thine." It is quite a different thing. The saved ones so linked up with Christ, so identified with Him, that God says there is no separation between them and Christ, like Him and with Him for ever. If I look at the first and second Paradise, at Adam the first, and that One who is the centre of the second, under which banner would I range myself? Surely under Christ's in God's Paradise! But ah! if I go there, I must go to heaven as a sinner, Christ does not mean any to be there but poor sinners saved by grace. What a contrast to what had marked Paul as in the flesh! With his eye on the glory, Paul wants to forget all behind; pressing on, knowing no standard short of Christ. Verse 12 is one of the most important in the chapter. But does he not speak of himself as an Apostle, and of the grasp of truth he has? No! but, "I follow after;" I have not got it, but God and Christ have; they have apprehended me, I press on, I have a living Christ as my righteousness; and I want to know what He has apprehended me for. I know Him as the One who has a clear notion of me, as I am to be. Paul could show no mark whatever as though he had

attained, but he knew that Christ could; he knew he was apprehended, and could say, My eye and my heart are up there. I am following after, if that I may apprehend what I know I am apprehended for. What he presents is that which was the formative power of his heart down here.

(Must I say it?) I do believe that many Christians do not know anything about a living Christ in heaven, occupied with them, and they with Him; do not know Him as One who calls upon them to apprehend that for which He has apprehended them. Let me ask, how many thoughts of Christ have you had today, telling you that He has apprehended you to be a saved people in glory? The heart never can have strength to apprehend what it is; but can you say that Christ has shown you bits of it? and you follow after that you may apprehend more and more of it? Is it the formative power of your heart? Do you connect it with your walk down here in the wilderness? You may find plenty of whirlwinds and storms, plenty of rough places; but do you connect all your way through with One up there? who has apprehended you for something? Oh! how clear, how distinct to Him is that for which He has apprehended you! I may follow after Him, finding more and more of the heights and depths of His love, and yet say, "I have not apprehended, but I press on for the mark." The time will soon come when all down here is to end; if I have served in fear, I do not think of what is behind, (present service I may have), but I press onward to the goal; and I would have all to be thus minded, to be occupied in surrendering themselves to Christ. You could not be occupied with Christ without having a cross to bear in such a world as this. Have you ever really desired to have one on your shoulder? Paul had, and where did he get power to carry it? He looked right up to where Christ was, and could do nothing but press onward till he saw that Christ face to face. He did get the cross practically, but there were others who were the enemies of the cross (vv. 18-19). Of what cross did Paul speak? Of the cross of Calvary? No, he did not mean only that. Many may say, Christ died on the Cross to put away sin, but was that all? Is there not eternal life, and has it not begun now? They do not see the death of Christ as something that has entirely separated us from sin and the power of the world, enabling us to be walking in the power of the life of Christ. It ought to be a solemn thought that confession is now so easy; and taking the place of being God's people so easily done; no persecution, but on the contrary, other motions, the refinements of society, etc. Ah, but I ask, have I eternal life as a present practical thing? in my own soul? Do I walk as one who has present living intercourse with the heart of Christ? having my heart formed and fashioned by the constant apprehension of His glory? If so am I to be conformed to this world? How can one walk in communion with Christ in heaven and not come into collision with it? Ah, if your heart be occupied with God, it will produce a walk very different from the walk of a man occupied with the world in the flesh. I have God with me, and have to live in communion with Him in heaven, not occupied with worldly religion, doing a quantity of things. Certain things have to be given up, and certain things have to be taken up; why? Because I have got communion with God's mind in heaven. He says, "If you want to know what I am occupied with, it is with my people in the wilderness, I am carrying them on to lead them into the glory for which they are apprehended." What a thought, that in the centre of that glory there is a Man, and He has a certain thought about me, about the glory for which He has apprehended me. What a thought to have life formed from! Do you believe that Christ is not ashamed to confess your name to the Father as one He has apprehended? If Christ's eye is on you, is filling up what remains of the sufferings only sorrow, or joy? If I am called to give up certain things, and to be separate from things, is it sorrow or joy under the eye of Christ who is leading me on into glory with Himself? A heavenly life will never be found in any if not in present communion with Christ about the place where He is conducting us. A heart

can never be abidingly in communion with that heart of Christ and be identified with the world that does not know Him.

Then the hope! How remarkably identified with the walk, as the walk is connected with the knowledge of God's mind, by the Holy Spirit revealing it, If we have got the Holy Spirit, He will not leave the work only begun, but carry it on to the end. If the eye be on Christ, He says, "Keep it fixed on Him, as He is conducting you to the glory in heaven for which you are apprehended." If my life is hid with Christ in God do I belong to earth? No, my citizenship is in heaven, not here. In connection with the hope, it is something connecting me with God and heaven, something Paul was looking for, and he would allow nothing to come between him and it. "From whence also we look for the Saviour:" etc. It is unutterably blessed finding the Spirit putting forward Christ first, the blessing after. Which would you rather have, a glorious body or Christ? Could I give up the knowledge I have of Christ's purpose of making me like Himself, and be content with Him for ever in this body of humiliation, rather than not have Him? Yes! I want Him; I must have HIM, HIMSELF there. Paul wanted the full manifestation of glory, and the eye is up watching heaven, looking for the coming of this blessed One. (That is what the morrow is for Christ; what is it to us?) His heart was set on the next great thing God was going to do; everything had been discarded as coming between Him and a Risen Christ, who was now upon the throne, occupied for Him until He should come and fetch him. He was going up hill, looking straight up to heaven, living upon the hope of that Christ's coming, not knowing any moment when He might appear. Do you and I live in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ coming at any moment; is that the hope that sheds its light on everything? It is of immense practical comfort! If the thought of Christ's coming were always the present object of the heart, would it be possible to be overcome with the difficulty of trial we have to pass through? He may be coming tonight, or I may have years more of trial or persecution, but in the thought of His coming to fetch me, and His hand under me, can I not forget this body of humiliation and these trials until then? If I can calculate on His love all the way, certainly I shall be able to meet every difficulty; the love that makes Him come forth to fetch me will shine out then, and I can count on its out-shining today. Will any one say, I know He will come at last to fetch me, but He forgets me while in difficulties at the present time. Any one perhaps would say it who is not walking with Him. Could we? The grand expression of His love is, that He means to come and bring us to the Father's House. How will He take us there? As we are? No, "Who shall change our vile body," etc. The thoughts of God and Christ in Heaven, as they flow into us. make an awful contrast between them, and what we find in ourselves: but how directly in all that reminds us of what these bodies are, we are reminded of the love that, before we are taken, will change and fashion them according to His own glorious body. "Vile body" is not the thought here, but, "Body of humiliation," as contrasted with that glorious body He wears. In what dress am I to appear in His presence? One fashioned like His one! The thought of power being given to a human body to become an immortal and incorruptible body is feeble, compared to this being "fashioned like His own glorious body." He might have given us incorruptibility, but not this. When we see Him, we shall see Him as He is, and be like Him. What a thought! not untold riches above me, but that which brings me the token of what I have in this Christ, soon coming to make me like Himself. Do I love Him, and am I a citizen of Heaven, because of being hid with Him in God, until the time come when His glory will be shown out fully? What think you of having bodies like him? How it brings the heart to heaven where that body is; a human, though a glorious body. How sweet the association "With Himself," and like Himself, "When we see Him as He is." How the thought that the body you now wear, is to

be fashioned like unto Christ's ought to lead to carefulness about self. If I am to wear the likeness of Christ is there no occasion to be careful what I do with my body: Christ's eye looking on me? As Christians, that is our future, but in connection with now, how is it laid out with you? Is everything done in connection with Christ's coming? You have duties not to be neglected; you may be bringing up a family, but is that future ever before you, showing out everything in the light of Christ's coming to fetch you, and give you the likeness of His own glorious body, according to the working of His mighty power. Do you see in your standing, life, and hope as a Christian, your close connection with a Risen Christ? See in all you pass through down here, not man but Christ, and God in Heaven with you and for you; as one in whom the Father is dwelling, and the Holy Ghost acting, and heaven bright before your eye, come what may.

(Notes of an address by G. V. Wigram.).

Leaning Upon God. The more we can bring our souls to lean upon God whether as it respects salvation, sanctification, or the rest, or heaven, or glory to come, regarding it as God's rest, God's heaven, God's glory, as much as it is God's sanctification and God's salvation, the more shall we understand our full blessing. We never get a blessing in its true value, until we see it is all God's.

J. N. Darby.

## S. Rest at Noon

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"Rest at Noon."

Song of Solomon 1:7. This song, though primarily applying to the earthly bride, Jerusalem hereafter, guides us now as to the Church, the heavenly bride, who is now on earth, and to those affections proper to her; and hence it is suited to each of us individually. And this verse in the song speaks so plainly for itself that little need be said. It ought to be the heart's language of every Christian. "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest." The heart desires to know the place where Christ finds that which satisfies Him - where He feeds. Where does He find this, if not in the company of the saints today? On earth He said He had "meat to eat which ye know not of." In the Psalms again we read of Him speaking as a man on earth: "My goodness extendeth not to thee [to the saints, the excellent of the earth]. In them is all my delight." And again, in Pro 8:1-36, "My delights were with the sons of men." Is your heart then occupied with what we have here - the desire to know where the Lord finds His delight now? It is in the company of His people. (Mat 18:20.) But surely, if so, He desires also to find His food, His refreshment, in us individually; and one asks the question, to be answered by each of our hearts, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest." Can I, can you, be content that He finds no refreshment in our company? Are we content to get through a single day, or hour, apart from communion with Him - giving Him in us no refreshment?

Secondly, the verse goes on, "Tell me where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon." The heart desires to know this also; for if the Lord finds His portion in us (the Lord's portion is His people), He will give us also to rest in Him. The love of the bride and Bridegroom, though differing, is a reciprocal love. "We love Him because He first loved us." He gets nothing from us to satisfy Him; but He gives ten thousandfold more to us, to satisfy us. Noon is the time of the day when the sun is highest. And to us, when the trial is bitterest, the way all hedged in, the desert a trackless waste of sand, without a shadow in it to shelter us, HE causes "His flock to rest at noon." As we read also in Song of Solomon 2:1-17 : "I sat down under His shadow with great delight." And when do you want a shadow? It is when the sun is high in the sky. Is Jesus then this to you? Have you found in Him, not merely your Saviour, but your rest (the rest to your souls of Mat 11:1-30). No rest can the flock find but with Him, in His company. But we want to know more of this for ourselves as individual Christians, one plodding on under one difficulty, and another under another, but Jesus - the One to whom each of us can come and say, "Thou whom my soul loveth" - Jesus, enough for ALL the difficulties I find in my daily path, and more than enough - REST for me in them all. And if He give me "rest at noon," if I find the place where He maketh His flock to rest when the sun is highest, what about His care of the flock, and of me, during the other hours of the day? for the day is all the time the sun shines. If I am thus with Him, and prove Him in that part of my little day when I wanted Him most, what a path is that of a Christian! Here on earth I am learning that Christ desires always to be in my company, and to have me consciously in all the rest of what the knowledge of His presence and company with me can and do bring. Again I would ask myself, and I would ask you, Have we found this place in the midst of the desert of this world? A desert indeed;

but the heart which has known Jesus in all its cares thus can say, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." Can you say this? The Lord guide your heart into it more and more. H. C. Anstey.

If failure comes in, you must not give up all for lost, but thank God that you have a connection with Christ in God, which your failure cannot touch. Satan cannot check the living water that flows forth to me in spite of all I am in myself, enabling me to be "up and on." In the death of a believer, I only see the expression of the love of Christ opening the way to a place where the soul can be present with Himself.

Ought we not to be able to say of a believer, that the way he lives to God, delights the heart of Christ; and that the way he lives to Christ delights the heart of God?

G. V. Wigram.

## S. Rev\_1:1-20.

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Rev 1:1-20.

Notes of an address by G. V. Wigram. In connection with glories, we get three parts: First — The glories of the Person; Second — Glories in connection with relationships; Third — Those connected with offices. From this glorious Person I have eternal life, and am made a channel through which the stream of living water flows down, and the Lord Jesus will remove whatever makes an impediment. He is the fountain of eternal life, and takes the responsibility of looking after His people. The way of learning truth is by looking at it in all its different aspects, and taking it up in all its different parts. We will look shortly at the different titles by which the Lord introduces Himself in this chapter in their connection with the churches; The Son of Man holding the seven stars, walking in the midst of the seven Candlesticks (Rev 2:1) in connection with the church of Ephesus. "The first and the last, He that liveth and was dead;" Rev 2:8, Smyrna. Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; (Rev 2:12) Pergamos. "His eyes as a flame of fire and His feet as fine brass;" Rev 2:18, Thyatira. He that hath the seven Spirits and the seven stars; (Rev 3:1) Sardis. In Philadelphia we get a whole cluster of glories, He that is holy, He that is true, that hath the key of David; He that openeth and no man shutteth and no man openeth (Rev 3:7). In Laodicea, "The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." (Rev 3:14.)

Returning to Ephesus, remark, there are two expressions: First — Holding in His right hand the seven stars (Rev 2:1): Second — Had in His right hand (Rev 1:16). Nothing in that address goes beyond the thought of the blessed Lord as sustainer of the testimony set up at the day of Pentecost. The Ephesians were a body He could take notice of, they had an immense deal of energy and doing; but Christ was very jealous for God; He was near them in connection with the light. Who planted the church; Who is the holder and ruler of light in connection with the church; where is Christ now? Is He not near at hand? None could say, I stand on earth in responsible witness, the bearer of light, save the Lord Jesus Christ. The thought of light is beautifully in harmony with Christ; in connection with the church, the light could not be lost. We may say Christ cannot be walking where there are no candlesticks. But we must begin with this, His being set up as the faithful and true witness, and He has never left us. The leading thought in this address is that of Christ carrying on this responsibility before God. The address to Smyrna is quite different; "These things says the first and the last, He that liveth and was dead." A very different state was that of the Smyrneses to the Ephesians. All had come down as if God had let the wave of death and resurrection break over them; all had come to a close. The expression "First and last" is different from "The beginning of the creation of God;" that is of the new creation. I get in "First and last" something in which my soul realises the whole of eternity. Man cannot get hold of that thought — Eternity; but it is sweetly realised to one that a Man is there, God manifest in the flesh. When we get to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, there is no beginning there; but God has revealed His Son to us as Man, and we are in Him and He in God. The Smyrneses have realised their weakness and the power of Satan; the wave of death rolled over everything, and that second title "Which was

dead and is alive" brings Him out fully as the resurrection and the life. One could not possibly confound this second address with the first: the state of mind in the one did not mark the other; both bring out the glories in Christ that each stand especially in need of. In the next address to Pergamos things having got thoroughly into the hands of Satan, it was "He that hath the sharp sword with two edges." I do not suppose this is merely judgment where the power of Satan is put forth; but the champion of the Lord showing forth the virtue and power of the word of Christ. What will this title be in the glory? Christ will be there, and in turning to Him in the glory and seeing Him scanning each one there, is a man, His friend. One of the sweetest thoughts our hearts will have will be the thought of His being the eternal fulness of truth. What will the sword be then? There will be no enemy to fight against, no hands of Satan to cut, but that which is the irresistible power of the sword will be Christ still; and all will stand in His power. How often is it that when the knees are weak and the hands hang down as though the difficulties around were insurmountable, it is because of this sword being forgotten. The irresistible power of Christ where Satan is, is more than a match against all that he can do. How little our hearts love things because of their nearness to Christ; how little thought we have of the preciousness of Christians because they are dear to Him. We ought to love things for Christ's sake, not only for the dew that distills from them for our refreshment. If you had lost a beloved relative and could enter the room she had left, you would not want to go in perfume to some other room in the house, even if it contained a perfect museum of objects of art and curiosity. Things would be only precious to your heart as they were connected with her; and you would linger there because the object loved had been there. Oh! how short we come! how little we know what it is to have no desire to go to any place, nor to do anything unconnected with the Lord so dear to us.

Next, the word to Thyatira; The flame of fire and the feet of fine brass. If I turn to what the Romish church was before the Reformation, I get Christ bringing His word to hew out everything there not connected with it. I have the eye as a flame of fire expressing divine intelligence, searching everything. At the time of the Reformation everything was searched to see how it could bear the light, and if it could do so it was reserved, the fine brass bringing everything to the test of Christ's ways. This title is connected with Christ's ways. Christ has certain ways of His own as Son of God, and as One who has His eye right down, reading everything in every heart. If one single corner of my heart were covered from Him, I should lose all confidence. It is a solemn thought that the Lord does know everything, but all rest of soul is in it. He is never taken by surprise by what He finds in me: He knew what Peter was. Religion is made such a conventional thing; subscribing to certain charities, going to different places. You find everywhere certain things counted as religion, but what can I count on in myself. Are my ways like Christ's ways? Would I like to change His ways because they are not like mine? to close His eyes? No! let Him be the Son of God, let Him search my heart; I can follow Him in perfect peace. Ah! if you and I knew a little more about Christ's ways we should get a great deal more communion when we came together. If we more felt what our fellowship is in Christ, we might, when we meet, speak more of those things we have got in Christ as our portion. The next address, Sardis, shows a state of things, where one sees an effort on the part of the Spirit of God, different from anything before. That which is remarkable here is a testimony back to church order, by the nonconformists after the Reformation. If those people, who were ordering churches, had really got hold of this word, they would have found a great deal applicable to themselves. "These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars." All spiritual energy has its rise in Christ, the seven Spirits and the seven stars are held by

Him in reference to testimony. If it is the question of any position now, where are the seven churches? If I look on to the end I see the Bride of Christ rising up to meet her Lord, and the professing church on earth spued out of His mouth. There is nothing to glory in these. I do not think glorying in churches ever could meet Christ's praise. Directly the attempt is made to set up former things, Christ is not there; but I never get near Christ as an individual without the consciousness that the Holy Ghost is mine. So also I never get near Christ without the consciousness of having power to do what He wants. He has power; whatever little testimony I have for Him, I have just to go forward with Him, and I shall never fail. If I want to look out for the help of saints or the sympathy of friends, I shall always find weakness. All power is His, and whatever service He calls for me to do, I shall have power from him to do it. In all states of the church Christ says, I have all power, and I am with you; but mind how you walk. In Smyrna they are caught in a wave and brought right down, and the question is of being brought up again. The question in Philadelphia is of trust in Christ, and Christ throwing His bright mantle over to let His glories shine out: an uncovering of Himself to break the mist. If I say, All is weak and vain, and all I can do is to sit down with Lot in Sodom, why, I shall not get Christ uncovering His glory there; but if I say, This state of things won't do, I must be holy, I must separate from all that is not in character with Christ. Well! says Christ, that is just like me; if you are not going to forget the Holy One, I won't forget you. If the Key of David is in His hands, I say, Well! the Lord is going to open the Kingdom of Israel; and if so, it is quite right to think things are coming to a close, and the bright and morning star is coming. "I have set before thee an open door"; no one can shut it, not all the angels, nor all the spirits, nor man can close when Christ says, I have left the door ajar. One cannot say these are the same titles of glory in the other addresses as in this. We see here none spoken of but Christ in connection with a few weak ones keeping His Word. What an unspeakable comfort that there is a glory of Christ's connected with individuals. He might lock the door and put you aside: would you find no sweetness in being able to say, "Christ has shut the door." Which is best, the door being shut by Christ or opened by man? In a thousand ways Christ may shut the door; we must not struggle like a naughty child because He has shut it. He sees He cannot deal in full blessing till the soul He is dealing with can say, "Thy will and not mine be done." If it be His will to shut the door, and it is my will to have it shut, then He opens it and says, "My child come forth." If I say, I will sit down quietly because He would have me sit down, then He says, "Rise up and go out." Whether you sit down or go out you act as the expression of His will.

I see now man's church, and a mighty energy working: I see it all around. We hear of the poor man's church; what would Paul have said to that? There is an energy of man at work to set up the church, and it will come out as here. When I find the Lord using "Amen," I like to see what Amen is said to; and here the Laodicean state is brought out. "Take care, I know thy works, and that thou art trusting because of being great and increased with goods, take care of self." "That is not like me. When I was in the world I went about never seeking mine own, but testing everything as the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." There is such a thing as the flesh, and man's will. The basis of the Reformation was human will (Henry VIII putting aside the Pope). The human will has not been judged, and when Christ takes up the church, the human will will be judged, and all that is unlike Christ will be left behind.

Deliverance.

Now do you honestly say, I know that in me, that is, in my flesh — dwelleth no good thing? Do you believe that of yourselves? You will never get full liberty till you do, and you will never know what it is to be settled and steady in your soul till you have learned it; for then you get not only forgiveness and justification, but deliverance.

J. N. Darby.

## S. Rich in Mercy

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Rich in Mercy.

Notes of a Lecture.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend Vol. 4, p. 313.

Eph 2:4.

"God, who is rich in mercy" — rich in mercy. We have in the latter part of Eph 1:1-23 and beginning of Eph 2:1-22 God's expression of His grace and mercy. The former contains the expression of His grace, and goes on to show, as the result of it, the expression which is in measure in contrast with it. The close of chap. 1 presents to us the person of the Son of man sitting in heaven — the glorified Alan. Wonderful to think there are those who are connected with Him; that there should be a people given to Him! In Eph 2:18, the wealth of God's inheritance in the saints is spoken of; almighty power is displayed in separating a people who believe in Himself in a marvellous way. In Eph 2:20 to end, we have the man Christ Jesus sitting in heaven. He is looked at in Eph 1:1-23 as the servant of God, who can say, "My God." The term Christ, or the Anointed, always applied to Him as man. God finds His infinite delight in this perfect servant, and in His service rendered. No other resting-place could be found in which God could express His delight; and He brings Him up into His own eternal glory, places Him at His right hand, and draws the comparison between Him and every other power, marking His superiority. He is the only perfect servant God ever had. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. God has set Him in a place by Himself. Both there and hereafter, no power is like His. All is put under Him. God has assigned to Him a place of peculiar dignity and power; has made Him the Head of the Church. One thought in my mind has been, that as children of God, as followers of Christ, we are not exercised about Him, occupied with Him, as we should be, about the glories of His person. If we could read each, we should. We have not adequate thoughts of the glories belonging to the Lord Jesus. I believe the thoughts saints have of Him in this day are very limited. They are not brought up to the mark in the present day. What is wanted is a fuller apprehension of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is truly Man in the midst of all the eternal and divine glory of God; and there is everything in Him proper to the place that is given to Him as the just recompence of the reward for the service He has rendered. When God acted as Creator, and finished the work of creation, He rested, and man was called to rest with Him. Satan came in, death came in, and the counsel of God came forth, "the seed of the woman," etc. God's Champion against Satan took the place of a servant; went thoroughly through the whole work ; measured everything; was Himself the test of all. He went to the cross, and gave up the ghost, and God raised Him, and placed Him at His right hand as the object of His delight. God found His rest in Him. He has triumphed gloriously over every enemy. He has won the victory — He who had a right to judge the quick and the dead — by His humiliation and service. We ought to be familiar with that Lord who has thus

brought us to and with Himself in divine glory. We have in Him that which holds our souls, and draws our hearts. Amazing subject — Man in divine glory: He who was the object of heaven's worship became the perfect servant, and having accomplished the work, all is put into His hands. In connection with His being Head of the Church we get mercy introduced; we are called to turn from Him in His solitariness, to look from where those who form the assembly are brought; we have to turn from heaven and its brightness to earth and hell's darkness. (Eph 2:1-22.) You cannot draw a single characteristic of what you were save from these verses (Eph 2:1-3); all the good there is in yourselves as descendants of the first Adam is recorded there: dead in condition, and the walk according to the road that the world is travelling. The world is a system made up for man to be happy in, out of God's presence. (Gen 4:1-26.) Man sought, when sin and death came in, to amuse himself and wile away his time. This system has gone on ever since (world means a system) in different forms and phases. Look at this world, or system; you never find God or Christ in it; it is not for Him. If you put Christ on it, you cannot say it all looks of a piece. Nothing can be built on this earth and not get tainted by the root on which it is built. Do any doubt if this is true of themselves? that each of us is born belonging to a system that has nothing to do with God? I look at the Lord Jesus Christ as in Php 2:1-30. I see two marks: He was the free Son of God, and He never had a will. If I look at myself, was I free? No; I was the slave of lusts and passions. Was I will-less, like Him? No. What would you think even of a babe without a will? I remember my own babe when only three hours old. I said to the nurse, "Ah! that child has a will;" and before a week passed she could but own it too; even the movement of its little hand bespoke it. Christ had no will. Can anyone question for a moment whether you have a will? Don't you say, I like and I dislike? Did Christ say so? He said, "As my Father will, or will not." "Lo, I come to do Thy will." Even if it led Him to the cross, to bear the curse, only one will ruled Him — His Father's. Have you got a will that is so thoroughly curbed that you never have your own will? Are you never hasty with a servant? quick with your child? or impertinent to your father or mother?

Eph 2:3 takes up the Jews. If anyone wants a good character let it be gleaned from Eph 2:1-3; every stone there that looks bright you may take for yourself. Saul of Tarsus had nothing in himself to deserve any blessing. God's thought was to deal with the Son of His love. Will my Son go down and motet Satan, and take the curse upon Him — die on the cross? Yes; He is the perfect, obedient one. Thou hast crowned Him with glory and honour. Then in these verses we get the contrast in man; all the evil of nature, the world, and Satan is brought out. What can God do? He acts in His free grace towards the Son of His love, and mercy comes out, which is a different principle from grace. Grace is free gift. God took notice of the merits of His Son; mercy rather takes notice of demerit. Man deserves — what? I can only say of myself, I deserve to be left alone. Put there is an antagonistical principle in God to that; He is rich in mercy. He does not look for any good in the creature; He bestows His love freely. The Lord Jesus had watched Saul of Tarsus, and could see not a single good thing in him; but God is rich in mercy. It is very wonderful how slow the heart is to give God the whole glory that He set His love on us. Whenever any creature has to do with God, God must begin. People get occupied with their efforts, striving and doing; all right in its place, but it is only as the result of what God has been doing. How can a dead man begin in life? We must take care not to confound quiet silent, workings of the conscience with being part of the old nature; it is a part of the new nature. It is not God letting men off, but He makes him who believes, one in life with the Lord Jesus Christ. If I have tasted God's mercy, what then? I am in life with the Lord Jesus Christ, quickened, raised, and seated with Him at God's right hand; I am a

member in particular of His body. He has stooped low to where man was, and lifted him up into fellowship of life with the risen, glorified man, Christ Jesus.

It was the subject of mercy I wished to speak of. To my own soul it is very simple, when we see whence it comes from. It is an attribute of God Himself. There are two things about Satan in direct contrast to God. God cannot lie; Satan has been a liar from the beginning. God delights in creating; Satan in pulling everything to pieces: he has pleasure in destroying. If we take the question of mercy, whence came it? Who but God can look in upon the universe, and pick up things He finds in a state that He hates and abhors? What is the measure of His delight? He has raised Him, and set Him at His own right hand, and you in Him — "you," He says, "who have identified yourself with my arch-enemy, Satan; you who have everything about you I hate and abhor." Who could speak thus but He? Could Satan? No. Man? No; none but God Himself, and He only. It is a proposal that is utterly impossible to any but Himself; but He made the Perfect One sin, who knew no sin. Mercy is an attribute of God Himself, part of the character of God which showed out when sin came into the world. In Rom 9:14 we find it clearly and guardedly stated; Rom 9:16 guards it: blessing "is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth." Man says, "I will, I run, and so I get blessing." No; that is not the way; mercy is the root, after mercy follows will, then the running, then the doing His commandments. In Exo 33:1-23 two things are brought out. We get first the occasion on which mercy is shown, and then the root — mercy. God takes Israel out of Egypt, God comes down to deliver them, their troubles increase, and what are they occupied with? Not with God's purpose of delivering, but with the increase of their toil. God brings them out of Egypt, the people turn their back on God while Moses is in the mount. The jewels, the earrings of the women, are put into a furnace, and out comes a calf. Could they more distinctly renounce Jehovah? It was only a few days after they came out of Egypt, and had seen God's delivering power for them. We cannot conceive anything worse than this, to say to God, "We have done with you." (Exo 33:2-9.) "The ground of my dealings with Israel shall be a thorough known ground." I own this word is to me one of the strongest expressions of God's prerogative, to do as He pleases. "They may dance before their calf, and put me aside; but I am God, who have a right to do as I please. I will." People may call it His sovereignty. Its absoluteness, people say, does not put me on this ground with God. But stop a bit! Do you know God when you say you don't like to be put on His character? If Satan could say I will, there is an end to everything — he is a liar and a destroyer. What an awful thing to have to depend on the absoluteness of a being who likes destruction! If, instead of a liar and murderer, it is God who says I will, it is enough. Do you know Him? Then you are not afraid to trust Him. The angels themselves thoroughly understand there is no fountain of goodness, mercy, or compassion save in God Himself. Would you like to direct God as to your daily path? to direct Him how to bless you? Would any created intelligence have proposed to God the way whereby He can bless? Would you desire to direct Him as to the ordering the circumstances of your path? or do you doubt the perfection of His goodness? that He is the only one who has a right to say, I will? "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." "Though Israel my people danced before the calf they made, and set me aside, I will bring them back, because I have a heart for them. I will stoop down to them." The motive was from inside His own bosom. Is God to be the only being who is never to please Himself? He has a right to do as He will.

People often speak as though God had no character. He chooses to take the lead, and it is for us to be dropping into the wake of God's thoughts and plans, and. to leave everything with Him, to

Him, and to Him alone; this is the path of blessing. Moses got hold of it. It is not only a declaration made to Moses, but a principle laid down on which He acts, and a principle on which Israel, as a nation, will be brought back another day. In Exo 34:1-35 we find a yearning, pitifulness, patience in looking at that which He means to accomplish; Exo 33:1-23 brings out the condition they were in; Exo 34:1-35, the character of God. "In me is their help." Our character as Christians will not get its proper development unless this character of God, as God of mercy, is before us. What is the proof I am not deceived? I can look right up into the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, and say, Thou dost not look as if Thou hadst a will to curse me — the Father has put Thee there as the Saviour of the lost. I say, I am ruined in myself. I cannot look at the Lord Jesus Christ on the throne, and let a shadow of question remain on my mind as to my safety. He is my safety, if I am a lost one. The God of mercy and compassion will never reject me; but God cannot allow the soul to rest on anything but God Himself. The Lord Jesus is on the throne, picking up poor sinners. His character is the same today; it is nothing altered . . . . .

If we knew each other intimately, and had been in company with Paul or these Ephesian Christians, what a contrast should we find between ourselves and them! They were clean out of the world. Christ who had gone up to heaven had carried their hearts away. What a difference between them and Christians now! People will say the world is altered. Is Christ altered? Is the Holy Ghost altered? If faith were simple in the soul that is brought to Him, we should be truer Nazarites. There would be a savour of God, of Christ, of heaven, of eternity, as we walked through the world, not talking about it, but as those whose hearts Christ had carried away with Him. If you set me beside those Ephesian Christians you would be constrained to say, "Bound up in the same bundle of life with them; but where is the power, the heavenly-mindedness?" They thought of nothing from morning to night but the Father's pleasure in heaven. Nothing will work it in us like grasping this principle in which God took us up at first. All of our own washed out, all that is connected with us. When I go to glory I shall leave all my circumstances behind. We want to be Nazarites, as those who know His love. May we each say, Let us be out and out for Him. If we would be living for God and for Christ, we must let this truth into our souls. God is the only source, the Lord Jesus Christ the only channel, and the Holy Ghost the only power. Let us seek more subjection to this blessed truth, to the joy of our hearts, and the praise of His grace.

## S. Shall I ever die?

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Shall I ever die?

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 8, 1881, p. 141.

(This paper was enclosed in a letter to a brother by the beloved late G. V. W., and was afterwards printed in The Present Testimony. — Ed.)

"Of course you will, sooner or later," most men will answer. "I DO NOT KNOW," is the answer which most Bible students ought to give. Of believers, it is only those who have a special revelation that they will die, as Peter had had (John 21:19; 2Pe 1:14) and Paul (2Ti 3:6), who are justified in saying, "Certainly I shall die." Peter could say so; for the Lord Jesus had promised to him in particular the martyr's crown. Paul knew the same of himself; but I am only an ordinary Christian, and I do not pretend to be either a Peter or a Paul, and I do not either pretend to have had any revelation direct from the Lord Himself to me about my own private self in particular, therefore I am obliged to be satisfied with the general light which God in His word gives to His family as such, that clear and broad light which shines upon the people of Christ as such.

I am thus obliged to be satisfied with such words as these: "As it is appointed unto man [man as a sinner; not, as often wrongly quoted, unto all men] once to die, but after this the judgment [so far we read of what awaits man in fallen nature, death and the judgment, then comes what is true of the believer only] (Heb 9:28.); "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." As mere man is a sinner, and as such is appointed to death and judgment, so the believer (every believer) had all the penalty due to his sins borne by Christ. He looks for Him; to "them that look for Him He will appear a second time without sin unto salvation." Again, 1Th 1:9 : "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." Again, 1Th 4:15-18 : "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Again John, in Rev 1:7, says, "Behold, He cometh with clouds;" and (Rev 3:11) the Lord says to John, and to us too, "Behold, I come quickly;" and, in Rev 22:7; Rev 22:12, "Behold, I come quickly; and (Rev 22:20) when the Spirit and the bride (Rev 22:17) invite Him to come — "The Spirit and the bride say, Come" — He answers, "Surely I come quickly." To which John replies, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." These Scriptures and many others show: first, that the path of the believer, as laid down in Scripture, leads the mind, not down to the grave, but up to meet the

Lord at His coming; and secondly, that the believer in apostolic times did look up that bright and shining way to the Lord returning as their hope, even as it becomes those "whose conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Php 3:20.)

Thus did they, as I, having no special communication of my death, act up to the word of the two in white apparel, who stood looking up steadfastly toward heaven (where a cloud had received Jesus from their sight). "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:10-11.) Being myself only one of the flock, nor bell-bearer, nor shepherd, the prospect of the flock is my prospect, nor more nor less. Special communication to myself as an individual as to what ought to be looked for by myself in particular have I none, so I must content myself with the hope set before all Christians, and seek to be like unto one that waits for His Lord from heaven, "who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." (Php 3:21.)

It must be so. The Lord has not yet fulfilled the promise which He gave to poor self-confident Peter (see John 13:38; John 14:1-3): "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Yes, such is our hope; that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Col 3:4.)

Someone may say, If these things are so in the Scriptures, how come the religious people of our day not to see them? To this I answer, The pentecostal Christians were by faith, and through the Holy Ghost, occupied with the ascended Lord, who, having by His death cleared them of all guilt, was in heaven caring for all their heavenly and spiritual interests, and about to come again, that He might receive them unto Himself. Few of the religious nowadays know even what the value of His death and resurrection is to them; they, therefore, cannot study His glory in heaven, and they do not long for His return, or even wish to do so.

It may be said, "Are you alone right, and everyone else wrong?" I reply, "Thank God, I am not alone in this; but if I were alone, I would be alone in truth, rather than with a multitude in error." "But are you sure you are right?" Of this I am sure: first, that God's word is with me; and secondly, that God will not suffer those that prayerfully search His word, and lean not to their own understanding, to err in their faith and hope.

Certainly Christ in His coming, and not death, was the hope of the early Christians. Certainly too it is written at the end of the Revelation (and it cheers my heart to read it for others' sake as well as for my own), "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." G. V. W.

## S. The Bright and Morning Star.

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The Bright and Morning Star.

Rev 22:16.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 11, 1884, p. 266.

I wish to say a few words on what it is that gives the heart of a believer boldness at all times to say, "Come, Lord Jesus." My own thought as regards this passage is, that nothing but personal affection to the Lord can ever give the heart boldness before Him. The soul must realize that it has been laid hold of by His love, that such a light is shining down upon it from His face as to enable it, under everything coming up against it, in spite of failure, to know that there is nothing but love in the heart of the Lord Jesus Himself towards it. Yes, through all possible changes we have still His love. I may be a poor thing, as unlike Him as possible, still His love laid hold of me just as I was, and nothing that He can find in me is unforeseen, or can change that love. If the thought of my heart were, "I have been a Christian thirty or forty years, done this or that," would that enable me to stand and say, "Come, Lord Jesus"? No; nothing but love to Himself will.

"I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." All the promises are sure in Him. Have they failed with us or Israel? No; Christ is the guarantee for all. "Root and offspring." Is the root never to bud and blossom, and fill the world with fruit? Should we be content to have Him up there, and Satan possessing the earth? No; in my heart He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; I must see every knee bow to Him. "Bright and morning star." Not of the night, but of the morning without clouds, harbinger of day before the glory of the sun lights up the world, as it will do. This glory, brightness of the morning star, is a glory to be in Himself, seen and admired of His saints, a peculiar glory. It was something to cheer John's heart in the midst of failure (and ours too), to watch through the night for that bright star, that Lord "who loved us, and gave Himself for us."

Then we find the word, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Why displace God's thoughts of the bride for my thoughts of myself? Knowing the grace of Christ, cannot I leave myself in the hands of Christ without reference to what I am? If I can do that, I can say, "Come." If we think we have a multitude of things to do first, we cannot know the blessedness of waiting and watching for that bright star. John might have said, "I have testified of the failure of all in man." But what there was in Christ to meet it all was his thought; is it yours?

There is no scene so marvellous in the whole world as the description of the bride, the Lamb's wife. Faith identifies the soul that has it with the Lord. You ought to know why you can say, "Come, Lord." Testimony may have failed; and if walking in the Spirit, you can never count you have given Christ what He deserves. How then can you say, "Come"? The name of "bride," connected as it is with the Lord Jesus, brings one to the conviction that God is acting just to please Himself there; that Son to be enthroned in the heavenlies with all possible glory, but not alone. He must have

companions there. It is God's thought to have an adopted family of poor sinners there; and who shall stop Him? If a ray of light has come down into my heart from the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ray identifies me with the bride. I belong to Jesus; I must be with Him, go where He is. Strange place for such as I, but I am His; I must be there. The most halting, the "saved so as by fire," will go up to one common glory, brought in because part of the bride. Rewards, differing according to faithfulness, likeness to the Lord, there will be; but when I think of the Christ there in glory, and myself a part of His body in it, how it does away with all thought of creature merit, and faith understands why Christ must have glory, without reasoning; for "He is worthy." The heart that loves will never be satisfied till Christ has all His glory. Oh for softness of heart rather than greatest intelligence! Is there nothing to move the affections in the certainty of those words being so soon accomplished: "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry"? Are you longing for Him? He is coming! Is the hope ever on your heart? Has that part of God's grace told on your souls? The moment a man gets this hope he must begin to act on it. How sweet to have love drawing the heart in separation to Christ, or to fruitfulness, if unfruitful!

Looking then at ourselves or our service, there could be nothing but despair; but the moment the person of Christ flits before the mind, then comes a joy that neither light or darkness can dim. He is surely coming, and a bride is surely kept to meet Him. Lift up your eyes in the midst of all your failure; He is coming; it is Jesus; and the heart can say "Come" to Him. I cannot think of Him without breathing out, "Come, Lord, come quickly;" and I cannot get to the love in the bosom of the Father without longing for another to enjoy it too, looking out too for another heart to cry, "Abba, Father" with me. That word "come" is a sort of plumb-line to our hearts, a touch-stone by which to test the state of your soul. Is it failure that hinders? And do you ever expect to meet His face with joy on account of your own faithfulness? No, impossible! All your confidence must spring from what Christ is, not from what you are. If this moment we were caught up to meet Him, His first thought would be surely not to find fault. His first thought would be: These are mine; this is the bride made ready by the Father. He never found fault with anything He did. He does not love to find fault; commendation is sure to come first with Him. He will have a private account to settle with each soul, but not at the hour of meeting — all will be joy then. Living water is ever streaming from that Rock, and where is the limitation? "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." There may be two states of souls thirsting. With the one God deals to make them find out what they are. If you are one trying to snatch at everything to satisfy yourself, to you I could not say, "Drink freely." Another state of soul is seeing everything in Christ to satisfy; but thinking you have something to do to get hold of Him, there is a grasping, a catching, but a never getting hold; seeing the manna and water, really hungering and thirsting, and crying out, "I see, but cannot lay hold." Such a soul has to learn that the God who has showed the blessing is the One alone to give it. Would the Lord coming tonight find you as those having to do with Christ, and not with yourselves? This portion fits the day we live in! Nothing now remains but for God to introduce Christ, to put down all the wickedness of man; and in the sense of this, at the fag end of the Church's failure for nearly 2000 years, I can still stand and say, "Come, Lord Jesus;" but I could not do so if looking at a single thing around me or in myself. My heart and my eye must be filled with Himself. Then, and then alone, can I cry, "Come, Lord Jesus." G. V. Wigram.

## S. The Broken Sabbath.

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The Broken Sabbath.

John 5:1-47.

Some solemn thoughts arise in reading this chapter, though the questions and answers it awakes bring out blessed subjects for the soul's meditation; for since sin entered into the world, its sorrowful effects have ever been the occasion for the manifestation of divine grace, and the discovery that the blessed God is above all the power of evil and the evil one.

Without at all intending to dwell on the detail of the chapter before us, I would notice two things which stand out with prominence; viz., the miracle wrought, and the sabbath apparently broken - two things that a pious Jew would find it difficult to reconcile. The smallest reflection would assure him, that the power and goodness displayed in the miracle was none other than that of God, the Jehovah-Rophi of Israel, who had come down into the midst of the sorrows of His people in the Person of the despised Jesus of Nazareth; but that this work of power should be wrought on the sabbath-day, and the ordinance of the Lord be seemingly broken, would be his perplexity. He knew that of nothing was the Lord more jealous than that His sabbath should be kept inviolate. It was one of the most intimate links between the Lord and His people Israel; but now this same Lord is in their midst, giving the most convincing testimony of who He was, yet according to their thoughts disregarding the sacred sabbath, and when charged with it justifying Himself with the well-known words, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." This was quite inexplicable to a conscientious Jew, but still more intolerable to the religious fanatic, in whose eyes the keeping of the sabbath was of far greater moment than the relief of human suffering and woe. But, dear reader, this difficulty only brings out, as do all other difficulties which sin has occasioned, the manifold wisdom and goodness of that God whom we know as our Father. The very meaning of sabbath is rest, and rest implies satisfaction, as we see in its first mention in Gen 2:1-25. God had created the heavens and the earth, had perfected all in order and beauty according to His own mind; at the close of each successive day's toil He had pronounced it very good; and when all was finished, and He could look out on all with pleasure and approval, He rested from His labour, and sanctified the day that thus expressed this satisfaction in the works of His hand. But let us for a moment reflect on the scene of our chapter. Alas! how changed, a change baffling description! Everything is in disorder; the beauty of all is tarnished and spoilt; man, the lord and head of the first creation, himself a total wreck, lying a helpless cripple at the poolside. What a sight to meet the eye of the Son of God! Could He rest in such a scene, and amidst such surroundings? Could the sorrow and misery which met His eye yield any satisfaction to Him? How far from it! Too keenly did He feel human woe, too deeply in His bosom were the interests and well-being of poor man to allow Him to pass through all with unfeeling indifference; nay, the suffering of man and the tender sensibilities of His nature made it utterly impossible for Him to keep any sabbath here. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," tell us this.

Ever since sin entered the world the God of all grace has laboured, and will continue His labour until sin and all its bitter fruits are for ever banished out of His realm; then will He keep His long and unbroken sabbath of eternity - "He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing;" but this could not be in the day of our chapter. Love cannot but be active so long as there is a need or sorrow to call it forth; and so it was as Jesus passed through those dismal porches of Bethesda. No Jewish ritual or Jewish hatred could check the activity of His love; with a dignity above it all He moved. He had come to do His Father's will, to reveal the Father's love, and He finds in the misery before Him a suited occasion for its display. Nothing can exceed its beauty. He singles out the most pitiable case - one who was "without strength," and had "no man" to help him. How like a Saviour to select this case out of all others to display His power and goodness. "Wilt thou be made whole?" says Jesus. What a strange question to ask! We should have thought the question of willingness lay all on the other side; but so it is, however it may surpass our thoughts. Jesus is more willing to save than sinners are to be saved. He came to save; His very mission from the glory was to bring down the grace and power of God to relieve poor man from the misery under which he lay, and so here He seeks one who is willing for Him to exercise His mission upon.

Amazed that such a question should be asked him, the man replies, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool." Although this divine visitation was brought so near him, he had not enough strength to avail himself of it, nor one who was sufficiently above his state to assist him; but, blessed be God, there now stood by his side One who could not be numbered among the fallen race - Son of man, it is true, but also Son of God. In grace He had come down to "destroy the works of the devil," and deliver poor man from his grasp. No sooner is there the confession of his helplessness and an implied willingness than the word is spoken, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." This is a lovely picture of what grace would do eternally after the mighty work of redemption was accomplished, a work in which not only the guilt of sin, but the whole state of man as a sinner, should be dealt with. Jesus "died for our sins according to the Scriptures;" but more, "He was made sin for us." He takes upon Himself the whole condemnation under which we lay as children of fallen Adam, and now "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life." Not only are we thus justified from all things, but quickened out of our death in trespasses and sins, raised up in that life in which Jesus was raised, and have our place in Him now in the heavenlies according to Eph 2:1-22. Unspeakable blessing! Unspeakable grace, that has bestowed it on such as we! And if we are left on earth for a time, as we are, it is that we should be to the praise of Him who has blessed us, just as the once impotent man was as a testimony to the power and grace of the One who had healed him. It is this testimony that evoked the hatred of the Jews, because it seemed to set aside what gave importance to themselves, and it is still true that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." May the Lord Himself give each of us grace in our varied circumstances and callings to be witnesses of His grace and power, not only by our words, but by our walk homewards, taking a lesson from the example before us of being able to justify all we do by the beautiful word, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk." H. A. C.

I can be before God just as I am: take care not to pass that by. It is a wondrous part of the glory of Christ that a person with sin in him can be in the presence of God in perfect favour. Sin could not be there, but it was all borne by Him who was the accepted sacrifice in His own body on the cross, and put away for ever. By faith in Him I am brought into the light with nothing to hide - and I do not

want to hide anything. There is sin and mortality about me, but all that I am cannot separate me from Christ. God says, "He is the accepted sacrifice, and I have nothing to say against you as to all you are in yourself; in Him you are perfectly accepted, the blood cleanseth from all sin." But I have need to be in the light to keep up a walk that becomes such a place. If I turn aside, I shall forget that I am purged from my old sins, and God must come in with a rod. You must keep your walk up by having your eye fixed on Christ. G. V. Wigram.

## S. The Call and Faith of Abraham

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The Call and Faith of Abraham.

Heb 11:8-19. from Memorials of the Ministry of G. V. Wigram. Vol. 1.

[Notes on Scripture; Lectures and Letters.

Second Edition, Broom 1881 (First Edition 1880)] Part Fourth. LATER MINISTRY.

Quite a new principle was brought to light when God began to deal with Abraham; 1:e. the principle of calling out. God distinctly called Abraham. Many other things are connected with Abraham, as father of the faithful, and a pattern, model man to show forth God's dealings; but he was the first that God called forth out of his own country. One of the first principles of truth to a soul lies in the discovery that Abraham made; that is, the personal existence, of God, and an invitation from Him to keep in His company. "Come unto the land that I shall show thee." Many may not have denied the existence of God, but as to any personal connection with Him, it never would have entered their minds unless He had revealed Himself. Others had faith too, but it did not come out like Abraham's. Abel showed his by offering a lamb. Again, we get Enoch's call, but his heart was above before he went on high. Noah's lot was cast in exceedingly evil days; he believed God, prepared the ark, and was carried out of one earth to another.

Abraham is among an idolatrous people, and God comes and calls him, saying, "I have a place for you, and there I will make you a blessing in every way, and you shall know what it is to have the living God as your help in every time of need." I want you who are old and you who are young in faith to set to your seal, that God has introduced Himself as a living Person to your soul. Directly we are in connection with Jesus Christ we have God, and all our associations are connected with God. Faith produces different effects. The moment you bring in anything save God and His word, that is not faith. The path of faith is never the path of nature; nature takes quite a contrary course. "What!" Abraham's kindred might have said, "a stranger, a God we do not know, has told you to leave us all, and you are going forth in a mist, not knowing where He is going to take you?" God had spoken, and Abraham as an individual had to act on His word. It became a question whether Abraham could say, "I will put aside all the reasonings of my friends, and listen only to Thee." When did his faith fail? When he came to a difficulty and stopped to consider for himself, and settle for himself, which way to get out of it. God had told him the way, but he got upon circumstances, and off faith. First, he had been told to leave all. If it came to that he must leave everything behind; but he did not leave all, he takes with him Terah and Lot, and the effect was that he had to stop till Terah died, and that he could not get on till Lot was separated from him. God will not give up with His people; He will have patience till they know it will not do, to depart from His word. Not until after Terah died did Abraham come to Canaan. First, he had to get rid of Terah, and then of Lot. If I interrupt the word of the Lord in any one part, it lowers the tone of my whole soul unconsciously. There was Lot, and besides a famine came; there was corn in Egypt, and Abraham says, "I will go there." The littleness of faith carries him there, and he gets into the thick of the. fight and loses

Sarah. He is at his wits' end, and can do nothing. Departure from the Word has brought him into all this, and what was there to help him out of it? God's own word and again he is sent forth in the power and presence of God.

Remark in Heb 11:8, when called to go out, by faith Abraham obeyed, and went forth, not knowing whither he went. Nothing tries and searches human nature so much as uncertainty. We cannot bear suspense (there is relief in the worst certainty); but that is just God's principle of acting with us. He does not want you to know how to face famine. He does not want Abraham to know how His promises are to be made good. His seed was to be as the stars of heaven; how was this to be, seeing he had no child? God has given him everything but that, silver and gold, flocks and herds, and three hundred trained servants. He was a man most remarkable in his day, and all seemed to say to his heart, "Who is to inherit all this?" It ever seemed to be bringing to his heart the thought that he had no children; and poor Sarah tried to smuggle a child into the house, but that was not an Isaac. The question was continually raised, "Where is your city? where is your seed?" He had to wait a long time, and it came at last by a miracle wrought by God. The very prosperity of Abraham forced him to hang on God. Who is to be the heir — the manservant? No; wait, hang upon God.

Remark that in Heb 11:9, we have the pilgrim and stranger character kept up: dwelling in tabernacles was the mark of a stranger and a pilgrim. Tents were made for Israel in the wilderness; they did not have houses till in the land of Canaan. God's dwelling in the wilderness is a tent, in the land a temple. Abraham dwelt in a tent. Lot did so, too, at first, but he did not keep up the pilgrim character. First, he pitched his tent towards Sodom, then sat in the gate, and had a house in Sodom. Abraham kept his tent; for he looked for a city (he knew there was such a city), and the Holy Ghost adds, "whose builder and maker is God." Remark how this man's faith was sustained. He can look above everything, counting on the promised blessing. It was a faith sustained by God's word. As heavenly pilgrims we cannot yet say we have got what we hope for; but the time is coming when we shall go right into heaven, and cease to be strangers and pilgrims down here. Is our faith set above? If God and you are keeping company, do you think He will let you have a single need unsatisfied? Oh, what a jealous God He is! What a wall of fire round about us! When He separates anyone to Himself, He plants the blood of Christ right behind them. If He has spoken to us of His glory, and told us not to mind earthly things, should not our associations be, not of ties of nature down here, but of His company, His country, His interests waiting as people that do want to keep up their character of strangership, plainly confessing, by their walk and ways, that they are pilgrims on their way to a better country?

Even poor Jacob could not help being a pilgrim. How came Jacob to be in a condition to receive wages of Laban? Because he got off the ground of a pilgrim. He had a deal to say at the end of how long and how dreary his life had been; whilst Abraham's whole pathway is strewn with blessings, having God with him all the way through. Jacob, too, dwelt in a tent. If God has revealed Himself to your heart, and spoken to you of future glory, separating You unto Himself, He would not like you to be passing through the wilderness "hardly bested;" not with Jacob's experience, talking of the great things you have to give up. He does not like that. He wants you to be like Abraham, saying, "Look at all my blessings; look how close God has set me to Himself; and see how He is going to fill all my circumstances to make me rise over all my difficulties, and make His own presence so sweet to me, that I would rather be in difficulties with Him than out of them

without Him." We learn what God is by Abraham's walk.

Look, too, at Paul when moved out of everything, when in difficulties of all kinds he always had a song to the praise of God's grace. What a difference between God saying, "Here is something good for you," and your holding out your hand and taking it, and your saying that you are not good enough for what God gives you. Christ would not give Himself to us in resurrection till He had ascended to His Father. He must come down to us as the Father's gift. We can say to everything else, "That is not good enough for me." Did God's people lack power in His company to feel that He was their portion? What you must be looking out for is His gift at the present time. If anything bright offers itself (not God's gift) do not take it; it will not have sweetness; you will not find God in it. Let Him be first, and you keep behind Him. If a pilgrim, you will not be thinking of settling in houses; you will hang all your hopes on the place where the Son is. But do not take anything but God's gift to you at a moment like this. If God has prepared a city for me, should I like my mind to be absorbed by anything else down here?

Abraham refuses to touch a single thing, and the moment after God says, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." We never read of His being the God of Lot. He promised to be Abraham's God to Lot, and fetched him out of Sodom; but Lot was not in the way to talk of Him as "my God." What! the God of a man settled in Sodom? No; but the God of pilgrims and strangers. The same unerring grace and love; but God could not blazon it abroad that He was the God of Lot in Sodom. There was no planning with Abraham. When we deal with God we cannot make a plan; we get our feet entangled. You and God must go together; there can be no planning if with God. The trial God puts Abraham to in regard to offering up Isaac is very remarkable. God tries hearts often in the same way. I do not know anything more heart-searching than this that Abraham had put before him, but he left it all with God to settle all his difficulty. It was just the test whether he was hanging on God or not. Yes, he was, and he gives up Isaac His hand was stretched out to slay him, but God came in. It was not in the heart of the Father to let that father slay his son. Oh! what a feeling must there have been in Abraham, the feeling of all blessing, from first to last, being in the approbation of God Himself. Now God does try our faith in many ways. Do you know what suspense is? Do you know what it is not to see your way, and if you put forth a single thing to help yourself, does He not move it out of His way? We are kept in suspense that we may be content to wait upon God; to look to, to hang upon Him, to be so satisfied with God as to leave all to Him. To be in suspense is to pilgrim and a stranger, not to take anything, but to wait till God gives it. Oh! a man walking with God will have a happy, a blessed experience; otherwise there will be only sorrow and disappointment, as Lot and Jacob found.

## S. The Character of Our Testimony

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The Character of Our Testimony.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 8, 1881, p. 127.

What is the character of testimony we have to bear in the present day?

There are certain principles which are alike as connected with testimony in all ages. There has been a testimony of God, and for God, from the beginning. Out of the ruins of the fall there were things that God would take up, and bring out a testimony for Himself. Then arises the question, Who can bear testimony for God but God Himself? And those who are witnesses for Him are those who have learned that "all flesh is grass." There is a certain word that is peculiarly dear to God — SON — the only-begotten of the Father. In Ephesians the Son is connected with the Father's house and the Father's bosom. That Son is to have a certain place which He would share with poor sinners saved by grace.

Look at the Son rejected on earth by Jews and Gentiles; and God saying, "They will not have Him on earth, but I will give Him a place at my right hand, and then I will send down the Spirit by which they can call me Abba, Father." Think of that! I am set here, not to be saved, but to be a witness of the Father's love to me in Christ. Seeing how Christ can say, "Abba, Father," I can say, "Abba, Father." God leaves you down here to show what a son of the Father is, what the Father's heart is, what the Son of the Father is! If I am but to be a witness of the Father's love to me in Christ, seeing how Christ can say, "Abba, Father," I can say, "Abba, Father." God leaves you down here to show what a son of the Father is, what the Father's heart is, what the Son of the Father is. If I am not that, I am short of the mark. Testimony for Christ does not consist in separating from this bit of worldliness and that, but in manifesting the spirit of sons. If I am here as a witness, it is clear that the relationship has existed before. Your starting-point is, that you are inside the house. You are children, those whom the Lord Jesus can call brethren. Directly I begin with that (perfect liberty indeed), I say, Who is sufficient for these things? I have my sonship made known to myself, and every step of the way must be in that spirit of sonship by the direct operation of the Spirit of God Himself. What we have to seek after, what to separate from, what the difficulties of the path, and what the joys, are four points to be considered in connection with this testimony for God. The Lord Jesus was separate from sinners purely and perfectly for God. When God is acting in us, who have bodies of sin and death, all the things around we find against us, therefore we are in conflict.

Testimony or witness is merely what we show out. What we have to show out is, that we have a birthright, and onward to heaven in our path God has to put down the little world SELF, which is making itself comfortable with things around and shutting out God. The testimony for the present day, then, is specially one of sonship; and another thing to be remembered is, that testimony must always be a real thing, because a witness is that which God is showing now in grace what we shall have eternally. We have to show the reality of this life which is in the Lord Jesus Christ. The

breaking down we get here as saved ones is all connected with that. To walk in simplicity as a child with a father my will. must be refused. (Php 2:13-15.) For me to live is Christ; Paul was a dead man, bearing a living Christ. (Eph 4:10.) It has been often remarked that a saint rejoices in the value of the blood at the beginning of his career, then he goes on to learn other truths, and the blood is less prominent in his thoughts; but as he nears the end the blood is again the uppermost in his mind, and it is said this shows that the leading truth with which he begins is the one with which he ends, and other truths are spoken of disparagingly. But I believe it is in a different way the blood is looked at in the beginning and at the end of a saint's career. It is my value of the blood at first, it is God's value of the blood at the end, so that there is acquisition of new truth in this case about the blood. G. V. W.

## S. The Coming of the Lord.

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The Coming of the Lord.

Acts 1:1-26.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 9, 1882, p. 16.

There is much to remark in the way the coming of the Lord is presented to the disciples after the resurrection. They, poor things, after the Lord was risen, were still running on Jewish things, and looked for the kingdom to be restored. But God has His plan. He says, "No, the time is come for a testimony of grace to go forth, beginning at Jerusalem." There is another thing. They see Jesus go up; they gaze after Him. Their hearts are up with their Lord. So ought our hearts to be looking after Him; nothing ought to satisfy the believer's heart but the Lord Himself. Then the promise comes to them, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." This is the first putting forth of the coming of the Lord Jesus as the hope of the believer's heart;\* and the security of it is in the absolute manner God presents it as His plan.

\* It is the appearing rather than the coming of our Lord in this passage. But the principle abides. — Ed. The mystery is the very essence of the Church. The Jews are waiting for a Messiah — the Church is on quite a different basis. We have pretruded in Christ. We know Him as One who has come, who has everything and yet nothing. What has a Christian here? Literally nothing. The infidel may say, "Show me something." I know what I have got — Christ in heaven. He is my anchor, my whole soul is resting there; my heart is in heaven with this Lord Jesus. The heavenly bride's place is that which Christ took below. He had nothing here. He could not turn to this or that person and say, "I can trust in him." His spring was in God. He could trust Him and Him only, and so with ourselves. If I have the Son's heart on the Father's throne, the Father's heart and house are opened to me. We find daily His sympathies can flow down to His people. While passing through the sand of the wilderness, our feet cut and bruised, Jesus has a heart that can sympathize, and make all "work together for good." What Polar star have you to guide you? None but the coming of Christ Himself. What hope have I apart from the coming of Christ? Literally none. The bride of Christ has nothing as a future save the coming of her Lord.

One thing very touching to the heart is the way in which Christ conforms our removal to His own. Because He loves His bride, no one can be trusted to fetch her save Himself — not a power in heaven, not if legions of angels volunteered it. He will so arrange it, that all shall recall His own removal. He will present her to Himself. It is part of His special privilege as Son, to arrange all for His Father, as well as for the Church. He will purge the heavenlies; He will come down with the same chariot of cloud as that in which He ascended to fetch her up and present her to the Father. Every little thing in which we can be conformed to Him is sweet; but when it is something put on her by His own hand, it is sweeter still. Like the disciples, we too should want our Master back,

want to see Himself. Personal love is the answer to that love which proved stronger than death. He proved His love and the fountain of His love to be entirely independent of them. He settled the matter with Peter, went through it with Thomas — proofs enough of love. Their hearts could not rest satisfied without being with "this same Jesus."

It is very sweet to have the Lord looking down on us here, but nothing like being with Him. What is the force of my saying, "This is a wretched, howling wilderness"? What is it but "Nothing can satisfy my renewed nature except to see Himself"? He set His heart upon His bride. He loved her, and gave Himself for her. The heart that gets the simple thought of the personal love of Christ to the Church, will be strengthened to encounter the perils of the wilderness. We have to be where He puts us, because the great thing is to taste His love, and I can taste it down here. There is no question but that I should taste it much more with Him; but if it is His will for me to stay, that makes me happy to stay. When Christ is displaying power, there is Satan to oppose Him; it does not suit him to be in opposition where Christ is not. Have you ever said, "Come, Lord Jesus"? Why do you say it? He is waiting; not satisfied till He presents His Church. Have you felt nothing will satisfy you but seeing Him and being like Him? Have you felt in the quick of your soul, that if God were to give you heaven without Christ, it would be a blank place to your hearts? Why do you say "Come"? Because God has not forgotten His own plan. God would have some associated with Him up there in the desire of the Holy Ghost: that is why you say "Come." It is part of God's plan about Christ. If God says, "I have chosen you, and am working part of my plan for my Son in you," I do not understand people saying, "Oh, I am not this or that!" You would be far more humble, if you thought more about God, and less about yourself. Why do the sympathies of Christ flow forth to you? Dare you say, "Because I was so faithful to the sympathy He showed me yesterday"? Yet it does flow forth to you; and unless you are blind, you can lift up one stone after another, and find water flowing under all. Why? Because of what you are? No; He looked out for such bad clay, that no other potter could make anything of it. There is only one way God can keep such vessels full, and that is by keeping you close to the gushing fountain. Do His sympathies depend upon you? Not a bit. We cannot be trusted with the full amount of joy. We should be puffed up. Peter must have his hands tied, or they would be busy to take off the crown of martyrdom. Are you better than Peter? Nay, but worse,

You are looking for Christ from heaven. Your looking will not bring Him, but you will be happy if you are looking. The only spring of living waters Christ knows is in God. It is not the will which Christ sets in movement in your heart that is the power, but Christ's love. I am ashamed when I think of Christ's patient waiting to fetch us. Do you think Christ, in the glory of the Father, has a heart large enough to have a care to come and fetch us, and are you not ashamed? He says, "There is that poor thing stumbling through its duties, but I will soon go and pick it up." The Father's house is higher up than the manifestation of glory, the New Jerusalem, the court of the kingdom, but Christ will delight for the world to see the Father's glory in a way it can admire. But there are sweeter things than that — home-ties, relationships. The name of the Father hardly comports with the pageantry of rule, but it meets our hearts when He says, "Surely I come quickly." (Rev 22:20.) Here is the answer to the call of the Bride. God's thought when man had forgotten the hope is, "I will trim the lamp again." I believe God is moving, and that it is impossible in the riches of His grace that there should be none to meet His testimony. Even in Malachi some were looking for Him. He could not have come three hundred years ago, when all was in gross darkness; but now, were He

to rise up from the throne this night, there are many who through grace from the depths of their hearts have cried, "Come, Lord Jesus." Does your heart answer, "I am one"? May it be our desire that He would revive the testimony in the hearts of His children. G. V. W.

## S. The Father's House

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### The Father's House

#### John 14:1-31

J. N. Darby. In this part of the gospel of John the Lord is leading His disciples away from earth to associate their minds with Himself up in heaven. That begins from John 13:1-38. In John 8:1-59 and John 9:1-41 we have His rejection. Then, John 10:1-42, He states He will have His sheep in spite of everything. John 11:1-57, that which He was on earth as Son of God borne witness to. John 12:1-50, the Son of David riding on an ass, and Son of man when the Greeks come to Him; but He says, "I must die." He cannot have to say to the disciples on the earth, though loving them to the end. Then He washes their feet, and says, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." The possibility of His having a part with man down here was over - the world had rejected Him; and now instead of blessing the disciples here, He was taking their hearts up there. The thread that runs through the rest of the gospel, up to the last chapter, is - not here, but there, and you must take up your cross here. In John 14:1-31 the Lord gives us our portion on the ground of taking us up there. They would not have Him with them; but He says, "Let not your heart be troubled" at My going away. You do not get the comfort of God by seeing Him in bodily presence, and so with Me. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." He is going to prepare a place, that is the whole thing. 'I am going to My Father. I have brought you redeemed ones into the same relationship as I am in; He is your Father as much as Mine, and your God as much as Mine. I am not to be alone there. In My Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you.' The place He was going to prepare (and that He was putting before their hearts) had this specific character, that the children were at home there. He had brought them into this place of children before God and the Father; and therefore, when the time was come, they should go to the Father's house. The thought and purpose of God was to have us with Christ and like Him, His own blessed Son, in His house. "I will come again, and receive you unto myself" - in the Father's house - "that where I am, there you may be also." Where the Son is, in the joy and blessedness and rest and glory of the Father's house, there we are to be with Himself. That is His purpose - what He is bringing us to. Then He adds this blessed truth, that He is coming back Himself to fetch them. He is interested in them, and it is a fixed abiding interest. He would not be satisfied to send, but would come Himself. What wonderful blessing! It would be an honour to be sent for as redeemed ones who are everything to Him. I may send to meet a person I make something of; but if I make a great deal of him, I go myself.

He goes on to tell us how we know it all now, so that our souls live in it while He is away. The blessed Lord's death - redemption - giving us a title to be in no less a place than the Father's house, like and with Himself. But while His death accomplished that for us, it was a total breach with the world. "The world seeth me no more." He is going to the Father's house, and the world and the Father are in direct opposition. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." They saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. And when He was rejected by the world, He went up

to sit at the Father's right hand. The accepted One of the Father was the rejected One of the world. Man may have hopes that he is going to do a great deal with man. God has done all as to responsibility. And at last He says, 'I have one Son, they will reverence him.' But they said, "Come, let us kill him." The Lord says, "Now is the judgment of this world." The obedient, accepted One of the Father sits on His right hand, on His total rejection by the world, and He takes His redeemed ones with Him there. We get the place of sons; we are to have the glory; to be conformed to the image of His Son, the First-born among many brethren. While His work on the cross put away our sins, it gives us a place with Him and like Him in the glory.

After the statement of this in the first three verses we get how to realise it now in our souls. There are two parts - First, the object that is before us; and second, the power that is in us. First He tells us the place He is going to take us to - it is the Father's house. And what makes the Father's house of importance to the child - if he has right affections? It is, that the Father is there. The blessedness of being there is that the Father is there. Christ is there too. However feebly we may enjoy it now, when we talk of 'going to heaven,' it is going to the Father. The Lord says, "No man cometh to the Father, but by me." He was going to the Father, and bringing us in spirit there now, hereafter actually in glory. Therefore they say, "Shew us the Father." No one has seen God at any time; but there is that blessed relationship of the Father to the Son, and to us as putting us in His place. He brings us to the Father. So He says, "Where I go ye know, and the way ye know." Thomas thought of a place. "We know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" The Lord says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." And then we get the point - "No man cometh to the Father, but by me." If I know the Father, I know where He has gone and where I am going. When Philip says, "Shew us the Father," He answers, 'You have the Father this long time with you revealed in the Son. He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' There we have this blessed truth, that when the Lord tells us He is going to bring us to the Father's house, we know what the blessedness of that house is, we know the centre of it. We know the Father because He is perfectly revealed in the Son. In coming to Christ I have found the way. I may see "through a glass darkly"; but as to the object, I have got the Father Himself revealed in Christ, so that in believing on the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ I know the blessedness I am called to - the place of Christ as Son, He who is the source and centre of eternal blessedness, loving-kindness, and favour. It is not the mere abstract theory of God and of a holy place that it is; but I stand in a perfect relationship, and the Spirit of adoption crying Abba in my heart, there is a consciousness of the love that has put me in this place of favour. If I say, How can I know I have seen the Father, a poor worm such as I? Have you seen Christ (not with the outward eye, but seen Him by faith)? "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The spring of all our blessedness is in Christ, actually when He comes, and the soul lives in it now as far as he is in heavenly-mindedness, and in spirit enjoys it all, looking forward in the brightness and blessedness of hope to being there. I must for this understand the work as well as the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is my title. I know in His death my sins are perfectly put away, and what He has done is so perfect in glorifying God, that He has taken His place at the right hand of God as man, and that gives me a place. He can say, "Glorify thy Son." There we get the relationship, and then, "I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me," etc. That is the title by the work, and He has done the work for me. He has gone to the Father, and in Him is the way to go. He makes us feel that blessing is for us as a present thing. I quite admit we see through a glass darkly; but the things I shall get in heaven are not things I have not had revealed on earth. I have not seen the glory, but

if I speak of the Father's love as my portion there, it is that which has given me Christ now. If of my title, it is no new thing, but the work and blood-shedding of Christ; if of eternal life, I have it now in His Son (shall have it fully then). Whether the thing enjoyed or the title to enjoy, we have it now, though we do not apprehend it fully. What a thought to be able to say, according to Christ's own thoughts of the blessedness of heaven, I have it now. He was revealing the Father's name. "I have declared thy name unto them, and will declare it." What He tells them is: 'Now you have seen the Father, the very one my delight is in, and my joy (eternally infinite, of course), the One that I walk on earth with, that I am one with. I have brought you into this relationship with Him, and revealed Him to you.' How far can we say, I have got on earth what I am to have in heaven - the revelation of the Father in the Son? What settled quietness of spirit it gives, to have found yourself with the Father, through the knowledge of the Son, in confidence of heart! Have your hearts got that? Are they really occupied with the Father? (worshipping, of course; but the clearer the knowledge of the relationship is, the more worship there will be). He is the way. Can you say, I have been that way, and He has brought me to the Father? That is, in this world; it will be no new thing up there. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Can our hearts say, I have found the Father in Christ? That is what the Lord was insisting on; and there was far more ignorance then than now, for the Holy Ghost had not come.

## S. The Hope of His Calling

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The Hope of His Calling.

Eph 1:15; Eph 2:10.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 8, 1881, p..

"That ye may know what is the hope of His calling." God has called you; what is the hope of the calling? What future is there in this call? We get it in Eph 1:5 — "Having been predestinated unto the adoption of children." I know "Abba's" heart now; I am to know "Abba's" house then. If God says, "How beautiful my house will be with my Son in it, surrounded by those associated with Him," is it nothing to my heart that God already has joy in the thought? It will have a separating effect on the soul from evil to God. "And what the riches of the glory," etc.? Glory is not the same as the Father's house. There is rest in the thought of the house, whereas in the glory we get the public expression of it. What a contrast to this beggarly world down here! Here it is all toil; but what is it all leading to? To a bright, brilliant, glorious future, now made little of by people here; then made much of by God up there. So far there is no question of life; He takes them as it were and shows them the corpse they were, the pit they were in. God loves to be Centre, to have round Him a circumference of blessing. What was the pit you came from? What good was there in it? God could find none; so you cannot. Everything in it is bad, though it need not come out. As the pit was down there, and nothing but evil working in it, so the blessing came from quite a different place — from the Man up there upon the throne. Had we taken a few steps towards Him? No! it is even when we were "dead in sins." It is not a question of bad fruits — "dead in sins" (not alive in sins, as in Romans), all entirely wrong, all dead; not a correct notion of God, nor of Christ, nor the Holy Ghost, nor of ourselves.

There are three things: life-giving, separation from the grave, and a place of permanent rest. Satan cannot rob me of blessing, because I am within Christ. The bringing into a place of blessing is a thing to be known individually; knowing it, and knowing the existence of it, are very different things. You say you believe it. Have you got it yourself? Can you say, "I have gone up from the tomb by a power that associates me with all that is dear to God? God looks on me, and says, 'There is an individual who has life together with my Son.'" Can you say it? Is the life that you live in the flesh by faith of the Son of God?

God promised a son to Abraham; his circumstances said, "Impossible, you cannot have any children." But Abraham said, "Let God alone, He must see to His promise." Difficulties to believers now come in exactly the same way. Things inconsistent are brought up by conscience: if you say, "That is inconsistent with the Man up there, I am ashamed of myself," you judge it in faith; but if you say, "I have failed, I am no Christian," you play into Satan's hands; you do not judge yourself, but slur over the evil. We get here three things -

Abba's heart, Abba's house, and that the Man, the perfect Servant of God, who was obedient even unto death, has won His place up there. He went in not only as One who had a right to go in, but because He had humbled Himself. These things just mark the place that you and I are in as Christians. God wanted to show what a God He was, and the resources He had in His Son.

If God has raised us up together, etc., it is that we may have communion with Himself through this Christ dwelling in us by faith. We cannot get steadiness of works, unless with a soul abiding in communion with God. If I am in communion with God, what do I get? If a heart be right with God, there is talking about Christ always — Christ at home in the heart. I look up and say, "There is a Man on the throne of God, and He has all power in His hand: the Son of the virgin, the seed of the woman; and God says, "That is my beloved Son, the fulness of Godhead." If you know Him, you may get all the fulness of God. I never shall know Him; but I know Himself. God presents in that Man, seen there by faith, what can fill the humblest mind.

God has formed in my soul such an estimate of Christ that I could not do without Him; and more than that, He cannot do without me. Nothing is good without Christ, and the presence of Christ in anything makes it a home-scene to the heart. The valley of Baca is a precious place if Christ be there. Oh, what a height and depth in the truth that makes us one with Him! What an expression of love! What an expression of light! G. V. W.

## S. The Judgment-seat of Christ

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The Judgment-seat of Christ.

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

## S. The Lesson of Sorrow

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### The Lesson of Sorrow

One of the leading effects of sorrow and bereavement is to cast a veil over things present, and to bring us into the presence of God and eternal things in heaven. The result of this is that we are astonished to find how strange we are to the things of God and of heaven. To know what faith in Christ secures to us, and to be practically in the familiar use of it, are two very distinguishable things. I know that faith in Christ makes me His for eternity, and makes His Father to be my Father, and the Spirit to be Comforter to me. It gives me eternity and heaven, and cuts me off from earth. But, alas! the being so blessed, and knowing it too, and the being able to act upon it, are two very different things, more so than having learnt a language theoretically and thoroughly, and being able to speak it.

Now when sorrow and bereavement come, things present for a time fade, and things heavenly and eternal assume more substance to our minds. The object of your love gone to heaven and God and Christ, there is a void down here. The place that was ever full of refreshing water is dried up. You are lift, and your mind in grace follows the one you love upward. But, then, perhaps you find how little you know of the God he has gone to, of the Saviour who is there, of his present state, of the connection of the pool down here, and the grace that gave it to you, and the present bereavement of his presence in the pure light above, and of the restoration in the end to God's glory and his own profit.

How often have I learnt in such a season that I had not been living to the glory of God; that "Leo, I come to do Thy will," to suffer Thy will, had not been my principle of conduct; and God in such hours has seemed a strange God, a God I had neglected, and practically been living without. Self-ignorance, too, giving Satan power against us at such seasons; for, if we do not attribute to our own sin the having been living practically so far from God, not to be at home with His ways of dealing and with Himself, Satan will boldly inspire not only hard thoughts of God, but hard words against Him too.

Now, it is clear that God is perfect in wisdom, love, power, and goodness. It is only because I, His child, am not in the light of His plans and wisdom that I think I could have done better for myself than He has done. He gave me a pool, and I thought of its suitability to myself and others more than of Him who gave it; and when He took it away, then I found that I had not been thinking of Himself but of His gifts, like Job. Poor Job, self-ignorance led him to mistake God for Satan and Satan for God! I have known this lesson too, and how, if I did not see the hardness of my own heart, God seemed hard; and how, if I had been living at a distance from God and did not confess it, .God seemed at a distance; and how, if I did not. confess that the selfishness of fallen humanity had led me, a saint, to walk as if there were, a veil between God and me down here, I felt as if the heavens were brass, and that He made it so. I had not leaned upon the arm of God, and to confess this according to the Spirit, or to leave Satan to suggest that God's arm was raised against me was the alternative; to confess that I had forgotten God, or that God had forgotten me. But

then, it is love divine which, having made us to be everything to Christ, insists upon teaching us now to make Christ EVERYTHING to ourselves down here. The jealousy of His love, who, as the Father, is not satisfied that we take or have anything but Christ as the portion of our souls or our joy, and the jealousy of Christ's heart cannot be satisfied that we should have anything but His Father as our choice. These lessons break us, and let God and Christ into our souls and make us feel our need of them.

G. V. Wigram.

## S. The Lord in the Midst of His Disciples.

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The Lord in the Midst of His Disciples.

Luk 22:19-34. That which is so precious and interesting in this portion is the grouping together of so many various subjects. If you follow the order of events here, and the moral unfoldings, it is most beautiful. It begins with the greatest expression of divine life. In a certain way we begin life every week with the Lord's table. A week is the summary of one's life, and the first day of the week we begin with the death of Christ, and there is no beginning like that. After the passover is over - the celebration of that which was characteristic of Israel - He comes to that which is for us, and He does it in full view of the future. I am sure if we get right about the Lord's table we are right about all else. "This do in remembrance of me." Whatever brings our souls into close contact with Christ is a gain that will never pass away. Our great necessity is nearness to Christ, to have in our sons the sense of what a wondrous reality it is to speak to Him. To think that people walking through this world may know that just as really as the disciples could speak to the Lord down here, we may speak to Him. I do not know anything to compare to it - His ear ever open to me, His heart ever open to me, and the Spirit ever willing to conduct my soul into His presence; but it is a greater thing for Him to speak to me.

"This do in remembrance of me" has a peculiar claim on us. He was about to undergo death, and yet there He is in all quietness and calmness saying, "This do in remembrance of me." How differently a person goes out on a Sunday morning to the other days of the week! Where are you going? I am going to meet the Saviour, according to His own desire, and everything else sinks into utter nothingness. There is no routine in it. Could there be routine in worship, adoration, bowing of the heart, and the satisfaction that takes a person out of the world? If there is a hymn sung it is worship; if there is silence it should be the silence of adoration. I go and sit down and wait till I have the sense that the Lord is there, and that is everything. It is not repetition. There is no such thing in God's ways with us as repetition. We never pass through two circumstances alike. We are walking to heaven as straight as we can go. In the pathway every circumstance is new, and fresher in divine blessing than before, and there is so much there to take in that we shall never get to the end of it. But I press the solemn, blessed joy of being able to speak to Christ. Often we pray, and do not get the sense of being near to Him; and then I think the thing is to persevere, and get out of the distractions until the Spirit of God takes us into the quiet place, and we sit down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit is sweet to our taste. When a person is with Christ, and has really got Christ, there really is not room for other things.

Here (Luk 22:23) when the disciples come out for a moment, they are disturbed at the thought that there is to be a betrayer. John 13:1-38 tells us how the secret is known that there was to be a betrayer, and there. This is a most expressive verse - "Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake." Immediately after there is a strife among them which should be the greatest; that is self pure and simple. It is that kind of working which we have to judge in this day. There was the Son of God, the Lord of glory, going to give Himself for them, for ever to displace

from before God's eye that which was unsuitable to Him, and there they are making themselves objects of consideration. They were objects of suspicion in the previous verse, now objects of consideration. John the Baptist is a beautiful contrast to them. He calls himself nothing but a "voice," and if we are anything else but voices it is all over with us. It is a beautiful thing to be a voice, and we are only voices for Christ, as the voice of Christ is the joy of our hearts. This is the most humiliating picture of man's heart. Immediately after the table where His love is displayed, then they strive which should be the greatest. When you get near to Christ you feel as if every shred of yourself was gone. Luk 22:25 shows what goes on in the world; but Luk 22:26 shows that Christianity is the total and entire opposite of it. It is beautiful, the moral condition of soul that takes a person into the place of being nothing, and glad to be in obscurity. The more we are with Christ, the more we welcome obscurity, and He knows; that is enough. The soul that goes on with Christ can say, "Well, I am content to be nothing;" but this Luk 22:26 is open to us because it is service, and the way He remedies their departure in that day is the way He remedies it for us in this day. We never remedy anyone but by setting Christ before them. "I am among you as He that serveth." Service is where we get tried; but when we are with Christ, nothing but the lowest place will do for us. The moral order here is so beautiful; first the table, then service. Nothing can disturb Christ's love; but what it must have been to Him to see His disciples like this. But He removes the entire thing in a moment when He says, "I am among you as He that serveth."

First, we have the full expression of divine love in the supper, and the request of divine affection; the greatest love shown, and the greatest grace in asking them to do something for Him. There is nothing He cares for so much as the affections of His people. Then He comes down and sees that these loved ones are at issue among themselves as to who should be the greatest. He corrects that by the revelation of Himself, and by doing this He displaces self. We are never displaced but by Christ. Then He says, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations." The moment the heart reaches what Christ was, immediately He says everything He can in their favour. He rebukes them solemnly first for their selfishness, and shows them that the very opposite marks Christianity - "Ye shall not be so," and then He unfolds the true principle of service. Because He loves them, He delights to say everything He can in their favour. He delights to say all He can for each of us; and when we stand before the judgment-seat, He will surprise us. Little things we had forgotten He will remember and bring up in our favour. What a set they were, these disciples, a company of men one would look down upon. That is the best company Christ had in this world. But it brings out what He is. Is this the kind of Christ you have to do with? He will say everything He can for me, He will not pick all the holes He can find in me. It is the sense of the love of that Christ who looks over my pathway here. He knows what a bungler I am. But He cheers us and helps us and puts the best motive for all we do; and when we get home, will He not surprise us? And now think what a moment it was for Him; think of the surroundings in which He was - sorrow and rejection, and those waiting outside to drag Him away to death; and yet He speaks about the kingdom. (Luk 22:29) The kingdom was present to Him, and He says, "I appoint unto you a kingdom." Only a man in power and position can talk about appointing. There never was a brighter day for us than the present; but it must be faith. Faith makes what is on before present; it makes the kingdom present, and the light of that future is enough. You never found a man strong and vigorous in Christianity who was not living in the light of the future. Put yourselves in company with the disciples, and say, How are things with us? The very men who were appointed a kingdom forsook Christ and fled. First, we want personal acquaintance with Christ, and then, there must be

the acceptance of identification with Christ in rejection. We talk about the Church and house of God; but if a person is not in spirit identified with a rejected Christ, the Church is all Greek to him. No soul has ever taken in the truth of the Church that is not in identification with Christ in rejection. The Church is a heavenly thing. Do you know you are one with Christ outside this world? that there is a breach between Christ and the world, and are you with Him?

Luk 22:30 is worth looking at. Eating at His table is the highest thing; sitting on thrones is more for judgment. Intercourse with Christ in the day of glory coming. It would be a terrible thing not to be true to Christ now. Let us rise up, and go straight on. Satan will try to hinder, and we get Satanic power here. (5: 31.) There you find Satan, and what he brings against the soul, and then Christ's priestly service praying for us. To think that the Lord knows every tactic of Satan. He is above them all, and sees their working towards me. We have not an inactive Christ in heaven, but one who cares for us, and watches over us every moment of our lives. What a moment it is for the soul when it can say, "Lord, I know Thou art sufficient; Thou wilt help me through." To know I am an object of consideration in heaven. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards Him." There is nothing like Christianity. A Saviour in heaven, with boundless, measureless resources, who is going to do everything for me. "I have a rich Almighty Friend."

"When thou art restored, strengthen thy brethren." (Luk 22:32) It is beautiful to see how the Lord contemplates the blessing of His people. He does not say, "When you are restored, take care you do not fall again," but, "When thou art restored, strengthen thy brethren." That is what Christ cares about. You must learn from failure; but when you are restored, strengthen the brethren. That is our business, and we cannot strengthen each other but by the ministry of Christ. "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing [blessing there means the ministry of blessing]; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." (1Pe 3:9.) We are going to inherit it, we do inherit it, and our only business is to minister it. The one thing we need is to get near to Christ. Can I speak to Him? Can I be as near to Him as John or Peter were, and have intercourse with Him? What a wonderful thing! And how He values it and loves it! If we are taking the ground of self-sufficiency (Luk 22:33), God has to put us to the proof. The first thing is to be so at home and at rest in Christ's presence, that He has no question to put to me. It is no good thinking about service if there is a question between me and Christ. Peter had to learn himself. The higher thing is not to learn oneself by faults, because if I rightly accept the cross of Christ, I accept the very worst about myself. If we have learnt the cross, we have learnt the worst about ourselves.

E. P. C.

I never had my heart occupied with a living Christ in heaven without finding that His love drew my affections after Him. I never grew careless without there being cold chills. If occupied with Him, you will not be thinking of yourself, your walk, your beauty, or anything except the love which draws the heart after Him. I can give no reason why my heart was wrapped round Christ, save that the grace of God drew me to Him, and has kept me these forty years; because He loved me, and will love me to the end. Peter cursed and swore, and denied the Lord, but the Lord had bound Peter to Himself, and He kept him to the end. G. V. Wigram.

## S. The Love of Christ

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The Love of Christ.

"This is my body which is broken for you." The floodgates of the love of Christ are thrown wide open. What Judas was doing at that moment; what Peter would do before the cock crew; what the others would do consequent upon the outrage in Gethsemane, hinders not in the least the outflow of the shoreless and fathomless ocean of love that swelled in the breast of the Saviour, and tore its living and triumphant way through every barrier that rose up against it, until the bitter chalice of divine judgment was to the very dregs exhausted, and the blackness and the darkness and the wrath and the forsaking were over for ever, and in all its solitary grandeur and greatness it swathed Golgotha with a glory that declared salvation for a world of fallen men. J. Boyd. As metal is smelted in the furnace, so when God gives faith, He will surely try it, to the end that, "the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." G. V. Wigram.

## S. The Peerless One

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The Peerless One.

O THOU, Jehovah's fellow, Man!

Jesus, my Lord, God's Son Human perfection at its height But found in Thee alone. To Abba's love, to God's high claims, Thou cam'st not short at all;

Perfect in everything art Thou Alone since Adam's fall.

O matchless, peerless Man! shall we Begrudge to Thee this praise?

Perfect, alone Thou cam'st in love To glory us to raise.

Peerlessly, spotless One! 'twas Thou The wrath did'st bear for me Peerlessly, righteous One! I'm made God's righteousness in Thee.

Peerlessly, glorious One; how soon Shall I be like to Thee?

Thy very glory then reflect, Thy perfect beauty see.

G. V. Wigram.

## S. The Prayers of Saints

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### The Prayers of Saints.

"And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints." (Rev 5:8.) That latter clause is very peculiar, as connected with the grace of God in His own proper eternity. There are things His people suffer from, and that He never forgets. All their prayers are treasured up before God - their tears are put in His bottle, and treasured up. What! the sorrow I have forgotten, has God put that down? Is that one of the things that will shine? He can use all for His glory; but can the prayers and groans of a saint be kept and have a special place, be an odour of a sweet savour to God? The sinner does not know this; but a poor broken one can say, "Not only does God remember my prayer, but He puts it by on His own throne, like the pot of manna which He liked to be laid up, to be remembered as a trophy of the way He carried His people through the wilderness." And so will their prayers tell there what their special need of His presence was here. "Golden vials." Gold marks the divine character of that by which they are kept; the odour, a fragrant incense going up; the fragrance ever the same. Is that said of the prayers of saints? Yes; not one of them lost. The Lord Jesus knew them all; they were ever before God. G. V. Wigram.

## S. To Me to Live is Christ

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"To Me to Live is Christ."

Php 1:21.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 7, 1880, p. 307. The mind of the Spirit for you and me today is, that we should be channels for the flowing forth of the eternal life that is in Christ, in the midst of the world. He would have a stream flowing forth from us, telling of the God who is its source, and of the Christ who supplies it. For what does Christ show that all He possesses is ours? Merely that we should be saved? No! He might then have waited till the eleventh hour before He had called us. No! He wants the eternal life to be told out in a world where Satan is master, so that He can point angels, and principalities, and powers to the Church, to learn in us the manifold riches of God's grace. As children of the Father's house, who have known the bosom of the Father, who are like the feet of the glorious Head in heaven, let me ask you if the character of the Head is seen in you? Are you seeking to make the wilderness resound, not merely with the name of the Lord Jesus, but with lives conformed to His character, and to the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven? God has His wishes for His saints, and shall not my heart respond to His desires? See to what an extent Paul carried this. To some it seems a strange thing to press the life of Christ on people; but what would you give for a beautiful watch without hands? And what is a saint if not showing forth Christ? or a vine if it bear no grapes? The apostle could say, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." What was Paul about when he wrote that word? He felt that he was for Christ, and for Christ only, whether in life or in death. He could say, "I have only one object — Christ; and I have only one desire — that Christ should be magnified in my body." If, therefore, they had beheaded Paul, would he have lost anything? No! Christ would have been magnified in his body still. What sort of testimony was that in Caesar's court? A Roman knew how to face death as a display of courage, but to go forward to it in the thought that death was gain, because there was a Jesus who had been crucified between two thieves, who was the joy of a man's heart, a Roman could not have understood. Let me ask you — since you have known Christ, Christ's heart, Christ Himself your treasure, your life, Christ everything that God could give you — has your thought been, "To me to live is Christ, and to die gain"? It is our privilege while passing through this scene. And how it glorifies the meanest life if Christ is magnified in it! And how does it change death, if to die is gain, Christ being magnified in it! That is what a life of communion with God gives to a man. Ennobled by God most truly. The life of Christ flowing out through me, I am like the hands of a clock through which the life of the works within shows itself. Is that bondage? Is it legality for Christ to say, "Your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, and I expect you to show it"? If this is bondage, would to God there were ten thousand times more of it. G. V. W.

## S. Two Letters on the Marriage of an Evangelist

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Two Letters on the Marriage of an Evangelist.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend vol. 15, 1888, p. 287.

One of the Lord's servants, after having been devoted to the work of preaching the gospel for three years, contemplated marriage. But it was pressed upon him by some that, as he had not sufficient income to keep a wife and family, he ought, before undertaking such responsibility, to seek some secular employment. In these circumstances, although he was clear in his own mind, he asked the judgment of the two well-known and valued labourers whose letters are here given.

I.

Dearest Brother, - Not one of the passages Mrs.- quotes applies to the question. That those who have occupations, as - and others, should evangelize all they can is all very well, but that is not being given up to the work of evangelizing where God has called us to it. Mrs. speaks of deacons or evangelists. But deacons are not evangelists. Serving tables was set up that the apostles might not be hindered in evangelizing; and when Stephen and Philip became evangelists, they gave up their place as deacons, at any rate Philip, for he left Jerusalem.

Next, that when a person is an aged widow, or an elderly matron, should teach young wives to be stayers at home is all well, but what it has to say to an evangelist having an occupation - I am at a loss to see.

Providing for one's own - though, of course, a man is bound to cherish and care for his wife - speaks of a wholly different and indeed opposite case, that the Church should not be charged with widows who had children, but that they or young members of their family should provide for them. I have gone through them all, and none apply at all, unless 2Co 12:13-14; nor does that. Paul had no wife, and no home, and no fortune, and tells us he had no certain dwelling-place. He would not take from the Corinthians because they were fond of money, but talks of it as a wrong, and that it was an extraordinary thing (but he took from others for the gospel's sake), and in 1Co 9:1-27 he discusses the whole matter on the ground that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. Peter led about a sister, a wife, and Paul insists that he and Barnabas had the same right, so did the brethren of the Lord, and the apostles. (1Co 9:5.) So that the direction of the Word is quite plain. And heaps of brethren have so done on the Continent. If they have families, no doubt they must have a house; but the Lord has taken care of them, and their families have been educated, and get on just as other people's have. In one case there were eleven children. Of course, such cases require faith in a woman to undertake when in it. I have often seen them have more courage than men. My experience is wholly against him called to be an evangelist taking up a means of providing by other occupation. It is putting this world and human care before God's calling, and their spiritual work is spoiled in its very root. It is a wholly different thing, and the

opposite as to faith, where those who have occupations break out of their bounds to evangelize. If a man be called of God to give himself up to evangelizing, that is another matter, but departing from the path of faith is a serious thing.

I am thankful you were all refreshed at Lewes. It is grace from the Lord.

Affectionately yours, dear brother in Him, J. N. D.

"Trust in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him."

II.

Dearest -, The mission by Christ of the twelve for the time when He was still upon earth, as in Mat 10:1-42, etc., had differences introduced by Himself when He was anticipating another position for Himself than that of being on earth, as Luk 22:36. Himself had kept in check the power of evil when down here; when He had been rejected they were rejected in Him by man, and His flock became as sheep for the slaughter. As called to follow Paul as he followed Christ, it is a path of faith, and of faith only, on which I find myself. Paul saw how a wife would impede his course, and he took none. He was above any need, through the power of grace and the Spirit, of human nature, and he left all to follow Christ. He never despises marriage, or God, who as Creator ordained it in Eden. But while he teaches and presses that it is right for some, if need be, to marry, he had no need; and he was above human nature's line in giving himself to the work of the Spirit. 1Co 7:1-40 gives his truth to us on the subject.

If God's word through Paul told me that I ought to marry, I hope I should do so. The Lord to whom I look for everything in this life, ever since I found that He had given me to Christ, is He to whom I did look when I was a young man upon this subject; and if He said marry, He also would say what I was to do when married, as to food and raiment, whether to be fed by Him direct, or whether to make tents. Of course, for an unmarried man to say, 'I go out and serve the Lord in His word, and care not what I get to eat, or where I sleep, it is only myself that will suffer,' is different from a married man doing it. But still the question is for faith to answer.

What I sometimes say to young men is this: The first question is, Are you prepared to give up, or to keep on as having given up, time for eternity; to make service in the Word the one business of your life, contempt and poverty and difficulty notwithstanding? Have you given up 'self' for 'Christ'?

If anyone says 'Yes,' Paul is his model of the better way. If Paul's letters tell me that I ought to marry, I take his doctrine as guiding me in my conduct in that. Still, though it becomes me to judge myself in taking a wife - and how far my faith will carry me afterwards - clearly the sparrows of the air, and the beasts of the wilds, and the fish of the sea, assure me that God feeds those who have no *gagne-pain*.\*

They that preached the gospel lived of the gospel (1:e. evangelists) in Paul's day, that was God's own order; not a paid clergy, not a settled employment in business, but to be evangelists, and to look to God for food and raiment. And it is good for us saints to see those who have faith so to act, and good for us who aspire to the name of workmen to give in humbleness ensamples of trusting in the Lord, and in the Lord alone, and of enduring hardness for His name and work's sake, if needs be.

Most affectionately in the Lord, Yours, G. V. W.

\*This is a French phrase for "livelihood." - Ed.

## S. Waiting for God's Son

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Waiting for God's Son.

1Th 1:1-10. The doctrine of the Lord's coming is brought out in a remarkable way in these two epistles. These Christians were those who "waited for the Son from heaven." If we compare 1Th 1:1 with John 20:17, we shall see in the former the Lord speaks of the assembly, in the latter individually, in the character of sons. I have been struck lately with the way the two are often confounded; and frequently the truth connected with those who form the assembly is overlooked. It is important to notice the distinction of the family from the assembly. In Ephesians we see it is the sons of God who make up the assembly. The thought of the Bride carries the mind to the display of His glory, as Eve was the companion of Adam, sharing all with him. If we think of the family - sons - it is the Father's house that comes before us. Two different spheres of glory, the glory of the palace New Jerusalem is the sphere of the Bride's glory, and the Father's house that of the children; but the assembly is made up of sons and daughters. They know Christ in the Father in John 14:20, and the assembly as the Bride is in God the Father likewise. I am brought apart by God to wait for the Son from heaven. God will judge according to what He separated me to. What induced me to wait for the Son from heaven? What inducement do we find? Why are we unable to be satisfied until we see Himself? In Thessalonians we do not get circumstantial glory, nothing beyond limit of the glory of Himself. I should be a most unspiritual person if I did not want to see Himself. What is the reason? He is hidden in the Father; I know Him there. I know myself in Him there, and the assembly in Him there. He would say to us, You cannot look at Me in the glory where I am, and separate yourself from me. There is a Person there on whom the Father pours out all His affection, and we hear the word dropping out, "I in My Father, ye in Me, I in you." He is thinking of me down here.

Many ask, Where is the Church? I might say to such (but it might not be gracious), You will never see it, because you are not looking unto the Father and the Son. Neither the Father nor the Lord Jesus have ever changed their minds about the Bride. We could not say that the saints in any given place are a fair presentation of the Bride, though they form a part of it. Is there not a motive for me to say, I cannot be satisfied till I see Him of whom this is true? Another thing there is that is touching to the soul; the Lord is not satisfied with our being down here, and by our gleaning by faith what is true of Him up there. He wants us to be with Himself. In the energy of His love He brings us into connection with His past, present, and future. In 1Th 1:3 we get three things. When the Lord Jesus shines down into the soul, when the light of Christ gets hold of the soul, it puts me into another position; faith has told its work upon us. When Israel went out of Egypt it was plain to all that they were gone; and when by faith people get hold of the Lord Jesus, it is plain enough, they find, that they have lost those who were their companions before. The early Christians passed from the company of the priests and Jews to the disciples. We have to do with Christ, who is alive from the dead, and the living Christ has to do with us; then, if we get our conscience soiled, if we have failed, then it is we find in times of weakness the value of a living Christ in heaven. We know Christ who was in humiliation (past) a present Christ in heaven serving the people for whom

He gave Himself. The early Christians might have been anxious for Him to come, but His eye was on us. We should not have been thus in an eternity of blessing had He come then. How resolute He has been! He will not sanction the least departure from Himself on the one hand, but how gentle on the other! Has He not a claim on us? After speaking at Exeter the other night of His coming, an old woman came up to me and said, "I am so impatient for the Lord to come; He won't come." I said, "If He had come a hundred years ago you would have been shut out; you ought to go home and thank Him He still tarried. If He had foreclosed the thing, where would the many have been? Have you any children? Are they waiting? Then go home, and thank the Lord He has not yet come." Ah, how patiently He has waited for us, and are we to be in a hurry? It endears Him to us that He did wait so long, that He is waiting still for some dear to our own souls. His love to us, His service as alive from the dead challenges our hearts. If a servant had been in an office for thirty or forty years, and then had no care for his master, what should we think of him? Christ is in heaven, busy with poor, wretched beings down here, showing out the exceeding greatness of His love, and gentleness, and patience towards them in all their weakness and infirmity. Such is the nearness of our position in which we are placed, that we are the only people who know what the next movement of the Lord will be. We look to see the Son with joy; we are a peculiar people - peculiar honour is put upon us - to be those who are waiting for Him. When the Son comes down from the throne on high we shall be able to say, "This is our God, and we have waited for Him."

What is the whole tomorrow of the Christian and of the children of God? We are not kept to be waiting to see the improvement in the arts and sciences, to see the place prepared for antichrist, but we are kept individually to wait for the Son from heaven. The individuality of it strikes me, to wait for Himself. (1Th 2:9) The eye of the apostle passed over across Jordan. Who shall I meet there? My Master, the blessed Lord, whose divine fulness has won my heart; who, in the affection of His heart, has brought before me His present, past, and future, and wreathed them round my soul, and called me to wait for Himself. But there is another thing. All you Thessalonians will be there; I shall see you there, you among whom I have laboured. It will be joy to see those among whom he has laboured surrounding him. People sometimes ask, Shall we know one another? It is evident Paul had no question about it, that then he should know these loved Thessalonians. It was not inconsistent that Paul, who saw the Lord as his Light and his Hope, should think too of meeting those among whom he laboured. How this thought makes the scene a home scene. The Lord is there, the one great and distinctive object through whom and from whom all the joy flows of those who are there filled with joy. Ah! it will be no strange scene; human affections are renewed, and the heart too is occupied with those he walked and laboured among down here.

1Th 3:12-13 tells us how we are to go through this wilderness and conflict of the way; it shows all the evil and enemies working, and shows, if people are to go on to the end, the need of abundance, of love one to another. 1Th 4:13. We get here what enables us to say, "By the love wherewith He has loved me, made me partaker of all the benefits which flow from His death and resurrection, made me know I shall inherit all things with Him - by that love I wait, I long to be with Him. Nothing can satisfy me till I am at home with Himself; there we get the open display of His complete triumph. He is now up there in His solitude, but He is pouring forth the glory and virtue which makes His people triumph over every adverse circumstance. He left His divine glory once, as we read in Php 2:1-30, and He will leave it a second time. He will leave His Father's throne and the glory again, because His heart cannot brook separation. When all His purposes are

accomplished He will come forth again, because His love, His heart, is set upon His people." Is there not something in this for the heart to lay hold upon, that there lives one human heart in heaven who so desires to have His people with Him that He will leave the throne to take a glory which He can share with them? (Php 2:18) Do you ever think of the hour when He will come forth? of the state of utter weakness and incompetency those will be in when He comes to take them to glory? Out of every thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine of their bodies, I suppose, will be in the grave, and those who are alive and remain will be in bodies in such a condition as to be impossible to mount up to Him. If we follow up the individuals who are to be in glory to the very last instant before He comes, they will be bearing the mark of death and Satan's work, and they have no power in themselves. It is not the Lord trying to hide what sin has done; He lets it go on. The Lord comes forth, and then victory! If He were to come now we could not but bound up to meet Him. He uses the condition of His people, their weakness and incompetency, to show forth the virtues of His person as the resurrection and the life. Some will be in the graves, others in their mortal, corrupt bodies; but He takes occasion of their state to show what sort of a person He is. He comes forth, He speaks the word, the dead in Christ rise first. What makes it so precious is the outshining of His person, of that which belongs to Him alone, of the man Christ Jesus, whom God delights to honour. How came the long list of those who have died - the stream of death that has rolled on? Ah! the resurrection morning will tell us. It is reserved for Him to display Himself as life and resurrection. Will it not be most precious to behold Him in that day when He comes in His faithfulness to claim His own? Not one will be forgotten; not one of those who have believed in Him will be passed by. What sort of power is it that can raise up the body of a Stephen or Paul - the bodies of the saints? It is not creation-power. Who is it that keeps the dust of His saints? Who knows where to find the dust of His saints? If we only think of it we can but say, it is a marvellous instance of His faithfulness. In the confusion and bustle of the night they went out of Egypt. Joseph's bones were not forgotten. The Lord remembers each one. He speaks the word, they rise. Do you find the circumstances of mortality press upon you? Do you know what Satan's fiery darts are? what conflict is? Is it no joy to you to know the One who has graven your names upon His bosom, who sees and watches you in your path of sorrow and rejection, is coming down to claim you and all that are His? Your soul alive already; so if He came now you would never see death, but He would fill up your body with immortality, and cause all that is mortal and corruptible to go out of it. What victory! I come out of my Father's presence as a victor, as the resurrection, as the life, to look for a people whose hearts are set upon me. What a victory! What an One to come and look for me, to claim me as His own, and to fill me with Himself, and nothing but Himself! He is showing out the divine perfection of life and incorruptibility, and so death is swallowed up in victory. Do you feel the pressure of circumstances? the cruel tyranny of Satan - man continually rushing in or pushing you aside to make room for himself? Do you not say, "I long for His coming"? How blessed to see resurrection teeming forth! to see Him come forth as the fountain of eternal life! There will then be the springing up and triumphing over every thing. We are to be waiting for the person of our Lord. . . ." I remark in this epistle how little is said of circumstantial glory. It is a question of the bride and Bridegroom of the children of the Father and of the only-begotten Son. Nothing ought to be before the soul but meeting Him. I would ask you whether you know what it is to set your soul in the position of waiting for Him? I am called to be one who is looking out for Him, reminding myself continually that He is coming, that my soul may be constantly kept in a waiting position. G. V. Wigram.

## S. Was Balaam Converted?

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Was Balaam Converted? In the *Christian Friend and Instructor* of last year, p. 269, we read, "As with Balaam so with Job, there were those outside the immediate circle of Abraham's family who knew and worshipped the Almighty." Again, p. 283, we read, "In the world outside God used an unconverted Balaam." This is an apparent contradiction. But it is clear from Rom 1:21, etc., that a certain knowledge of God may exist apart from conversion or the working of divine life in the soul. Balaam, speaking in Num 24:16, speaks there, I judge, more of what he had learnt of God since being invited to come to Balak than of any of his previous knowledge of Him gained in Pethor; and for these reasons it is apparent that Balaam's character as a soothsayer or diviner was well known. Balak, when he first sent to him to come and curse Israel, sent his messengers "with the rewards of divination in their hands." (Num 22:7.) Also, there was no knowledge of God's ways with Israel, His people, in Balaam's mind at the moment. God forbade him to go, and says the people are blessed; then allowed him to have his way (for he loved the wages of unrighteousness, says the apostle Peter); then stood in the way as his adversary, with a sword drawn to kill him, forcing thus from the prophet the cry, "I have sinned." - When come to Balak he does say, for God had already warned him, "Peradventure the Lord will meet me" (Num 23:3); but there is evident doubt about it in his mind, and the second time he does not say whom he goes to meet. (Num 23:15.) In Num 24:1, the Spirit records that "he went not, as at other times, to seek for (or to meet) enchantments," including in "other times" his two former efforts. All this shows, I think, clearly that there was another power than that of Jehovah which was influencing his mind at this moment, though it is also clear that he knew this power to be impotent against God. His language in Num 23:23, "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel," would indicate two things - the futility of his efforts, and also what he had learnt in the hands of God. Further, soothsayers, and those who use divination, are an abomination to the Lord (Deu 18:10-14; Lev 20:6; Lev 20:27); and this is Balaam's description in Jos 13:22, "Balaam the soothsayer." When he came to Balak, Balak took him at once to the high places of Baal (Num 22:41), and it was there that Balaam proposes, "Build me here seven altars" (notice the words "me" and "here"). There they unitedly offered their sacrifices. (Num 23:2.) Can we suppose this to be the action of a prophet of Jehovah? Then Balaam's own words, as, in "the vision of God," he pondered the blessed end of His people, were, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his. (Num 23:10.) Again, "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh." (Num 24:17.) They remind one of Luk 16:23, and Rev 1:7, and imply anything but a heart then at perfect rest with God. The words Balaam "rose up and went and returned to his place" (Num 24:25), too, are very suggestive, where he perished as a soothsayer among the Lord's enemies, at the hands of His people (Jos 13:22), who were commanded to cut off all such as an abomination in His eyes.

Moreover, in the New Testament, Balaam is classed among those to whom is reserved "the blackness of darkness for ever," by both Peter and Jude. (See 2Pe 2:15-17; and Jude 1:11-13.) Terrible end of one with whom there was a certain knowledge of God, coupled with a love of

honour and reward on earth, making him a servant of iniquity and unrighteousness, deceiving himself, and yet calling Jehovah the Lord his God. (Num 22:18.)

Finally, as to Balaam worshipping Jehovah, as another has said, we must not confound Christian worship today with the worship of God in the past, nor with what will be found on earth again in the future. The hour "now is" when the true worshippers worship the Father, and when they that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:1-54) None can worship now save those who worship thus, and in order to it there must be divine life in the soul; but this was not a necessity in the past. Thus we see that all Judah and Jerusalem worshipped the Lord. (2Ch 20:18.) Were they all converted? Saul worshipped the Lord. (1Sa 15:25; 1Sa 15:31.) Nor will conversion be a necessity in the future. Men in the millennium will worship Him, and yet be unconverted. (Psa 22:27-29; and Zech. 19:16. See also Jer 26:2-6; and Zep 2:11.)

H. C. Anstey.

I am standing with the open grave of Christ behind me - just risen out of it with Him, my eye fixed on Him before me, darting forward to the glory, waiting for Him to come. G. V. Wigram.

We should be like a vessel under the droppings of heaven, always kept full out of His fulness.

What is at the bottom of restlessness with us is, wanting to be somewhere or somewhat the Lord does not want us to be. When Peter meant his best, he found out what a wicked heart he had. When he did his worst, he found out what a blessed heart Christ had. G. V. Wigram.

## S. Weakness and Strength.

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Weakness and Strength.

2Co 12:1-10.

G. V. Wigram.

Christian Friend, vol. 8, 1881, p. 295.

Immediately upon redemption weakness comes in — "He was crucified through weakness:" "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He could have gone up to heaven as the Son of David, but then He would have had no one with Him.

If the Spirit were given where atonement was not known it could only produce fearful conflict in the soul. There was no such thing as redemption, bringing back, except by the humiliation of His Son. If He had not become Man, He could not have gone to death, He could not have been the Head of the Gentiles, He could not have been the One amongst men meeting every need. He came down to measure out every thing in His own personal presence in grace. He did not stay in heaven and do the work; He said, "I choose to recognize Satan's power, but I will go down and worst him on his own ground." but He was not only crucified through weakness; the great point is, He was raised from the dead — Himself the Resurrection and the Life; and we can look into the grave and say, "I know Him as the resurrection and the life:" How does this power work in us? It is resurrection from the dead; when known it brings in the taste of death into everything connected with ourselves. Look at Saul of Tarsus; he had everything planned in his own mind for his service, and the Lord Jesus speaks to him from heaven. His first word, "Who art Thou, Lord?" shows that he was conscious of the entire end of everything connected with self. Then the next thing was, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" You will not find until Christ really looks into you that you will look at Him as the revelation of the glory of God. Then you say, "There is a Man up there in heaven raised from the dead, the One in whose face all the glory of God shines. If I want to know anything connected with God, I must learn it from that Man; the answer to every question, above, around, within, is found in the face of that One. God centralizes all in that Person!"

We often think of this passage as the experience of the apostle. True, it was so; but in it we get the principle of Christ's dealing with a soul. God shows me the Man in the glory, but after that I look up and see that One bearing me on His heart before God, and that He never forgets me. We get here the principle of God's dealing with a man down here. There is more than one principle on which the apostle was quite willing to have the fare of a pilgrim down here; but this is one, "My grace is sufficient for thee." If it be a question of service, of suffering, of any power at all, where do I get it? In Christ.

We get another ground in Php 3:1-21. There his heart was so entranced with Christ, that he wanted in everything to be like Him; because Christ suffered, he wants to bear the marks of

suffering too; to be like Him in every possible way, in moral character, in suffering, even in "being made conformable unto His death." Christ was down here as a pilgrim and stranger, and so he wanted to have the marks of one of His disciples, in being conformed to His sufferings; and why? For the love he had to Christ. But here it is another thing, "My grace is sufficient for thee," etc. I mean to conform you as My disciple to that principle of death and resurrection that was made good in Me before you got any blessing from it, that in everyday life you may have My strength. Look at the bearing of this on a person down here, the light it casts on his face. It was not only a question of the danger Christ saw, but He used Satan. People lose much when they forget that Christ uses Satan to guard them from sin; he is one of the powers by which He works. Satan gave Paul the thorn in the flesh. Christ's purpose is to perfect His strength in his servant's weakness. The whole scene down here is under His band; and not only are the difficulties here for us to get through, but they are arranged by Christ that He may glorify Himself by taking you through them. Who made the wilderness? God. And had He any special purpose in making it as it was? Why did He not make it like Canaan? Because He wanted a place for His people where He would have to supply their need every day. The secret of quietness and peace of heart is not to look at things and say, I have got to face them; but Christ has prepared the things as they are that I may not be able to get along a single day without Himself. Have I no bread? no work? Am I sick? Where is Christ? All the things are not only overruled, but used by Him that we may learn His strength of love that cripples us that He may be able to say, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." As I go along and see in my path a large rock, what do I think? How can I ever get over it? No; Christ has allowed it. He has put it in my path to try my faith, and somehow or other He will get me over it. You cannot say in ease and prosperity, There is Christ; but directly the storm begins, the weakness is felt, the sickness comes, we can certainly count on Christ. An extremity never takes Him by surprise, though often it may be an extremity entirely opposed to His moral character. If He leave a person to himself, it is not that He gives him up, but to prove his heart. If He see a man full of himself, even though his face may be beaming with the glory, He must leave him to himself a little. If the heart will not bow to Christ it must be left to itself. If we do not learn in the quiet of the sanctuary, we shall find ourselves outside to learn what poor things we are. Christ would rather have His name dishonoured and Peter brought low, than keep him in the ranks of the Church, "making a fair show in the flesh:"

Look at John in Rev 1:1-20. There, an exile in Patmos, he might have thought his apostleship ended; but Christ comes and gives him a book to write, unfolding things of deep moment to the Church in all ages. What should we do without the Revelation? We get another instance in Rom 8:1-39. I know not what to ask, but the Spirit makes intercession with groanings, and He that searcheth the heart knoweth it. Do I know what I want? No; but we present our desires before Him, often unable to form them into sentences, but Christ is up there, He knows what the Spirit wants for us. It is only an instance of redemption, working through Almighty power, connecting God, Christ in heaven, with me, a little insignificant individual down here. That God is so occupied with me that He brings me into desires after spiritual things connected with the glory of Christ. I present the desire, Christ understands (take the figure in Psa 107:1-43; the sailors at their wits' end, then they learn the poverty of nature) I am brought to a sense of weakness by this character of communion, by His "strength made perfect in weakness." A great deal of the defective Christianity nowadays is owing to the Lord's people coming short in seeing that. Do we understand that the whole wilderness is to be a book of death and resurrection to us? Very often sorrow is taken up

from love to Christ; but here it is my lifetime all developed by Christ, and He acting upon all to develop the principle of death and resurrection, and that to let me know "My grace is sufficient." If you look at Satan as one of the powers by which God works, at the wilderness as the place prepared by Christ, where the tokens of His love are shown out, and at yourselves, crippled by Christ in order that you may have no strength but His to act on, you will find sweetness and refreshing of soul. G.V.W.

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